



# New Heights

## USING OUR PAST TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE



**Meet Arnaud, he is a well-spoken young man, a recent graduate of Hope College, and is about to start his Master's work in the field of International Development.** Currently Arnaud is a Youth Advocate at the St. Vincent Catholic Charities Children's Home, working with children in the Comprehensive Clinical Assessment Program. These children stay in this program 30-days until the assessment is complete and a detailed care plan is created. The plan determines their next step, whether it is staying longer at the Children's Home for more counseling

and healing treatment, or moving on to an appropriate placement in a foster or family home.

Arnaud loves working with all of the children that come his way at the Children's Home but has a special place in his heart for the younger children.

Arnaud describes his role models as Nelson Mandela for his courage and how he embraced issues of social justice. Prolific author Henri Nouwen has also had a positive impact on Arnaud. "His book *Turn My Mourning into Dancing* really moved me. I think about his words when I have to say good-bye to some of the children, especially the young ones who can be encouraged to dance their way to positive feelings of joy," shared Arnaud. "It takes more to break through to the older children, who have experienced so much trauma and often have a world view that nobody cares for them."

Arnaud is coming up on his first year anniversary as a Youth Advocate at St. Vincent Catholic Charities' Children's Home... but he is no stranger to STVCC. You see, Arnaud first came to our doors when he was 13 years old in 2004. He was a refugee with no knowledge of the English language. You might say that he is working in a family business. Both of Arnaud's parents now work at STVCC in the refugee resettlement program helping other families build a new life.

"I remember going with my Mom to the airport, late at night, to welcome refugees to their new home. It was exciting even then to see my mother helping and guiding these people through the process."

Years before Arnaud, his two sisters and his parents fled from the deadly civil war in Burundi. They lived on the run for over ten years. They bounced from refugee camps to living the shadow life of illegal immigrants in different cities in Africa, searching for the next safe place, until they were finally able to make their way to the United States, and ultimately to Lansing with the help of the resettlement services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

*"I feel for these children, because of their tragic lives ... these children deserve my best efforts."*

Arnaud recognizes the parallels and the differences between his experiences as a refugee and the disenfranchisement that the children in his care have experienced from their own troubles, the trauma of abuse, neglect, and unstable homes. "I feel for these children, because of their tragic lives. Yet, my life, while unsafe and scary during those early years, always included the love and support of my family and the new community that embraced us and made a place for me to grow and learn. For this reason these children deserve my best efforts."

"All of the staff, workers, volunteers, and even the children are creating a community of care at St. Vincent Catholic Charities' Children's Home. I want them all to learn that we can use our past to build a better future."



Head to [www.stvcc.org](http://www.stvcc.org) and help us save money by subscribing to the **FULL COLOR** online version of our newsletter!

(517) 323-4734  
2800 West Willow St.  
Lansing, MI 48917



"In the midst of a turbulent, often chaotic, life we are called to reach out, with courageous honesty to our innermost self, with relentless care to our fellow human beings, and with increasing prayer to our God."

- Henri J.M. Nouwen, Reaching Out

Dear Friends and Supporters,

One of the areas this newsletter focuses on is one of our most essential programs, the residential Children's Home. From the early days of our existence in the late '40s and early '50s, we were known as St. Vincent Home for Children, and the agency was caring for children who had been separated from their parents and families for some obvious reasons.



Now, we are called to help the children who have experienced unspeakable atrocities of abuse and neglect, often from their own family members. These are the children with complex trauma who require highly skilled care and therapy, and volunteer support to set them on a path of healing and a life transformed.

We have come to understand that this intensive care and therapeutic approach is what is called for under the circumstances and perfectly aligns with our mission of Providing Help and Creating Hope. I invite you to take a look at the infographic in the center spread which gives you a better idea of the depth of services we are offering through the Children's Home.

I know that I can speak for the 187 dedicated and resourceful staff members, and the 500 tireless and caring volunteers, that the work we do here at St. Vincent Catholic Charities in all of our programs is truly God's work. In Henri Nouwen's words: "Our greatest fulfillment lies in giving ourselves to others."

