

A Publication of **Catholic Charities** of the Archdiocese of Chicago

Transformed by his ministry to suicide survivors

Father Charles T. Rubey has spent his career fighting the stigma surrounding suicide. In the process, he has welcomed, supported, witnessed, and healed thousands of survivors of suicide loss through his founding of Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

On April 26, 2026, Father Rubey will celebrate 60 years as a priest and a ministry that has touched the souls of so many who call him a dear friend. From his humble beginnings as a 26-year-old parish priest at the former Little Flower Church in Chicago’s Auburn Gresham neighborhood, Father Rubey has grown to be a legendary spiritual leader serving those hoping to find joy and purpose after a suicide loss.

“We all have the same story — he changed our lives,” said Monica Pedersen, who lost her twin brother to suicide at age 16. She and her family found comfort and connection through LOSS and a life-long friend and counsel in Father Rubey. “He was the voice in our heads to move forward. He’s our gift — his vision, his courage, his dedication. We need 160 years of Father Rubey.

“I cannot imagine what my life would have been like if I didn’t have Father Rubey,” said Monica, who will once again host the 35th annual Blossoms of Hope brunch fundraiser planned for April 26, 2026, at the Westin Chicago Lombard.

And Father Rubey can’t imagine what his life would have been like without LOSS.

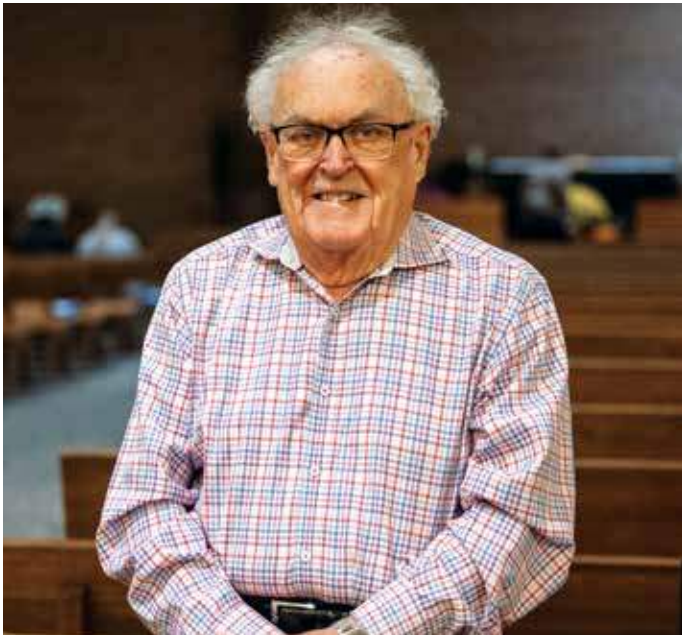


Photo by Kathleen Hinkel

Father Charles T. Rubey, ordained 60 years ago this April, founded Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS), which has been his life’s mission.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Greetings from the Editor

ELIZABETH OWENS-SCHIELE

Happy Spring! In this issue, you’ll find tips for filing your taxes this year, an insider look at our Charities Resource Hub, and Words for the Spirit during your Lenten journey.

Discover how Gibsons Restaurant Group honored seniors and veterans living in our 21 housing communities and find out how volunteers are filling their souls by serving others at The Shared Table community meal. You’ll find program snapshots from our annual report that detail how Catholic Charities is serving those within our Immediate Needs, Mothers and Families, and Seniors and Housing impact areas. We highlight our Diaper Depot, West Suburban Parenting Program, and St. Francis of Assisi Apartments. You’ll also find a map of how and where we served 270,000 adults and children in need with hope and so much more.

We hope you’ll enjoy this issue’s word search and try a new dessert recipe for Italian Easter Pie. Happy Easter!

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SPECIAL DATES

March 2026

Birthstone: **Aquamarine**

Flower: **Daffodil**

- 3/8** Daylight Savings Time
- 3/17** St. Patrick's Day
- 3/20** Spring Begins
- 3/29** Palm Sunday

April 2026

Birthstone: **Diamond**

Flower: **Daisy and Sweet Pea**

- 4/2** Holy Thursday
Passover Begins
- 4/3** Good Friday
- 4/4** Holy Saturday
- 4/5** Easter
- 4/9** Passover Ends
- 4/15** Tax Day

For more news and information about events, visit catholiccharities.net

Tax Tips for Seniors

The One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act significantly affects federal taxes, credits, and deductions. It was signed into law on July 4, 2025. Here are a few highlights for older adults to note before the tax filing deadline, Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

1. Deduction for seniors

- Effective 2025 through 2028, individuals age 65 and older may claim an additional \$6,000 deduction.
- This is in addition to the standard deduction for seniors available under existing law.
- Applies per eligible individual (or \$12,000 for a married couple if both spouses qualify).
- Phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$75,000 (\$150,000 for joint filers).

