

# CARITAS NOW

CATHOLIC CHARITIES BROOKLYN AND QUEENS MAGAZINE | THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

CELEBRATING  
**125**  
YEARS



THEN AND NOW  
AND MORE...

AS WE CELEBRATE 125 YEARS,  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
BROOKLYN AND QUEENS  
LOOKS BACK AND LOOKS  
TO THE FUTURE

## 125 Years of Compassion

THE HISTORY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES BROOKLYN AND QUEENS

# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

As we approach the last few months of celebrating Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens' 125th anniversary, we are filled with gratitude for all of the support and dedication that has made this milestone possible. From our humble beginnings to our current state of serving hundreds of thousands of individuals and families in need, we have come a long way thanks to the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners.

This issue of *Caritas Now* reflects our journey thus far, highlighting then-and-now tidbits that showcase our agency's growth and impact over the past 125 years. We are proud to share with you the various events and initiatives that have taken place throughout this particular year, including the opening of a new behavioral health clinic in Woodhaven, Queens, the employee appreciation party in Coney Island, Brooklyn, and the launch of a junior board to engage with future leaders in our organization.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve those in need and make a difference in the lives of many individuals and families in Brooklyn and Queens. As we look towards the future, we are excited for what lies ahead and remain committed to continuing our mission of providing help and creating hope for those we serve for 125 more years.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,  
Monsignor Alfred LoPinto

Monsignor Alfred LoPinto  
President and CEO  
Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens





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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:

**CARITAS NOW MAGAZINE:** 191 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

**CARITASNOW@ccbq.org** or 718-722-6202



# 125 Years of

## THE HISTORY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN BROOKLYN AND QUEENS

**Throughout the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, the programs and services of Catholic Charities have stood as pillars of compassion and support for 125 years. Its rich history is a testament to the enduring commitment to serve those in need, as caring staff members live out the mission of “affirming the dignity and value of every person, especially the most vulnerable members of our diverse society.”**

The roots of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens trace back to the late 19th century, a time of

rapid immigration and urbanization in New York City. At that time, concerned Catholics came together to meet the needs of children orphaned in downtown Brooklyn by poverty and disease. As other needs arose, they sought ways to meet the need for food, clothing, education and housing. By the end of the 19th century, the services being provided were so diverse and widespread that they required formal organization. In 1899, Bishop McDonald of Brooklyn appointed Monsignor William White to bring together all the diocesan charitable agencies into one organization and, officially, Catholic Charities was born.

### Growth and Evolution

From its modest beginnings, Catholic Charities quickly expanded its services to meet the changing needs of the community. By the early 20th century, it had established a network of outreach programs, including programs for families, food pantries, and educational initiatives. During times of economic hardship, such as the Great Depression, Catholic Charities played a pivotal role in offering relief and support to families facing dire circumstances.

Combatting poverty has remained a primary focus for the past 125



years. In 1964, Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan, former Executive Director and President of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees, said: "The most urgent concern of our country is the crime of poverty, a national disgrace in the wealthiest country in the history of man. The challenge of poverty is a catholic challenge because it is a challenge to all men. Catholic Charities must be in the front lines of this most just of all wars."

Today, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens continues to combat the effects of poverty while also offering a diverse range of services aimed at empowering individuals

and families. These include mental health clinics, affordable housing, older adult programs, early childhood centers, youth and job training initiatives, and a wealth of community outreach services. The agency's programs address immediate needs while also fostering long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

