



Insights Enancdounte

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The reward was in the service

TheCatholicRegister - LukeMandato



Ganesh Subramaniam has spent the last 26 years making sure every dollar raised for Catholic Charities reaches the needy. Now, the organization's long-standing finance manager has made the decision to retire, but not from caring. Reflecting on his career, Subramaniam says the real reward was never in the numbers, but in the people, both his team and the ones they served. "I am very grateful and very humbled that I was able to contribute, even if in a small way. Working with our volunteers really gives you that satisfaction at the end of each day, and even when the hours were long, you still felt that you were able to do it as part of a team that has been so amazing," he said.

While Subramaniam may attest that his contributions were "small," his work often cemented itself as the humble, driving force behind Catholic Charities' work, turning countless donations into life-changing help for the most vulnerable across the years. For years, Subramaniam worked relatively unseen, overseeing financial management, pension administration, benefits administration and investments. He was responsible for managing the disbursement of funds raised through ShareLife campaigns to member agencies, while also reviewing, validating and prioritizing agency funding requests with program managers and volunteers each year. Often in the ~~thick of it~~, he is only now beginning to realize the true impact of his and his peers' daily work on the people who need it most. Subramaniam noted an interesting reality that could only be observed by the people who have lived the life of service for as long as he had — while staff, technology and processes have evolved, the needs of vulnerable people not only remain, but have constantly grown more complex. "We have a very small office, but we are ultimately responsible for these social services and making sure those services in the Archdiocese of Toronto are being carefully managed and provided to all the needy people," he said. Catholic Charities has shared space with the Register since the archdiocese moved into its midtown chancery in the 1990s. Over the years, both organizations shared a strong relationship, both professionally and socially. "So many good people have come and gone through our time as neighbours, and Ganesh is definitely one of the best. Always quick with a smile and his laugh, he brightened up so many days when we'd cross paths. His infectious smile and good humour are what we'll miss most about Ganesh around the building," said Editor Mickey Conlon.

-Originally published in The Catholic Register

Catholic Charities' Christmas Card Design Contest



Honourable Mention:
Abigail C - Rose of Sharon



Honourable Mention:
Ajantha & Ashrithan - CCSYR



2025 Winner:
Neda Tadayon - CCSYR

This time of year, we are often overwhelmed by the seemingly endless lists of tasks to complete ahead of Christmas. Yet one tradition we never mind stopping for is selecting the winner of our Annual Christmas Card Design Contest. It is always a joy to pause, reflect, and marvel at the artistry shared with us. We extend heartfelt thanks to the talented clients, program users, staff, and volunteers from CCSYR, Houses of Providence, Mary Centre, and Rose of Sharon for their entries. This year, we were blessed with designs from a wonderfully diverse group of artists—from a 4-year-old boy and his mother, to a team of seniors who humbly asked that their submissions be considered a collective effort. These are the small but radiant moments of light that remind us of the beauty of community and creativity.

Catholic Charities' Christmas Card Design Contest



Larysa Kurianova
CCSYR



Honourable Mention:
Ajantha & Ashrithan
CCSYR



Darcy
Mary Centre

After much thoughtful deliberation (and a few Christmas treats along the way), our team selected, from CCSYR's Welcome Centre, Neda Tadayon's stunning painting as the winner of this year's contest. Wanting to recognize some other artists, we also chose 2 entries as our Honourable Mentions – the submission from Rose of Sharon's Abigail C., and the mother/son entry of Ajantha & Ashrithan from CCSYR. We are deeply grateful for their imaginative works, and for the agencies whose programs nurture and encourage such creative spirits. You can learn more about one of these inspiring programs in our "In Our Own Words" feature on page 10. As we close this year, we are reminded that these cards are more than designs—they are expressions of hope, joy, and faith. What a beautiful way to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christmas, as we await the holiest of nights and the promise of peace that it brings



Celebrating One Year of CCSYR's Seniors' Psychoeducation and Wellness Programs at York Region Housing

Catholic Community Services of York Region



One year ago, CCSYR launched its Seniors' Psychoeducation and Wellness Program inside three York Region subsidized housing communities. With the support of ShareLife donors, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto, and the partnership of York Region Housing, we brought accessible mental health and wellness services directly to where seniors live.

The program's goal was clear: ensure seniors—especially those facing barriers—could access psychoeducational and emotional support in a familiar, safe, and culturally competent setting.

