



CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER



PRESS RELEASE

CCCS AND CFC MERGE / CATHOLIC CHARITIES FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CCCS and CFC merge to form Catholic Charities Family and Community Services

*Marlene Bessette to retire as CEO for next phase of
community service.*

June 30, 2021

Rochester, NY ... The Board of Directors of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester (CCDR) announces the merger of Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS) and Catholic Family Center (CFC). The combined agency will be called Catholic Charities Family and Community Services, providing clients with easier access to a wider range of services and enabling staff to offer more comprehensive care and treatment options in a more efficient delivery model. Serving together, the staff will continue over 100 years of service to the most vulnerable individuals and families living in the city of Rochester, as well as throughout all 12 counties of the Diocese.

Highlights

- Agency will continue to serve clients across all stages of life, with services and programs that enable independence and promote human dignity.
- The newly joined non-profit agency will operate services and programs representing approximately \$47M
- These services and programs span refugee resettlement to services assisting vulnerable individuals and families, supporting people on their journey to independence. Both agencies have highly respected housing programs serving those

MARLENE BESSETTE TO RETIRE

Marlene Bessette, an outstanding leader of CFC for nearly ten years, informed the CFC Board late last year of her intention to retire from CFC in 2022, making this a perfect opportunity to consider this merger.

During Marlene's tenure, she instituted a data and process driven management approach that turned around financial losses while improving and growing quality services. Marlene also served the wider community, using these skills to benefit community wide initiatives such as RMAPI, Behavioral Health Care Collaboratives, and the Systems Integration Project.

Ever a systems thinker, Ms. Bessette identified synergy opportunities between the two CCDOR agencies with headquarter locations in Rochester. Her announcement presented an opportunity to accomplish this with Marlene directly assisting the transition.

"After 28 years of leadership in the for-profit sector, Marlene felt a call to an even greater purpose," said Jack Balinsky, Diocesan Director, Catholic Charities of Rochester. "Under her stewardship at Catholic Family Center, she has stabilized the

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seeking shelter, those needing residential support in their addiction recovery, and those living with significant health challenges.

- Lori VanAuken, MPA, current Executive Director of CCCS will lead Catholic Charities Family & Community Services as President and CEO.
- Last year, Marlene Bessette, President and CEO of Catholic Family Center for nearly ten years, informed the CFC Board of her intention to retire from CFC in 2022. **See sidebar.**

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, offers his words of support: "As sister agencies under Catholic Charities, both Catholic Charities Community Services and Catholic Family Center share a common mission and vision for helping the most vulnerable members of our community in answer to the mandate of Jesus to love God and to love our neighbor. In answering this call to serve together, the dedicated staff of both agencies will be even more strongly supported to continue their service, in faith and charity and in love. On behalf of the Diocese, and all who have been served by her leadership, our prayerful wishes and gratitude to Marlene Bessette for her dedication to the service of Catholic Charities."

Stephanie Schaeffer, Board Chair for CFC, and Denny Fries, Board Chair for CCCS, share their enthusiastic support for the merger: "Our constituents will benefit from this combination through the enhanced services and streamlined processes we will be able to provide as a single entity. In these challenging times, our community needs a human service provider that is large enough to navigate complex regulatory requirements but small enough to provide the human touch in a caring way, providing help to those who desperately need it. Both CFC and CCCS have long histories of successful service to our community, and together they can combine the best of both organizations to be even stronger and better positioned to serve for many years to come."

The merger process will take place over the next several months. Both the CFC and CCCS Boards, as well as the Bishop of Rochester and the Board of CCDDR, have all expressed unanimous support for appointment of Lori VanAuken as CEO of the combined agency.

MARLENE BESSETTE TO RETIRE (CTD)

agency's operations and financial performance, and positioned Catholic Charities as a community leader in the fields of poverty reduction and community health. Her unique ability to make the complex simple and divergent agendas align have inspired others to come together in the community transition to integrated human services."

Stephanie Schaeffer, CFC Board Chair adds, "The CFC Board of Directors expresses our deepest gratitude and appreciation for Marlene and her nearly ten years of visionary leadership of CFC. Marlene's passion and tireless commitment to serving the most vulnerable members of our society have left a lasting and positive impact on our community. Her strategic thinking and community partnerships have created the foundation for true progress in the fight to reduce poverty. She will continue her extraordinary service through 2021 by working to ensure that the newly combined agency is well-positioned for success. While Marlene's service and dedication will be missed, we wish her all the best as she moves into her next phase."

Marlene's work has touched the lives of thousands and her leadership has made a lasting impact that will be felt throughout the region for many years to come. Catholic Family Center and the entire Catholic Charities family express deep gratitude for her service

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"This is true leadership in action and shows what is possible when dedicated, community-driven organizations, their boards and staff come together to best meet the needs of the individuals and families they serve," said Jaime Saunders, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester. "United Way was honored to be a trusted partner in this process and to provide a Synergy Grant to support this big picture thinking and implementation. We are grateful and inspired by the leadership of Marlene for her years of dedicated service to Catholic Family Center and countless community tables, and we look forward to working with Lori in her new role and the bright future ahead for Catholic Charities Family and Community Services."

Bringing the two agencies together combines the strengths of both organizations in a unique and natural way that will benefit our community.

In a joint statement, Marlene Bessette and Lori VanAuken shared, "Our services and mission are naturally aligned and our joining together will enable a broader array of services and programs for the people we have the privilege of serving. Both CFC and CCCS are in a position of fiscal and program strength which helps to ensure the success of this transition. We are excited for what is to come."

The merger will be effective in January, 2022. Meanwhile, information on current services and programs, and how the community can support them, can be found on www.cccsrochester.org and www.cfcrochester.org.

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About Catholic Charities Community Services

Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS) began in 1980 with a group home for 12 persons with developmental disabilities in Lyons, NY. CCCS now serves the 12 counties of the Greater Rochester area with 13 certified residential sites. Today, thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities, and those with serious health challenges receive an array of services including housing subsidies, care coordination, employment and community-based behavioral health support.

About Catholic Family Center

Catholic Family Center (CFC) is Greater Rochester's largest provider of comprehensive family services. Each year we assist tens of thousands of our neighbors, relatives and friends as they work to remain or become healthy, productive, participating members of our community. We serve all people—regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, age, ability or gender. Our programs work together to address the many issues of human need across all stages of life.