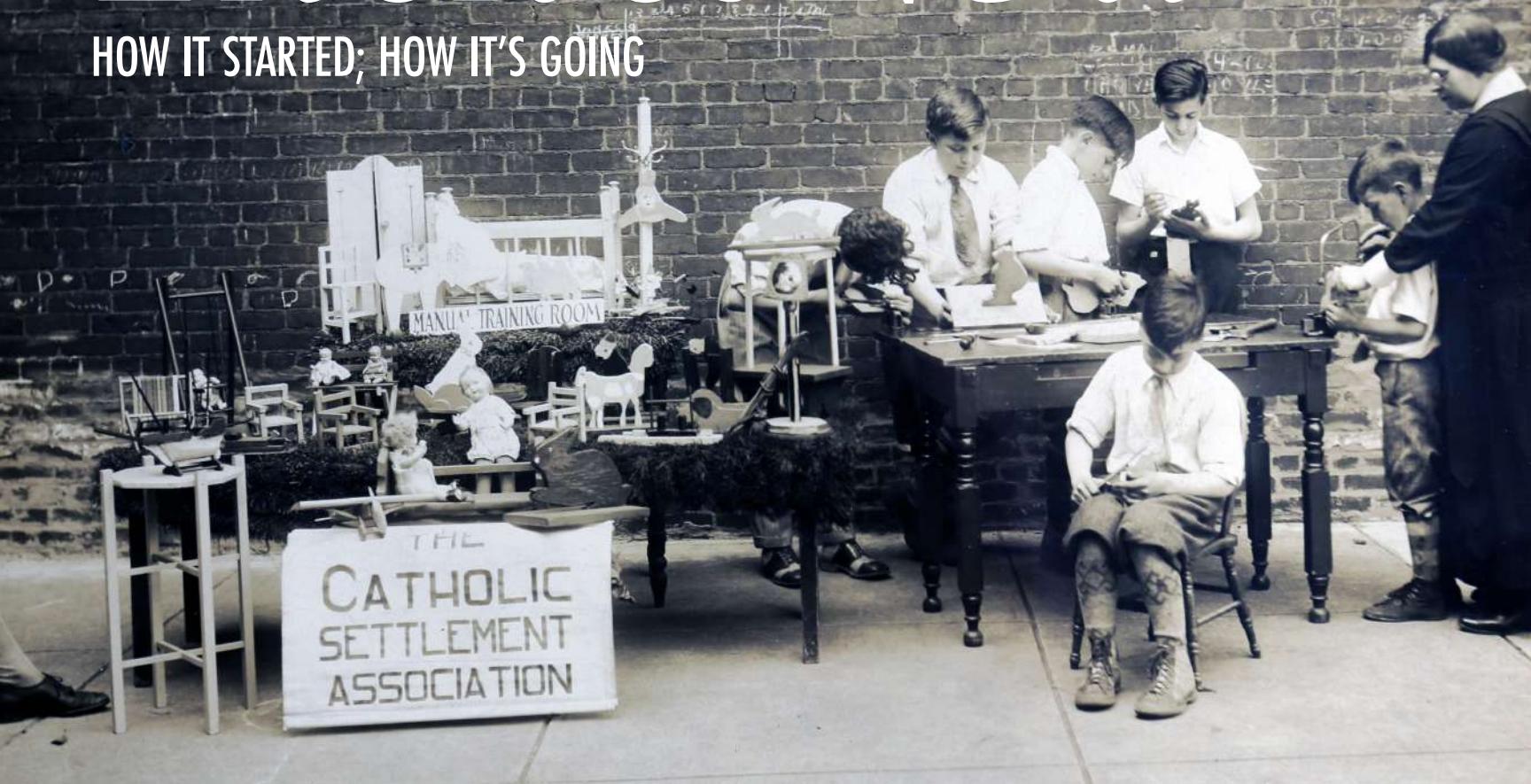
### Looking Forward

As Catholic Charities looks to the future, it remains steadfast in its mission to uphold the dignity of every individual and address the root causes of poverty and injustice. As one of the largest multi-service

agencies in the nation, Catholic Charities continues the work that guided its formation 125 years ago: to meet the needs of its neighbors with compassion and solidarity. From its humble beginnings to its expansive array of 160+ programs and services today, Catholic Charities has touched the lives of countless individuals and families, offering hope, support, and opportunity. As it embarks on its next chapter, Catholic Charities remains a beacon of hope and a model of compassionate service for the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. ■

# Then & Now

## HOW IT STARTED; HOW IT'S GOING



**Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has provided essential community services for over 125 years. It all started in 1899 when a group of concerned Catholics came together to help children orphaned by poverty and disease in Brooklyn. From those humble beginnings, the agency has blossomed, now supporting more than 500,000 people in need each year.**

*THEN: In 1899, the year Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens was founded, there were 1.3 million residents in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.*

*NOW: Catholic Charities, a force for good, is proud to serve over 5.1 million neighbors with a network of 160+*

programs throughout both boroughs, a testament to our unwavering commitment to the community.

