

CARITAS NOW

CATHOLIC CHARITIES BROOKLYN AND QUEENS MAGAZINE | THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUE

CELEBRATING
125
YEARS



HOPE AND HEALING:
CATHOLIC CHARITIES SUBSTANCE
USE AND OPIOID TREATMENT
PROGRAMS

MENTAL WELL-BEING
VIDEO SERIES
LAUNCHED ON
OUR WEBSITE
AND MORE!

NEW BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH CLINIC
FOR CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES
OPENING SOON

Transforming Lives

CATHOLIC CHARITIES BROOKLYN AND QUEENS MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share with you the latest edition of Caritas Now Magazine, with its focus on the critical issue of behavioral health and substance abuse services for individuals battling mental illness and addiction in the Brooklyn and Queens communities.

We are delighted to announce the opening of our newest clinic for children and families in April. The facility will be located in Woodhaven, Queens, providing essential support and care to families whose children require behavioral health services. Our goal is to ensure that every member of our community, especially the youngest ones and their families, receives the assistance they need.

In addition to the opening of the new clinic, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens is also excited about the upcoming series of mental health and wellness videos for parishes and the greater community in need. These videos will highlight crucial topics such as opioid abuse, substance use, geriatric mental wellness, and suicide prevention. These resources will provide much-needed support and education to those struggling with mental health and addiction issues in our communities. Our commitment to providing comprehensive care and services to those in need is unwavering, and we are proud to continue our mission of helping individuals and families in Brooklyn and Queens.

As we celebrate 125 years of service to the communities of Brooklyn and Queens, we can proudly say that it is a testament to our commitment and dedication to those in need. We take immense pride in being the hands of Jesus for individuals and families during times of struggle, and we are committed to continuing our mission for many years to come.

In this edition of Caritas Now Magazine, we have also included a special insert featuring an impact statement and financials. This insert aims to provide our donors and supporters with a visual overview of how their contributions have positively impacted the communities we serve. Transparency and accountability are crucial in maintaining the trust and support of our donors, and we are committed to providing you with the information needed to make informed decisions about your charitable giving.

We express our heartfelt thanks to you for your continued support and generosity. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

Peace,


Monsignor Alfred LoPinto
President and CEO
Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens





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*** SPECIAL INSERT -- 2023 IMPACT STATEMENT ***

For 125 years, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has been providing quality social services to the neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens and currently offers 160-plus programs and services for children, youth, adults, older adults, and those struggling with mental illness. Since 1975, Catholic Charities Progress of Peoples Development Corporation, the affordable housing developer of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, has been transforming vacant land and buildings into affordable housing units and transforming the lives of individuals and families. We've completed more than 4,567 units with supportive services for seniors, families, veterans and the formerly homeless. Since 2020, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has provided much-needed food packages and services at 60 Catholic Charities parish-based food pantries and has distributed over \$15 million in food.

CARITAS NOW Magazine will bring you quarterly insight into the programs and services offered by Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens.

For more information, or to be removed from our list, contact:

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CARITASNOW@ccbq.org or 718-722-6202



Transforming Lives:

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OFFERS LIFE-CHANGING MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS IN BROOKLYN AND QUEENS

Local drivers might have spied our billboard at Kings Highway and Farragut Road, in Brooklyn.

Marina*, a 70-year-old recent retiree, arrived at the Catholic Charities Behavioral Health Center feeling anxious and depressed, and was troubled by insomnia, loss of appetite and general weakness. And her symptoms were getting worse.

Working closely with her Catholic Charities therapist, Marina developed a safety plan, identified contributing stressors, and learned techniques for problem solving and reframing negative thoughts. Today, Marina knows how to manage her symptoms and has new insight into her problems. Her connections to her family and friends have improved, and she's firmly on the path to a healthier and happier retirement.

In today's society, mental health and substance use issues have been front and center, affecting individuals from all walks of life and at all ages. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five people live with a mental health condition, while one in 25 live with a serious mental illness. Amidst these challenges, Catholic Charities has made a significant impact through its dedicated network of Behavioral Health Services for over 75 years.

"At the heart of Catholic Charities' mission lies a commitment to providing compassionate and comprehensive care to those grappling with mental health and substance use issues," says Patricia Bowles, Senior Vice President/Chief Program Officer of Integrated Health and Wellness Services. "Our network of programs is designed to address the unique needs of each individual,

recognizing the importance of a personalized approach to healing."

