R-E-S-P-E-C-T: it’s just the beginning of the RICHES we share

The true RICHES of Catholic Charities Maine are grounded in the social teachings of Jesus Christ, empowering our mission and values and guiding us in all we do:

RESPECT
We believe in and accept all persons for their unique gifts, circumstances and needs, and treat them as we would want to be treated.

INTEGRITY
We seek wholeness in all our relationships — individually and organizationally. We keep our word and remain faithful to who we say we are.

COMPASSION
We provide care and comfort through our diverse presence as social service providers.

HOSPITALITY
We welcome persons of all faiths, especially those most vulnerable and in need, to an environment of dignity, safety, warmth and a sense of being “at home.”

EXCELLENCE
We consistently aim to achieve the highest quality outcomes while striving for innovation, collaboration and continuous quality improvement.

STEWARDSHIP
We make use of all our human, material, environmental and financial resources in a responsible and accountable manner.

And in the end, the love you take...

For 50 years,
the dedicated employees, passionate volunteers and generous donors of Catholic Charities Maine have been changing lives by sharing our RICHES: Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Hospitality, Excellence and Stewardship.

Those have been our core values from the day we opened in the summer of 1966, with a staff of three and a budget of $50,000, to today, with a network of more than 20 programs and services delivered by a stellar community of nearly 700 full-time and part-time employees, more than 590 volunteers giving 46,404 hours at a value of $953,146 and 1,360 donors.

In this 50th Anniversary retrospective, we look back at some of our “greatest hits” and the brightest stars who have shared their talents, time and resources over the decades — and look forward, with a renewed vow to give all we can, to fulfill our mission: “to empower and strengthen individuals and families of all faiths by providing innovative, community-based social services.”

is equal to the love you make.
— John Lennon & Paul McCartney
1966
Agency opens under the name Diocesan Human Relations Bureau
In the summer of 1966, while radios everywhere were playing the Byrds’ song “Turn! Turn! Turn!” based on the Bible passage in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, a trio of caring, committed Mainer turned their talents to building something new: an agency of the Church dedicated to serving the neediest and most vulnerable residents in communities all around Maine. As founding Director Neil Michaud described it: “We were collectively establishing a piece of God’s Kingdom in this most northeastern part of the country.” Based in Guild Hall, adjacent to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, with a budget of $50,000 and a staff of three — Michaud, social worker Katherine Cronin and casework assistant Harold Smith — the Diocesan Human Relations Bureau would end up serving more than 50 families before the year was out.

1967-68
St. Elizabeth’s Child Development Center opens to provide intellectual, social, physical and emotional development opportunities for children.
Holy Innocents Home, which got its start in 1907 as a division of St. Elizabeth’s orphanage, develops into three services: homemaker/teacher services, homecare services for families with chronically ill parents and family life education and was a precursor to our current Independent Support Services and Support & Recovery services for families with chronically ill parents and family life education and was a precursor to our current Independent Support Services and Support & Recovery programs.

1969-70
The Indian Needs Program is introduced providing a focus and a forum for the development of strategies to meet the problems of Maine Native Americans. The Indian Needs Program is introduced providing a focus and a forum for the development of strategies to meet the problems of Maine Native Americans.

1971
The Birthline program is initiated to provide services and support so mothers can carry their babies to term with care, grace and courage. It was believed to be the first program of its kind in the U.S. and continues today. Our second Child Development Center, St. Louis, opens in Biddedford, continuing to advance our mission of ensuring all Maine children, regardless of income, have access to safe, nurturing, quality child care.

1972-74
Peaks Island Daycare opens, as our third child care center. We continue growing our children’s service offerings with assistance to children with visual impairments, an effort that evolves into our current Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (ESBVIC).

1975-78
SEARCH (Seek Elderly Alone, Renew Courage and Hope) begins matching volunteers to isolated seniors in Androscoggin County and in its 40+-year history of connecting seniors with their communities, has expanded to Sagadahoc, Kennebec and Lincoln Counties and the Bath/Brunswick areas.

1977
On August 16, 1977, it was reported that Elvis Presley had died at the age of 42 — one day before his scheduled appearance at Portland’s newly-opened Civic Center to kick off a planned comeback tour.

1978
The Jessie Albert Memorial Dental Center opens for business in a railroad station donated by Bath Iron Works. Named for the local mother of six who was in search of affordable dental care who also served as a community Vista volunteer, Albert’s tireless efforts enabled us to help more than 1,200 children that first year.

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1982-88
Aroostook Group Home for Children opens in Presque Isle. The Home later transitions to Christopher Home, an extended-stay group home for at-risk boys in Caribou. Our services for children flourish with the launch of the Therapeutic Foster Care program and Big Brothers Big Sisters expanding in Augusta. Our Homemaker Services (now known as Independent Support Services) expands to Aroostook and Washington Counties to meet the needs of seniors in Maine’s most rural areas.

1992
The best-selling female artist of the 90’s, Mariah Carey was topping the charts all decade long with hits like “Hero.” And in 1992, we renewed our commitment to be a “hero” to Maine’s most vulnerable with an official name change to Catholic Charities Maine.

1994
The Aroostook Building Materials Bank is growing, aiding low-income families with building materials and supplies so they are able to make home improvements. An offshoot of Birthline, Project Rachel begins offering experiential, scripture-based retreats for anyone personally affected by an abortion, including women, men, relatives and former abortion workers. The program is still offered today through the Diocese of Portland.