2. Standard deduction increases

- \$32,200 for married couples filing jointly
- \$16,100 for single filers and married individuals filing separately
- \$24,150 for heads of household

3. No tax on tips

- Effective 2025 through 2028, employees and self-employed individuals may deduct qualified tips they received in occupations the IRS identified as “customarily and regularly receiving tips” on or before Dec. 31, 2024, and are reported on a Form W-2, Form 1099, another statement furnished to the individual, or on Form 4137 if the individual directly reports the tips.
- “Qualified tips” include voluntary cash or charged tips received from customers, including shared tips.
- The maximum annual deduction is \$25,000.
- For self-employed individuals, the deduction cannot exceed net income (before this deduction) from the trade or business where tips were earned.
- This phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000 (\$300,000 for joint filers).

4. No tax on overtime

- Effective 2025 through 2028, individuals may deduct the portion of qualified overtime pay that exceeds their regular rate of pay (for example, the “half” portion of “time-and-a-half”).
- Overtime must be reported on Form W-2, Form 1099, another statement furnished to the individual, or directly by the individual.
- The maximum annual deduction is \$12,500 (\$25,000 for joint filers).
- This phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000 (\$300,000 for joint filers).

5. No tax on car loan interest

- Effective 2025 through 2028, individuals may deduct interest paid on a loan used to purchase a qualified vehicle for personal use that meets other eligibility criteria. Lease payments do not qualify.
- The maximum annual deduction is \$10,000.
- This phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$100,000 (\$200,000 for joint filers).
- Interest must be paid on a loan that:
 - Originated after Dec. 31, 2024.
 - Was used to purchase a vehicle originally used by the taxpayer.
 - Was secured by a lien on the vehicle.
 - Was for a personal-use (non-business) vehicle.
- If a qualifying vehicle loan is later refinanced, interest paid on the refinanced amount is generally eligible for the deduction.
- A qualified vehicle is a car, minivan, van, SUV, pickup truck or motorcycle that:
 - Has a gross vehicle weight rating of less than 14,000 pounds.
 - Underwent final assembly in the United States.

For more information, visit <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/topics-in-the-news>

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Upcoming Events

Learn more or register for an event at:
catholiccharities.net/attend-an-event

Virtual Investor Update

Thursday, March 5, 2026, 4 p.m.

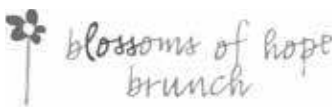
Sally Blount, CEO, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, will provide a year-in-review of our services, programs, impact on the people we serve, and financials for investors.

Blossoms of Hope Brunch

Sunday, April 26, 2026, 11 a.m.

Westin Lombard Chicago

Join us for a fundraiser benefiting our Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) program.



'Giving Hope' to those in need

Voice of Charity

ASHLEY STYX

Senior Program Director
Charities Resource Hub,
Catholic Charities
of the Archdiocese of Chicago



When Tanya, a young mother participating in a Catholic Charities housing program, couldn't afford to attend the graduation ceremony for her associate's degree, we stepped in to help her celebrate her achievements.

Our Giving Hope Fund provided her with the chance to travel to the ceremony with her children so they could see her walk across the stage to accept her diploma. She felt it was important for her children to see the value she placed on education to motivate them in their schooling. The joy she felt attending her ceremony inspired and encouraged her to pursue her bachelor's degree.

The Charities Resource Hub of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago serves as a front door for anyone coming to us for help. Our team distributes direct financial assistance to those who are eligible and in need. Sometimes, all it takes is a few hundred dollars to keep a family stably employed or housed. The beauty of our Charities Resource Hub's funds is the generosity and flexibility that private donations provide us to meet the needs of those who come to our doors for help.

We also recently assisted Sal, a senior and long-time resident of Lake County. Sal faces significant challenges in securing employment and is ineligible for public benefits. He works part-time jobs and relies on assistance from food pantries to support his family. Sal and his family were at risk of eviction and



The Charities Resource Hub case management team helps find the resources to help those in need.

becoming homeless. Our Giving Hope funds were able to support Sal and his family with rental assistance so they could maintain their housing. Sal shared he was very grateful to Catholic Charities and his case manager for, once again, providing support to his family during a difficult chapter in his life.

"I feel very blessed that we have received this timely and important help to improve the everyday life of my family. God bless all the people who make it possible for families like mine to receive financial support just when we need it the most." — Elizabeth

Elizabeth, a mother of four and a domestic violence survivor, received assistance from our Giving Hope Fund for a badly needed car repair. She spent months worrying about the safety of herself and her children. Elizabeth wrote:

"These are the immediate benefits that my children and I have received:

First, the benefit of feeling safe to transport my family to their school, medical, and recreational needs. Secondly, to be able to drive to my job and [not] fear losing the stability of working.

I am a single parent, and I take care of the needs of my four children. This is a sacred responsibility and a sacrifice, but I assume [these] demands with joy because I love my children, and I know that God protects us. Having a safe vehicle helps me complete my everyday tasks.