Behavioral Health Services at Catholic Charities are organized into three areas:

- Clinics, Rehabilitation and Recovery
- Care Coordination and Case Management
- Residential and Housing Services

Clinics, Rehabilitation and Recovery

Our clinics, rehabilitation and recovery programs enable Catholic Charities to provide immediate mental health services to those in need, offering counseling and therapy sessions to individuals and families and providing a safe space to explore and navigate the complexities of mental health. Our Behavioral Health Centers offer treatment and support groups for common mental health issues.

Peer Advocacy and Open Door Clubs are offered, and a Mobile Crisis Team is available when needed. Additionally, the clinics serve as an entry point to other services at Catholic Charities. A veterans' Peer Advocate is available for outreach to those who have served in the armed forces, and grant funding enables staff members to work with the uninsured immigrant population for mental health services.

In addition to mental health counseling, our substance use treatment programs focus on holistic recovery, incorporating evidence-based practices to support individuals in overcoming addiction. There are nearly 22 million Americans addicted to illicit drugs or alcohol, and almost 50 percent of people in the nation know a person who is addicted to prescription painkillers. With addiction treatment, family therapy and emotional support, families can heal the damage caused by addiction and build a healthy future.

Care Coordination and Case Management Programs

After suffering a severe depressive episode in her junior year of high school, Denise* was enrolled in the Catholic Charities Children's Care Coordination Program. A previous straight A-student, Denise was having difficulty engaging in care, often sleeping all day, and feeling disconnected to mental health outpatient treatment. Denise's assigned Care Specialist connected her for therapy and conducted weekly at-home visits, with numerous calls between visits to keep her engaged and assist with motivation for activities of daily living. The Care Specialist encouraged her to continue attending her mental health appointments and taking her medication. The Care Specialist also worked with her family to provide support during this difficult time and provided family education regarding Denise's symptoms and needs. With ongoing support from the care specialist, Denise's grades improved, and she graduated with honors and recognition from the National Honor Society. Today, she is attending college on a full scholarship to study Criminal Psychology.

Stories like Denise's are common in the Care Coordination and Case Management Program, where Case Managers work with adults, children, and families to develop a person-centered plan of care, which



helps individuals navigate the healthcare system, schedule appointments, arrange transportation, and communicate between healthcare providers. Case Managers also provide education on how to manage chronic conditions, take medications properly, and understand complex discharge plans and next steps for follow-up after a hospitalization. Court-involved juveniles who might benefit from mental health services are also assisted through our Justice for Juveniles Initiative. In addition, Catholic Charities aids with benefits/entitlements and completing applications for public assistance, support with accessing safe and affordable housing, and connectivity to food pantries and other services to support daily living.

Residential and Housing Services

For those who are seriously and persistently challenged by mental illness, Catholic Charities offers supportive and transitional residential housing programs to help individuals in their quest to live as independently as possible within a structure of supportive services. The overall goal is to provide a safe home that meets the needs of our residents. Catholic Charities offers three scattered site transitional apartment residences that are targeted to those living with serious mental illness, while the Casa Betsaida HIV/AIDS program assists immigrants living with HIV/AIDS in lowering their virus to undetectable levels. Our four Catholic Charities Progress of Peoples Management Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Buildings provide homes for 311

formerly homeless mentally ill tenants of which 91 receive behavioral health support.

One of those residents is Jim*, a 38-year-old man who has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Prior to becoming homeless, Jim was employed and lived in his own apartment with his girlfriend. When the relationship failed, he became sick and was hospitalized, eventually losing his job and his apartment. Jim entered the shelter system where he resided for nine months before Catholic Charities found him a home in the Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan Residence at Our Lady of Good Counsel. Despite experiencing two hospitalizations since he moved in, Jim keeps his goals in mind. He is currently working on finding gainful employment and stabilizing his medical and mental health. Today, Jim remains connected to his health care and stays on top of attending his appointments with his psychiatrist and primary care physician.

