

THE MISSION

FALL 2026

CATHOLIC
CHARITIES
OF LONG ISLAND



U.S. Army veteran Salvatore Canzoneri celebrates the 250th anniversary of America's independence at CCLI's Wantagh Senior Center.

PROUDLY SERVING VETERANS



The red, white, and blue were on full display as Catholic Charities of Long Island celebrated Independence Day with veterans at its senior centers in Wantagh and Oceanside. The festivities were also a reminder of our year-round commitment to the men and women who served our nation.

Guided by Jesus Christ's call to love and serve one another, Catholic Charities supports veterans through affordable housing, Meals on Wheels, senior services, mental health counseling, and addiction treatment programs.

Inside this issue, discover how Catholic Charities is helping veterans across Long Island live with dignity, independence, and hope. In serving those who served our country, we strive to follow Christ's example and see His presence in every person we are called to help.

“Among the principles that have guided the development of this country is the God-given dignity of every human life, each person being endowed with an inherent worth that calls for reverence, protection and care.” Pope Leo XIV

PATRIOTIC CELEBRATIONS SALUTE CCLI SENIOR VETERANS

Festive Fourth of July barbecues at Catholic Charities senior centers in Wantagh and Oceanside, marking the 250th anniversary of America's independence, paid special tribute to members who are veterans of the U.S. military. The celebrations featured patriotic decorations, music and dancing, fellowship, and gratitude.

Guests enjoyed favorites including hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, pickles, and desserts. At the Wantagh Center, a special cake honored the nation's anniversary and Lisa Pagliaro, the center's director, whose birthday falls on July 4. Members joined in a spirited rendition of "Happy Birthday."

Michael E. Smith, CEO of Catholic Charities of Long Island, greeted veterans and other members. A brief ceremony recognizing veterans for their service and sacrifice was held and each veteran received a commemorative T-shirt.

Veteran Peter DeSantis, 81, proudly accepted his shirt and said he plans to wear it often. Peter attended with his wife, Diane. They joined the Wantagh center after their daughter encouraged them to visit. "This place is fabulous," Peter said. "I'm so happy I joined here. The staff is great."

Peter volunteered for the U.S. Army after high school in 1963. Stationed in Germany with the Third Infantry Division, he operated a tow truck and completed rigorous training. While home on leave, he married Diane before returning to Germany and completing three years of service as a sergeant.

Another veteran, Richie Tagliaferri, 89, enjoys card games, social activities, and bus trips offered through the center. "I love this place. It's added years to my life," Richie said. He enjoyed his military service and recommends it to the younger generation. "It made a man out of me," he said.

Catholic Charities supports veterans through Senior Centers, Meals on Wheels, Congregate Meal Sites, Affordable Senior Housing, Nutrition Services including SNAP assistance, Mental Health Services, and Addiction Services.

Heavenly Father,

Bless our veterans and all who serve our nation defending our freedom.

For those who bravely gave their lives, grant them eternal rest.

For those who are serving, give them courage.

For those who served, we offer our gratitude.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Published by Catholic Digest



Dear Friend of Catholic Charities,

Over the past several months, I've hit the road to promote Catholic Charities of Long Island. My travels aren't very far from home, as I am addressing groups right here on Long Island. Of course, that makes perfect sense since it's precisely the audience we want to reach.

Our charitable service is 100 percent devoted to our neighbors here. That's been the case since our founding in 1957 by Most Rev. Walter P. Kellenberg, the first bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Church history buffs may recall that was the year the diocese itself was founded.

We're getting a head start on the 70th anniversary of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Rockville Centre in 2027. I'm very proud of all we've accomplished from the beginning. That's why I'm getting out and about talking to Chambers of Commerce alliances and association trade shows, just about anyone who can help us.

I've met receptive audiences, gathered right in front of me or during Catholic Faith Network appearances and media interviews. I tell everyone how delighted I am to lead a mission-driven organization that offers "Care with Dignity" and "Life with Hope" to the needy and vulnerable Long Islanders we are privileged to serve with the transforming love of Jesus, as He taught us in Matthew 25:35-40.

Each person reading this letter is among the core supporters of our Catholic Charities of Long Island community. Thank you so much for standing with us, and please continue your generous giving, so that others may rise.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Smith".

Michael E. Smith, Chief Executive Officer



SHAPING 'GOD AND LOVE' AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Mike Addonizio never rushes an art project. His latest idea had been percolating since 2020 when a cross and heart were incorporated in Catholic Charities of Long Island's new logo.

He waits for inspiration to strike before the design work begins. The finished product went through a cardboard template and several unsuccessful attempts with other materials before the steel remaining from a home project proved the correct building material.

