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**DIOCESE OF  
ROCKFORD**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024

# PRESS RELEASE

## Newspaper sponsors ‘Christmas in July’ Donation drive for Catholic Charities

ROCKFORD, IL—Santa will be breaking out the lawn chairs and sunscreen on July 9 to help Catholic Charities in the Rockford Diocese.

The *Observer Catholic Newspaper* will celebrate the message of charity and thanksgiving normally reserved for the celebration of Christ's birth in December so that the agencies of Catholic Charities can help others in a big way both when the need arises and when the celebration of Christmas actual comes later this year.

“Our friends and neighbors, all we serve, come to us with needs throughout the year. Catholic Charities is blessed by the community's generosity during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. However, for many reasons, donations decrease during the good weather,” said director of Catholic Charities Cathy Weightman-Moore.

“Our pantry shelves and household goods room need to stay stocked at St. Elizabeth Center in Rockford to serve the ongoing needs of our neighbors. In our refugee resettlement program, the limited funds we receive for resettlement are increasingly drained due to the higher cost of rent. Donations of new items to furnish housing go a long way to stretching those funds. Requests for assistance are ongoing, and gift cards for gas and groceries are especially helpful in stabilizing a family crisis or feeding a family,” Weightman- Moore said.

**So to help fill those needs, *The Observer* is inviting the public to join in the giving and drop off needed items to the Diocesan Administration Center, 555 Colman Center Drive, Rockford from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.** There will be a “Christmas Tent” in the employee parking lot during those hours to collect items. A Catholic Charities truck will be on-sight to take items to Santa's workshop for later distribution to those in need.

Donors will have the opportunity to say an early hello to Santa and share some cold beverages and Christmas treats along with sharing in the mission of Catholic Charities' staff and volunteers who Weightman-Moore says “serve as the hands and feet of Christ, joining with our neighbors and communities to strengthen families and stabilize lives.”

Donations to the Christmas in July event assist people from all walks of life who come to Catholic Charities for assistance when hardship strikes. Those hardships can include the loss of a job, illness in the family, chronic food insecurity, homelessness, unplanned pregnancy, mental health concerns, or any crisis that can push someone to seek help.

Items collected will also help Catholic Charities as it serves families and youth through programs at St. Elizabeth Center in Rockford with a DCFS-licensed childcare program, and a food pantry and household goods room. Items will help refugees who are resettled through the Refugee Resettlement Program, providing housing and other case management to promote early self-sufficiency. Also benefiting will be the Emergency Assistance Program that provides resources and referrals, and limited financial assistance to move families toward greater stability.

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Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 400,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford visit [www.rockforddiocese.org](http://www.rockforddiocese.org).