My gratitude is to all who contribute to help those who need help. I feel very blessed that we have received this timely and important help to improve the everyday life of my family. God bless all the people who make it possible for families like mine to receive financial support just when we need it the most. Amen."

We hear stories like these every day that highlight the ways a small amount of financial assistance can make a lasting impact on those in our community. It can change the trajectory of a family's life. It's a joy for my team and me to hear these stories, and we extend our thanks to those who support Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago so we can serve people in need in Cook and Lake counties.

Ashley Styx is the Senior Program Director of the Charities Resource Hub at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

† ST. JUDE NOVENA

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world, now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on us; St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us; St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us

PSB | MAG

The Novena is a nine-day devotion. Say the prayer nine times a day. If you would like to acknowledge your gratitude for its influence in your request, contact Keenager News at keenager@catholiccharities.net and we will include your initials in the publication of this Novena. No payment required.

Lent ... and life ...
invites our humility

Words for the Spirit

JOHN DECOSTANZA
Vice President of Faith and Mission
Catholic Charities
of the Archdiocese of Chicago



Each year on the First Sunday of Lent, we meet Jesus in the desert. He is hungry, vulnerable, and yet deeply grounded in who he is and what God calls him to be. In Matthew’s Gospel (4:1–11), the temptations Jesus faces are not simply about stones or kingdoms. They are temptations to self-importance: *Use your power for yourself. Prove yourself. Elevate yourself.* Jesus resists each one, not through grand gestures, but through humility. It is rooted in trust, clarity, and relationship with the Father.

As I’ve prayed with this Gospel, I’ve realized that humility during Lent is not about shrinking or thinking less of ourselves. It’s about refusing to inflate ourselves. It’s the grace of remembering that we are neither better nor inferior to anyone else. Humility invites us to “show up” in relationship: before God, before others, and even before our own children

— not by prioritizing what I want, but by listening for what God calls me toward.

This Lent, I’m thinking about humility through the lens of my relationship with my children. Parenting often acts as a mirror. There is some beauty there, but I tend to see that it reveals my rough edges, my instinct to control, my desire to be right. Through these reflections, it also shows the holy invitation to grow. If I want my children to be humble, they need to see what humility looks like acted out in real time, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes imperfectly, but always with intention.

Humility begins with celebrating and honoring the differences between myself and others. My children remind me daily that God’s creation is wonderfully diverse, not only across humanity, but even within the walls of our home. Each personality, each fear, each joy is a unique expression of God’s imagination. When I honor that, I model for them that difference is not a threat but a gift.

It continues with self-reflection. Lent invites us to pause the noise and ask hard questions: *What drives me? When am I tempted to center myself? Where is God nudging me to grow?* This is not self-criticism; it is self-awareness. The desert teaches Jesus clarity, and it teaches us the same.

“To me, having the courage to tell your own story goes hand in hand with having the curiosity and humility to listen to others’ stories.” — Sarah Kay

Finally, humility means acknowledging that I am always on the journey. I don’t have it all figured out. I make mistakes. I begin again. When my children see me apologize, adjust, or admit that I, too, am learning, they see that holiness is not perfection: it is freedom for our relationships with God and others.

The poet Sarah Kay writes, *“To me, having the courage to tell your own story goes hand in hand with having the curiosity and humility to listen to others’ stories.”* This feels like a Lenten truth to me. Jesus knows his own identity deeply. More importantly, he listens intently — to God’s voice, to the needs of others, to the deeper truth beyond ego. Lent asks us to do the same.

Humility is hard. It takes intention and effort. But it can free us for God’s love, generosity, and understanding in our relationships. This Lent, as we walk with Jesus into the desert and out again, I pray that we can be more attuned to who we are and available for who God dreams we can become.

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Gibsons honors seniors and veterans with steakhouse lunch

It may have been snowing and frightful outside, but inside Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse in Oak Brook on Sunday, Jan. 25, it was warm and quite delightful for the more than 300 older adults who joined together with friends and neighbors to enjoy a decadent steakhouse meal.

The 18th Annual Gibsons Catholic Charities Luncheon was generously hosted by the Gibsons Restaurant Group, staff, friends, and family who volunteered, prepared, and served lunch to clients of Catholic Charities. Since 2008, Gibsons has partnered with Catholic Charities to provide a special holiday meal to those in need.

Gibsons invited residents from 21 Catholic Charities senior housing communities throughout the city and suburbs to Oak Brook for a hearty meal of shrimp cocktail, salad, meatloaf and roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, and broccoli, plus cookies and brownies for dessert. Guests also received gift bags packed with ear buds, toiletry items, and more from contributing sponsors: Roundy's, Chicago White Sox, Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling, Fairlife, Walgreens, Strack & Van Til, Supreme Lobster, Get Fresh Produce, Northwest Meats, Fortune Fish, Purely Meats, Midwest Finer Foods, US Foods, CBC, Grecco, Viola, Stockyards, Trimark, RFD, and Blue Star.