1998
Case Management services for adults and children begin, extending our reach and experience in the mental health field.

2000
The Toy Box opens in Lewiston, Portland and Fairfield providing toys to children who have lost their possessions due to fire or trauma.

2003
Our first Golf Classic to support children’s programs is held. Now in its 14th year, the tournament will tee off for the Put Children First scholarship fund on September 19, 2016. The Fellowship House and St. Francis House merge to become the St. Francis Recovery Center which today offers men’s inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment for men and women.

2008
GBEON, the Greater Bath Elder Outreach Network is introduced and continues today under the SEARCH program to provide care and companionship to isolated seniors. The Aroostook Building Materials Bank becomes the Home Supplies Store and Food Bank. It will grow into the three thrift stores and two Food Banks in operation today in the County under our Hunger & Relief Services program.

2009
The “Feed the County” campaign kicks off in Aroostook — a partnership still in existence between our Food Banks and local businesses WGGM-TV and Aroostook Savings & Loan — to address hunger insecurity in Maine’s northernmost county.

2012
Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children pilots a new program called “Taking a RISK” (Responsibility and Independent Skills for Kids) for children ages 6-14. The day camp focuses on teaching independent living skills in a fun, interactive camp. The Agency is awarded a federal grant by the Center of Mental Health Services to administer the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) program in Maine.

2013
Up in Aroostook County, Farm for ME — a pilot project to grow fresh vegetables for food pantries supplied by our Food Bank — is launched. Its inaugural harvest of 8,870 pounds of fresh vegetables was distributed to 4,435 people. Our thrift stores get a makeover with a new look and name change to Threads of Hope…and two new locations open in Monticello and Sanford. Parish Social Ministry launches the Mustard Seed Project to help expand upon the Agency’s services and resources by engaging parish youth to support various Catholic Charities programs’ work on a more local level.

1988
Released in September of 1988, Bobby McFerrin’s “Don’t Worry — Be Happy” was the first a cappella song to reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart.

Encouraging and celebrating the dignity and spirit of every child is at the heart of all our children’s services.

Don’t worry — be happy!
— Bobby McFerrin

There’s a hero
if you look inside your heart.
— Mariah Carey

Yeah, man, that’s the good stuff.
— Kenny Chesney

In the summer of 2002, Kenny Chesney sang about what really matters with his #1 country hit of the year “The Good Stuff.” And the Agency continued to focus its energy on good works in the community with more than 40 services and programs now in operation across Maine.
We welcomed new Americans . . .

Refugee & Immigration Services employee Giti Ara Mohajeri realized a lifelong dream on Friday, August 21, when she, along with 83 others, was sworn in as a U.S. citizen at the Portland Public Library. “It was such a defining moment in my life; the pride and joy I felt that day is difficult to describe.”

. . . and resettled 590 refugees in total

We said goodbye to four long-time superstars

After a combined total of 160 years, four of our longest-serving employees — Sally Temm, Brenda Robb, Jean Small and Paula Starbuck — all retired in 2015. As CEO Steve Letourneau noted: “They left an indelible mark on the Agency during their tenure, and will certainly be missed.”

We celebrated a local hero

The Caribou office of the American Red Cross in Maine awarded our own Dixie Shaw, Director of Hunger & Relief Services, a Lifetime Achievement Award at its annual “Real Heroes” breakfast, for all she “has done and will do to help keep Aroostook County people fed and cared for.” Bravo, Dixie!

We won a major federal contract to offer community-based substance abuse and mental health treatment services

In April of 2015, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Counseling Services began working with the first of a five-year, federal contract totaling over $1.6 million in funding to provide community-based outpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment services.

. . . and 40 years of helping Maine’s seniors stay independent through SEARCH

Connecting isolated seniors with volunteers in the Bath/Brunswick area and throughout Androscoggin, Kennebec and Sagadahoc Counties, SEARCH’s (Seek Elderly Alone, Renew Courage & Hope) celebrated 40 years of service, while expanding its reach into parts of Lincoln County in 2015.

We harvested a bumper crop in our fight against hunger in northern Maine

It was a record yield for our Farm for ME program, which harvested 33,700 pounds, gleaned 3,826 pounds and received a staggering donation of 70,034 pounds of locally-grown, nutritious vegetables — bringing our total bounty to more than 107,500 pounds! And thanks to our partner Northern Girl, a locally operated microprocessor, we are now able to slice and dice vegetables for easy use, prep and distribution into the long, cold winter months. Now that’s something to sing about!

We enjoyed a rocking World Refugee Day festival

Congolese singers, a Sudanese hip hop artist, an Iranian musician and a South Sudan dance group were just a few of the performers who made the summer 2015 festival a success, with more than 400 community members from all backgrounds turning out to celebrate and honor the courageous individuals who have come to Maine as refugees.

We hosted Maine’s youngest author at our St. Louis Child Development Center

10-year-old JoJo Thoreau shared her tale, Bendy-Wendy, part of the Center’s commitment to celebrating and encouraging every child’s unique skills and talents.

We looked back on 40 years of rebuilding lives at St. Francis Recovery Center in Auburn . . .

2015 marked 40 years helping men and women struggling with chemical dependencies and substance abuse find hope and recovery with compassionate, confidential support and treatment.

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Thread of Hope thrift stores, operating in five locations — Portland, Sanford, Caribou, Monticello and Presque Isle — supported all of our programs and services, with every penny of the proceeds going directly to support food for those in need. 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