Yours in Faith,

Andrea E. Seyka

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Chief Executive Officer

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MISSION

The mission of St. Vincent Catholic Charities is the work of the Catholic Church, to share the love of Christ by performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

VISION

The vision of STVCC is with faith in God and love for all we aspire to create a healthier community.

VALUES

STVCC's Core Values:  
• Compassion  
• Service  
• Faith  
• Stewardship  
• Integrity

WHO USES THE STVCC IMMIGRATION LAW CLINIC? NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES

There are many misconceptions when it comes to the perception of immigrants in our country. According to Melissa Indish J.D., Immigration Attorney at St. Vincent Catholic Charities, it can be "easy to stereotype" and to assume that clients using immigration law services are entering the country illegally. This type of mindset shows the lack of awareness in the state of Michigan about immigrants and Immigration Law.

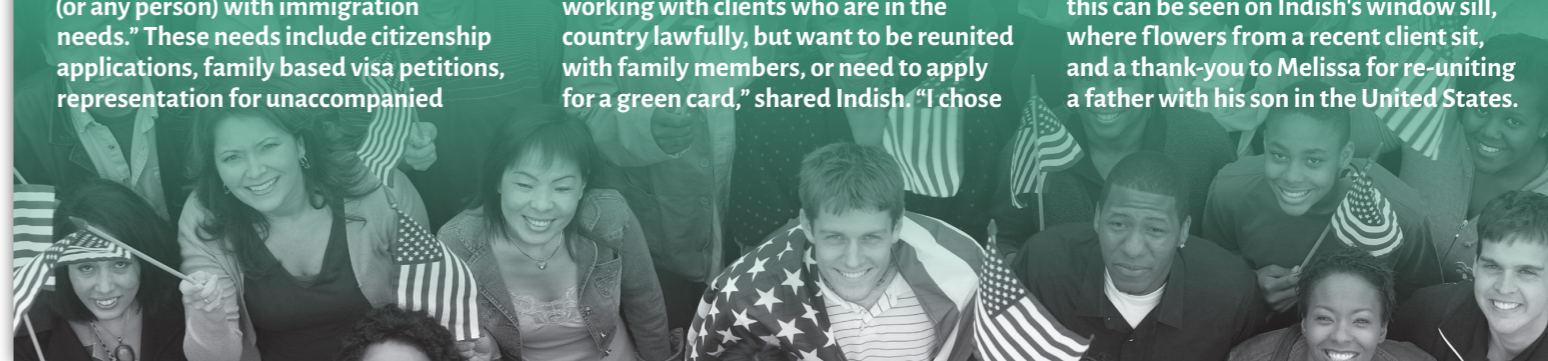
As Indish states, the clinic "provides legal representation to foreign nationals (or any person) with immigration needs." These needs include citizenship applications, family based visa petitions, representation for unaccompanied

minors, employment authorization, assistance in addressing deportation/removal proceedings and more. With the vast array of services, the STVCC Immigration Law Clinic represents a wide variety of clients, with over 50 countries represented. Most clients reside in the Lansing area, however STVCC has represented clients across the state of Michigan, from cities such as Detroit and Grand Rapids, and even areas in the Upper Peninsula.

"In the majority of our cases, we're working with clients who are in the country lawfully, but want to be reunited with family members, or need to apply for a green card," shared Indish. "I chose

this career path because it is a very complex area of law that is constantly changing, and I like helping people."

The fact is, the STVCC Immigration Law Clinic has transformative qualities, much like the other services that the agency offers. To Melissa Indish, she finds Immigration Law fascinating and challenging. "I can see the direct impact I make on people, and the results of my hard work. When I win a case, a person is now a citizen. Their life has been completely transformed." A reminder of this can be seen on Indish's window sill, where flowers from a recent client sit, and a thank-you to Melissa for re-uniting a father with his son in the United States.