"I don't think there's enough that goes on in our world to honor our seniors and our veterans," said John Colletti, managing partner of the Gibsons Restaurant Group. "We started this lunch to honor Dave Cacioppo, who worked for us.



Dave was a product of Catholic Charities, he was an orphan, and a fine example of what Catholic Charities does. If you look at our group today, it's amazing all the smiles on all of the faces of the seniors and veterans, and the smiles on our volunteer faces today. They are all having a gas."

"I feel like a king here," said Charles, who dressed in a suit and tie for the event and to proudly represent St. Leo Residence for Veterans. "Coming out for a special occasion like this, I was definitely excited.... The service is excellent. I feel privileged, happy, and thankful for Catholic Charities."

Liz Lombardo Stark, director of marketing and public relations at the Gibsons Restaurant Group, said it means so much to the Gibsons family to serve seniors and veterans with this special meal each year.

First-time guest, Rachel, a resident of Donald Kent in Northlake, said she and her neighbors were dressed up and ready to go early Sunday.

"I love it. The food is excellent, the restaurant is really nice," Rachel said. "I was looking forward to it, and I'm very pleased and very impressed. This is really awesome of Gibsons."

Catholic Charities staff leaders Colleen Kennedy, Vice President, Giving, and Gina Cleggs, Senior Vice President, Seniors and Housing, thanked the Gibsons Restaurant Group and the more than 50 volunteers who prepared and served the meal.

This was Jamada's first time at the luncheon after moving into St. Leo at the end of last year.

"It's been a very great experience, and I appreciate outings like this that show the community appreciates us and what we sacrificed and what we went through," said Jamada, who served eight years with the U.S. Navy.

Martha has lived in both All Saints Manor and Roseland senior housing communities for 17 years, and she loves to see outings like this special luncheon.

"This event lets the seniors see Catholic Charities does care and provide," Martha said. "Seniors do nothing but sit — this is getting them out of their apartments and social isolation and getting them involved in some type of social activity."



Angel Rivera, Vice President, Housing, told the seniors in attendance how grateful Catholic Charities is to have them as residents.

"The importance of this event is the power of coming together as a community in the service of others," Angel said. "That act of kindness is a spark of light that we really need these days. Hopefully, with the kindness that's been shared here today, the seniors will go home and spread that light with others in their community."



Diaper Depot

A simple solution to a pervasive problem

With the cost of diapers exceeding \$1,000 a year, it's estimated that nearly half of families with children under three struggle with diaper poverty. "This is a health crisis that nobody talks about," says Diaper Depot volunteer Don Rosanova. People can't use their SNAP or WIC benefits to buy them."

The consequences of not having enough diapers to keep a baby clean and comfortable go beyond cases of chronic diaper rash and urinary tract infections. "Put yourself in the position of a parent whose job is to care for this child who they can't console," says fellow volunteer Tom Powers. "They're cutting back on food purchases. They have to take time off from work and school... The way it cascades down through a family is heartbreaking."

Thankfully, there's a simple, yet robust, solution that Tom, Don, and a team of volunteers are helping Catholic Charities meet: **provide 50 fresh diapers a month to families who need them.** "Diapers are not a luxury, they're a necessity," says Don. We're filling a real need for families."

Pictured: Don Rosanova and fellow volunteer prepare packages of diapers for monthly distribution to partners.

Program Snapshot

- Operates out of the Schreiber Center in Round Lake.
- Provided 225,000+ diapers in FY25; on track to double volume in FY26.
- Diapers are distributed at Catholic Charities WIC stores, parenting programs and 40+ partners.
- To host a diaper drive, email diaperdepot@catholiccharities.net.

West Suburban Parenting Program

Helping parents be their children's first and best teachers

When 19-year-old Jazmín gave birth to her daughter Sofia, she was more than 2,400 miles away from her mother. Having moved to the Chicago area just a month prior, she didn't have a strong network of family and friends nearby to support her as she adjusted to motherhood.

Thankfully, however, she had Melina Jaime.

For the past year, Melina, a Home Visitor with Catholic Charities' West Suburban Parenting Program, has been making regular visits to Jazmín's home, helping equip her with the knowledge and confidence to set Sofia up for success in school and beyond.

Beyond working with Jazmín to make sure Sofia meets her developmental milestones, Melina has connected her to resources and parent groups, empowered her to advocate for Sofia, and helped her navigate a system she might otherwise feel excluded from.

The first years of a child's life are stressful for every parent, but for those experiencing poverty, trauma, or other hardship, it is especially so. Melina says that when they first began meeting, Jazmín was very quiet. Through patience, consistency, and compassion, she has become Jazmín's trusted partner and advocate.

Pictured: Melina demonstrating how to teach Sofia new vocabulary through play.

