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Commonwealth Catholic Charities

1512 Willow Lawn Drive
P.O. Box 6565
Richmond, VA
23230-0565
804.285.5900 phone
804.285.1630 tty
www.cccofva.org

Joanne D. Natrass
Executive Director

Richard Ciofani
Chief Financial Officer

Edward M. Smith
Chief Development Officer

Krystal Thompson
*Chief Operating Officer
Children's Services*

Morgen McElroy
*Public Relations &
Marketing Manager*



Labor of Love Walk in Roanoke, Monday, September 5

Your stroll will raise money for kids who need our help

Roanoke residents—put on your walking shoes and come out to Reserve Avenue Field for a quick two-mile walk on the Roanoke Greenway and lots of fun! The third annual Labor of Love walk will be Monday, September 5, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with new additions this year like a youth soccer clinic and lunch for you.

By walking, you'll be supporting all of CCC's child-centered programs, such as Adoption, Foster Care, and Refugee Resettlement. Adults can register for only \$10 and kids are \$5, making the outing perfect for the whole family. Each walker will receive a t-shirt, snacks and lunch, and will enjoy entertainment located at stations along the way.

(Pictured above): You can give our child-focused programs a big boost by supporting Labor of Love, bringing funds and resources to kids like these.



Call Alison Hammond at 540.342.1637 or visit www.cccofva.org to register online there. All ages are welcome!

Commonwealth Catholic Charities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit social service organization aiding residents of central and southwestern Virginia. Services are provided to all people.

Hit the Green to Raise Some Green

Team up and raise money in new CCC golf tournament October 3

If you've been practicing your swing all summer, come show it off at Salisbury Country Club on Monday, October 3, to benefit CCC! Registration begins at 11 a.m. with a shotgun start at 1 p.m.

Signup is going on now—call Hugh Dibert at 804.545.5941 or email him at Hugh.Dibert@cccovfa.org. Only \$200 per person (\$800 per team) makes you eligible for fun play, complimentary gifts, food and beverages, and the chance to win terrific prizes. Your day isn't over after you play...stick around for a spirited Awards Party (food and beverage included) and see who's really king or queen of the green.

Sponsorship opportunities offering prominent recognition for your group or company are available too! Call Hugh today 804.545.5941 or visit www.cccovfa.org for more information.

Top of the Class—A Success Story

Your gifts offer an incredible student the chance to graduate

Do you remember where you were on June 16? Probably not, but Christine Umutooni will never forget it.

Christine graduated from Hampton High School on June 16, only two years after enrolling as a freshman. Even more impressive, she spoke three languages at the time—but none of them English.

A refugee from Rwanda, by way of Burundi, Christine and her siblings were settled in the United States by CCC's Hampton office in 2009. How could she have imagined that just two years from being tested for tuberculosis and getting vaccinations at the Hampton Health Department that she'd be holding a diploma in her hand?

Without parents or contacts in the United States, Christine nearly missed enrollment at Hampton High School. The school district doesn't allow students to enroll in a school year if they are over the age of 21. Christine, who didn't know her birthday, had January 1, 1989, written on her documents. That meant she only had four semesters and one summer to fulfill all her requirements. Embracing the challenge, she pushed the refugee resettlement office to enroll her in school rather than finding her employment.

Her reason? Education was so important, plus she had to set a good example for her young niece and nephew. Her siblings supported her. Since they had no parents, her older sister, Agnes, began working full-time immediately so Christine could pursue her studies.

At Hampton High she took a full course load plus ESL classes every semester.

She was in a class with refugees from all over the world.

Dressed to the nines and filled with pride, Christine poses on her graduation day



“No one would laugh at you when you read (in ESL),” she said. Regular classes with American students weren't quite the same.

“Oh my, they laugh or look at you funny. Right away I decided I was not going to read anymore!”

Hampton High School smoothed her transition by sending a teacher with the refugees to all their classes the first semester. Mrs. Dawson, the teacher assigned to Christine, helped her understand the classroom lectures.

After the first semester, Mrs. Dawson was sent to help the next group of refugees and Christine was back on her own. Her English skills were taking off, and she became more comfortable in her classes. She attributes her success to something she learned early on: “Let me tell you a secret, if someone speaks to you and smiles, then you smile too. Everyone understands that.”

Christine took advantage of everything CCC made available to her—things donors like you make possible. She and her siblings took an intensive ESOL class, she had a volunteer ESOL

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“Let me tell you a secret, if someone speaks to you and smiles, then you smile too. Everyone understands that.”

they can get back on their feet with basic needs in tact. A little HELP can boost security and prevent major harm.

Counseling's Niki Mello wins award for service and mentorship

Your faith in CCC to deliver top-notch care to clients is confirmed!

Congratulations to Niki Mello, CCC Counseling Clinical Supervisor, who was awarded the Field Instructor of the Year Award by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for her outstanding service and mentorship with social work interns! Counseling staff members and others familiar with Niki's work and warm personality agreed that she was more than deserving of the award. Lauren Brooks, CCC's Intake Coordinator, enthused, "Niki is a great coworker who cares about the lives of the people she supervises."

