



January 25, 2019

Catholic Charities – Harrelson Center Partner of the Year

Wilmington, NC – On the third floor of the Harrelson Center, people from all walks of life are waiting to meet with Emilie Hart and her staff at the Catholic Charities Wilmington Office. This Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh regional offices supports 6 counties of people in southeastern NC – all of which were impacted by Hurricane Florence. Catholic Charities will case manage thousands of our neighbors with unmet basic needs such as housing, furniture, food and supplies, and assist them through the long term recovery process, which could take years.

The Harrelson Center has been grateful to Catholic Charities for their partnership over the last three years, supporting Catholic Charities as they counsel neighbors and impact young families, immigration services, and disaster survivors. The Harrelson Center and Catholic Charities partnership strengthened further with recent disaster relief and recovery efforts. On November 15, 2018, at the Harrelson Center 7th annual Thankful Hearts Luncheon, the Board of Directors announced Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh as their 2018 Partner of the Year.

Catholic Charities Regional Director Emilie Hart and her staff of three worked with over 500 volunteers to bring immediate relief after Hurricane Florence. They supported 21,000 individuals in New Hanover County and an additional 20,000 in the region, while case managing 200 survivors still suffering from Hurricane Matthew two years earlier. “We are here for people when disaster strikes,” says Hart, “and we stay through the long term recovery efforts.”

Catholic Charities works through four core programs: immigration services, family support services, emergency assistance which includes a food pantry, diaper program, and financial assistance, and disaster services. Case management is fundamental to Catholic Charities approach to working with the whole person, “It’s at the heart of who we are and what we do. We address immediate needs like food, shelter, and clothing, but then we go on to help with paperwork, health issues, mental health crises, and spiritual counseling,” explains Hart. “Navigating the system of support available through federal, state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations can be a challenge. Case managers direct people on where to find help with rent or mortgage payments, utilities, rebuilding services, counselling, and food distribution - whatever the individual and their family needs to get back to their pre-disaster lives.”

Hart says being located in the Harrelson Center proves most beneficial to those they assist, “We can tell people to take the stairs to the Help Hub or to another Partner, rather than take a bus across town to reach the services needed. Synergy and collaboration between the nonprofits partnered in the Harrelson Center make it possible to assist with complex issues by eliminating barriers to access.”

Harrelson Center Executive Director, Meade Van Pelt, shares what this partnership means to the nonprofit campus, “We all learn from Catholic Charities expertise about how to better serve our neighbors in crisis and after disaster and come alongside with our strengths and resources. It is a respectful relationship that will bring results to our community for healing, recovery, and preparedness, every day, and for the next disaster. We humbly celebrate and advocate for Catholic Charities, as they do the same for every one they meet and for issues of social and economic justice.”