Transforming Lives and Offering Hope

The true measure of success for any behavioral health program lies in the stories of transformation. Catholic Charities is proud of the countless individuals who, with the support of our services, have overcome adversity and reclaimed their lives. These stories serve as beacons of hope, illustrating the profound impact that compassionate care can have on one's mental health and overall well-being. ■

Hope and Healing

**Catholic Charities
Substance Use and
Opioid Treatment
Programs**



Substance use and opioid addiction is an issue that touches the lives of many within our community. Surveys have found that 2.8 million New Yorkers aged 12 years and older have had a substance use disorder in the past year, and last year nearly 6,400 New York State residents died of a drug overdose.

In the face of this pervasive challenge, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has emerged as a ray of hope, offering comprehensive and compassionate substance use and opioid treatment recovery programs. Our mission is to help individuals maintain a drug-free lifestyle and stable recovery program.

"Drug and alcohol addiction has reached alarming proportions, affecting individuals and families from all walks of life," says Claudia Salazar, Vice President of Clinics, Rehab and Recovery Programs. "At Catholic Charities, we treat chemical dependency as a progressive and potentially fatal, but not hopeless, illness. We are able to offer a range of programs designed to address the complex issues

associated with substance use disorders, including evidence-based therapies, counseling and support services."

Experienced and dedicated professionals lead the programs, ensuring that participants receive individualized care tailored to their unique needs. From intake to long-term recovery support, these services provide a continuum of care that guides individuals through each stage of their journey to sobriety.

Key Features of the Program

Our goal is to provide a safe and supportive setting for the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals with substance use disorders. Staff members work closely with individuals to manage substance withdrawal, as well as the accompanying medical and psychiatric complications. Licensed therapists provide individual and group counseling, helping participants address the root causes of addiction and develop coping strategies. Our Opioid Prevention and Treatment (OPT) Into Recovery Program also offers Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) including Suboxone and Vivitrol, which helps manage withdrawal symptoms and reduce the risk of relapse.

Although the battle against drugs and alcohol is a personal one, Catholic Charities is also considerate of the many ways in which addiction can affect the entire family. Addiction can destroy relationships, cause financial hardship, and lead to emotional and physical health problems.

"Addiction can tear families apart, but there is hope," says Rebecca Herman, LCSW-CASAC, Director of the Flatbush Wellness and Recovery Program. "With addiction treatment, family therapy and emotional support, families can heal the damage caused by addiction and build a healthy future."

A Ray of Hope

Cassie*, a woman in her early 30s, first arrived at Catholic Charities Flatbush Addiction Treatment Center seeking help for mental illness and chemical dependence on hallucinogens, cannabis and alcohol. Cassie began attending individual and group counseling sessions, in addition to regular toxicology testing. Over the course of her treatment, she went from expressing ambivalence about treatment to fully embracing recovery, taking responsibility for her choices and experiencing a decrease in her mental health symptoms. After successfully completing the program, Cassie voluntarily enrolled in continuing care for ongoing support in her recovery. As part of her continuing care treatment plan, she continues to complete monthly toxicology screenings. Catholic Charities also assisted in her recovery by referring her to World of Work, an assisted competitive employment program. One week after her enrollment in World of Work, Cassie was hired for a full-time position.

Equipping individuals like Cassie with the tools for sustained recovery, Catholic Charities ensures ongoing support through aftercare programs and relapse prevention strategies. Every day, Catholic Charities is making a difference in the lives of countless individuals struggling with substance use and opioid addiction. ■

Older Adults and Social Isolation

For older adults, the golden years can sometimes be difficult. Many older adults feel lonely and alone, and this social isolation is as likely to reduce life expectancy as smoking or high blood pressure. In fact, connection with others can literally save our lives.

A loss of a spouse and friends, combined with health and mobility issues, can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression. Loneliness can even contribute to cognitive decline and increase the risk of dementia.

If you or someone you know are feeling lost and alone, programs are available to help. Catholic Charities sponsors Older Adult Centers throughout Brooklyn and Queens where seniors can make new connections and find friendship and stimulating activities, while our Behavioral Health programs offer counseling and support groups for those who need them.

Visit us at www.ccbq.org or call 718-722-6001 for more information.



New Children and Family Behavioral Health Clinic to Open in Woodhaven, Queens

This spring, Catholic Charities will open the doors to their new Children and Family Behavioral Health Clinic. This modern facility is a testament to the agency's unwavering commitment to the well-being of children and families in the community.

Catholic Charities understands the unique challenges that children and families face in today's world, with 20 percent of youth ages 13-18 living with a mental health condition. Fifty percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and suicide is currently the third leading cause of death in youth ages 10-24.