A Community Reconnected

From the earliest sessions, seniors shared how much loneliness and isolation had shaped their daily lives. Over time, many reported feeling more “seen” and “heard,” and “less alone.”

The Power of Creativity and Expression Art Expression Sessions at Maple Glen and Unionville offered seniors a meaningful way to explore emotions and reduce stress through hands-on activities. Participants noted improvements in mood, confidence, memory engagement, motor skills, and social interaction.

Workshops That Made a Difference

Delivered in English, Farsi, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Ukrainian, our workshops provided safe spaces for seniors to discuss emotions, learn new skills, and support one another. Topics covered included:

- Mindfulness and self-care
- Communication and intergenerational relationships
- Emotional wellness
- Cognitive health and dementia
- ACT and CBT-informed strategies

Connection Through Active Living & Wellness Days

Gentle movement, yoga, mindfulness practices, games, and group activities encouraged participants to stay physically active and socially engaged. Residents reported increased confidence, improved balance and mobility, and a greater sense of motivation.

Thank You

Many participants approached our team with emotional gratitude. Some asked, “Can this program continue? We need this support.” Others said, “This is the first time I feel like I belong again.”

This impact would not have been possible without the unwavering support of:

- ShareLife donors
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto
- York Region Housing (for welcoming us onsite)
- Our dedicated CCSYR Team members

We look forward to working together to bring accessible, culturally competent care to seniors across York Region.



Rebuilding Life After Stroke: Mei Ling's Path from Isolation to Connection

Catholic Crosscultural Services



For 72-year-old Mei Ling, a stroke brought silence and isolation that most seniors dread. Communication became a daily battle, leaving her feeling disconnected and alone. But when Mei Ling joined CCS's senior support program with her daughter, everything began to change.

She started with Line Dance classes, which became more than just movement, they were a lifeline to connection and healing. Encouraged by compassionate staff, Mei Ling also joined the Games Club and Choir, activities that gently improved her speech and cognitive abilities. Today, she takes pride in singing smoothly without stuttering, a victory that lights up her spirit!

One of Mei Ling's greatest challenges has been navigating the complicated subsidized housing system. For a long time she struggled to access and use the online application, feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. CCS staff stepped in with patience and dedication, guiding her step by step to log in, explore housing options in Scarborough, and express interest in homes she hopes to call her own. While she is still waiting for an offer, the support she has received has empowered her with confidence and hope for a stable future. Mei Ling says, "It feels good to know someone is with me, helping step by step. I am so thankful for the patience, encouragement, and guidance I've received."

Stories like Mei Ling's are made possible because of caring donors who stand with vulnerable seniors facing isolation and barriers. Programs like CCS's senior support program ensure more seniors get the compassionate care and practical help they need to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.



Sleep Out 2025

Covenant House



On November 20, more than 60 executive leaders from across the Greater Toronto Area gathered at Covenant House Toronto to raise awareness about youth homelessness and the solutions that help break this cycle. The annual Sleep Out: Executive Edition event brought together executives who gave up their beds for a night to support youth experiencing homelessness. Together, they raised critical funds to help make sure 16-to-24-year-olds experiencing homelessness have a safe place to stay at Covenant House Toronto, and access to our on-site healthcare services, counselling, nutritious meals and opportunities for education and job readiness training – the building blocks that help break the cycle of homelessness so youth can focus on their goals and pursue their dreams. Before sleeping outside, participants heard firsthand accounts from young people about the life changing impact of the programs and services offered at Covenant House Toronto thanks to the community's generosity. Sleepers also got to learn about the wide range of programs and services Covenant House provides, before heading out to the sleep site to spend the night outside. Thank you to every participant for their leadership and fundraising efforts. Registration is open for our Sleep Out: Champions Edition in spring 2026 – find more information and sign up here: [Sleep Outs - Covenant House Toronto](#)

Little Hand, Big Love: A Festive Day of Living and Learning

Rose of Sharon

What an incredible day it has been! Our Living and Learning cooking class was buzzing with energy as more than thirty-five little ones, babies, toddlers, and young children, filled the room with excitement. Today's activities were all about hands-on fun in the kitchen. The children worked together to create colorful veggie platters, layer their very own seven-layer dips, and, of course, decorate festive Christmas cookies. The scent of freshly baked shortbread drifted through the space, mixing perfectly with the happy chatter and bursts of giggles coming from every corner.