Mike worked with his son-in-law Sean, who has mastered the bending machine set up in his home workshop. The steel block was shaped to fashion the heart leaning on the cross. The two main elements represent "God and love," said Mike, adding that "He's always in your heart." The shaping process took time to achieve the right bend on the heart and the cross before the individual pieces were carefully welded together. Cuts were made and ground down and pickled before being wiped down with copper sulfate and a combination of dishwashing detergent, water and salt to form a patina under a clear-coat seal.

The project came together in nine hours. Perhaps the work was made easier because he and Sean are next door neighbors. "We bounce ideas off each other," Mike says. "If me and him can't build it, then no one can," Mike states. The work is currently staged in the boardroom at Catholic Charities offices in Hicksville. "It gives me great joy to see somebody look at the piece and be happy," he notes.

Mike, who is in his 26th year with Catholic Charities, currently serves as Residential Facilities Coordinator for the dozen homes across Long Island that CCLI operates for adults with developmental disabilities. Over the years, he's gotten to know many of the clients who live in the residences, where they are encouraged to develop their potential and be active in their communities. "I have a relationship with all of them. When I go into a house, I'm greeted by 13 people in their own way," he said. "I treat them with the respect and dignity that they deserve."

Mike considers himself a pretty quiet fellow who doesn't seek the limelight, but enjoys bringing people joy through his artwork. He's hoping to create smaller versions of the heart and cross piece that will fit well on desktops. "I love doing the work and putting a smile on someone's face," he said.



"It gives me great joy to see somebody look at the piece and be happy."



STUDENTS AND SCOUTS PUT FAITH INTO ACTION

Catholic Charities of Long Island is celebrating local Eagle Scouts and Kellenberg Memorial High School students whose projects helped families, children, seniors, and adults with developmental disabilities while learning the invaluable lesson that giving to others often becomes a gift to themselves.

Eagle Scout Lorenzo Falanga, with help from Troop 93, organized a collection drive for Regina Maternity Services that brought in four carloads of diapers, wipes, soap, laundry detergent, shampoo, and clothing. Eagle Scout Michael Vogt also gave families a reason to celebrate by creating and delivering 100 birthday boxes filled with cake mix, frosting, candles, and party supplies.

CCLI also partnered with Kellenberg Memorial High School's annual Service Camp. Over four days, students helped host a children's carnival, spent time with seniors, and shared activities and meals with adults with developmental disabilities. Through these efforts, they lived the Gospel calling to care for one another and discovered firsthand that acts of kindness enrich both those who receive and those who give.

RESPONDING IN CHARITY

**“LET US SPREAD THE WEALTH OF CHARITY,
SHARE OUR BREAD AND MULTIPLY LOVE.”**

– POPE FRANCIS

**“To love Christ means
to love the poor”**

– Pope Leo XIV, Dilexi Te



A GRAND CARITAS EVENING

The 2026 Caritas Award Dinner in May was a spectacular success, as father and daughter honorees Joseph Fennessy and Carol Sciotto delivered eloquent messages supporting CCLI. A total of 228 guests filled The Heritage Club in Bethpage. Fennessy is retired after a stellar career with Deloitte and Touche LLP, and Sciotto is the current executive director of CYO Long Island. Bishop John O. Barres said, “The work of Catholic Charities is our Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in so many contexts.” The event raised the second highest total ever.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF LONG ISLAND

24TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC
& PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT



Monday, October 5th, 2026
The Muttontown Club, East Norwich, NY

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HONORING

Deacon Michael Monahan,
Tri-Parish Beach Catholic



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“We all take pride in our nation that has offered refuge to so many for so long who come from such a marvelous diversity of places and cultures.”

*Bishop John O. Barres, Diocese of Rockville
Centre, on Immigration Reform*

WARM WELCOME ON REFUGEE DAY

“United” was the key theme of Catholic Charities of Long Island’s annual World Refugee Day celebration, where more than 300 people gathered at the Amityville campus to share food, friendship, and culture. Families from around the world enjoyed games, raffle prizes, music, and international cuisine in a welcoming atmosphere that celebrated diversity and belonging.

In her remarks, Carmen Maquilon, director of CCLI’s Immigrant and Refugee Resettlement Services, encouraged the many guests attending to introduce themselves to someone new and learn about one another’s backgrounds. Her message of connection resonated throughout the event.

Afghan refugee Sayed said gatherings like this are important because “as an immigrant you need this.”

Under sunny skies, colorful flags from many nations lined the venue while families enjoyed soccer drills, a vibrant version of musical chairs, and kid-friendly face painting. Guests shared dishes from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Haiti, along with pizza and salad.

Visitors discovered community, inspired by Catholic Charities, in each other. Their togetherness was both a joyful encounter and a welcome relief.

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