Tony Poekert Retires
Cousineau Named Director of Parish & Community Services

Liz ran away from an abusive home with a man she saw as her knight in shining armor. Once they were out west, Liz realized her partner was no better - he was abusive and controlling. Having lost a pregnancy to the violence, and with another child on the way, she resolved to escape. When she returned to New Hampshire and found her way to Tony Poekert, she was at her lowest.

“One of the things I asked her was to envision life the way she would like it to be. To dream big … And I remember her sitting there crying, and she said, ‘I can’t dream. Dreams aren’t for people like me.’”

Together, Liz and Tony found that dream - taking care of children. Today, she has a family and has found success working with kids.

Liz is one of the hundreds of people who have come to Tony’s door. People who needed a hand. A voice. A dream. And now, Tony is stepping down after nearly 32 years of service to the people of the North Country.
June 25, 1984 was a good day for Catholic Charities New Hampshire. That was the day Marc Cousineau and Tony Poekert each took outreach positions for Parish & Community Services. Cousineau worked in the Lebanon District Office, while Poekert was placed in the Littleton District Office.

Tony Poekert retired on February 5, 2016, and Marc Cousineau will assume the role of Director, but will remain based in the Lebanon office. Christina Bertin continues her role as the Littleton Coordinator.

“We are fortunate to have such continuity within our Parish & Community Services,” says Thomas E. Blonksi, President and CEO of Catholic Charities New Hampshire. “People like Marc and Tony have allowed us to successfully reach thousands of people with the help they need.”

Tony introduced Hand-in-Hand, a community project that helps elderly, veterans and others in need with small household projects.

The spirit of helping build stronger communities is something shared by all staffers within Parish & Community Services and exemplified by Cousineau and Poekert, two long-time colleagues and friends.

Bienvenue from Catholic Charities
Immigration & Refugee Services

The office of Immigration and Refugee Services brought long-term French-speaking residents in Manchester together with French-speaking immigrants, many from West Africa, though a program called Conversation Café Francophone.

“Our goal is to welcome French-speaking newcomers to Manchester and provide them the opportunity for French conversation, to establish new social connections and new friendships among Manchester’s French speakers, young and old,” says Cathy Chesley, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services.

The program was a collaborative effort between Catholic Charities, the Manchester Integration Initiative, English for New Americans and the Franco-American Society.

St. Ann Resident Will be Flying High

Trinity Health Partners

St. Ann resident James O’Brien will join other veterans, mostly from World War II, on May 22, on a flight to visit the various monuments and memorials in Washington, D.C.

The flight was arranged through Honor Flight New England, a non-profit agency dedicated to honoring veterans.

“We are greatly excited to see our very own resident receive such an amazing sponsorship and an opportunity to visit the Memorials,” St. Ann administrator Chrystal McCaffery says. “He’s greatly excited for this unexpected adventure and grateful he is healthy enough to attend such an important ceremony.”

Starting the Year with Hope

Mardi Gras Gala

Thank you to all of the sponsors and guests who helped us raise over $100,000 to provide pathways out of poverty. As one client said: “Catholic Charities helped us get our life back on track. They were kind and understanding while providing constructive criticism and an honest evaluation of our situation.”

We hope to see you at next year’s event!

Grants
Help to Move Lives Forward

We would like to recognize the following groups for their support:

The Donley Foundation (Parish & Community Services) .................. $5,368
Price Chopper’s Golub Foundation (Parish & Community Services) .......... $1,200

Build a Legacy that Impacts Lives

Consider leaving a gift in your will or insurance to move lives forward. For more information, contact Lisa at 603-669-3030.