Program Snapshot

- Serving pregnant moms and parents with children up to age three.
- One of four home visiting programs offered by Catholic Charities.
- Service area includes Broadview, Hillside, Maywood, Melrose Park, Northlake, and Westchester.



Senior Housing

Caring environments where people live with dignity

Beatrice moved from Florida to the St. Francis of Assisi Apartments in Palos Park after she lost everything during Hurricane Ian. Although she rented her new apartment sight unseen, she knew it was a special place right away. “When I walked in, I felt like I was home,” Beatrice says, about her first impression.

St. Francis is an affordable housing community operated by Catholic Charities. Rent is never more than 30 percent of a resident’s income. The stability this provides has been life-changing for Beatrice. When she was in Florida, finding and keeping housing was a struggle. “My income was low, so I just had to survive,” she explains, adding that she moved seven times in two years.

In addition to fixed housing costs, Beatrice receives support from the community’s onsite service coordinator, who has made sure she is receiving all the benefits she is entitled to. Security, maintenance, and management that are just a phone call away also contribute to her sense of security.

To Beatrice, finding St. Francis was a miracle. “For me to go from where I came to a place where I am not a second-class citizen anymore... I have a home, I have a place, I have friends. I’m not surviving, I’m living.”

Pictured: Beatrice in the library at St. Francis.



Program Snapshot

- One of Catholic Charities’ 21 residential communities.
- Open to seniors age 62+ with very low incomes; rent tied to resident’s annual income.
- Full-time service coordinator on site.

In FY 2025, nearly 169,000 people turned to Immediate Needs programs in moments of crisis

CHARITIES RESOURCE HUB

Served 53,000 people in crisis through case management and connections to internal programs and those of other trusted partners.

Provided more than \$2 million

in financial assistance to help 900 families stay housed, keep the lights on, bury a loved one, and more.

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTS

Offered resources to 21,000 adults and children such as diapers, hygiene kits, holiday gifts, and temporary shelter.

RAPID RESPONSE

Helped 5,200 recent arrivals through migrant care initiatives and reunification support.

FOOD AND ESSENTIALS

Provided food to 53,300 individuals at six food pantries and distributed 10,200 bagged lunches.

Served nutritious meals to 24,100 guests

at Shared Table meals and through the senior home-delivered meals program.

In FY25, more than 60,000 parents and children were served through programs that strengthen families and futures.

WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN (WIC)

Provided 54,800 moms, infants, and young children healthy food, formula, and nutrition education at WIC Grocery stores and Mobile Market.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Supported 1,460 children and adults on their path toward healing and wellness.

PREGNANCY & PARENTING

Supported 780 new parents and their babies with pre- and post-natal doula services and home visits, parent education, and case management.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Assisted 70 single parents with achieving their financial, parenting, and career goals.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Helped 250 survivors and their children find safety and hope through counseling, transitional housing, and aftercare programs.

IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE SUPPORT

Welcomed 2,450 individuals by providing legal support, refugee resettlement, and citizenship classes.

In FY25, Seniors and Housing programs served more than 42,000 older adults, veterans, and people with disabilities

LIVING COMMUNITIES

Provided safe and affordable housing to 1,600 people at 21 apartment communities for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

CARE COORDINATION

Connected 21,500 seniors with needed supports that help them live independently, and with dignity.

U.S. MILITARY VETERANS

Offered 165 veterans housing and support including case management, behavioral health, and other social services.

HOUSING STABILITY

Helped 4,500 people find and stay housed with programs for individuals at risk of or transitioning out of homelessness.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

His early years

Charlie, as he was known as a child, grew up in Des Plaines. His mother, a native of Ireland, and his father, who passed before he was ordained, along with his sister, attended St. Mary's Church. It was there at the age of 12 that he discovered his vocation.

"I was an altar boy when I decided I'd like to become a priest," Father Rubey said. He would go on to spend five years at Quigley and another seven years at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein.



"I liked being a priest, I never really thought of leaving," he said.

During his first assignment at Little Flower Church, he connected with many in the community, serving as an officiant to dozens of marriages for couples who

still keep in touch. When a fellow parish priest introduced him to Catholic Charities, he found another calling — ministering to the men living on Skid Row along Madison Street in Chicago. For six years, he lent his ear to those who needed to talk and shared words of support for those struggling to overcome alcoholism.

Father Rubey's compassionate care was recognized and soon needed elsewhere. In the winter of 1979, he met with three couples to offer compassion and support after they each lost a child to suicide. In the late 1970s, suicide was poorly understood, and there was little organized support for families experiencing this traumatic loss, leaving many survivors in the Catholic community feeling ostracized. This was Father Rubey's first grief support group, and the three couples eventually became known as the founding families of LOSS (Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide). One group led to a second and third, and word spread across the Chicago metropolitan area.



