

## Did You Know...

Caritas Connections is eligible for **matching gifts**. We are also now set up to receive **automatic monthly gifts via PayPal** or to take **stock donations**. Gifts of stock can be directly made from 401(k) plans or IRA accounts without needing to pay taxes on distribution—a big help if you no longer itemized because of recent tax changes. To learn more or to volunteer to help, call 314-225-2605 or e-mail: Friends@CaritasConnections.com



### An Easy Way to Help Caritas

This Christmas season (and throughout the year) you can support Caritas Connections every time you make a purchase via Amazon Smile. Simply copy this link into your browser—<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-3332934> – and then, designate Caritas Connections as your charity of choice and .05% of every purchase you make will be donated directly to Caritas! **To date, Caritas has received \$772 from this program.**



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St. Louis, MO 63131

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### Who We Are

Caritas Connections, Inc. is a faith-based organization dedicated to “connecting those who have with those who need”. Many members of our community are eager to share their blessings. Many of our less fortunate neighbors desperately require their help. The challenge is linking the gifts with the needs. We provide that vital connection—transforming compassion into charity. Members of St. Gerard Majella Catholic Church in Kirkwood, MO serve as the primary coordinators and volunteers.

**Donations may be sent to:**  
Caritas Connections, Inc.,  
PO Box 31072  
St. Louis, MO 63131

## Personal Care Items Needed

Non-perishable food, coats and hats along with personal care items like hand sanitizer, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo and lotion are all things that we’re always happy to receive. If you have any questions about items we accept, contact [Mary Kempa at marykempa2@gmail.com](mailto:marykempa2@gmail.com).

## Every Week at Caritas Connections

*Caritas Connections volunteers make over 40 pickups and deliveries every week in order to reliably connect surplus food and personal care items from our donors to those in need.*

### Our Donors:

Britt’s Bakehouse, Bello’s Bakery, Costco, The Daily Bread, The Donut Palace, Elite Cuisine, Great Harvest Bread, Jimmy John’s (Des Peres), Merb’s Candies, Panera Bread (Des Peres), Pizza Hut (Des Peres), Raterman and Associates, Sara Lee Outlet Store, Schnucks (Des Peres), Small Cakes, and Starbucks

### Our Clients:

Biddle House, Criminal Justice Ministries, Dutchtown Care Center, East St. Louis Heart and Home, Federal Probation Office Family Program, Ferguson Senior Resource Center, Father Dempsey’s Charities, Grace Hill-The Patch Center, Guardian Angel Settlement, John Paul II Apartments, Our Lady’s Inn, Our Little Haven, Room At the Inn, Rural Parish Workers, St. Agnes Nursing Home, St. Augustine-Wellston Center, St. Francis Xavier SVDP, St. John Neumann Apartments, St. Louis Crisis Nursery, St. Mary Magdalen SDVP, St. Nicholas SVDP, Sts. Teresa and Bridget SVDP and more....

# STAYING connected

The newsletter of Caritas Connections, Inc.

## Caritas Launches New Overview Video and Updated Website

### Our Mission

*Inspired by the compassion of Jesus, Caritas Connections, Inc. continues His mission to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and help the sick, suffering and homeless.*



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‘Delivering the Good’ is the overall message of a new overview video that now lives on the recently refurbished Caritas Connections website. We invite you to see both by visiting [caritasconnections.com](http://caritasconnections.com)

The video showcases many of our volunteers as well as a few of our clients who all help tell the story of what Caritas Connections is all about. “Having this video allows us to tell the Caritas story in a few short minutes,” said board member Tom Blood. “It will be great to share with potential new clients and maybe provide inspiration for people to volunteer or donate to Caritas,” he added.

Apparently, the video is already working as two new volunteers recently signed up to become personal shoppers for Caritas as a direct result of seeing the video.

The video is just one of the highlights of the newly redesigned Caritas Connections website. The ‘About’ page tells a brief history of Caritas and provides a good overview of the many ways we try to help

our clients. There’s a page on who we serve and another that lists most of our donors.

