



Faith and Determination to Carry On

- ▼ Stephen Berens might have been homeless, but he was never without faith.
- ▼ Before becoming homeless five years ago, Berens lived a typical middle-class life. He attended Catholic school, graduated with honors from college and worked full-time.

Berens' normal life turned into chaos when his mother, for whom he cared, died. With no other family and few friends, Berens had no support system to help him through the grief and loneli-



"I never could have achieved anything without will and determination. But the biggest thing was my faith," said Stephen Berens, resident of St. Christopher Place.

ness he felt. He turned to alcohol, and later, drugs.

But he couldn't continue on his self-destructive path for long. After losing his job and house because of his drug addiction, Berens found himself in a place he had never dreamed of.

"I never in a million years thought I would be homeless," he said. Now he realizes if it could happen to him, it could happen to anyone. "You're only one rent or house payment away from being homeless. It's a matter of circumstances — of several bad things coming together at once."

"This is going to pass."

During this difficult time, Catholic Charities provided Berens with shelter and supportive services to help him regain his stability. He moved through Catholic Charities' housing continuum — from emergency shelters at Dorothy Day Center and Mary Hall to transitional and, eventually, permanent housing.

Despite his difficult circumstances, Berens never gave up hope. "I kept telling myself, whether it takes six months or six years, I am going to achieve my goals. Even sleeping on the floor of the Dorothy Day Center, I told myself, this is going to pass."

Berens faced his challenges with courage and, most of all, faith. He began attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Every day was spent "frantically looking for work and doing a lot of praying."

"I never in a million years thought I would be homeless."

"It's hard to find a job when you're carrying your belongings around all day — and you have no transportation, no permanent address, no phone number," said Berens, grateful that the temporary job he started four years ago has since become permanent.

With steady income, Berens now stays at Catholic Charities' St. Christopher Place, an affordable housing facility. But, he has his mind set on a new goal — his own apartment.

Berens faced a long journey to stability. His success comes from his motivation to change his circumstances — and also his unwavering faith. Berens said, "In the midst of that mess, how can you not have faith?" ♦

Parishes Make a Difference

Church of St. Raphael Collects School Items for Youth at St. Joe's

The Church of St. Raphael in Crystal is one of several parishes that collects school supplies for youth served by Catholic Charities. St. Raphael has been donating school items for well over 10 years, giving children access to the supplies they need for success in school. The notebooks, markers and other materials go to classrooms at St. Joseph's Home for Children and Northside Child Development Center.

Catholic Charities Receives Congregations in Community Grant

Catholic Charities has received a three-year Congregations in Community grant from The McKnight Foundation. The grant will allow Catholic Charities to create an integrated program for parishes and Catholic schools that provides education, reflection and interaction with the agency's mission. Engagement opportunities for parishes include poverty education, service opportunities and advocacy activities.

Cathedral of St. Paul Active in Service and Social Justice Ministry

Parishioners from the Cathedral of St. Paul have found numerous ways to engage with Catholic Charities to serve those most in need. Some serve meals at the Dorothy Day Center on a regular basis, while others volunteer for the annual holiday Giving Tree program or with special one-time projects. Parishioners at the Cathedral are also active in the advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities' Office for Social Justice.

Our Programs

Children's Services

- Hope Street Shelter for Youth
- Northside Child Development Center
- St. Joseph's Home for Children

Housing & Emergency Services

- Branch III
- Dorothy Day Center
- Evergreen Residence
- Exodus Residence
- Family Service Center
- Food Shelves
- Glenwood Residence
- Housing First
- Mary Hall
- Secure Waiting Space
- St. Anthony Residence
- St. Christopher Place
- St. Paul Residence
- Visitation Place

Family Services

- Adoption Services
- Caregiver Support & Respite
- Counseling Services
- Hispanic Outreach
- Migration/Refugee Services
- Office for Separated and Divorced
- Parenting Services
- Prenatal Services
- Senior Care Management

Advocacy

- Office for Social Justice

Understanding Poverty

Why are the poor getting poorer in the richest nation on earth?

Learn why and discover how poverty is harming all of us — economically, socially and morally.

Consider Catholic Charities' free informational workshop, Understanding Poverty. To learn more, call Ron Krietemeyer, director of poverty education, at 612-664-8619.

From Fr. John's desk

Our faith calls us to create a just society — one that protects the human dignity of all. This principle of Catholic social teaching stands at the heart of Catholic Charities' mission to serve those most in need.

As a steward of social justice, Catholic Charities can be a resource to help parishes engage with the Church's social mission.

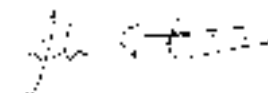
Simply put, Catholic Charities can help you put your faith into action.

We have many ways for parishioners to engage in social ministry, including volunteer experiences of all kinds; a new educational workshop about poverty in our community; advocacy teams and giving opportunities.

Whether as an individual, family, committee or entire parish, I invite you to actively participate in the Catholic Church's social ministry to the poor.

We believe the well-being of everyone in our community — including the families coming to our food shelves, or the homeless man sleeping in the park — is deeply connected to our own well-being.

Together, in partnership with you and your parish, we can work toward the common good.



Fr. John Estrem, chief executive officer



Getting Involved

Pax Christi Devoted to Works of Mercy and Justice

▼ Pax Christi Catholic Community, Eden Prairie, recently awarded a Justice Grant in support of Catholic Charities' Housing First initiative to help chronically homeless individuals obtain affordable housing.

"Catholic Charities is understood to be the social service arm of the Archdiocese, helping the Church fulfill its social mission," said Allison Boisvert, social justice minister at Pax Christi. "Our parish has long been devoted to supporting works of mercy and justice — and this forms a natural relationship between Pax Christi and Catholic Charities."

Pax Christi has implemented a stewardship model which encourages parishioners to offer their time, treasure and talent to help the greater community. "Our goal is to develop a deeper, 'hands-on' relationship

with the organizations we support," said Boisvert, a former senior director of housing at Catholic Charities.

The parish also focuses its efforts on preventive and early child development programs. "We want to get at the root issues of our community's problems and work toward preventive solutions."

As a result, the parish donated items to the youth at Catholic Charities' Northside Child Development Center, a North Minneapolis learning center for children from low-income families. Engaging the parish's youngest members, Pax Christi's youth made blankets to give the children at Northside.

"Pax Christi is highly committed to providing opportunities for social action," said Boisvert. "Working for social justice is integral to the life of the parish." ♦

Helping Parishes Put Faith Into Action

Join in worship with Fr. John Estrem, chief executive officer, when he visits several parishes as guest celebrant. Fr. Estrem will discuss the work of Catholic Charities and how our common faith calls us to serve those most in need.

- Pax Christi Catholic Community, Eden Prairie • Sept. 22: 5 p.m. Mass • Sept. 23: 8, 9:30, 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Masses
- Cathedral of St. Paul • Oct. 20: 7 p.m. Mass • Oct. 21: 10 a.m. and noon Masses
- St. Therese Catholic Church, Deephaven • Nov. 10: 5 p.m. Mass • Nov. 11: 8:30, 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Masses