The new facility, **located in the heart of Woodhaven, Queens at 78-15 Jamaica Avenue, will serve as a warm and welcoming place where individuals and families can find the care and resources they need.**

Highly skilled staff members will provide individual therapy, group therapy, family counseling, psychiatric evaluation, and medication management.

"One of the key strengths of the new Children and Family Behavioral Health Clinic is in its collaborative approach to mental health," says Patricia Bowles, Senior Vice President/Chief Program Officer of Integrated Health and Wellness Services. "The Clinic brings together a team of experienced and dedicated professionals, including licensed therapists, social workers and psychiatrists, who work together to create customized treatment plans for each individual and family."

For more information on the Children and Family Behavioral Health Clinic, please call 718-722-6001 or visit www.ccbq.org. ■



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Search: "What can we help you with?"



Have a child 6-12 years old?
Watch our video on Mental Well-being.

Watch Now

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Catholic Charities Launches Mental Health Well-Being Video Series

Over the past few months, the Behavioral Health team at Catholic Charities launched the first in a series of videos on mental health with the goal of fostering well-being within our community. This video series was created to provide support, guidance and encouragement to individuals navigating the complexities of mental health and/or substance use.

The first video in the series focused on childhood mental well-being for children ages 6-12 years old, and focused on the triggers, warning signs, and ways to promote good mental health. The second video focuses on teenagers and social media and provides practical tips and resources that teens and their parents can easily incorporate into their daily lives.

In addition to videos, Catholic Charities is also creating a series of webinars with valuable resources about mental health and the services available. The first of these webinars is currently available and focuses on opioid use. The webinars will be created and posted monthly on a range of topics, including general mental health issues, geriatric mental health, and substance use.



The videos and webinars are accessible on our website at <https://www.ccbq.org/service/mental-well-being-video-series/>, ensuring that everyone in our community can benefit from this valuable resource. ■

BUILDING BRIDGES OF SUPPORT

The Essence of Care Coordination and Case Management

At the heart of Catholic Charities' mission is the belief that every individual deserves not only access to healthcare but also a comprehensive and compassionate support system. Our network of Care Coordination and Case Management Services plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between health services and the diverse needs of the community.

Care Coordination

Care Coordination is more than just managing medical appointments; it's addressing the multifaceted challenges individuals and families may encounter. The program brings together a dedicated team of professionals who work collaboratively to ensure that clients receive the right care at the right time. This includes coordinating medical services, providing emotional support, and navigating complex healthcare systems.

"At Catholic Charities, our Care Coordinators work with adults to develop a person-centered plan of care, which helps individuals navigate the healthcare system, schedule appointments, arrange transportation, and communicate between healthcare providers," says Desiree M. Barberio, Vice President of Care Coordination and Case Management. "Care Coordinators also provide education on how to manage chronic conditions, take medications properly, and understand complex discharge plans and next steps for follow-up after a hospitalization."

Services are provided in the home and community with providers, or at in-patient settings and program sites, and we aid with benefits/entitlements and completing applications for public assistance, assistance with accessing safe and

affordable housing, and connections to social and self-help services, food pantry, and additional resources to support daily living.

Case Management

The Case Management Programs at Catholic Charities focus on assisting individuals and families facing specific challenges or crises. These programs are designed to provide personalized support, empowering clients to overcome obstacles and build a foundation for a brighter future. Specific areas of assistance include housing assistance, employment services and emergency assistance such as food, clothing, and rental or utility support.

The impact of this network of programs is most evident in the success stories that highlight positive transformations within the community. Clients have not only improved their physical health but have also found renewed hope and stability through the comprehensive support provided by the dedicated staff.

Catrina* is an example of how these Catholic Charities programs can change a life. At the time Catrina enrolled with the Targeted Case Management (TCM) team in 2021, she was struggling with her depression and its symptoms, including mood swings, a lack of focus and increased forgetfulness. She expressed a

desire to get back into the workforce, but her current symptoms made it difficult for her to work.

Catholic Charities helped Catrina connect to an outpatient mental health provider near her home where she was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder and put on a medication regimen. Team members at Catholic Charities assisted Catrina with appointment reminders and provided health literacy services to educate her on her diagnoses and prescribed medications. Through medication management and therapy, Catrina was able to better manage her depression and focus issues. After only a few months, her ability to focus increased and she was able to revisit her goal of getting back to work. Catrina is currently successfully employed and has graduated from her outpatient mental health program and the Targeted Case Management program.