PREPARING TO HELP SYRIAN REFUGEES

As the world watches the Syrian crisis unfold and as thousands of refugees cross (or attempt to cross) the Mediterranean every month, our hearts reach out to help. According to the latest news from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 4 million Syrian refugees have fled their country in search of safety over the past three years. Most are in neighboring countries. Many have endured tremendous hardship fleeing their country and have suffered unbearable loss. STVCC awaits the resettlement of Syrians here in Lansing.

The US has expected approximately 4,000 Syrians to be resettled this year, with larger numbers arriving over the next few years. Considering the extent of the conflict and the overwhelming need, this may seem like a small number. But considering that only less than 1% of refugees worldwide are ever resettled in a third country like the United States, this is normally how it works.

In most refugee crisis situations, it takes time before refugees are moved from a "host country" (the first country of shelter or asylum) to a resettlement country, allowing the United Nations and partner countries to review durable solutions. The first durable solution is always voluntary repatriation. In some cases a conflict will erupt, citizens will flee and then peace will resume allowing citizens to return.

Most people want to return to their homes in safety, being near their family, enjoying their culture. If peace continues to elude the region in question, the second durable solution considered is local integration. In some cases, refugees are able to stay in their country of first asylum, becoming regular residents and in some cases citizens. But many neighboring countries also struggle with border conflicts and are unable to support refugee populations.



That is when resettlement in a third country becomes the third and only durable solution.

Meanwhile, we pray for peace, work for justice, and prepare ourselves to serve Syrians when they come.

For more information on Syrian refugees, go to www.unhcr.org and to learn about advocacy for Syrian resettlement, go to www.rcusa.org.

198 CHILDREN



ONLY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM OF ITS KIND IN MICHIGAN

# 2014 BY THE #'S

## ST. VINCENT CATHOLIC CHARITIES CHILDREN'S HOME

20 AND COUNTING  
LIFE ENHANCING SUPPLEMENTAL RESIDENT PROGRAMS

3964 VOLUNTEER HOURS  
2500 HOURS RUNNING COACHES  
1144 HOURS MENTORING  
320 HOURS TUTORING

5772 THERAPY HOURS  
INDIVIDUAL  
GROUP  
FAMILY  
YOGA

160,000 HOURS/YEAR  
STAFF HOURS OF CARE  
170 STAFF



**TEEN FOSTER FAMILIES NEEDED**

**The need for foster families for teenagers in the state of Michigan has never been greater.** When most citizens think of adoption, babies and young children are the first that come to mind. However, only approximately 3% of children waiting to be matched with an adoptive family are under the age of 5, with the vast majority being 11 years old or older. In addition, the amount of licensed foster homes in Michigan has been steadily declining over the past two years, losing over 8% of homes in that timespan.

Today, according to the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)

there are approximately 13,000 children in foster care statewide, however there are only 6,400 licensed foster homes, showing a significant need for more licensed homes. The current need for homes for teenagers is great, as we receive calls inquiring about homes for teens ranging from Detroit to the Upper Peninsula.

Unfortunately, many children ultimately age out of the foster care system without being reunited with their biological families or finding a stable foster or adoptive home. Many children interpret this lack of foster families as a message that they aren't worthy of

a family and are not loved, and enter adulthood without the safety net of a healthy, strong support system.

Due to this need, I wanted to share with you how fostering a teenager can be a very rewarding experience. Providing a teenager who has experienced trauma with love and support can be very enriching. Foster families not only impact the foster child and their family, but the whole community. By fostering a teen, you can help us create a healthier community.

If you feel the call to foster, I want to remind you that every child is unique. The biggest thing for any family, considering any age, is having patience and having grace. **If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent, please call Natalie Marshall at (517) 373-4734 Ext. 1614.** Natalie can provide more information on upcoming orientation dates, foster parent requirements, and connect you with a current foster family to speak with.