After 47 years, LOSS continues to bring people together, creating a community of survivors who support each other. Individual counseling and support groups are held in person across Cook and Lake counties, and also online. LOSS hosts support groups for spouses, parents, Spanish speakers, families of first responders, and others, plus a writing group. The groups are led by seven clinicians and 43 volunteer facilitators who are survivors. Deborah Major, who has worked alongside Father Rubey for 16 years, is the director of the program.

"I'm always amazed that he had this very open and nonjudgmental view of people who had lost their children or other relatives to suicide," Deborah said. "He had that view way back in the '70s when suicide was even more highly stigmatized than it is today."

He remembers about 40 years ago when he received consecutive calls from families who had sought solace with their parish priest, who told them, "You know your loved one is in hell."

"As a result of that, I developed a ritual to bless the place where the person took their life," Father Rubey said. "I've been on railroad tracks and woods, that's where they were engulfed by God."

"Since then, the church has changed its whole attitude about suicide and began allowing funeral masses, Mass of Christian burial. It's no longer a sin."

LOSS welcomes and embraces

Monica remembers her first LOSS meeting with her parents in 1987. It was the first time she was in a room full of people she could relate to — fellow survivors.

"We go in with no hope, LOSS gives us hope," she said. "Father Rubey gave us the tools to get through the day, get through the hour, and get through the moment. He gave us permission to have our feelings and express them."

"You're suffering this great loss, and you feel alone because your community is avoiding you because they don't know what to say," Monica said. "Father Rubey wasn't avoiding us; he was embracing us."

She said he encouraged survivors to talk; he listened and gave them permission to have feelings. He helped them overcome their guilt.

"I always thought it was my fault. He was my brother and I was 16," Monica said. "Father Rubey was that voice, 'Your brother died of mental illness,' and when he said it, I believed him. When he said, 'You will learn to live with the pain,' it was having someone communicate in a way, believe, listen, and hear, that started me on my path of healing. He's never stopped being there."

Understanding LOSS

"Mental illness, it can be fatal," Father Rubey said. "Survivors have to learn to live with the mystery — not necessarily understand it but learn to accept that you can't change it. The loved one

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

is at peace — they're with God. I believe that's holy and sacred. You never want to forget your loved one. You want to remember them. They weren't bad people. They would not want to impose their pain on their loved ones, but they could no longer tolerate that pain, so for the loved one, it has ended."

Father Rubey said his own faith has been challenged by his work with survivors of suicide who ask him, "Why would God allow this?"

"To me, that's all part of the mystery — the holy mystery," Father Rubey said. "There are no magical words to take away the pain. You give them hope, you're not going to feel this way for the rest of your life. You'll learn to smile again, laugh again, and enjoy life."

LOSS participants are encouraged to create quilt squares to memorialize loved ones with photos, drawings, and words. The program has 24 large, memorial quilts that are displayed at the annual Blossoms of Hope brunch.

