

WITNESS OF HOPE
STORIES OF
YOUR IMPACT



ARCHDIOCESE
— OF —
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

Catholic Services Appeal

Quarterly Newsletter

AUGUST 2026

PLANTING HOPE

The Catholic Services Appeal is pleased to share *Witness of Hope*, our first newsletter for donors, parishes, and partners. In these pages, you'll find stories of impact made possible by your commitment to the annual Catholic Services Appeal.

Recently, the Catholic Services Appeal team became part of that story by spending a morning refreshing the landscaping at Abria Pregnancy Resources' Northside Clinic in Minneapolis. Though the work was simple, creating a more welcoming entryway helped support Abria's mission to reflect Christ's love by meeting women where they are and accompanying them through life's challenges.

While pulling weeds and planting flowers, we were reminded that service takes many forms. **Whether through volunteering time, sharing talents, or giving financially, each act of generosity strengthens our local Church and extends God's care to those in need.**

If you are interested in giving your time, please visit our website to connect with CSA-supported ministries that offer volunteer opportunities. Thank you for being part of this mission and for bringing hope, healing, and faith to our community.

In Gratitude,



Marci Franzen, Catholic Services Appeal
Office of Mission Advancement
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



CSA team members, Marci, Lindsey, and Melanie (top photo: three on the right), and archdiocese coworkers, Maria Hultman and Kim Kelly, beautifying the grounds at Abria Northside Clinic

CARING FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

City Connects in our local Catholic schools



Students from Community of Saints Regional Catholic School

The CSA supports Catholic education within our archdiocese. A portion of these funds goes to City Connects, a student support program that helps schools address the individual strengths and needs of each child so they can thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Through City Connects, trained coordinators work closely with students, families, teachers, and community partners to identify barriers to learning and connect children with the resources they need. These supports may include academic enrichment, mental health services, healthcare referrals, food assistance, mentoring programs, and family support services.

Supported by the CSA, City Connects serves students attending the Archdiocese's Drexel Mission Schools—schools with the highest concentration of need throughout our community.

These schools include:

- Ascension, Minneapolis
- Blessed Trinity, Richfield
- Community of Saints, West Saint Paul
- Immaculate Conception, Columbia Heights
- Risen Christ, Minneapolis
- Saint Helena, Minneapolis
- Saint Jerome, Maplewood
- Saint Pascal Regional School, Saint Paul
- Saint Peter Claver, Saint Paul



Community of Saints is a K-8 Catholic School



Music class at Community of Saints

By addressing challenges both inside and outside the classroom, City Connects helps ensure that students have the support they need to succeed in school and in life. Through the generosity of Catholic Services Appeal donors, City Connects served **1,761 students** across these schools, providing individualized care and connecting families with critical resources that strengthen academic achievement, well-being, and long-term success.

This work reflects the Church's commitment to educating the whole child and supporting families in communities where additional resources can make a life-changing difference.

1,761

The CSA helped 1,761 students receive pivotal services in the 2025-2026 school year.

RESTORING THOSE WHO SERVE

Youth ministers retreat

Through the CSA, you support youth ministers who nurture and encourage the Faith in young people in our archdiocese.

Recently, the Office of Discipleship and Evangelization hosted a three-day, two-night retreat for parish staff serving in youth discipleship and faith formation. The retreat provided an opportunity for these ministry leaders to encounter Jesus in prayer and the sacraments, and to experience rest and renewal, returning to their work strengthened in their mission.



Archdiocesan youth ministers on a retreat at Trinity Woods Catholic Retreat Center hosted by the Office of Discipleship and Evangelization

Youth ministry can be both rewarding and demanding. Many youth ministers experience feelings of isolation, burnout, and a lack of support, contributing to a high rate of turnover in these important roles. Opportunities for prayer, fellowship, and spiritual renewal help sustain these leaders so they can continue accompanying young people in their faith journeys.



Greg Montana (left), Youth Discipleship Coordinator for the archdiocese, with an attending youth minister, John Regnier



Hear from one of the attendees:

"I've seen and talked with other youth ministers before and you can tell that a lot is weighing on them. Sometimes it's a feeling of failure or loneliness, but often it's due to a lack of support for youth ministers."

This kind of retreat is essential for youth ministers to have their time separate from the busyness and worries of the mission and focus on something crucial: their relationship with the Lord.



To carry out the mission of the Church more effectively, youth ministers need time to continue building their relationship with the Lord. The way this retreat was handled was amazing, as it provided the place of rest and provided opportunities for us to dive deeper into our own relationship with the Lord and rest in His peace."

Your generosity strengthens those who are helping young people encounter Christ and grow in their faith, ensuring that dedicated ministry leaders can continue serving the next generation with joy, purpose, and hope.



100

The CSA supports the ongoing training and care of approximately 100 youth ministers in the archdiocese.

Top: Group of youth ministers at the retreat

Middle: Father Chad VanHoose, Mass was offered daily at the retreat

Bottom: Recreation like canoeing and four square was available to the attendees

FROM SEARCHING TO BELONGING

Northfield college campus ministry

When Nathan Howard arrived in Northfield for college, he was far from home and searching for a place to belong. A simple online search for a Catholic parish led him to **Saint Dominic Parish and the campus ministry community** that would become instrumental in his journey to the Catholic Church.

Saint Dominic is the home of college ministry in Northfield, Minnesota. Their ministry for Saint Olaf and Carleton Colleges provides “a variety of worship and prayer, catechesis, and formation for human and spiritual growth, and service and social encounters for all college-aged young adults”.

Through campus ministry, Nathan found opportunities to grow in faith alongside fellow students. He attended on-campus Masses, joined Rosary nights through the Catholic Students Association, and participated in a Discovering Catholicism class as he prepared for Confirmation.



Nathan Howard praying at Sunday Mass at Church of Saint Dominic in Northfield, Minnesota



The college outreach is an integral part of the parish of Saint Dominic learn more about their ministry [here](#)

"It was a wonderful experience for me to walk with other college students who were preparing for Confirmation or wanted to deepen their faith," Nathan shared. "We were able to grow in our faith together."

After months of preparation, Nathan entered the Catholic Church. Rather than feeling anxious, he described the experience as natural and fulfilling.

"It was something I'd been preparing for, for many months, and I felt like it was time to step into that," he said. "It felt very natural and fulfilling."

Nathan credits campus ministry with helping him encounter the truth and beauty he found in the Catholic faith. As a musician, he was drawn to the Church's rich tradition and teachings, which deepened his relationship with God and transformed his understanding of faith.

He also recognizes how important campus ministry is for students navigating college life.

3

The CSA supports three college campuses in their ministry:

- **Saint Lawrence Newman Center, University of Minnesota**
- **Carleton College**
- **St. Olaf College**

"I think I would have felt much more alone if campus ministry wasn't there to meet me where I am and connect me with the clergy and community. Campus ministry is how we're able to reach college students of all kinds."

Today, Nathan is grateful for the many CSA donors whose generosity supports campus ministry throughout the archdiocese.

Asked about the impact of college ministry he said, "it means everything, if we're not reaching out to young people, we're not supporting the future of the Church. I'm very grateful, and I'm looking to do my part in bringing more people to the Church and deepening the faith of others."



Father Justus Musinguzi is the beloved Chaplin of the college outreach ministry for the colleges in Northfield: St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges

WELCOME TO THE BEGINNING

CSA Quarterly Newsletter

Witness of Hope is a quarterly newsletter that shares inspiring accounts of the ministries, individuals, and communities made stronger through your support, showing how together, we are bringing Christ's love and hope to others.

Thank you for being part of these stories and helping make this mission possible.



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