We look forward to working with you,  
**Stephanie Stanley, LMSW**  
**STVCC Foster Home Licensing Manager**  
**Wendy's Wonderful Kids Supervisor**

**SEASONS – NEW PROGRAM LAUNCHED**



**Our Counseling services are very happy to announce a new program called Seasons: Supporting Families through Serious Illness.**

A serious illness impacts an entire family, changing the lives of children, parents, and loved ones. Such an illness can have serious consequences, disrupting existing lifestyles, relationships, and financial situations. Due to these additional stressors, parents can become less accessible to their children, while children struggle with how to cope to manage the crisis. Fear, anger, and remorse may overcome

family members. At Seasons, we strive to assist each client in navigating the journey of a family member's illness, providing support groups to assist in the coping and healing process.

From the point of diagnosis, Seasons is able to help children, teens, and adults cope with the changes that occur with serious illness. The treatment Seasons provides positively affects the entire family, improving the healing process and creating family unity. Separate weekly support groups, facilitated by licensed mental health clinicians, are offered for children and teens

ages 5-18, adults living with illness, and caregivers in each family.

Support groups provide multiple opportunities for families, which include gaining support from others in a similar experience; learning and expanding coping skills; reducing patient stress; improving how a patient responds to treatment; and increasing communication within the family surrounding the illness.

Illnesses may include, but are not limited to: AIDS/HIV, Alzheimer's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Cancer (all types), Closed Head Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury, Emphysema, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, and Parkinson's Disease.

All Seasons' support groups will be held at St. Casimir Church, located at 815 Sparrow Ave., Lansing, MI 48910. There is a cost associated with Seasons, however sliding scale fees are available for those families whose health insurance will not cover the services.

**To begin healing today, schedule an appointment by contacting our Counseling Services at (517) 323-4734 Ext. 1700, or visiting [www.stvcc.org/Seasons](http://www.stvcc.org/Seasons).**

*Guardian Society*  
 ANNUAL BREAKFAST

**EAGLE EYE GOLF CLUB**      **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015**  
 15500 Chandler Road      **REGISTRATION 7:30 – 8:00 AM**  
 Bath Township, MI 48808      **PROGRAM 8:00 – 9:00 AM**

There is no cost to attend.  
 RSVP by Wednesday, September 30th  
 RHONDA ABOOD · 517.323.4734 ext. 1205 · [aboodr@stvcc.org](mailto:aboodr@stvcc.org)

WHERE  
 PROMISE  
 & HOPE  
 LIVE



**WELCOME FROM THE CEO**

It is my pleasure to welcome Deacon Jim Kasprzak to his role with the Catholic Diocese of Lansing. Jim was recently appointed by Bishop Boyea as Director of Catholic Charities, where he will serve as the liaison between the Catholic Charity agencies and the Diocese of Lansing, and Bishop's office.

*Andrew E. Syta*

## A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

Online  
[www.STVCC.org](http://www.STVCC.org)  
Convenient  
Safe and Secure  
**SHARE**



When you **LIKE** our Fan Page and share our posts, you help us spread the good news about **STVCC**.

### HOLIDAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The support from our volunteers is crucial to the success of our agency and our clients. Although it's several months away, we're already preparing for the "Be An Angel" Holiday Giving Drive, one of our largest donation drives of the year.

During the month of December, we will be in need of volunteers for a variety of roles, which include: packing and sorting donated gifts at the STVCC Children's Home; identifying "Be An Angel" gift tags for each child's wish list; stocking of Giving Trees with gift tags at the Meridian Mall, Lansing Mall, & Eastwood Towne Center; and delivering donations from the malls to STVCC.

During the drive, members of the community can select "Be An Angel" gift tags at each mall and purchase the specific item that is then donated. We also provide options to "Adopt a Child," or "Adopt a Family," purchasing specific items that are identified on the child's or family's wish list.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Dr. Thomas Woods at (517) 323-4734 Ext. 1203 or at [woodst@stvcc.org](mailto:woodst@stvcc.org).



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LEARN MORE ABOUT  
THE CHILDREN'S HOME



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PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.  
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