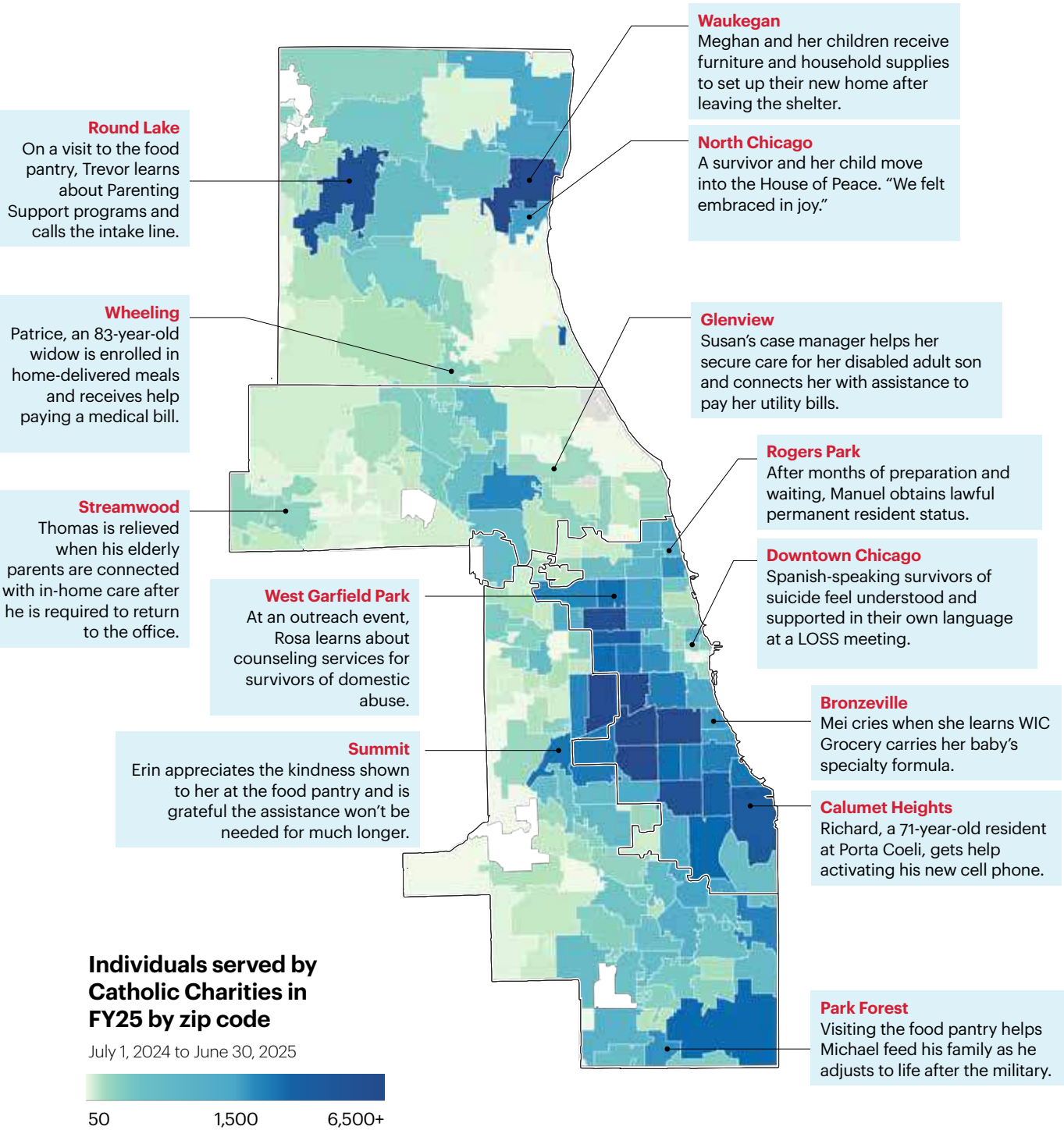
"It was Father Rubey's idea to create memorial quilts to humanize and destigmatize suicide loss," Deborah said. "This has been his life's mission, and a cornerstone of his service. He's helped a lot of people understand that even though this is a horrible tragedy, they are all still children of God. He's helped many people free themselves of that sense of being ostracized, which is very important."

Father Rubey has been working closely with Catholic Cemeteries to develop a memorial garden that he hopes will bring peace and healing to those whose lives have been impacted by suicide at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums in Hillside, Illinois. A dedication ceremony is planned for May.

"My life has been transformed in working with the LOSS program, and my faith has been deepened," Father Rubey said. "The LOSS program has been a real source of strength for me."

What's in a number?

Last year, Catholic Charities served more than 270,000 adults and children. Behind this number, however, was the witness of millions of signs of hope shared with neighbors from nearly every town and city neighborhood across Lake and Cook counties.



WORD SEARCH

Answers are found forward, backward, up, down, and diagonal

V I L L A F C H A L E T J F S L E T
F A C T O R Y P A L A C E Q L S F T
L G A L L E R Y R D V K H A U H N S
A X S K Y S C R A P E R H O L E C U
T P R I S O N W C N D J H S M D O P
G I Y H H D A I R Y B E C T U N N E
K B C C A C X A O H E Y R A S S V R
D U A I C A B B F G R A L T E C E M
K N S N K S B G T A P H M I U H N A
U G I E K T G A R A G E Z O M O T R
R A N M M L O B U I L D I N G O R K
D L O A D E I W G R A N G E O L I E
H O S T E L T H E A T E R B Z T J T
H W O F F I C E T R A G S A L O O N
U X N A Q X U L C A T H E D R A L B
T R V V S X U B D I S T I L L E R Y
M O N A S T E R Y C O L L E G E Q L
U U W N U R S E R Y W K C H U R C H

buildings

- APARTMENT
- BANK
- BARN
- BUILDING
- BUNGALOW
- CASINO
- CASTLE
- CATHEDRAL
- CHALET
- CHURCH
- CINEMA
- COLLEGE
- CONVENT
- CROFT
- DAIRY
- DISTILLERY
- FACTORY
- FLAT
- GALLERY
- GARAGE
- GRANGE
- HALL
- HOSTEL
- HOUSE
- HUT
- KIRK
- LIBRARY
- MONASTERY
- MUSEUM
- NURSERY
- OAST
- OFFICE
- PALACE
- PRISON
- SALOON
- SCHOOL
- SHACK
- SHED
- SKYSCRAPER
- STATION
- SUPERMARKET
- THEATER
- TOWER
- VILLA

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from The Recipe Box

Do you have a recipe you would like to share with Keenager readers?
Feel free to email us at keenager@catholiccharities.net

Italian Easter Pie

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 stick unsalted butter melted, divided
¾ cup powdered sugar plus more, to taste, for garnish
3 large eggs
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 tablespoon orange zest
1 (15-ounce) container whole milk ricotta cheese
⅓ cup pine nuts toasted
½ cup short-grain rice cooked
6 sheets fresh phyllo sheets or frozen phyllo sheets thawed

PREPARATION

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 375° F.