*THEN: Catholic Charities, a pillar of strength, served the poor through the Great Depression and the First and Second World Wars by providing child and family welfare services, social activities, protective care, and health services, demonstrating our resilience in the face of adversity.*

*NOW: Catholic Charities provides more than \$7 million in food assistance annually to families, children, the homebound elderly, and older adults through our network of 60 parish-based food pantries and pop-up food distributions. For those in need of emergency services, we serve more than 4,000 clients annually at our walk-in centers and respond to over 45,000 calls for assistance through our Call Center.*

*THEN: In 1969, an Aging Services Office was created, focusing on the concerns of the elderly. By the 1970s, Golden Age Clubs were established in parishes throughout the Diocese, the precursors to today's Older Adult Centers.*

*NOW: More than 16,800 clients ages 65 and over are served each year through our Older Adult Services programs, and more than 650,000 meals are delivered annually through our Home Delivered Meals Program to homebound seniors.*

*THEN: In 1975, Catholic Charities Progress of Peoples Development Corporation began transforming vacant land and buildings into affordable housing units and transforming the lives of individuals and families.*

*NOW: More than 4,567 units have been created with supportive services for seniors, families, the formerly*

homeless, those with HIV, and those struggling with mental illness.

*THEN: In 1975, the agency took over five mental health clinics previously operated by Catholic Medical Center.*

**NOW:** Catholic Charities serves more than 7,700 clients annually through our network of neighborhood clinics and recovery programs.

*THEN: Catholic Charities' roots lay in caring for children, and by 1965, Catholic Charities had opened its first Head Start program at St. Joseph Hall, a girls' home in Bedford-Stuyvesant.*

**NOW:** More than 1,800 children each year are nurtured from birth to age five and provided with more than 467,000 meals at our network of Early Childhood Centers and Family Child Care Programs.

*THEN: A 1926 survey within Catholic Charities determined that resources for family welfare needed to be of primary importance to the agency.*

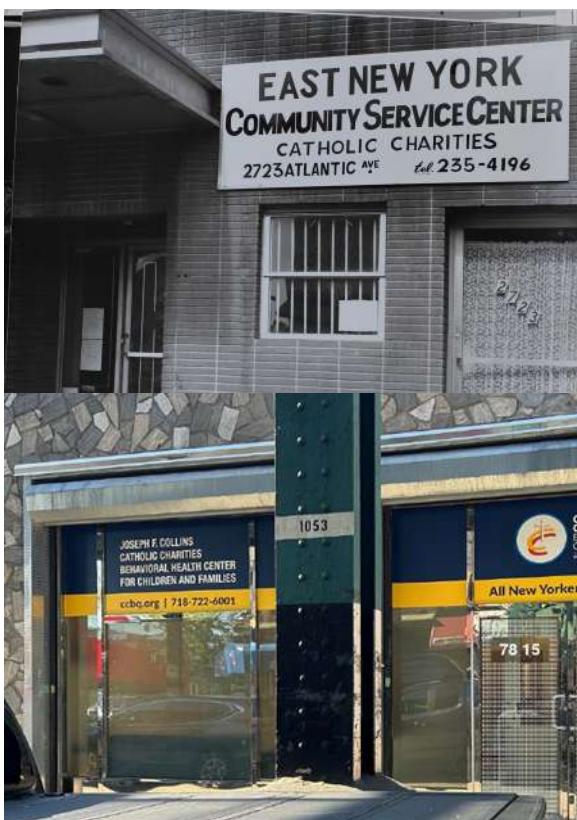
**NOW:** Our Family Services programs provide 23,200 people annually with a wide range of services for the entire family, from homelessness prevention and summer youth employment programs to literacy initiatives and WIC services for pregnant and new mothers.

