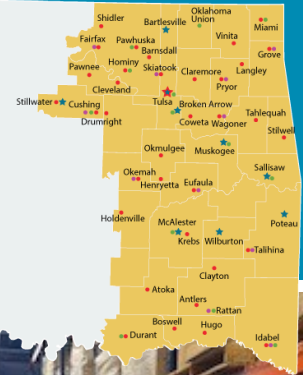


SERVICE IN ACTION

April 2025



Beth Jensen



Barb Collier



MaryAnn Thornton

Longtime Volunteers are Love Changing Lives

Catholic Charities (CCEOK) has been blessed to have many years of service of three remarkable ladies who have generously given their time over the several decades since the organization began north of downtown on Denver - and continue volunteering to this day.

“Prior to the beautiful campus at 2450 North Havard Ave, Catholic Charities administered a small handful of programs out of many old (and somewhat dilapidated) buildings in different parts of town, recalls Chief Program Officer, Dcn. Erick Bell. “Only a few people are still around who remember that version of Catholic Charities. MaryAnn Thornton, Barb Collier and Beth Jensen are long-time volunteers who remember those early years.” And while the services back then were modest and on a much smaller scale, they were carried out with just as much LOVE by the likes of Mary Ann, Barb and Beth, he added.

“They were love changing lives long before ‘Love Changing Lives’ was even a thing,” Dcn. Erick said. Since the three began volunteering, they have given their talents to many CCEOK programs.

Beth Jensen started at the front desk at the CCEOK

location on Denver. After CCEOK moved to its current location, she began work in the volunteer office under John (now Fr. John) O’Neill. She then moved to the former clothing center. Now, she’s back in the volunteer office, tracking the hours that thousands of volunteers give each year.

Barbara Collier started working with Mary Lee Weaver in adoption services, assisting with paperwork to help adoptive parents and birth mothers connect. She now serves in The Market and at Porta Caeli House, but has volunteered in almost every department.

Mary Ann Thornton also started on North Denver and now spends her time in The Market several days a week. Mary Ann has seen a lot of change, and quite a few people come and go, but remains steadfast in her commitment to the mission of Catholic Charities, to be Christ’s merciful love to those who suffer.

“To this day, I continue to be amazed by their strength and zeal for the mission and how they seem to get younger with the passing years,” Dcn. Erick commented. “Buildings age and eventually get replaced, but the charity in the hearts of these faithful servants has endured.”



In 2024,
136
dental volunteers
gave
2,570
hours
of their time to serving
our neighbors in need.
That translates into
\$1.1 million
in dental care!

Dental Volunteers Make a Big Impact!

The Catholic Charities Dental Care program provides general and restorative dental care to individuals without insurance or access to dental services. No one is ever turned away!

To accomplish such an undertaking, the dental clinic relies on volunteer dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants. The dental clinic performs 550 procedures each month, including restorative treatments, emergency pain relief (extractions, comprehensive exams and diagnosis), and dental hygiene care.

Another important component to CCEOK's dental clinic is the student learning experience. Dental students from OU College of Dentistry (OUCOD) and dental hygiene students from OUCOD and Tulsa Community College learn about providing compassionate care, as well as working alongside their instructors and professional dentists to become volunteer-minded and successful in their fields upon graduation.

Facilities Volunteers Keep Our Campus Running Smoothly

Roy, Thomas, Debra and LaDon know a lot about Catholic Charities' Tulsa campus. That's because they are volunteers in our Facilities department, which is responsible for the maintenance, security, cleaning, and day-to-day operations across campus.

Roy, Thomas, and Debra volunteer one day a week. Roy assists with maintenance tickets, updates safety kits in all of our buildings, and helps with other things that come up while he is on campus. Thomas also helps with tickets, but his real passion is computers. He has helped 501Tech with setting up equipment, and many of you will see Thomas around campus in the coming months as he replaces out-of-date computers. Debra uses her background in finance to enter invoices and track data for Facilities. She does an amazing job and has helped organize the department and free up time for Sonny and Beth. LaDon is on campus bright and early most days, and if you see him, he always has a smile on his face. He helps with cleaning, polishing, and ensuring things are ready for the day.

Facilities is responsible for a lot of behind-the-scenes work that helps keep Catholic Charities running smoothly! These volunteers have allowed the Facilities team to do more work faster than they would have been able to without the extra help. The Facilities Director, Beth Nichols, can't say enough good things about the team. "Catholic Charities continues to grow and that growth causes an increased demand on our facilities. Having volunteers on the Facilities team allows us to better support the programs so they can serve the clients without worrying about all the things that happen in the background to keep the doors open."

