

Love Changing Lives.

Spring 2024 Newsletter

Your gift in action.



Seyi, Rachel and the other students in Good Shepherd Kitchen Culinary Training Program showed off their skills by cooking a meal for Catholic Charities' staff and volunteers.

Good Shepherd Kitchen: Cooking up a future

Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma's new culinary training program is serving up more than hot lunches. Good Shepherd Kitchen is a 12-week course, held at The Market at Catholic Charities' production kitchen and taught by Chef Michael Fusco, focuses on teaching the essential culinary skills needed in the food service industry. The program aims to provide students with upward mobility in their careers, but its impact goes far beyond just professional training.

"I just want to give my boys a good life. This has been the perfect program for me."

- Rachel



Good Shepherd Kitchen, which began with a "pilot" class last summer, just graduated its second full cohort on April 4th. Fusco is proud that all five students in this cohort graduated from the program. In addition to receiving top-notch training and experience, students are awarded a stipend to help offset expenses, as the program runs Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 2 pm.

Good Shepherd Kitchen not only teaches culinary skills but also life skills. Christi Johnson, lead volunteer for the program, manages the curriculum for the program and teaches life skills classes alongside a team of six volunteer teachers. Graduates leave with a Serv-Safe Food Handlers Certification, a Certificate of Completion, new skill sets and promising job opportunities. This program is indeed a beacon of hope, opening doors to a brighter future for those in need.

For more information or to apply for the Good Shepherd Kitchen Culinary program, visit cceok.org/culinary-training.

Rachel and Seyi each came to Catholic Charities as single mothers looking for shelter. They found the support and hope their families so desperately needed at St. Elizabeth Lodge and both women have successfully completed Catholic Charities' culinary training program. Rachel is also working toward her high school equivalency diploma in our Adult Education program! The women are looking forward to putting their new culinary skills to good use.

Good Shepherd Kitchen is a part of Catholic Charities' new **Workforce Development** program aimed at providing marketable job skills to those in need while also contributing skilled workers to the community. The second program within Workforce Development will be the expansion of our **Car Care Clinic**, which is currently seeking volunteer mechanics to eventually provide basic auto maintenance to clients in need. If you are a mechanic interested in volunteering at the Car Care Clinic, contact Catie Coulter, Senior Director, at ccoulter@cceok.org.



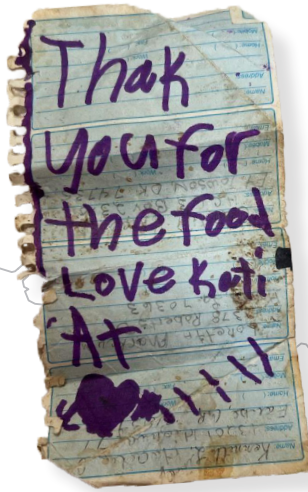
See our new Car Care Clinic video at cceok.org/car-care-clinic

Reaching the far corners of Eastern Oklahoma

Our Eastern Oklahoma Outreach program primarily addresses the problem of food and nutrition insecurity in rural areas. Oklahomans who live in a rural food desert may be 20 or more miles from the nearest grocery store. A family living in rural poverty will almost certainly lack the nutrients they need, resulting in poor school performance, issues focusing at work, and a host of serious and expensive health issues associated with long-term malnutrition.

Our objective each year with Eastern Oklahoma Outreach is to increase security with food and other necessities for individuals living in impoverished and isolated areas of Eastern Oklahoma. We've heard many comments of gratefulness from the recipients of the food received at the mobile pantries....such as "this program helps us stretch our dollars further", "this helps make ends meet" and "this program is a real benefit to me because there aren't many pantries close to where I live". Resources are few and far between (literally) in these outlying areas. Catholic Charities reaches rural Oklahomans through six outreach locations, 14 mobile food pantries, and by providing grants to 35 local Catholic parishes to distribute food in their communities.

A little girl from Rattan wrote this sweet note to a mobile food pantry volunteer and gave them an A+!



3,441,800
pounds

of food given to the hungry at our Outreach Locations

812,747
pounds

of food distributed through Mobile Pantries, including 206,063 lbs of fresh produce

61,000
pounds

of clothing donated to those in need

The Eastern Oklahoma Outreach program is almost entirely volunteer run. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers!

2,044
Outreach volunteers served
40,766
hours in 2023!
 That's the equivalent of
21 full-time employees!





Catholic Schools put a dent in childhood hunger with PB&J!

The Market distributes an average of 190,000 pounds of groceries each month and significantly impacts the lives of approximately 5,000 children annually. However, we have noticed a consistent shortage of shelf-stable foods like peanut butter and jelly, which are both nutritious and popular among the families we serve. Saint Catherine School, St. John Catholic School in Bartlesville, School of Saint Mary, Marquette Catholic School and Bishop Kelley High School finished off Catholic Schools week by building PB&J towers and donated all of the peanut butter and jelly to Catholic Charities. Thank you! Your support will directly feed our mission: to be Christ' merciful love to those who suffer...one sandwich at a time!

Together, the schools donated **1,886 pounds** of peanut butter and jelly!



Corporate team building that makes an impact

Volunteer together to serve your neighbors in need:

- Assist families as they shop in The Market
- Help prepare nutritious meals in our production kitchen
- Stock shelves and organize the warehouse
- Dig in the dirt in our vegetable garden

Tailor your day to your needs:

- Group volunteer opportunities for any size group
- Flexible volunteer time frames to fit your needs
- Meeting/lunch space available

For more information on how your team can get involved, visit cceok.org/teambuilding or contact Barbara Bird at bbird@cceok.org.



The Champions of Hope Recurring Giving Society honors those who contribute to the financial stability of CCEOK through monthly giving.

Just like the anchor, a Christian sign of hope and steadfastness, recurring gifts help provide security and steadiness to our mission to be Christ's merciful love to those who suffer.

We are profoundly grateful to those who show continuous commitment to Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma and invite everyone to be a part of our mission.



CHAMPIONS
OF HOPE
RECURRING GIVING SOCIETY

Become a member with any size monthly gift at cceok.org/donate

Donations from individuals like you fuel our mission to be Christ's merciful love to those who suffer.

Many are surprised to learn that Catholic Charities does not receive funds from the Diocese of Tulsa's Faith & Works Annual Appeal.

You may donate using the enclosed envelope or by going to our website:

cceok.org/donate



19th Annual
**COOKING UP
 COMPASSION**
 February 10, 2024

Cooking Up Compassion breaks records with **\$2 million+** raised!

Catholic Charities' 19th annual Cooking Up Compassion gala on February 10th, hosted by event chairs Matt and Teresa Gawey, welcomed 1,250 guests with food, music and fun for a good cause!

"When we began working on this event one year ago, we never dreamed that \$2 million was an attainable goal. We'd like to thank our generous patrons and our dream team patron committee for putting their heart and soul into making this event a success."

- Matt & Teresa Gawey

*Save the date
 for next year!*
**Saturday
 2-8-25**