*THEN: In the late 1800s, a flood of more than 2 million immigrants arrived in New York City, all of them needing housing, jobs, and food.*

**NOW:** Catholic Charities exemplifies compassion for those seeking refuge in the United States, offering limited financial assistance, emergency food and food pantry access, hot meals, clothing, diapers, English as a Second Language classes, WIC programs, and workforce development.

Throughout the years, Catholic Charities has been unwavering in its dedication to meeting the community's diverse needs. Today, 125 years after its founding, Catholic Charities is dedicated to keeping alive a tradition of community outreach, advocacy, and

social justice that is a hallmark of our continuing mission to the neediest among us. ■





# AS IT MARKS 125 YEARS, CCBQ LOOKS TO STEP UP MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH

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THE. TABLET

by Paula Katinas, Senior Reporter for  
The Tablet

**Msgr. John Bracken likes to describe himself as a cheerleader for Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens and said he is always eager to speak about the wide range of programs it offers to people in need. This year, as the agency marks its 125th anniversary, his efforts to promote the nonprofit organization have been kicked up a notch.**

Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, which was founded in 1899, is planning a number of events to celebrate the 125th anniversary, including a gala dinner in the fall. But the organization is also determined to use the anniversary year to spread public awareness of the programs it offers.

As part of that effort, CCBQ has launched a new mental health initiative. And that's where Msgr. Bracken comes in.

Msgr. Bracken, director of patrimony for the Diocese of Brooklyn, is the

chairman of CCBQ's anniversary committee and is helping to launch the new mental health initiative. Msgr. Bracken said he will be reaching out to pastors around the diocese to let them know that CCBQ stands ready, willing, and able to provide mental health services for their parishioners.

"I see what I'm doing as being a cheerleader for Catholic Charities and making the pastors, parish priests, and others who are involved in local parish work aware of the many opportunities that they have to reach out and get the professional help, advice, and counsel their parishioners need — especially in

the areas of mental health, seniors, and drug addiction,” he explained.

As part of the initiative, Catholic Charities has posted a Mental Well-Being video series on its website, [www.ccbq.org](http://www.ccbq.org), explaining the signs to look out for in someone in distress, and ways to help.

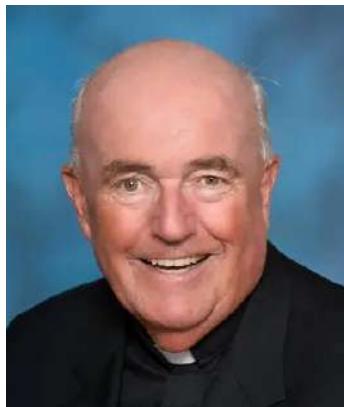
One of the videos focuses on mental well-being for children and features Program Director Zory Wentz explaining how to help kids.

Catholic Charities operates five behavioral health clinics in Brooklyn and Queens (Corona, Flatbush, Glendale, Jamaica, and Rockaway) where children and adults can find help. The clinics provide counseling, substance abuse recovery programs, and other forms of assistance.

Albert G. said he has been coming to the Corona Behavioral Health Clinic for the past few years for group therapy to help him deal with borderline personality disorder. He started visiting during the pandemic. “During the quarantine, I wasn’t doing anything. I had been in a program before that and it was over Zoom. But I needed something in person and it didn’t seem like there was anything in person,” he said. “I was pretty much on my own at home. My symptoms were getting worse. I wasn’t really taking care of my mental state as much as I should have,” he added.

Albert, who was raised Catholic but said he is not a regular churchgoer, heard about Catholic Charities and started attending therapy sessions at the Corona clinic. He feels the sessions have greatly benefited him. “They have a welcoming staff. But it’s also all my peers here. I need to be around peers who are dealing with the same issues as me,” he explained.

In addition to the therapy sessions, Albert said he appreciates the sense of structure Catholic Charities has brought to his life. He works with an individual case manager who meets with him



**Msgr. John Bracken**

regularly to set goals and discuss his progress. “Here and there, I’ve had doubts about myself. But I’ve stuck with it,” he added.