Our volunteers have many, many talents and skills! Volunteers make an impact in every program, and Catholic Charities and our clients are blessed every day by volunteers sharing those talents.



HANDS OF CHRIST

By Caleb Harlan, Porta Caeli House
Volunteer Coordinator

In April 2024, I stepped away from all that I knew: my vocation, my trusted peers, my paved-out future, and the hundreds of people I was serving. For ten years I had been a Protestant pastor (Presbyterian/PCA), now following the Lord's call into His Church. There is a long, four-year story there and many big "aha moments" along the way, but I stepped into the unknown without a plan. I resigned my pastorate, and my life unraveled much quicker (and more challenging) than I imagined.

Fast forward three months, and after narrowing down my career search to ministry-minded jobs, I met Deacons Erick and Kevin at Catholic Charities. They told me about this opening at Porta Caeli House (PCH), working with our many wonderful volunteers. I didn't know the darndest thing about hospice work, but I jumped right in. My wife and I came into the Church on July 28th and my first day at PCH was July 29th. I couldn't have imagined a better place to begin my new Catholic life.

A few months into the job, PCH received a sixteen-year-old guest, only the second child we've taken in. By God's providence, he was put in the room right next to my office, and I quickly learned the courage our volunteers have - they enter rooms, walking in on grief-stricken situations. I witnessed the compassion of our team and the prayerfulness of our CCEOK family. It was contagious and propelled me into a relationship with this kid. Every day, I knew people prayed for him, and I would walk into his room knowing I was not alone. Our volunteers made him special meals, brought him cake, and so much more. He didn't make it very long, and I remember crying on the shoulder of our volunteer.

There haven't been many emotional moments like that, but the work we do at PCH is emotional. We do this wonderful work of renewal. We take what ought to be a house full of sadness, despair and heaviness, and we make it light, warm, hospitable, joyful and full of hope. Our volunteers (and employees) have hearts of gold - welcoming and serving people in their vulnerability and pain. We love those who really need to be loved.

I'm now transitioning to new work at Holy Family Cathedral, overseeing their growing OCIA program, where I will help others on their journey into the Church. I am excited about this new chapter, and forever grateful for this season at PCH. It's been a joy to do this work alongside of you. Thank you all for being my first Catholic community and teaching me more deeply about God's mercy. You all are an inspiration for me - and I will be praying for you as you continue to be Christ's merciful love to those who suffer.



A big CCEOK
Welcome
to our newest volunteers!

Akshay Sunil Londne – Dental

Dr. Phil Lowe – Dental

Johna Abbott – Education

Guillermo Barbosa - Education

Adam Grover – Education

Suzy Chacon – Emergency Assistance

Teresa Rangel – Kitchen

Adiel Correno – MMO

Michelle Daniels - MMO

Evan Milligan - MMO

Sherry Coffee – PCH

Hanna Massell - PCH

Ashlee Sorrell - PCH

Brady Stephens – PCH

Ethan Reichert – Workforce Car Care



CCEOK Volunteer Coordinators meet and train quarterly. This time, all coordinators were invited to hear Fr. John O'Neill talk about important issues relevant to working with volunteers and with clients.



Cassie Leach (Transitional Living) and Joell Griswold (The Market & Warehouse) recently attended a volunteer opportunities fair at TCC. They let incoming students needing Tulsa Achieves service hours know about the great opportunities across CCEOK to serve their neighbors!

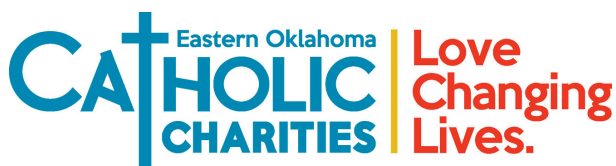


Porta Caeli House volunteers recently attended a training workshop for led by Volunteer Coordinator Calab Harlan.

All CCEOK programs will be closed April 18 & 21 for Easter
(Transitional Living and Porta Caeli House remain open)
The Market will also be closed on May 2nd



Thanks to all who came out to this year's ShamRock the 'Ville!



Volunteer with us! cceok.org/volunteer
Join our Facebook Group!
For story ideas, feedback, etc.,
email: volcommunications@cceok.org

MAKE A
DONATION!

