



Cardinal Spellman Center Revitalization



Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Dear Neighbors,

At Catholic Charities of New York, we believe strong communities are built by investing in places where neighbors can gather, receive support, and discover hope. The revitalization of the Cardinal Spellman Center in the East Village reflects that commitment and marks an important step in strengthening our network of community centers across New York.

The renewed Cardinal Spellman Center will provide lasting resources for families and the entire community. The Center will feature a Mothers & Babies Boutique, community garden, client-choice food pantry, and community library, along with weekly pop-up food distributions that provide fresh, nutritious food and essential support to neighbors in need.

Neighborhood community centers are far more than buildings. They are trusted spaces where relationships are formed, challenges are met with compassion, and individuals and families can access the resources they need to flourish. As neighborhoods change, these centers must continue evolving to meet emerging needs with dignity, care, and creativity.

That vision guides our work throughout New York. By revitalizing community centers, we expand services, welcome new neighbors, and create opportunities for collaboration with volunteers, local organizations, and elected officials. Every improvement helps ensure our programs remain responsive and rooted in the communities they serve every single day.



This work is possible because of the generosity of our donors. Together, we are transforming spaces, strengthening communities, and creating opportunities for hope to flourish for generations to come across New York.

With gratitude,

J. Antonio Fernández
Chief Executive Officer



Your Generosity in Action

Catholic Charities of New York upholds the dignity of each person as made in the image of God by serving the basic needs of the poor, troubled, frail, and oppressed of all religions through 82 independent affiliated agencies and over 300 sites – reaching 550,000 New Yorkers annually.

Because of you:



10+ Million

meals served by
our ongoing
food programs



116,500+

families in crisis
supported



82,000+

immigrants and refugees
welcomed and integrated



47,900+

children and youth
provided care

A New Beginning for the Cardinal Spellman Center

In the East Village, Catholic Charities of New York is reimagining the Cardinal Spellman Center as a welcoming place where neighbors can find not only essential services, but connection, dignity, and hope. We are revitalizing the Center with a simple vision: listening to the community and building programs that meet its greatest needs.

Catholic Charities of New York is breathing new life into the Cardinal Spellman Center, first opened in 1963, transforming it into a vibrant hub where families can access food, support, and opportunities to thrive. The revitalization is already taking shape through several cornerstone initiatives. The Mothers & Babies Boutique is now serving families with diapers, infant formula, clothing, and other essentials, reaching approximately 200 families each month, with plans to expand its reach. Weekly pop-up food distributions are

also bringing fresh and nutritious food to neighbors, serving 1,200 people each month, while a new client-choice food pantry is planned to offer a welcoming, supermarket-style experience where families can select the groceries that best meet their needs. A new rooftop community garden will provide space for neighbors to gather, learn, and grow fresh produce together. The Center will also feature a community library offering books, educational resources, and volunteer-led reading activities, creating a welcoming place where children, families, and older adults can learn and connect. On the second floor, a full-size basketball court will provide dedicated space for youth programs, recreation, and community activities.

As families walk through the Center's doors, Catholic Charities of New York hopes they experience something just as important as material

support: compassion and the reassurance that they are not alone. "We want people to come in feeling relaxed, feeling connected, feeling the compassion and warmth that the building can bring," said Lakisha Morris, Division Director of Food and Housing Stability.

The Center began its new chapter this past June with a Community Day celebration, welcoming hundreds of neighbors, community partners, and local leaders to experience the revitalized Center firsthand. Families enjoyed live music and dancing, youth basketball, cooking, Double Dutch demonstrations, and children's activities, while neighbors accessed a mobile food pantry and connected with community organizations providing additional resources. More than a celebration, the event marked a renewed commitment to strengthening neighborhood connections and building partnerships.





How the Cardinal Spellman Center Helped a Mother Build a More Stable Future

As a single mother raising a five-year-old son with autism, Cindy has worked hard to create a stable home and future for her family. For nearly two years, Cindy and her son lived in the shelter system, facing significant challenges that made it difficult to balance work, her son's education and their everyday needs. During this difficult period, Cindy found support at Catholic Charities of New York's Cardinal Spellman Center.

Through case management and a peer support group, Cindy found both practical resources and a sense of community. The group gives participants an opportunity to share their

experiences, learn from others facing similar challenges, and receive information on topics ranging from employment and financial literacy to navigating the city's social service systems.

For Cindy, who often felt isolated while living in the shelter system, those connections were especially meaningful. "You realize that you are not alone," she said.

With support from her case manager, Alexander Gutierrez, Cindy continued navigating challenges related to housing, transportation and other needs. She eventually secured a housing voucher and moved with her son into an apartment in the Bronx. When new housing concerns arose,

Mr. Gutierrez helped connect her with a Catholic Charities Homebase site in the Bronx for additional support.

Today, Cindy is working as a home health aide while continuing to prioritize her son's education and development. She has watched him make significant progress, from speaking only about 25 words when he was younger to communicating more, singing and developing new skills.

"Catholic Charities has been the best thing that has happened to me," she said.