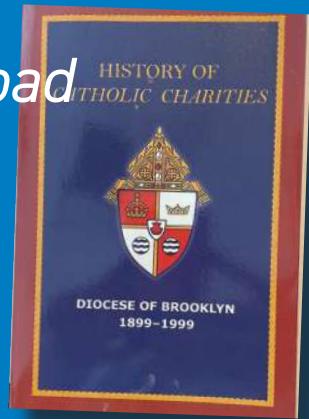
According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 20% of adults are dealing with some type of mental health issue, the most common of which is depression. According to Mental Health America, an estimated 21 million adults in the U.S. are affected by major depression each year.

Catholic Charities is filling an important need, Msgr. Bracken said. “Looking at these issues with young people, some of the statistics about them, like suicide rates, today. Then there’s also big addiction issues. And there’s also senior citizens’ loneliness. We live in the largest city in the world and we have people feeling isolated,” he said.

Even with all its services, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens is always looking to do more, Msgr. Bracken said. “How do we touch those people and how can a parish be able to be much more supportive than they already are?” he added. ■

*This article was originally published in the March 30, 2024 edition of The Tablet newspaper.*

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Today!**



## Exploring the Rich Tapestry of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens: A Journey Through History

The rich history of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens spans over 100 years. A unique history book, first published in 2002 and now available in electronic format, chronicles this legacy. It features rare photos, personal stories, and historical accounts, showcasing the organization’s impact and evolution.

The book highlights the dedicated clergy, volunteers, and staff, as well as the invaluable community support that have shaped Catholic Charities. It details how the organization has adapted to changing community needs while staying true to its core values. Each chapter of the book reveals important moments, such as expanding services during economic hardships and creating innovative programs to address social issues. The book vividly portrays resilience and innovation through its historical content.

To access the book, please visit [www.ccbq.org/ccbq-e-book](http://www.ccbq.org/ccbq-e-book).

## We Are the Catholic Faith at Work: Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens in the We Are There Campaign

In a display of community support and service, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens is participating in the nationwide Catholic Charities USA "We Are There" campaign, alongside its network colleagues across the country. This initiative aims to shine a spotlight on the invaluable, life-saving services provided by Catholic Charities agencies in local communities nationwide.

Established in 1899, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens continues to lend a helping hand and provide assistance in the Diocese of Brooklyn. For 125 years, the agency has developed 160+ programs annually, serving more than 500,000 clients. This commitment demonstrates how essential these services are in today's communities.

Headquartered in Downtown Brooklyn, the Catholic Charities Robert Charles Golden Community Outreach Center annually assists 2,800 families with emergency rent and limited financial support, exemplifying our commitment to helping those in need. Additionally, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has recently launched five parish-based migrant centers, providing essential emergency assistance to new arrivals.

"We are proud to join Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) in launching the 'We Are There' campaign, reaffirming our commitment to compassionately serve our community," said Monsignor Alfred P. LoPinto, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens and Affiliated Agencies. "Together with CCUSA, we join the greater network to support and uplift individuals and families, embracing the spirit of unity and hope that defines our mission."

Catholic Charities USA, the national membership organization for Catholic Charities agencies, has spearheaded the We Are There campaign. Over the coming months, the campaign will raise awareness for the work of Catholic Charities through a variety of national media outlets. Here in the Diocese of Brooklyn, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens will continue to highlight the different ways we help and accompany our neighbors in need. ■

# Events



## Employees Celebrate the Heart of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens

Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens marked its 125th anniversary with a special employee celebration at the iconic Gargiulo's Restaurant in Coney Island, Brooklyn. This landmark event was an afternoon to remember, with delicious food, fun games and an opportunity to honor the employees who have been the lifeblood of the organization. The afternoon was a blend of gratitude and celebration, drawing together more than 700 employees from the agency's 160+ programs. The atmosphere was filled with camaraderie and the shared sense of purpose that has been a hallmark of Catholic Charities' operations since its inception. The 125th-anniversary celebration was not just about marking a significant number of years; it was about acknowledging the people who have made our mission possible. Over the years, our employees have dedicated their careers to serving others, often going above and beyond to provide critical services, from emergency food assistance and housing to mental health support and immigration services. They truly embody our mission to serve the vulnerable and needy in Brooklyn and Queens.

