

*Diane had always felt immense pressure and guilt because her son's father was not present in his life. She knew that her and her son's future relied solely on her. This drove Diane to accomplish amazing things such as earning an MBA and buying her first home. Her stability was shaken though when in the middle of the recession, she was laid off from her job. To survive, Diane tapped into her retirement funds to pay her bills. She fell behind on her mortgage and her power was soon to be cut off. Diane felt pressure to keep going, despite falling further into this hole, because of her son who was away at school. She hid all the financial pressures she was facing from him in an effort to protect him. Diane felt hopeless and was desperate to find an organization that could keep her from losing everything.



Financial Services Client

**Diane's Story*

When Diane first came to CCA, she did not have hope that anything would be different, but she immediately began to see small things change. She began to see the beginning of hope. If the small things changed, then the larger things could begin to change as well. She started to believe that it would be okay. Catholic Charities gave Diane someone to listen to her anxieties and worries as she navigated through this process. Her housing counselor helped Diane realize that her biggest accomplishment was not becoming a homeowner, but her son. Having support from CCA allowed Diane to finally tell her son about her situation, and he chose to come home to help support Diane. Diane realized that it was no longer just her. Catholic Charities helped Diane get out of foreclosure, get her power turned back on, and give her the confidence to begin letting her son give her support when she needs it.

*Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

Client Success Story

*Theresa was an exceptional mother. She prioritized God, her family, and others before herself. She first joined the military while in college and was selected to by the Marine Corps to go to law school. She loved every part of her education and her work. Theresa had three boys whom she loved. One summer she sent to a day camp. Worried she called the day camp frequently until their final day. On the last day of camp, her three children were involved in a canoeing accident. The three children were rushed to the hospital where they put on life support.



Veteran Services Client

**Theresa's Story*

Theresa's life began falling apart: She did not want to lose her kids, she did not see her husband for two years because of his work, and she cried for five years nonstop. She wanted to die, but God did not let her.

After getting into a relationship with her children's father again, Theresa's family stopped supporting her. With no food in her fridge and no help from family, Theresa called Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities helped her find housing, jobs, and Theresa received counseling services through Catholic Charities. Despite having another child, Theresa still struggled with suicidal thoughts. The counseling services provided by CCA showed Theresa that there was another way. Counseling showed Theresa that there were people in her life that cared for her and helped. As a result of the help she received, Theresa felt as though she had the ability to help others who were also struggling with suicidal thoughts. This led Theresa to find work with the suicide hotline. Now she not only has two children, but two grandchildren as well. Theresa says that this is because of the helped from CCA that allowed her to be a wife and mother again. *Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

Ayana is a single mother of six children from the Central African Republic. Ayana and her children were forced to flee multiple times as conflict spread throughout their home country and to surrounding areas and they were specifically persecuted because of their religion. During the time they spent fleeing and searching for safety, Ayana's daughter, Dia, contracted Polio. Dia was left without the use of her legs and spent the majority of her life walking on her hands with sandals on her palms. The

family eventually ended up in Chad, where they found temporary refuge for a number of years before being resettled in the United States.

CCA's Refugee Resettlement staff has helped the family face many challenges as they learned to navigate their new surroundings—speak English, find work, and access resources in their new community. However, they faced all of these challenges with a positive attitude. Dia now has a wheelchair and is able to attend school with other children her age. Ayana is busy working full time at a poultry processing plant and caring for her family. Ayana's oldest son has recently entered the Job Corps program and her oldest daughter is preparing for her wedding. The other children are thriving in school and are well on their way to independence. They all enjoy participating in extracurricular activities and after school programs. *Names have been changed for privacy reasons.



Refugee Services Clients
Ayana's Story



Catholic
Charities
ATLANTA

Client Success Story



Immigration Services and Education Services Clients

**David and Ana's Story*

Each client who comes to Catholic Charities Atlanta brings a different life story. *David and *Ana are no exception. Their lives in Colombia had been disrupted when Ana was kidnapped and held for 4.5 months. After her release, they left their homeland and sought political asylum in the United States. They joined their adult children in Georgia, and settled in Atlanta.

