

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER



Catholic
Charities
Archdiocese of Dubuque

IN THIS ISSUE



- Saadat's Journey
- Immigration Legislation



- Be The Light In 2024
- Leave a Legacy



- A Day In Drug Court
- Alabar Plaza Vacancy



IOWA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

URGENT ACTION ALERT

IOWA IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

Iowa Catholic Conference Opposes Enforcement-Only Immigration Bills

The subject of immigration is politically divisive, and it has often been a point of contention throughout American history. Catholic social teaching recognizes a country's right and responsibility to manage its borders in accordance with the common good. At the same time,

serving newcomers is compelled by Sacred Scripture and Catholic social teaching and is a core ministry of the Church. Unfortunately, there are several bills moving in the Iowa Legislature that do not align with these principles.

>> You can make an impact by contacting your legislators <<

- **HF 2567 and SF 2340** would create a state crime of “illegal entry into the state by an alien.” We believe these bills are pre-empted by federal law and the U.S. Constitution. It is problematic that these bills would explicitly allow state officials to prosecute an individual for state immigration crimes, even if that person’s application for immigration relief is pending before federal authorities. SF 2340 has passed the Iowa Senate by a vote of 34-16.
- **HF 2608** would create the state crime of “smuggling of persons.” The language of the bill is vague. Does “encourage” or “induce” a person to remain in the U.S. mean providing food or shelter to an immigrant? Does it mean a person sending money home to a family? That should not be out of bounds. An amendment has improved the bill somewhat.
- **HF 2320** would forbid state universities and community colleges from offering in-state tuition to residents of Iowa unless they can prove “lawful presence.” We believe young people should not be hindered from working towards a promising future only because they were brought to the United States by their parents at a young age without legal status. As state and local taxpayers, we have already invested in the education of these young people for many years and in some cases this proposal might stop us from getting a return on our investment.
- **SF 108** would require usage of the voluntary federal “e-verify” program mandatory for employers in Iowa. E-verify is a web-based system that allows enrolled employers to confirm the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. This bill is duplicative in part because the federal government is already authorized to investigate employment violations in this context. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 30-17 and went to the House.

The Church is asking for policies that are merciful. [Please take the time to send a message in your own words to your State Senator and Representative in opposition to these bills.](#) Source: <https://iowacatholicconference.org/voter-voice/>

At Catholic Charities, we have the privilege of renewing hope when all seems lost and walking alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ through their darkest moments. For those who are elderly, disabled, struggling with their mental health, separated from their families, incarcerated, facing homelessness, and altogether isolated, we are here.

Our generous supporters directly impacted the 79,281 people we helped at Catholic Charities over the past 5 years alone!

DONATE



**YOUR GIFT PROVIDES HELP AND
CREATES HOPE FOR THE MOST POOR
AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE ACROSS
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBUQUE**



A Day at Drug Court

*The perspective of a Jail & Prison Reentry
Volunteer in Waterloo*

As a volunteer for Jail & Prison Reentry, I recently attended one of the weekly Drug Court sessions with my client. What an experience that turned out to be! I knew that Drug Court provided a structure for justice-impacted people to work through recovery and rehabilitation instead of serving their prison sentences. Clients that participate in our support groups (Circle of Support and Accountability) have given their perspectives on the ups and downs of the process. But

being there in person was impactful beyond words. The judge called each participant to stand at the podium for questioning, which closely resembled a group therapy session. There was an emphasis on truth, accountability, progress, and respect. Everyone was at a different point in the process whether living in the facility (formerly known as the halfway house) or living on their own. The number of days clean, realities of employment, landlord issues, and family concerns were all on the table for discussion.

For those who had relapsed, honesty in front of the judge, probation officer, and district attorney was expected. Those tense moments were filled with pain and regret while a short jail stay was imposed as a consequence. Being brave enough to face your failures in a room full of peers and



law enforcement takes a strength that I cannot imagine. The desire to change their lives outweighs the constant struggle with addiction. A couple of days in county jail is much preferred to a years-long prison sentence. They were immediately booked into jail and walked out by the Sheriff's Deputy.

Drug court has the feeling of a supportive parent checking in with their teenager. The conversations are compassionate and realistic to combat the lifetimes of trauma, addiction, loneliness, and mistakes that are strapped like baggage to every person in the room. The judge pointed out that honesty and change are hard work and celebrated progress, no matter how small. Space was held for vulnerable conversations about mental health struggles and the stigma around seeking help. This experience shaped how I understand the local justice systems and the efforts around recovery. Walking alongside someone through this process shines a light on the path to healing and a future full of hope. I'm grateful to be a volunteer with the Jail & Reentry program and the transformative work that happens in and out of the courtroom.



Volunteering is a work of heart

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER HERE



COME HOME TO ALABAR PLAZA

1110 DOREEN AVENUE, WATERLOO, IOWA



CONVENIENT & AFFORDABLE LIVING



Request an Application for a Two-Bedroom Unit



From Afghanistan to Cedar Rapids: Saadat's Journey

In March 2024, Saadat Ahmadi celebrates his 2nd anniversary of employment at Catholic Charities. He has served as a Pashto & Dari interpreter, and community navigator for the newly arrived Afghan evacuees in Northeast Iowa and recently became a Department of Justice Accredited Legal Representative. This is a much different life than he envisioned living just a few short years ago during his military career in the Afghan Air Force. Saadat's story is one of upheaval, resiliency, and determination. He demonstrates a passion for service and understands the unique challenges faced when navigating life in a new country.

"While I was busy serving other Afghans who needed help to make a new home and future in the United States, I also needed to find my own legal pathway for my own permanent residency here in the US...It was a very stressful time, but I am thankful for the legal help I

received and because of my work with Catholic Charities I was able to understand the legal challenges faced by many Afghans. I am fortunate to share that I recently received the official notice granting me asylum." [Read More](#)



**READ
SAADAT'S
STORY**

*Click
Here* →

**WE ARE
HIRING!**

APPLY NOW!

**PROPERTY
SUPERVISOR**

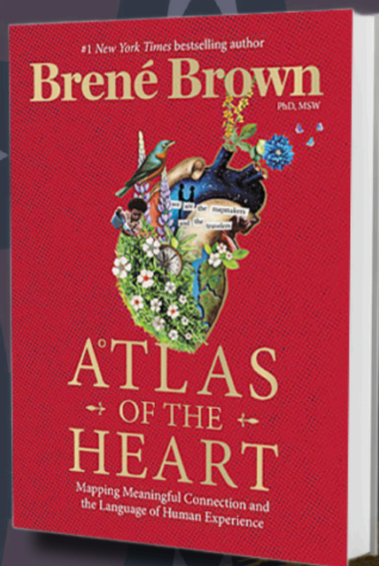
Affordable Housing at Catholic Charities

- **Full-Time Position**
- **Based in Dubuque with regular travel to other properties (Waterloo, Maquoketa)**

**NEW
VIDEO**



PLAY NOW →



What we are reading:

Atlas of the Heart by Brené Brown

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE



Like



Follow



Watch



Donate



Parishes

Plan Your Legacy With Catholic Charities

You can have an everlasting influence on the lives of those we serve at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Please ask your attorney to include a bequest for our organization in your will. If you would like more information about leaving a legacy gift to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, please contact Jeff Schneider at dbqcdevdir@dbqarch.org or call (800) 876-3546. *Through these simple steps, you will be taking an active role in making a lasting impact by helping the poor and vulnerable right here in the Archdiocese of Dubuque.*

WAYS TO GIVE