Thanks to this new website, it’ll be easier than ever to sign up for our Golf Tournament, volunteer your services (or share with someone you think might like to get involved) and of course, donate—whether you’re an individual or a corporation. We also intend to regularly update the News page with info and items of interest.

As an all-volunteer organization, both the video and the website were created for a fraction of what actual costs might have been. Two board members volunteered their time to create both the video and the website. They in turn called on some of their key contacts, who also volunteered a lot of their time and talents.

So please take a look. And if you can, please donate—whether that’s with your time or financially, and thank you in advance for your continued support and contributions.

## Tributes

Donations to Caritas Connections have been made in recognition of the following family and friends:

### In Honor Of:

Father Bryon  
Dr. Scott Schmidt's retirement  
Sharon Neuner  
Cay Sullivan  
Bob and Mary Alice  
Helmsing's 50th Anniversary  
Penny Helmsing's birthday  
Mary Anne Montgomery's birthday  
Father Henry Purcell

### In Memory Of:

Kathleen Kovacs  
Kevin Buchanan  
Kevin Boles  
Terry Etling  
Eileen McDounough  
Jorge Tumialan  
Dick Rabbitt  
Ruth Weinberger  
Keith Scott  
Maryilyn Dalton  
Mark Haywood  
Ray Mandle  
Harold Goedde  
Harold Satterfield  
Bernard Wagner  
David Butler  
Carolyn Harvath  
John McKenzie

## Mourning the loss of John McKenzie

Caritas Connections mourns the loss of John McKenzie, a long-time volunteer for the organization. John was a personal shopper for Dutchtown and picked up sweets from McArthur's bakery in Kirkwood. When that store closed, he contacted the Lemay store and once they agreed to donate, he volunteered to drive to Lemay to pick up their donations. John was a kind and joyful man who really enjoyed the ministry of volunteering for Caritas. John was 85 when he passed.

## Saint Anthony of Padua's Food Pantry Gives Back to Caritas

The Food Pantry at the 157-year-old Saint Anthony of Padua church has been serving and providing food items and other social services for those in need in the South City area for many years. When the pandemic hit, a number of sources in their food supply chain stepped up their donations. According to Bruce Court, who volunteers in their food pantry services, "we received an outpouring of food over the past several months." Since space for storing food items is rather limited, Bruce called Father Bryon to see if Caritas could use any additional food.

The answer, of course, was yes. So Bruce, who is a parishioner at Saint Gerard-Majella, initially arranged for Father Bryon to stop by and pick up items, which then transitioned to the Caritas Friday crew that makes deliveries to the South City area picking up the surplus items, including a number of frozen foods.

Caritas became one of the key beneficiaries of the excess food items early in the summer and it has continued through September. Overall, more than \$5000 worth of food items have been donated to Caritas, courtesy of the Saint Anthony of Padua Food Pantry.



Bruce Court's volunteer efforts for St. Anthony of Padua's Food Pantry continues to help many people in need.

Though this isn't expected to continue as food donations to the Food Pantry have leveled off, Caritas Connections is grateful for the items we have received as our own source of food supplies were diminished as a result of the Coronavirus.

"Our director was happy to help Caritas," said Bruce. "We're all trying to give back to those in need," he added. One good turn definitely deserves another.

## Annual Appeal Takes on Increased Importance

The cancellation of this year's Caritas Connections Golf Tournament was more than just a disappointment for everyone involved. It also meant the loss of revenue from the organization's largest yearly fund-raiser. Though quite a few of our registrants donated their entrance fee to Caritas, the amount raised represented a small portion of years past. Combine that with the toll the pandemic has had throughout society —on our volunteers as well as the many people we serve, many of whom are facing homelessness, loss of jobs, depression and loss of self-esteem. So we ask that when you receive our annual appeal letter that you think of those

less fortunate and consider donating to Caritas Connections so that we can continue our mission to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and help the sick, suffering and homeless.