Read the fully story:
CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Cindy

Mothers & Babies Boutique: Giving Children a Healthy Start

Catholic Charities of New York is transforming the Cardinal Spellman Center into a welcoming hub where mothers can access essential resources, build connections, and create brighter futures for their children and families.

The Center serves a neighborhood where many families struggle with rising housing, food, and childcare costs. Nearly one in four residents in the East Village live below the poverty line, and the neighborhood's median household income is 31% lower than Manhattan's. For many parents, even basic necessities like diapers, infant formula, and children's clothing can quickly become out of reach.

To help meet these needs, Catholic Charities of New York is transforming the Cardinal Spellman Center with the creation of the Mothers & Babies Boutique. Designed to give children the healthiest possible start in life, the boutique offers essential baby supplies, maternal wellness items, and other critical resources that help mothers care for their growing families at no cost.



Like many parents, Isabel wants nothing more than to give her six-month-old son, Samuel, every opportunity to thrive. She first came to the Center seeking assistance, but what she found was far more than the help she expected. She found a compassionate community that continues to walk alongside her as she builds a brighter future for her family.

"They make me feel very appreciated," Isabel says. "I'm thankful for everything."

That ongoing support has given Isabel the confidence to focus on what matters most: creating a safe, healthy, and hopeful future for Samuel.

Beyond the boutique, mothers can also access nutritious food, household essentials, and educational programs that offer parenting guidance and information about their child's developmental milestones, along with case management, and family support services.

At the heart of every service is a commitment to ensuring families know they have someone to turn to. "We want families to feel like they're a part of us, so they know they are not alone," says Carmen Soto, Isabel's case manager at the Center.

Read the full story:
CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Isabel



Launching Project Cool: Helping Older Adults Beat the Heat

Each summer, rising temperatures pose a serious health risk for older adults across New York City. Through Project Cool, Catholic Charities of New York is helping seniors stay safe by providing free box fans. Just as importantly, the program opens the door to additional services, support, and lasting connections that help older New Yorkers age with dignity.

For many older New Yorkers living on fixed incomes, the cost of staying cool during the summer can be overwhelming. Running an air conditioner may simply be too expensive, forcing seniors to choose between their health and their

monthly budget. To prevent heat-related illness, Catholic Charities of New York launched Project Cool, offering free 20-inch box fans, a simple but vital resource for vulnerable neighbors during the hottest months of the year.

This past summer, Project Cool distributed more than 1,500 free box fans to older adults at the Cardinal Spellman Center in the East Village, community centers in the Bronx and Harlem, and other locations across the city. For hundreds of seniors, the fans offered immediate relief from the summer heat and the peace of mind that comes with knowing someone cares.

But Project Cool is about more than delivering a fan. Every interaction provides an opportunity to connect older adults with the broader network of care offered by Catholic Charities of New York.

As neighbors visit one of our community centers to receive a fan, they also learn about additional resources that improve their quality of life, including food pantries and SNAP assistance, eviction prevention services, case management, and other support services.

Learn more:
CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Cool

You Can Make a Difference

Your generous support enables us to continue our lifesaving work and carry out our mission of providing help and creating hope.

There are many meaningful ways to support Catholic Charities and the New Yorkers we serve. Whether you make a gift, volunteer your time, engage your company or institution, or plan for the future, your commitment helps strengthen our programs and extend our reach throughout the communities we serve.



More Ways to Support Our Mission

Give

Your tax-deductible gift will enable us to continue to deliver programs and critical services to New Yorkers in need. Help now: CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Donate

Volunteer

Give your time and talents to help your neighbors. From food distributions and youth mentorship to other service opportunities, volunteers are essential partners in our work. To get involved, visit: CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Volunteer

Foundations & Institutions

Partner with Catholic Charities through foundation and institutional funding that strengthens vital programs, expands services, and helps us respond to the evolving needs across New York. For more information, please contact Jessica O'Connor at **646-794-2443** or Jessica.OConnor@CatholicCharitiesNY.org

Corporate Partnerships

Bring your company and employees together in service to New Yorkers in need. Corporate partners can support Catholic Charities through volunteer opportunities, sponsorships, workplace giving, and philanthropic partnerships. Visit: CatholicCharitiesNY.org/Corporate

Plan Your Legacy

A planned gift is a wonderful way to support Catholic Charities while accommodating your own personal, financial, estate-planning, and philanthropic goals. With smart planning, you may actually increase the size of your estate and/or reduce the tax burden on your heirs. To learn more, please visit: CatholicCharitiesNY.org/GiftPlans.org

If you have any questions, please reach out to Emily Chau at **646-794-2018** or Emily.Chau@CatholicCharitiesNY.org

Other Ways to Give

From charitable gift annuities, donor-advised funds, stocks and IRA distributions to real estate, vehicles, and rewards programs, discover the many ways you can support our lifesaving work while choosing the giving option that works best for you. Visit: CatholicCharitiesNY.org/WaysToGive



Please scan here to make a difference in your community by volunteering with us!

Connect with us to learn more and get involved!

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