MPP, Dawn Gallagher Murphy, for Newmarket Aurora



Little Hand, Big Love: A Festive Day of Living and Learning

Rose of Sharon



MPP, Dawn Gallagher Murphy, for Newmarket Aurora



Adding to the excitement, we were thrilled to share this joyful moment with our MPP, Dawn Gallagher Murphy, for Newmarket Aurora, who joined right in with the children. She rolled up her sleeves, decorated a cookie alongside them, and helped make the day feel even more special. Her warm presence and willingness to take part brought smiles to both the children and the adults in the room

Throughout the day, children could be seen joyfully skipping down the hallway, eager to visit each station and try their hand at a new culinary task. Whether they were carefully spreading toppings, arranging vegetables, or adding sprinkles to their cookies, every child seemed thrilled to be part of the experience. The sense of pride on their faces as they completed each creation was absolutely heartwarming.

To make the day even more memorable, every participant will be heading home with a special little cooking kit: a mini apron, a child-sized rolling pin, and a cookie cutter of their choice. Watching them select their favorite shape, stars, trees, gingerbread people, candy cane and more was a delight in itself.

The whole atmosphere was filled with a joyful holiday spirit. The sound of Christmas cheer from children's laughter to the warm encouragement of their mothers, staff, volunteers, and our visiting MPP created a sense of community that made this day truly unforgettable.



IN OUR OWN WORDS

Oleksandra Hrechyna

CCSYR Psychosocial Senior
Program- Art Facilitator

The Transformative Power of Art Classes for Seniors

When the Seniors first walked into the CCSYR art class a year ago, they carried stories, memories, and a hope for connection. Some had never painted before. Others hadn't held a pencil for art since childhood. Yet, in that bright room, they found something far more meaningful than an art class. They found each other. Over the past year, the room filled with the sound of soft laughter, gentle encouragement, people opened to new beginnings. What started as a weekly creative exercise gradually became a powerful journey of renewal—one where art didn't just occupy their time but expanded their world. The cognitive changes were impossible to ignore. Each week they learned new techniques, their memory, attention, and problem-solving skills grew stronger. They discovered how good it felt to challenge their brains in joyful ways, to wake up dormant creativity, and to prove to themselves that learning never has an age limit. And then there were the motor skills—subtle victories that showed up over time. A more controlled line. An easier time with the tiny movements required for craft. Art became therapy wrapped in beauty. They came shy and lonely. Today—after an unforgettable year—they stay good friends. The kind who celebrates each other's progress, who notice when someone is missing, who share stories and who offer kindness without being asked. The art class became a place where they could be vulnerable, joyful, and authentically themselves. This year of art has shown that seniors don't just benefit from creative expression; they blossom through it. Their minds grow brighter, their hands grow stronger, and their hearts grow fuller. One year of art changed them. And the colors they've brought into each other's lives will never fade. We express our deepest gratitude to CCAT and ShareLife generous donors. Their support made this transformative journey possible, allowing our seniors to experience healing, connection, and joy through art.

PAUSE & REFLECT

Advent Reflection – Finding Peace Amid the Chaos



On a postcard-worthy winter day, our team and Executive Directors from multiple agencies within our Archdiocese gathered for our annual Advent Reflection at L'Arche Daybreak. Amid demanding schedules, the onset of the annual cold and flu season, staff holiday parties, and the myriad of commitments during the Christmas season, this was no small feat! We had the joyous opportunity to be hosted by the facilitator, Clara Frascchetti, volunteers, and program participants of their beloved Lively Loaf program, to kick off our day. Surrounded by the warmth of the kitchen and the comforting smell of baking bread, we were guided through the process of making our own sourdough starters. We learned how to create beautiful designs on the bread and shared in the storytelling of how the Lively Loaf was one of the wonderful initiatives that emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.



