The 2018-19 Warming Center Season is coming soon. Our centers in Wausau and La Crosse, as well as Sojourner House in Eau Claire are recruiting for volunteers. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering at one of our centers, let us know.

A variety of shifts are available. We also have an option for volunteers who cannot commit to an evening or night at the center. You can offer to cook a meal and drop it off at the center.

Orientation sessions will be scheduled soon. Be on the lookout for those dates and times.

My Co-Ministers

What a difference a year can make, then again how quickly things can change in a few moments.

It has been a year since I came to Catholic Charities as the Volunteer Coordinator. When I first came it seemed everything was happening at break neck speed, there seemed to be so much to do. But I grew and a steady rhythm began to take shape. While there was change, there was also consistency.

Christ’s Gospel of Life is alive in the joy I have witnessed in the amazing ministry done by so many of our volunteers and staff members. How humbling and touching it has been to encounter Christ in those we serve, as I marvel at the resiliency of so many.

I have been blessed by so much this year and look forward to our continued journey together.

With Gratitude,
Sr. Laurie Sullivan, fspa
Volunteer Coordinator

Getting to Know Catholic Charities Staff

Meet a staff member who enjoys and appreciates the work of volunteers.

Tracy Rieger is the Director of Community Homeless Facilities. This is a new position that was created to offer support and oversee coordinated efforts with our programs that serve the homeless. She oversees the Warming Centers, Sojourner House, House of Mercy, the Franciscan Hospitality House and the Beyond Shelter Program.

Tracy is married and is the mother of two amazing boys whom she enjoys watching play football and growing into wonderful young men.

At work, Tracy appreciates what each volunteer has to offer and values their dedication and commitment. Since volunteers are often the front line to Catholic Charities’ operation, she knows that we could not fulfill our mission without them. She feels blessed to be surrounded by such compassionate, amazing people, and that she is honored to call volunteers! She says “thank you” does not even come close to how grateful she is.
Recognizing You!
Our Volunteers!

Linda Berg has been volunteering at Sojourner House for three years. Linda credits Joe and Kristi Kastelic for their influence and having been instrumental in helping her to find a way to give back to others. She has been surprised by how compassionate she has become toward the homeless and poor. Volunteering at Sojourner changed her outlook. She says she is saddened when others ask why she is volunteering at the house and she hears comments like, “Aren’t there enough jobs for them? Or “They just don’t want to work?” She states Catholic Charities helps people to know they are loved and gives them a second chance.

Haley Swanson volunteered at the La Crosse Warming Center. Sharing about her experience she says, “She is surprised by the different people she has connected with through volunteering. The other volunteers have been friendly, and I look forward to spending time with them. The guests are all so different and bring many different qualities to the center. There’s even a volunteer who used to be a guest, and I think it’s amazing that he’s giving back to the organization that helped him get back on his feet. Most people assume that volunteering with the homeless population is unsafe. Some guests at the center struggle with addiction and some battle mental illness, but this does not define this population! While many of my family and friends ask about my safety while I am volunteering, I am never alone at the center; there are always volunteers with you to help if there are any issues.” She would tell anyone thinking of volunteering that it enriches your life in immeasurable ways.

Sandra Hoeser has also volunteered at the Franciscan Hospitality House for three years. Since talking with the guests at the Hospitality House and the Warming Center she has been surprised at how many choose to be homeless. She would tell anyone thinking about volunteering that it is never too late or you are never too old to volunteer depending on your capabilities.

Catholic Charities Mission Statement

Proclaim Christ’s Gospel of Life and promote human dignity by alleviating poverty and strengthening individuals and families.

What do you know about Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse?

July’s Question: What Catholic Charities’ program focuses on strengthening individuals and families dealing with developmental and emotional disabilities?

Answer to July’s Trivia Question: Disabilities Services

September Trivia Question: What day did Sojourner House in Eau Claire first open its door to serve our neighbors in need?