Today, the Care Coordination and Case Management programs are emblematic of Catholic Charities' dedication to building a healthier and more resilient community. By providing our neighbors with a holistic approach to care, we are not just addressing immediate needs but are actively working towards a future where every individual can thrive. ■



Residential and Housing

Redefining Home for Those Struggling with Mental Illnesses

Sharon* grew up in New York City with her parents and three siblings and obtained her RN degree from SUNY Binghamton and her law degree from Temple Law School. However, her life took a drastic turn when she was diagnosed with schizophrenia, making daily life an often difficult proposition, and resulting in several hospital admissions for psychiatric episodes.

Sharon was referred to the Catholic Charities Queens Community Living Program, where she received ongoing support and guidance, and eventually graduated to independent living in our Queens Supported Housing Program. Today, Sharon is engaged in treatment and is employed as an RN, and she credits Catholic Charities with helping her get back on her feet and provide her with the stable housing and support that she needs.

Every day, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens carries out impactful work in the realm of residential and housing services. Our mission is to increase the likelihood that the goals of those with behavioral health issues can be achieved through effective programs and services via either transitional housing, permanent (supported) housing, or housing for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

"One of the key pillars of Catholic Charities' behavioral health services is the provision of safe and supportive residential housing," says Martin Sussman, Vice President of Residential and Housing Services. "Recognizing the importance of stable living conditions in the recovery process, we have established housing programs that cater to the unique needs of individuals with behavioral

health challenges. These residences offer a supportive community, helping residents rebuild their lives with dignity and respect."

Services at our behavioral health residences include self-advocacy and daily life skills training, health services and medication management, rehabilitation counseling and substance use services, employment services and skill training, parenting education, case management services, entitlement advocacy and benefits counseling, and social/recreational/cultural activities.

apartments feature on-site services, and staff members are available to assist in emergencies and are always on-call. The program enables individuals to live as independently as possible with minimal supports and empowers residents to remain integrated in their community. Staff assist clients with vocational goals, social skills, daily living training, budgeting skills, parenting training, medication management and symptom management training.

Housing for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS

Catholic Charities provides housing and case management to 27 individuals living with HIV/AIDS through our Casa Betsaida Residence. Clients receive three meals a day, 24/7 support and case management services to assist with health care, housing, mental health care, legal services, and substance abuse. Clients are provided with case management support after graduating from the program, while our prevention-based program also provides rental assistance and supportive case management to hard to serve individuals such as immigrants who have not yet received medical benefits.

Improving Lives

At the heart of Catholic Charities' approach is a commitment to person-centered care. Recognizing that everyone is unique, Catholic Charities tailors its services to meet the specific needs and goals of those seeking assistance. By combining clinical expertise with a commitment to safe housing and community integration, the organization is making a profound difference in the lives of those facing mental health challenges. ■

