“CREATE MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER AND FRIENDSHIP,” writes Pope Francis in his recent declaration for the first “World Day for the Poor.”

The Pontiff’s call to action motivates us to seek opportunities that improve lives, and gain a greater awareness that we are all more alike than different. Everyone has hopes, dreams and heartaches. The Pontiff’s call to action motivates us to seek opportunities that improve lives, and gain a greater awareness that we are all more alike than different. Everyone has hopes, dreams and heartaches. Recently, I was impressed by the determination of a young woman from the Eastern Shore of Maryland who shared her story of overcoming addiction and her pernicious self-doubt before a rapt audience at the 35th Anniversary of My Sister’s Place Women’s Center. This young woman overcame adversity and self-destructive behavior after enrolling in MSPW’s Learn to Earn program. Her resilience coupled with a strong support network, enabled her to overcome nearly a decade of defeat.

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My Sister’s Place Marks Its 35th Anniversary

“MY SISTER’S PLACE WOMEN’S CENTER SAVES LIVES,” said an emphatic Tamla Olivier, President and CEO of BGE HOME and Constellation Home and the guest speaker for Catholic Charities’ My Sister’s Place Women’s Center’s (MSPWC) Anniversary Breakfast, commemorating 35 years of service.

Since 1982, the Center has served as a pioneer in implementing creative care for women and children who are experiencing homelessness and hunger. The crowd of supporters enthusiastically punctuated Ms. Olivier’s remarks with affirmative applause. “My Sister’s Place saves lives with three hot meals, job-training, counseling and an internship program,” added Ms. Olivier. “These services allow women to overcome unplanned barriers and become contributing members of our society.”

During the breakfast, Rebecca Abrahamsen, current Program Director; and Mary Ellen McLaughlin, SSND, the first director of the Center when it opened in 1982 and current Director of the Caroline Center; Sr. Patricia Vanni, the second director and retired Executive Director of the Fuel Fund of Maryland; and Constellation Home; and Evelyn Chatmon; Janet Jones; Pat Tunstall, former Catholic Charities President and CEO of BGE HOME and Constellation Home; and Carol Guarrieri.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/mspwc
In 2015, I joined the Learn to Earn internship program at My Sister’s Place Women’s Center. I was 26, living in a recovery program — essentially homeless. On welfare. Jobless. Uncertain about my future. I am baffled as to how all these adjectives were part of my reality. How had this happened?

I am blessed to have a loving and supportive family. My parents are well educated and we lived in a lovely home. I was a 3 varsity sport athlete and a straight “A” student in high school. I graduated summa cum laude and attended Salisbury University with the majority of my tuition paid for in academic scholarships. I finished three quarters of a bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science.

For more information on programs and events, visit cc-md.org
ON A DAMP AND CHILLY FALL EVENING - FITTING FOR A NIGHT OF ACOUSTIC IRISH MUSIC – Declan O’Rourke, an immensely popular singer-songwriter from Dublin, Ireland, joined American singer-songwriter Peter Breinholt to perform before 120 music lovers for the Fourth Annual Benefit Concert supporting Our Daily Bread Employment Center held at Notre Dame of Maryland University.

“The place God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet. Tonight, music is our gladness while we address homelessness and hunger,” said Doug Desmarais, a Baltimore native and Brigham Young University (BYU) graduate, who spearheaded the benefit concert.

Peter Breinholt, a favorite of BYU students and a resident of Utah, opened the evening with his original compositions. His fantastic performance was followed by O’Rourke’s poignant and powerful music from his album, My Sister’s Place Women’s Center and women and children through Our Daily Bread, Christopher Place Employment Academy, My Sister’s Place Women’s Center and Sarah’s House.

In the past year, Catholic Charities provided 481,176 meals to men, women and children through Our Daily Bread, Christopher Place Employment Academy, My Sister’s Place Women’s Center and Sarah’s House.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/whrc, cc-md.org/odbec, cc-md.org/sarahhouse and cc-md.org/mspwc

CODE BLUE IN BALTIMORE

When temperatures drop below freezing, the lives of older adults, people experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable populations are at risk. Catholic Charities works with the City to broaden its services during the winter months and particularly when Code Blue is put into effect.

Catholic Charities’ Weinberg Housing and Resource Center, Our Daily Bread Employment Center and My Sister’s Place Women’s Center experience a significant increase in the number of men, women and children who rely on these programs for shelter, food and emergency medical services during Code Blue events.

Caring for many more individuals significantly increases the operating costs for these programs. Catholic Charities welcomes financial assistance to fund this essential, life-saving work.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/whrc, cc-md.org/odbec and cc-md.org/mspwc

LEARN TO EARN GRADUATES INTO THE WORKPLACE

Learn to Earn is a free 12-week training in either food preparation or clerical services. The program includes hands-on and classroom learning through My Sister’s Place Women’s Center.


To learn more, visit cc-md.org/mspwc

THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS at St. Vincent’s Villa!

Since 2007, volunteers have transformed the St. Vincent’s Villa school gym into a magical winter wonderland for the holiday season. Until January 1st, the students will enjoy the festive display of more than 100 pine trees decorated with twinkling lights and thousands of ornaments.

Ellen Torres, a former Catholic Charities employee, rallies the volunteers to create the magnificent Christmas tree display.

“For many of these children, this is their first holiday away from home; therefore, we make every effort to bring them joy, as they address a whirlwind of emotions,” said Ezra Buchdahl, Director of St. Vincent’s Villa.

St. Vincent’s Villa provides comprehensive residential treatment for children, ages 5-14, whose behavioral and emotional needs have not responded to community based interventions and services. There are 78 children enrolled in St. Vincent’s Villa.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/svv

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For more information on programs and events, visit cc-md.org
O come, all ye faithful!

Share your blessings this holiday season and make your year-end gift at cc-md.org/blessings. You improve lives with your generous support. Thank YOU!

Visit our new website: www.cc-md.org

One of the ways we share impactful stories about Catholic Charities is through our website. Take a look at our new web design that was completed in conjunction with Eyler Creative. We hope you find it inspirational and useful.