

SERVICE IN ACTION

February 2025



LOTS TO LOVE ABOUT LOVING IN LENT!



Loving in Lent is a new event that will help our neighbors in need. It has two components: a drive-up Easter meal giveaway and a program-focused basket building project.

Loving in Lent came about as a way to bless our neighbors in need at a different time of year, since over the years the number of area helping agencies giving away food near Thanksgiving has greatly increased. We were looking for another season that doesn't have as much food giveaway focus as the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas does. For our organization, the natural time to do that is during Lent!

Why Lent? The primary purpose of Lent is to help us increase in holiness; to draw closer to Christ. We can work toward this goal during Lent by extra prayers, penances, good works, almsgiving, fasting, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments (the chief sources of grace).

The program-focused basket building initiative is a way to bless the clients in our programs. CCEOK also wants to provide more opportunities to you, our volunteers

and CCEOK family, to delve into your Lenten season more deeply with more ways to serve and more ways to draw closer to Christ. What better way than to serve the poor in our community than by serving the vulnerable in our programs - Adult Education (garden baskets), residents in our Transitional Living programs (Easter baskets for the kids), guest's families at Porta Caeli House, our home for the dying (family welcome bags), and something for our new neighbors to Tulsa in our refugee resettlement program. This is a new initiative that will look completely different than anything we've ever done. And all ages can participate. We will be sending out information on this soon.

The drive-up food distribution will be held on the Tulsa campus Saturday, April 5, and will include food for a delicious Easter meal - and maybe a few extra fun things, too! In March, a sign up for those volunteer shifts will be available.

For any questions regarding **Loving in Lent**, please contact the Volunteer office at volunteer@cceok.org.

CELEBRATE ALL YOU DID IN 2024!

A look at **just a few** CCEOK programs and the impact volunteers made in our communities last year.

Wednesday nights were busy in the warehouse, where volunteers spent **1,001.03** hours building bags for distribution at mobile food pantries across Eastern Oklahoma.



A dedicated team of community volunteers gave **8,538.39** hours in 2024 to provide food assistance in their Eastern Oklahoma communities, including distributing the bags built (above) on Wednesday nights.



Volunteers at the main front desk of Catholic Charities logged **1,552.42** hours of hospitality for our organization.



In Broken Arrow at the Ministry of Compassion, **10,110** hours were given to serving their community.



Catholic Charities kitchen volunteers spent **5,136** hours feeding the hungry and our volunteers, as well as preparing and packaging over **29,455 lbs** of food for distribution in The Market.



Way to go, Wilburton volunteers! They worked **1,477.62** hours to ensure their community had a well-stocked food pantry to help their neighbors.



HANDS OF CHRIST

Gale Overton, Porta Caeli House volunteer

Fifty-five years ago, as a young wife whose husband had just returned from the service, I found myself in need of some marital advice and personal counseling. I was told that Catholic Charities provided this free of charge. At the time, Fr. James McGlinchy was the Director of Catholic Charities and turned out to be a true blessing. I remember his valuable advice to this day, but that's another story. Fr. McGlinchy met my husband and the three of us became life-long friends. He played a significant role in our journey of giving back to the community. By helping others, we automatically helped ourselves.

We were introduced to "Neighbor for Neighbor", which was in its infancy. It opened our eyes to the many struggles of families in Tulsa. Eventually, we began "adopting" families, or individuals, at Christmastime. Over the years, we involved our young children in the experience of sacrificial giving. It created a lasting impression to interact with the recipient of the gift. Now, with children of their own, our daughters still talk about their most meaningful Christmases.

After retiring a few years ago, I began looking for ways to expand my scope of volunteer activities. It seems a natural progression to get closer to God as we get closer to the end. After my mother's passing, it seemed only natural, and therapeutic, for me to help at Porta Caeli House. My husband and I continue to help at St. Mary's Outreach program, and now after the COVID scare, I find myself back at Porta Caeli. At times, I almost feel selfish volunteering at Porta Caeli because I receive so much peace and joy when serving others.

Helping others once again proves to be the best therapy for helping oneself. So, I've come full circle -- from the day I went to Catholic Charities to get hope, to today, as I give the gift of hope.

God works for the good of us all — always.



A big CCEOK

Welcome

to our newest volunteers!

