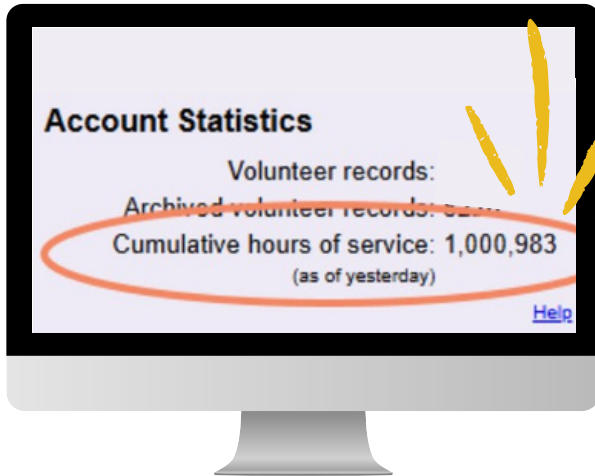
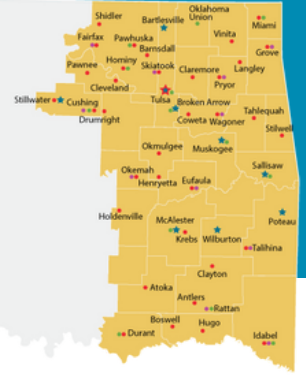


SERVICE IN ACTION

February 2026



Thank's A MILLION

Over a million hours serving our neighbors!

Near the end of December, the Volunteer Office's data guru (himself a volunteer), noticed when logging in that CCEOK volunteers had logged over one million volunteer hours in the Volgistics database. CCEOK began using the database in 2016.

"Just noticed this when logging into Volgistics this morning, quite a milestone!" Vic Alonzi emailed the Volunteer Office.

We could not agree more!

The number of volunteer hours over the years is truly impressive, but what impresses us even more is what's behind those hours - the **love** shown to our neighbors in need across Eastern Oklahoma, the **compassionate** care received in our clinics and at Porta Caeli House (PCH), the **healing** in the lives of counseling clients and Transitional Living residents, the lives **empowered** through Adult Education and Workforce Development, and so much more!

There are also many volunteers whose work behind the scenes help make everything run smoothly. Their hours are an important part of the story too!



"Topping a million hours is proof that we have **the very best** volunteers," said CCEOK Volunteer Director Kelly Cassidy. "Over and over, we see our volunteers go above and beyond on any given day. They truly embody the mission of Catholic Charities and serving their neighbors in need."

Did you know logging your volunteer hours helps to fund Catholic Charities? See the back page for a great explanation of how it works!

CCEOK Interns Both Serve & Gain Valuable Skills

CCEOK often hosts high school and college students looking to not only lend a hand, but also to build their college applications or put into practice skills they have learned in college. For some, a CCEOK volunteer internship has helped them get jobs after college, including jobs at CCEOK!

In 2025, 12 interns volunteered in programs like Immigration Legal Services (ILS), Development, Counseling and Adult Education for over 1,148 hours.

Every January a handful of students from Cascia Hall (CH) spend the month as interns in various CCEOK programs during CH's "Minimester." As we begin 2026, five students are interning in four programs.

Many interns say their time at CCEOK was helpful for their career development in a variety of ways.

Genevieve Clark, a 2019 CH Minimester intern with Development, assisted with preparations for Cooking up Compassion and volunteered at the 2019 and 2020 events. Upon graduation from college, she was hired as an Event Coordinator at the Oklahoma City Zoo, proudly listing her CCEOK internship supervisor as a reference. The CCEOK reference was contacted and Clark was hired.

Jackie Gonzalez completed a CH Minimester internship in ILS and continued to volunteer through 2024. That experience helped her decide what career path she ultimately wanted to pursue. Today, Jackie is working part time in Adult Education as she pursues her degree.

"Prior to interning at immigration, I was set on becoming a doctor," she said. "Being at immigration gave me hands on experience that helped changed my course to becoming a lawyer. Seeing the dedication of the attorneys and staff inspired me to pursue a different career path and helped me find a new passion."



Brenda Rubio, a case manager in the Emergency Assistance program, began her time at CCEOK as a Tulsa Community College (TCC) intern in both the EA and Disaster programs.

"During my internship at Catholic Charities, I gained invaluable hands-on experience serving the community through direct client engagement, Rubio said. "I developed a high level of professional communication, learning to navigate client needs with both empathy and efficiency. This role allowed me to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world social service, preparing me to contribute meaningfully to a non-profit."