You are warmly invited to join us for the

Closing Ceremony Mass in celebration of the 125th Anniversary of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens

Sunday, November 17th at 11 AM  
Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph  
856 Pacific Street, Brooklyn, NY 11238

His Eminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre is the main celebrant

We look forward to commemorating this significant milestone with you in a spirit of community and gratitude

For more information, please call 718-722-6202 or [ccbq.events@ccbq.org](mailto:ccbq.events@ccbq.org)



## The Joseph F. Collins Behavioral Health Center for Children and Families Celebrates Ribbon-Cutting in Woodhaven, Queens

On July 18, 2024, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens celebrated the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Joseph F. Collins Behavioral Health Center for Children and Families at 78-15 Jamaica Avenue in Woodhaven, Queens. The new clinic aims to enhance the well-being of local families by providing high-quality mental health services to individuals and children aged five years and older, including adolescents, and adults. It provides individual and group counseling, family therapy, and comprehensive evaluation and treatment. The ceremony honored Joseph F. Collins, III, who retired from a distinguished banking career to dedicate over 35 years to Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. Attendees included Monsignor Alfred P. LoPinto, president and chief executive officer, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens and Affiliate Agencies; Joseph F. Collins, board of trustee; Queens Borough President Donovan Richards; Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr., 15th Senate District; and Assembly member Jenifer Rajkumar, Assembly District 38.



## Next Generation Committee Young Professionals Group Gathering

On July 16, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens held the Inaugural Next Generation Committee Gathering in Manhattan, celebrating a significant milestone of 125 years of transformative service. This event was a key moment in expanding the agency's community impact, focusing on engaging young professionals with its mission. The gathering aimed to inspire a new generation of volunteers and supporters, with a clear goal of broadening involvement across diverse backgrounds and skill sets. This initiative reflects Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens' continued commitment to tackling pressing issues like the housing crisis, food insecurity and poverty in New York City. By fostering greater volunteer engagement, Catholic Charities seeks to enhance its efforts in addressing these critical needs.



## Coat of Arms Club Welcomes New Members in Brooklyn

This year's Bishop's Coat of Arms Club was celebrated on April 13 with a Mass at St. Joseph's University Chapel, followed by brunch at his residence. The event launched the 125th Anniversary celebrations for Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens and welcomed eleven new members, including Mr. and Mrs. Dominic and Maria Arlistico, Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Mary Aufenanger, Ms. Kathryn Grow-McCormick, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew and Jacqueline Meagher, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin A. and Marie Ange C. Mignott, Msgr. Michael J. Phillips, and Mrs. Eva A. Krainchich. Founded in 1972 by Edgar Debany and William Scalzo, the club supports the less fortunate in the Diocese of Brooklyn through Catholic Charities. Membership growth and additional gifts continue to aid individuals and families in need.

CELEBRATING  
**125**  
YEARS



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES**  
Brooklyn and Queens  
CARITAS NOW MAGAZINE  
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Brooklyn, NY 11201  
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## Save the Date!

**Saturday, November 16, 2024**

St. John's University Poverty Conference  
D'Angelo Center Ballroom (room 416)  
8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens

**Sunday, November 17, 2024**

125th Anniversary Mass  
Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph  
856 Pacific Street, Brooklyn

For details on these and future events visit: [www.ccbq.org](http://www.ccbq.org), contact the Office of Development and Communications at 718-722-6202 or email us at [ccbq.events@ccbq.org](mailto:ccbq.events@ccbq.org).



**WE ARE THERE.**  
We are the  
Catholic faith at work.

For 125 years, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has been providing social services to those in need. Catholic Charities offers 160+ programs for children, families, older adults, and those with mental illness. Since 1975, Catholic Charities has built over 4,567 affordable housing units. This year, we will provide more than \$3 million dollars in food assistance at 60 parish-based food pantries, pop-up events, older adult centers, and home-delivered meals for the homebound elderly. We serve more than 500,000 individuals with emergency assistance, older adult services, mental health counseling, affordable housing, family services, and early childhood programs.



For more information on our 160+ programs and services, visit [www.ccbq.org](http://www.ccbq.org).

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