### Matching Gift Challenge

The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA) has issued a Matching Gift Challenge. As soon as Caritas receives \$600 in new donations, they have generously offered to match that amount. Please consider giving so we can meet the challenge!

## SFX Outreach

### Helping transition the homeless to independence

Acquiring a legal ID is a critical step in transitioning the homeless to independence. Many have experienced tragedy or a violent environment and do not possess a birth certificate or state ID, which are essential for employment and housing. This obstacle to ending homelessness is greatly overlooked. SFX Outreach's staff are experts at removing this obstacle and do this for about 3500 individuals each year. Christine Dragonette and Tess Sanders lead a staff of volunteers, mostly retired St. Francis Xavier parishioners, who work one on one with clients. They help navigate the sometimes complex process of obtaining IDs and then provide guests with a voucher to cover document costs. "Each guest is treated with respect and dignity," says Sanders. "We compassionately honor their story and situation." The program is unique in that it is the only agency in the area doing this.

Caritas Connections has been supporting these efforts for many years. Over 200 personal care packages, bag lunches and breakfast snacks are pro-

vided by Caritas each month. "That is something extra that helps the client and adds to our relationship," says Christine Dragonette. "The level of consistency of Caritas Connections is amazing. Your volunteers show up week after week, with an unassuming sense of humility and friendliness. But what truly makes Caritas special is the proactive role you take by asking what is needed, and then generously making it happen."

SFX Outreach is leading a new coalition to remove barriers facing the homeless which are influenced by state and federal policy and Tess (outreach@sfxstl.org) invites any interested Caritas volunteers to share their gifts and abilities to enact change.

*SFX Outreach is just one of many organizations, groups and places that benefit from the many works of Caritas Connections. The more people who volunteer their time as well as donate to the organization, the more people Caritas Connections can help. The need is great. The good you can do is immense.*

## Volunteer Mass Tradition Continues



From left, Libby Billhartz, Mary Kempa, Gina Bauman and Joann Donelon at the annual Caritas volunteer appreciation mass.

The location changed and there was no celebratory gathering afterwards, but the annual Mass recognizing all Caritas Connections volunteers took place on Saturday, September 26, 2020. More than 40 volunteers attended the Mass, celebrated by Father Bryon at St. Gerard-Majella. Father Bryon acknowledged the efforts of all who volunteer for Caritas who continue the mission to help clothe, feed and assist the needy in the greater St. Louis metro area.

## volunteer spotlight

### TEAMWORK WORKS IN SUPPORTING SFX OUTREACH

The efforts to support SFX Outreach are large enough that a team of five Caritas volunteers have assigned roles, with many others assisting along the way.

The largest effort is making sandwiches every week. A sandwich is given to each client during their visit to SFX Outreach as part of a bag lunch, which provides nourishment as well as helps to build the relationship with the client. **Catherine Adelman** coordinates this effort which includes the purchase of ingredients, making the sandwiches, coordinating volunteers, and sandwich delivery.

**Rose Aschenbrenner** shops for multicultural children's books that are given to children of clients during their visit to SFX Outreach to help make it a more positive experience. **Jan Glunt** coordinates personal care packages that are given to each client. These packages help provide for their basic personal needs for a few days and include shampoo, deodorant, soap, a comb, toothbrush and toothpaste. **Chris Martin, Tina Revling and Betsy Bruns** do some heavy lifting, literally, by shopping each month for snacks for lunches, breakfast items, and personal care items.

Jan Glunt has been volunteering with Caritas Connections for ten years. "I was wanting to make service an important component of my life and I wanted a cause I could feel passionate about, with an active role and a flexible schedule," says Jan. "After six months of prayer and searching, Fr. Tom Bryon offered this Caritas opportunity that's perfect for me. I enjoy being one small part of a network of so many people, united in purpose, serving those in need."