Counseling intern Mariah Lopez is pursuing a master's degree in counseling. She began an internship at CCEOK last year.

"My internship at Catholic Charities has given me hands-on experience and has helped me feel more confident in myself as a developing counselor," she said. "Being here has made it easier to take what I'm learning in my program and apply it in session with clients. The support I've received has also helped me grow and trust my skills as a clinician."

LOVING IN LENT IS COMING SOON!



Loving in Lent helps our neighbors in need. It has two components: a drive-up Easter meal giveaway and program-focused basket building projects.

The Easter season is a time when not as many helping agencies are holding food giveaways (as they do before Thanksgiving and Christmas), so we stepped in to fill the void and bless our neighbors with food and the clients in some of our programs too.

What's special about **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).

Please be on the lookout for more information about ways you can be involved in **Loving in Lent**! Not in Tulsa? Check with your outreach location to see what they're doing.

Upcoming Key Dates:

Feb. 18 (Ash Wednesday): We'll send out a SignUp Genius listing what donations are needed for program baskets and people can start collecting.

March 9-12: Bring your donations to the giant Easter basket in the Tulsa CCEOK front lobby.



Volunteers assembled Easter baskets for Transitional Living families



Even though he was completely rain-soaked, our Easter Bunny brought great joy to the families he saw while hopping through the food distribution line. He handed out Easter Eggs that had been filled with goodies earlier in the week by CCEOK volunteers.



Ascension St. John volunteers in the drive-through distribution

A big CCEOK

=Welcome=

to all of our newest volunteers!

Maria Gomez de la Pava - Education
 Jhon Gomez Gonzalez - Education
 Elder Wager - Education
 Roland Youngberg - Education
 Harper Gosnell - Dental
 Matt Buckendorf - Disaster
 Megan (Scout) Conley - Garden
 Robert Jennings - Market
 Teresa Hance - McAlester
 Bret Hinds - McAlester
 Tonya Holt - McAlester
 Katie Johnson - McAlester
 Thomas (TK) Kopidlansky - McAlester
 Tammi Adams - MMO
 Maurene Thompson - MMO
 Ashton Anderson - Muskogee
 Claude Goforth Jr. - Muskogee
 Deborah Bell - PCH
 Ben Claflin - PCH
 Jeannie Graham - PCH
 Melissa Shotton - PCH
 Crystal Carey - Sallisaw
 Tonya Holt - Sallisaw
 David Leal - Sallisaw



Please log your volunteer hours – it's like giving to Catholic Charities twice!



As the Grant Writer, my job is to ask charitable foundations to give to Catholic Charities through written proposals and applications.

On every single grant I submit, I include our total number of volunteers and how many hours they give.

Why? Because the more people are willing to give their time, the more donors are willing to give their money. Volunteers allow us to do an enormous amount of work while keeping costs reasonable, magnifying the impact of each dollar many times over. Additionally, foundations prioritize giving to community-supported nonprofits, and volunteer engagement is the most important statistic for measuring community investment.

In our most recent calendar year, **7,492** volunteers gave an astounding **144,897** hours to our mission, and we want to continue showing the world how much we can do. The only problem is that we can only count hours that are logged!

So, from the bottom of my heart, please remember to log all of your hours!

Brennen Gray
Grant Writer



Brennen

The king of grant writing thinking deep thoughts about CCEOK's next grant application and how best to convey all of the amazing work accomplished helping those in need by CCEOK's outstanding volunteers!

Hang on to Your Hats!

MOC volunteers recently braved 20 mph winds to help provide food to their neighbors in need in Broken Arrow. The wind even blew a clock off the lobby wall!



Caroline



Vicky

Cooking up Compassion preparations are in full swing! Thank you to the volunteers helping with our main fundraising event this month. A successful CUC means we can help more of our neighbors in need.

Tulsa Construction Update

The new Market waiting room is estimated to be completed by the end of February. They have started demolition on the dock expansion, and that project will be complete mid-May. Please avoid the loading dock area if at all possible during this time.

Upcoming Market Closures:

Feb. 12 at noon

Feb. 18 at 11 AM for Ash Wednesday

Scan this QR code or search "Volunteers Changing Lives" on Facebook to join our group!



GET INVOLVED!



Volunteer with us! cceok.org/volunteer

For story ideas, feedback, etc.,
email: volunteer@cceok.org

MAKE A
DONATION!