"I'm endlessly impressed with the work that Niki does. She takes the role of supervising interns seriously. She knows that she's crafting the next generation of social workers and she wants them to excel in the field," added Marie Olenych, Counseling Program Manager.

Each year, Niki accepts three interns from VCU to complete clinical internships at CCC. Supervising and aiding the interns with a helpful, open attitude, each intern receives specialized attention and leaves with a better understanding of their chosen field.

Niki is a huge asset to our agency and to her clients, as well as to emerging social workers. Thank you, Niki!



Counseling Clinical Supervisor
Niki Mello brings compassion and leadership to CCC each day

Food, Glorious Food!

Your gifts of nutritious, shelf-stable food are never more needed than right now! Now is the perfect time to coordinate food drives or pick up an extra can of soup or box of cereal at the grocery store each time you shop. Times have been hard for so many recently—who isn't tightening their purse (or wallet) strings? Giving the gift of food is inexpensive, easy, and goes far in boosting the health and hearts of people who need it.

In RICHMOND—
Bring your food to 1512 Willow Lawn Drive any time Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or call 804.285.5900. We can also pick up from your group or business!

In ROANOKE—
Bring your food to St. Francis House, 824 Campbell Avenue SW or call 540.345.9090. We can also pick up from your group or business!

Brown paper bags piling up at home? Bring them to us! Be green and reuse/ recycle your brown paper bags by donating them to CCC. Our food pantry goes through approximately 420 bags *per month*, and we're always in need of more. Your donations of bags save money, staff time, and enjoy a new life carting home nourishing food for hungry folks in need!

Monthly Giving Now at CCC

You can enroll in monthly giving for hassle-free, regular donations



Financial experts often recommend having automatic drafts taken from your account, making saving and bill payments painless. We'd like to offer you the same option!

Let us save you the hassle of stamps, checks, and envelopes. Join CCC's monthly giving program, and sign up to have the same amount automatically deducted from your account on a monthly basis. You can increase, decrease, or suspend the gift amount at any time. Each January, we'll send you an annual giving statement for your tax purposes.

By choosing monthly giving, you provide a steady source of funding to our programs, and help us cut administrative costs. Your dedicated monthly gift will achieve more good for people in our community, and it's safe, secure, and easy.

Your Monthly Donor Membership is a reliable stream of compassionate help for clients. Call today! Ask for Hugh Dibert at 804.545.5941 or email Hugh.Dibert@cccova.org.

More Valuable Than Gold or Platinum—Your Donations!

Your generosity goes a long way to feed and clothe Virginia's little ones

When you donate items to CCC, you can trust that they are never gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. This summer has been tough for many families and young parents. Formula and diapers are major expenses, and for people struggling to put food on the table, money is too tight to stretch for even basic baby needs. Can you help? Bring your donations of diapers, formula, baby supplies, and baby clothes to us! We can also help you lighten your load by accepting your baby's gently used clothing, toys, bedding, and more. You'll be giving our tiniest clients a good healthy start.



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The Chronicle is a publication produced for the employees, volunteers, contributors, clients, and friends of Commonwealth Catholic Charities. If you are interested in sharing comments or contributing story ideas, please contact the editor by email at Morgen.McElroy@cccofva.org. The CCC Annual Report is available online at www.cccofva.org.

In RICHMOND—Bring your donations to 1512 Willow Lawn Drive any time Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or call us 804.285.5900. We'd be happy to make it easier on you and arrange for pick up from your group or business, too!

In ROANOKE—Bring items to St. Francis House, 824 Campbell Avenue SW or call 540.345.9090. Pick up can be arranged!

Top of the Class—A Success Story

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tutor for the first few months, and another tutor met with her family every week to hone her English skills. In 2010, Christine began working part time as a waitress to help support her family. CCC paired her with Kaitlin Kitchen, a CNU student who would tutor her and help her study over the next year.

Not only was the language different, but learning American government—a stark contrast to Burundian government—was a major task. Some of the distinctions between her homeland and here were a pleasant surprise.

“The teachers in my country are so mean, if you don't know the answer they say, ‘Just go home.’ Here in Virginia they work to give you motivation.”

Christine hopes to become a certified nurses' assistant and to eventually attend college.

She's incredibly grateful to everyone who has helped her along the way. The refugee office of CCC and her tutors and supportive

family all worked together to help her complete a difficult task in a short time.

Christine celebrated her graduation in the apartment she shares with her sister, brothers, and niece and nephew. American hip-hop and African traditional music played while hot dogs were served alongside goat stew and rice.

All smiles, she offered her diverse group of friends profuse thanks; “Thank you all for helping me, I wish I could keep you all forever,” once in English then again in Kirundi, the language of Burundi. Christine will stay in our minds and hearts forever, and with her indomitable determination, we know she'll create success wherever life takes her!

“Thank you all for helping me,
I wish I could keep you all forever.”