Patrick Humphrey - Disaster

Thomas Bradley - EA/Kitchen

Philard Rounds - EA/Education

Sherry Whyne - EA

Murray Papke - Education

Roy Conner - Maintenance

David Butler - Market

Ponce Duran - Market

Robert Grooms - Market

Benito Reynoso - Market

Luke Subura - Market

Stephen Wood - McAlester

Brian Quigley - MMO

Constanze Bever - Muskogee

Michael Brandt - Muskogee

Maddie Brinkely - PCH

Lynn Davis - PCH

Lydia DeJarnette - PCH

James Griggs - PCH

Priscilla Griggs - PCH

Judy Hurst - PCH

Chezney Thompson - PCH

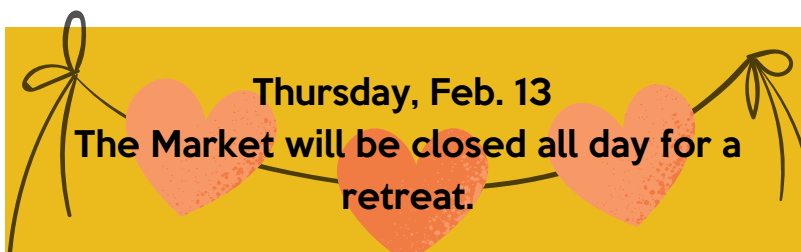
Amber Tyrrell - PCH.

Matt Vassar - PCH

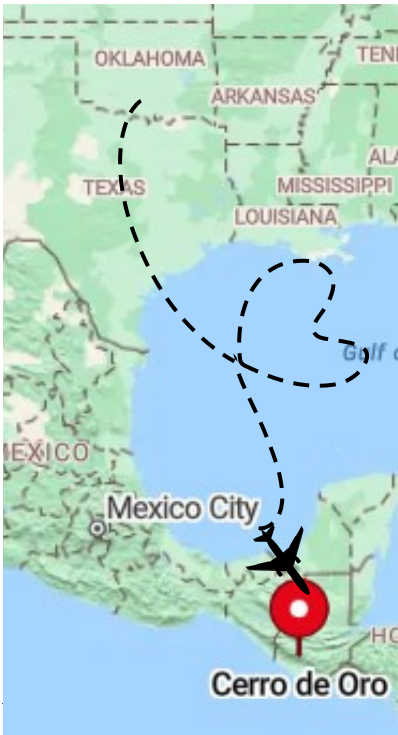
Cheyenne Ewing - Sallisaw

Joan Russell - Sallisaw

Shelby Crandall - TL Childcare



"Cold and chill, bless the Lord...Ice and snow, bless the Lord." - from the Canticle of Daniel
'Cool' photo by Barbara Bird



Happy New Year!

Some of you may know that I celebrated 20 Years at Catholic Charities on October 4th, 2024. It has been such a blessing for me to be here and learn from all of you. My path to holiness has been filled with lessons from our volunteers and employees and I am very thankful to have experienced Christ in the poor.

Our board has gifted me with a little time away for an abbreviated sabbatical. Jennifer and I spoke with Bishop Konderla about my thoughts and from there everything started to fall into place.

While my first hope was to spend the time in the Holy Land reading the gospels, I understand that it's not God's timing. So, I put in a call to a friend in OKC, Fr. Don Wolf, to inquire about Santiago Atitlan where Blessed Stanley Rother was on mission and gave his life for those he loved. I remember hearing of his death as an 11-year-old. Stan has had a real impact on who I am.

Fr. Wolf helped me make connections immediately and, as of now, I am planning to leave for Guatemala after Cooking Up Compassion for a 90-day stay. I will go to the mission town of Cerro de Oro six miles east of Santiago Atitlan. There is a building that needs to be refurbished which was built by the Diocese of Tulsa and Oklahoma City. I will add electricity, water, walls, etc. to help create a clinic and adoration chapel. A group of students from Benedictine College will join me in March (along with Sr. Maria Faulkner of OKC) and then a small group of medical professionals from OKC later to begin the clinic. One of the bigger challenges is that the village has no potable water and no sewer system.

I will live in the rectory with the priest and assist at mass. I hope to spend a good part of the day sitting by the lake, bicycling, exploring, reading, (anything but meetings and email!). I'm sure I will learn a little Spanish and have already been reading the Gospel readings in Spanish every day. Please let me know if I can take any prayers with me on your behalf. I can pass them directly to Blessed Stanley through his heart which remains in Santiago Atitlan.

My time away will be from February 11th until May 11th. During that time our Chiefs will hold down the fort and any questions they have can be directed to Bishop and our Vice Chair, Steve Allen. I honestly don't think that many will know I'm away, our team is that good.

Please pray for me, as I do for you, knowing that together, we are **Love Changing Lives!**

Dcn. Kevin



Volunteer with us! cceok.org/volunteer

Join our Facebook Group!

For story ideas, feedback, etc.,

email: volcommunications@cceok.org

MAKE A DONATION!