PAUSE & REFLECT

Advent Reflection – Finding Peace Amid the Chaos



Kelly MacKenzie of Silent Voice Canada reflected, “I was so touched by the generosity of L’Arche for sharing Rosie (their sourdough starter) to get us all started with our own sourdough at home. The team was so helpful and encouraging...I love carving out the time to be with my colleagues and enjoy the peace and sharing that is L’Arche! Thank you!” They also made sure that everyone had a fresh loaf of bread to take with them, for the fruits of their labour. The afternoon was spent in a guided reflection, led by L’Arche Daybreak’s own Executive Director, Trish Glennon, and their pastoral minister, Liska Stefko. Together with core members of L’Arche, the group explored the theme of Peace, considering the unique challenges faced by those in leadership roles and the grounding presence of faith. “It was a wonderful, rich experience that was definitely spiritually nourishing for me – a good grounding in what matters, what sustains and what and Who truly gives peace.”, expressed Elizabeth Pierce from CFSD. We are deeply grateful to the amazing L’Arche Daybreak community, which welcomed us with such generosity of spirit. Their hospitality, creativity, and witness to peace reminded us that amid the busyness of the season, God’s presence is revealed in simple acts of sharing and community. As we carry our loaves of bread and the fruits of reflection back to our agencies, we do so with renewed gratitude for the gift of fellowship and the reminder that true peace is found when we come together in faith, hope, and love.

ON THE HORIZON



INSIGHTS & ENCOUNTERS
THE PODCAST

Catholic Charities

Voices of Faith: Conversations on Prayer and Spirituality

Episode 1:
Making Space for Prayer in a Distracted World

with
Sr. Sarah Rudolph CJ
Representative of the IBVM
NGO at the United Nations

Scan to listen:

  

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Live: Monday, December 22, 2025!



Catholic Praxis:
SYNERGY 2026
CONFERENCE

November 3 – 5, 2026

Chelsea Hotel
33 Gerrard St W
Toronto, ON

Bringing together Catholic Social Services, Catholic Health and Catholic Education to explore effective ways to collaborate in addressing pressing societal challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, housing instability and mental health.

 

www.catholicpraxis.ca / www.SynergyTO2026.ca

For more information: info@SynergyTO2026.ca

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto provides leadership, supports social services, and facilitates advocacy for its member agencies and the people they serve. At its core is Catholic Social Teaching that focuses on the poor and marginalized, urging us all to build a just society and safeguard the dignity of every person.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto

How you can contact member agencies and affiliated organizations of Catholic Charities

MEMBER AGENCIES

COMMUNITY/FAMILY SERVICES

Catholic Community Services of York Region
1-800-263-2075
www.ccsyr.org

Catholic Crosscultural Services
416-757-7010
www.cathcrosscultural.org

Catholic Family Services of Durham
1-877-282-8932
<https://cfsdurham.com>

Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin
905-450-1608
www.cfspd.com

Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County
1-800-726-2503
www.cfssc.ca

Catholic Family Services of Toronto
416-921-1163
www.cfstoronto.com

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mary Centre
416-630-5533
www.marycentre.com

Saint Elizabeth Health Care
905-940-9655
www.sehc.com

St. Bernadette's Family Resource Centre
416-654-9810
www.stbernadettesfrc.org

St. Michael's Homes
(Our Place Community of Hope Program)
416-926-8267
www.stmichaelshomes.org

Silent Voice Canada
416-463-1104 TTY
416-463-3928
www.silentvoice.ca

SENIORS

Centres D'Accueil Héritage (CAH)
416-365-3350
www.caheritage.org

LA Centre for Active Seniors
416-452-4875
www.lacentreforseniors.ca

House of Providence
(Unity Health Toronto)
416-285-3666
www.providence.on.ca

Society of Sharing
416-413-0380
www.societyofsharing.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
416-395-1500
www.torontoccas.ca

Covenant House Toronto
1-800-435-7308
www.covenanthousetoronto.com

YOUNG PARENTS

Rosalie Hall
416-438-6880
www.rosaliehall.com

Rose of Durham
(Young Parents Division of CFS Durham)
905-432-3622
www.roseofdurham.com

Rose of Sharon
905-853-5514
www.roseofsharon.com

Vita Centre
905-502-7933
www.vitacentre.org

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
(Camp Ozanam)
416-364-5577
info@ssvptoronto.ca

Good Shepherd Ministries
416-869-3619
www.goodshepherd.ca

Birthright International
1-800-550-4900
www.birtheright.org

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys FertilityCare Toronto
416-465-2868
www.fertilitycare.ca

Natural Family Planning Association
416-481-5465
www.toronto.naturalfamilyplanning.ca

**To learn more about
Catholic Charities**

www.ccat.ca



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