Step 2

Using a little of the melted butter, lightly grease a 9-inch glass pie dish.

Step 3

Blend ¾ cup of the powdered sugar with the eggs, the vanilla, the orange zest, and the ricotta in a food processor until smooth.

Step 4

Stir the rice and the nuts into the ricotta mixture.

Step 5

Lay 1 of the phyllo sheets over the bottom and up the sides of the prepared pie dish, allowing the sheet to hang over the sides.

Step 6

Brush the phyllo with some of the melted butter.



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Step 7

Top the melted butter with the second phyllo sheet, laying it in the opposite direction of the first sheet.

Step 8

Top the second phyllo sheet with some of the melted butter.

Step 9

Layer the remaining sheets, alternating the position and repeating the buttering process for each sheet.

Step 10

Spoon the ricotta mixture on top of the last butter sheet and fold the overhanging dough over to enclose it completely.

Step 11

Brush the top of the dough with the remaining melted butter.

Step 12

Bake the pie until the dough is golden-brown and the filling is set, about 35 minutes.

Step 13

Transfer the pie pan to a rack and let it cool completely.

Step 14

Dust the extra powdered sugar over the pie.

Step 15

Slice and serve.

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Service fills their souls

Three dedicated volunteers have made a difference in the lives of guests at The Shared Table community meal at the Schreiber Center in Round Lake and discovered how service fills their souls.

“We’re like a little family,” said Denise Meyer of Grayslake, who along with Bob and Jo Schuck of Mundelein, volunteer and serve seniors dinner weekly in partnership with Catholic Charities and the Albertine Sisters. Every Wednesday, volunteers prepare hot meals, set up the tables, and serve the meals from trays tableside. They also offer dessert, coffee, and conversation for up to 30 seniors seeking socialization and companionship.



“What I love about Catholic Charities, I love the people that come here for dinner,” Denise said. “I like sitting with them, talking with them. You become friends — it becomes more than just putting a plate in front of them. It becomes a friendship.”

Denise started volunteering at the weekly meal and visiting veterans

at the VA in North Chicago three years ago when she retired after 30 years with a corporate payroll service.

“All the years you work, you don’t have time to volunteer, but now I have the time, and I want to do it,” Denise said, adding she’s connected with many of the guests who have been regulars for years. “It feeds me, and it feels like a good thing to do. It’s fulfilling, and that’s why I do it.”

Bob Schuck started volunteering at Catholic Charities in 2020, first in the home-delivered meals program then assisting the Albertine Sisters in the food pantry at the Schreiber Center. After he retired as a financial adviser, he joined his wife, Jo, volunteering at the community meal.

“When we retired, we decided we wanted to give back,” said Jo, a former nanny and home day care operator. “It becomes a part of your life. You meet the people, you get to know them, you get to know their families. It’s our own little group. It’s very special.”

Bob’s faith is what drives him to volunteer.

“I do it for God, I do it for Jesus,” Bob said, quoting Matthew 25:40: “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

The volunteers witness the companionship the guests also find with each other, many sitting in the same seats every week and becoming friends outside of the meal.



“I like the company, talking to them, talking to everybody,” said Diane, one of the guests who joined her husband. We’re very lucky to have this in our area.”

They meet regularly with Ilene of Lake Villa who has been attending the meals for years.

“We’re very fortunate we have these volunteers, they’re wonderful,” she said. “They’re very loving, caring people. They’re givers. I love Catholic Charities.”

KEENAGER NEWS

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Catholic Charities Mission
Catholic Charities partners with mission-driven people and organizations across Cook and Lake counties to witness a message of mercy and hope to a world in need. We are called to serve and accompany anyone, regardless of their faith, gender, race, or ethnicity.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Archdiocese of Chicago

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Birthdays and Anniversaries

To protect the personal information of our readers, we list the first names and last initials of all who have submitted birthdays and anniversaries to us.

Do you have a birthday or anniversary to share with Keenager News readers? If you do, please call (312) 655-7425.

Birthdays

HAPPY HUNDREDS		EXTRAORDINARY EIGHTIES	
Leona D.	100 on 3/1	Richard R.	81 on 2/15
Ann B.	105 on 4/1	Carole G.	89 on 2/17
NIFTY NINETIES		Judy B.	89 on 3/27
Joseph M.	91 on 11/6/25	Raymond G.	80 on 5/12
Dolores G.	93 on 1/4/26	Anniversaries	
Charlene K.	90 on 2/2/26		
Marilyn M.	90 on 2/10/26		
Elizabeth H.	97 on 2/23/26		
Ann R.	96 on 2/24/26		
Patricia M.	99 on 2/24/26	Joseph & Rosemary M. 70 on 7/2	
Luella B.	98 on 4/17/26		