

# SERVICE IN ACTION

April 2024



## Reaching out in Wilburton

Nestled in the hills of southeast Oklahoma, about two hours from Tulsa, and about due east of McAlester, lies the town of Wilburton. Along Main Street, in a storefront that opened in May 2021, is Catholic Charities Wilburton.

The Outreach location is affiliated with Sacred Heart Church, which is just down the street. The church, which has been in continuous use since its founding in 1912, originally served about 150 coal miners and their families. Fr. Bryan Ketterer serves this parish, as well as the parish St. Catherine of Siena in Talihina.

Elfie Bowling has been the Coordinator for Catholic Charities Wilburton since January 2023. It is open on Thursdays from 10AM to 2PM, and features a client-intake and counseling area, a client-choice market, and a place to hold and

distribute donated clothes. They also offer financial assistance.

Food for the market is ordered from the Tulsa Food Bank and arrives in Wilburton (from the Food Bank's facilities in McAlester) twice a month. Dry goods, frozen items, and sometimes dairy are available to order and are delivered using Food Bank trucks. Several times a month, Elfie travels to McAlester and "floor shops" at the Food Bank for fresh fruits and vegetables, bakery items, and other perishable foodstuffs that aren't usually in a Food Bank delivery.

Elfie is assisted by Fr. Ketterer, Dcn. Mickey Bradley and his wife Sylvia, Mary Ellen Mooney, Elijah and Diane Fuller, Angela Key, and several other committed volunteers who help unload, stock, and help clients shop and take their groceries to their car.

While there are a few other food pantries and assistance centers in the area, clients are treated with compassion, love, and respect – so much so that they notice and mention how positively they are treated when they visit. The volunteers at the Outreach locations truly are excellent examples of Love Changing Lives.



## How does our garden grow?

With lots of love and great volunteers! Check out all the amazing things going on in the garden right now:



A new residential program is branching out at CCEOK with some trees in the courtyard sprouting small baskets, wired onto branches. These invitations to birds to build nests, were thoughtfully placed in trees by Dcn. Paul Louderback.

“In visiting with Anita about her overall plan for the courtyard area, we thought encouraging native birds to nest would be a great addition to what she has started,” Dcn. Paul said of the baskets.

Once the trees have started to leaf out, the baskets will provide a safe environment for new bird families!



Thanks to the youth from St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church in Coweta and Holy Cross Catholic Church in Wagoner, who were in the garden last week for Spring Break!

We're looking for six volunteers to help make this event a success. Contact Anita at [amills@cceok.org](mailto:amills@cceok.org) if you'd like to help out.

APRIL IS NATIONAL GARDEN MONTH!

## HARVEST OF HOPE BECOMING A HEALTHIER YOU

A free how-to backyard gardening event educating and empowering individuals to grow and raise their own food and start their gardening journey!



### SCHEDULE:

- 9:00 CHECK IN & WELCOME
- 9:15 SOIL HEALTH & COMPOST BASICS
- 9:45 CONTAINER GARDENING BASICS
- 10:15 HEALTHY BASIC RECIPES
- 10:45 COMPLEMENTS TO A BACKYARD GARDEN (BEES, POLLINATORS, ETC.)
- 11:15 BREAK
- 11:30 CCEOK GARDEN TOUR
- 12:00 CLOSING & SURVEY

**APRIL 13, 2024**

at **Catholic Charities**  
2450 N Harvard, Tulsa, OK 74115

Join us for a fun day of educational sessions with topics including the basics of good soil and compost, container gardening, healthy basic recipes, and basic compliments to a backyard garden. Snacks will be provided, and the day will end with a grounds tour of Catholic Charities community garden! We are looking forward to gardening with you!

# HANDS OF CHRIST

By Dcn. Michael Loeffler, Cascia Hall Preparatory School Campus Minister & Theology Department Chair

At Cascia Hall Preparatory School, our core Augustinian values of Truth, Unity, and Love (Veritas, Unitas, and Caritas) inform everything we do. While other schools have service “programs” or “hours,” we have the Caritas Connection. This name demonstrates that service is not merely a box to check off on a list of graduation requirements! Rather, serving God’s people is an act of love, and we hope to connect our students deeply and meaningfully to their neighbors in need and to the agencies that work to meet those needs.

Catholic Charities has long been one of our Caritas partner agencies for two reasons: First and foremost, they excel in that mission of serving God’s people in eastern Oklahoma, but they also excel at knowing how to put teenagers to work! Many of our students volunteer at Catholic Charities on their own and with their families, but we also work together in two specific ways during our Minimester program.

Every Wednesday morning in January, our sophomores work at four of the core non-profit organizations in Tulsa: the Food Bank, the Tulsa Dream Center, Emergency Infant Services, and, of course, Catholic Charities. By the end of the month, each student has been to all of these sites and learned how they all work together to serve Tulsa’s underserved populations. Many of them especially love their day at Catholic Charities, whether they help clients directly at The Market, work behind the scenes in the warehouse, or even get their hands dirty in the garden!

Every year, a few of those sophomores have such a moving experience at Catholic Charities that they choose to spend another Minimester there as full-time interns. Some of our juniors and seniors have worked in the Saint Teresa of Calcutta Dental Clinic, in the San Toribio Romo Immigration Legal Services office, and even with Chef Fusco in the kitchen, blending a pre-professional experience with an intensive experience of Caritas.

Cascia Hall greatly appreciates the work that Catholic Charities does for the community and the opportunities they give our students to be the Hands of Christ for their neighbors!



A big CCEOK

**>Welcome**

to all of our newest volunteers!

Abigal Agosto - Dental  
Brock Comer - Dental  
Alexa Ezparza - Dental  
Delia Gomez - Education  
Zoey Harris- Front Desk & Kitchen  
Onifade Colbert - The Market  
Ann Louise Nemcok - The Market  
Sandy Trujillo - The Market  
Stacey Humphries - McAlester  
Karol Watson - Ministry of Compassion  
Barbara Turley- Muskogee  
Karol Watson - Sallisaw



Thanks to youth from St. Benedict's in Broken Arrow for spending part of their Spring Break serving at Catholic Charities Sallisaw!

Mark your calendars!  
**April 21-27 is  
National Volunteer  
Appreciation Week**

We love our volunteers and have neat stuff planned for Volunteer Appreciation Week!

Keep an eye out for more details as we get closer to this special time.



**Thank you St. Therese Altar Society!**

St. Therese's Altar Society has committed to preparing and serving lunch one Saturday a month at Porta Caeli House.

**Let's Do Dinner!**

How about making a standing dinner date to prepare and serve dinner to the families of our Porta Caeli House guests every 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th Saturday of the month?

To find out more about this beautiful ministry and how you can make this a "date" every month, contact Mary Nole at [mnole@cceok.org](mailto:mnole@cceok.org)!



Welcome back  
BOK volunteers!  
Thank you for  
restocking  
The Market!

**GET INVOLVED**



Volunteer with us! [cceok.org/volunteer](http://cceok.org/volunteer)

Join our Facebook Group!

For story ideas, feedback, etc.,  
email: [volcommunications@cceok.org](mailto:volcommunications@cceok.org)

MAKE A  
DONATION!