*Name has been changed for privacy

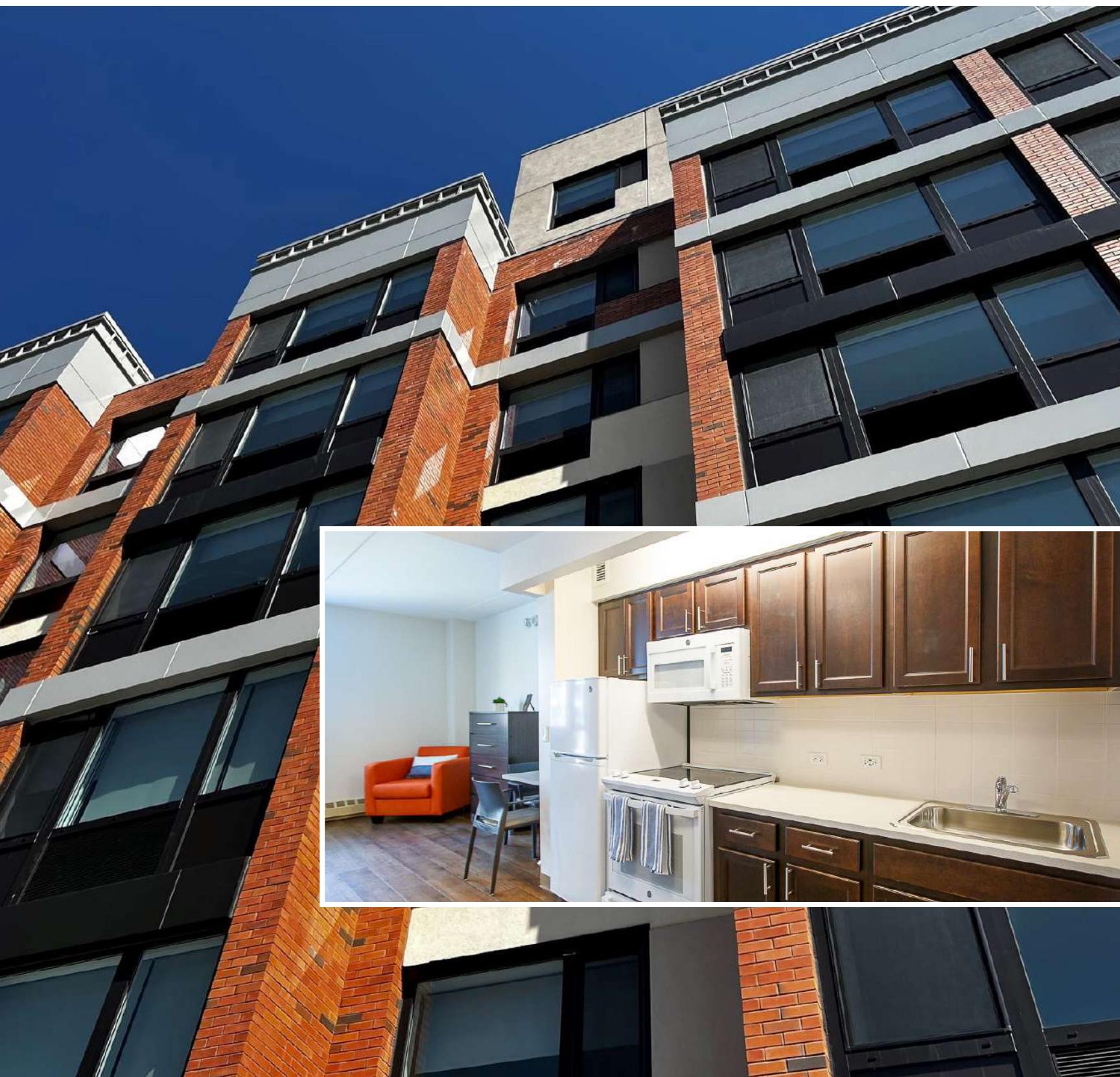
Transitional Housing

Catholic Charities Transitional Housing Programs provide residential and supportive housing services to individuals who have had psychiatric difficulties and need a supportive and stable environment. We assist adults in gaining the skills necessary to live independently in permanent housing within the community. Staff members work towards integrating residents back into their communities through various support services, vocational training, and social activities. This holistic approach not only addresses the immediate housing needs of individuals but also focuses on long-term recovery and reintegration into society. Through the delivery of supportive and rehabilitative services, case management, counseling and training, our residents develop the skills and abilities to live in more independent settings in the community.

Permanent (Supported) Housing

The Catholic Charities Supported Housing programs assist individuals in maintaining independent, permanent housing in furnished apartments located throughout Brooklyn and Queens. Convenient to shopping and transportation, these

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CELEBRATING
125
YEARS



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Save the Date!

Saturday, April 13, 2024

The Coat of Arms Club
St. Joseph's University Chapel

Thursday, June 20, 2024

The Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan
Memorial Golf Classic
North Hills Country Club

Thursday, September 26, 2024

Bishop's Humanitarian Award Dinner
Cipriani Wall Street

For details on these and future events
visit, www.ccbq.org, contact the Office
of Development and Communications at
718-722-6202 or email us at
ccbq.events@ccbq.org



Leave a Legacy with Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens

For 125 years, Catholic Charities has provided much-needed social services to those in need, including affordable housing, mental health services, early childhood education, food pantries, and case management for the home bound elderly. Your generosity can help us continue and expand our services, creating a legacy that you can be proud of. Consider leaving a lasting legacy by making a planned gift to Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. To learn more about including us in your estate plans, please contact Lucy Garrido-Mota at 718-722-6211 or lucy.gmota@ccbq.org.



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