Five years later, the couple was eligible to apply for citizenship and began attending our Citizenship Classes in Chamblee. They also attended our English classes to improve their language skills. When they were ready, they filed their applications for naturalization and waited for notification of their interview appointments. The days finally came (David's appointment was one day before Ana's). They passed the Civics and English tests with flying colors, and took the Oath of Citizenship on the afternoons of their interviews. Their entire family, including children and grandchildren are now United States Citizens! *Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

Client Success Story

Susan came to Catholic Charities Atlanta with the idea that she would make a plan of adoption for her baby. As with many women considering adoption, it was not her first choice, but she believed there was no way she would be able to provide for a second child. CCA staff immediately began counseling for her. She was given the chance to talk not only about her adoption decision, but also the whole of her current and past life circumstances. Some of her depression began to lift, and this enabled her to see a way out of her crisis. She soon decided that adoption was not the right decision for her and was



Counseling & Parenting Services Client
Susan's Story

transferred into the Parent Talk program. Once entered into Parent Talk, a Parenting Specialist began working with Susan on tackling all of the obstacles that stood in the way of her creating a safe and stable living situation for both of her children. Chief among those concerns was helping Susan to receive the mental health care she needed to better deal with her depression. With a clearer mind, Susan was able to take some steps in the right direction. She secured Section 8 housing and moved into a new apartment. She allowed her five year old to go on an extended visit with the child's father while she worked on getting settled in with her new infant. That respite allowed her to look for a job, find a daycare she trusted (and was flexible with work schedules), and enroll in school.

Things are looking up for Susan. She now has some child support. Susan now has a job, and her two children are doing well in their new daycare. She is working toward her Associates degree in Health Administration and was able to get into school on a scholarship. At her last meeting with the Parenting Specialist, nearly a year after she began services, Susan said she's not as fragile as she once was, she trusts people more, and she feels content. After a very tough start, Susan is making the most of what she has to work with and is ensuring that her two daughters have a better, more secure life. *Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

*Brenda came to the agency with her mortgage 20 months in arrears. She and her husband were unable to meet their financial obligations after his hours were reduced and she was unable to work. Throughout this difficult time, Brenda and her husband sought help with two different agencies. After completing an intake with the first agency, Brenda had difficulties following up on her case. She was upset to learn that the agency had moved and was no longer in contact with her. Following this incident, Brenda used an agency that guaranteed the short sale of her home. During this process, official



*Financial Education Services--
Foreclosure Intervention Clients*

**Brenda's Story*

documentation and paperwork was filed. When she decided to no longer participate in the agency's services, her personal documentation was withheld until she and her husband paid additional fees

When Brenda discussed her situation with a housing counselor at CCA, they immediately recognized what was going on and advised her to no longer make any payments to the agency she had previously worked with. The scams were reported to Loan Scams Prevention—a Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. CCA's housing counselor contacted Brenda's lender to see what could be done in the case, but the lender denied any modification program. By this time, the loan had been sold to another lender. CCA staff worked tirelessly with Brenda's new lender who finally approved her for the Modification and Principal Reduction Program. The modification package Brenda and her husband received included a principal reduction and her interest rate was lowered significantly. On a monthly basis, Brenda is now paying \$839 less each month, and she is elated that she and her family were able to keep their home. *Names have been changed.

Client Success Story

*Kevin's dream was to join the military, but being on the front line broke him mentally, physically, and spiritually. He came back as a totally different person, unrecognizable to his friends and family. His PTSD brought him down, making him lose his dignity, sense of home, and pride. Kevin faced struggles with finding stable housing and food insecurity.



Veteran Services Client

**Kevin's Story*

However, the thing that hurt him the most was that he was unable to provide for his family. This was a very dark time in his life with a lot of emotional and mental pain. He was hurt because he put his life on the line for the country, but no one took the time to understand his pain.

Kevin went to different organizations looking for help paying utilities or trying to find a place to live, but they all turned their back on him. When he went to Catholic Charities Atlanta, it was not overnight but a process and they stuck with him. Catholic Charities Atlanta would reach out to him, calling him and asking how he was doing. He was touched deeply by this to know that there was still an organization out there that cared about people.

As time went by, Kevin started to get back his dignity. He was happy he that could now help his kids and provide for them, because he knew Catholic Charities Atlanta had his back. They felt like a family. Catholic Charities Atlanta has been with him every step of the way to where now he has a house. He treasures the time now that he can spend with his kids and family. He now feels like he can reach for the stars and become a successful businessman that can pass on the blessing. To tell others the goodness that Catholic Charities has done for him and his family. *Names have been changed.

"I first heard of Catholic Charities Atlanta from a friend of mine, who recommended that I call and see what services I could get to help me take better care of my son. By the time I made my first call, I was also seven months pregnant. The information I got was that there was a short waiting period and someone would get back to me. After giving birth to my son, it was my turn. I got to meet the social worker and that was the start of a very interesting learning adventure. A parent specialist called me, introduced herself and told me about Catholic Charities. She explained what to expect and we set up a day to meet. As I waited for the agreed upon date, a lot went through my mind. Though she had told me what to expect, I still waited anxiously.

Since then, I have learned a lot that I have applied in raising my baby boy. I learned safety, nutrition and what to expect at different stages of growth and development. I have used the informative booklets and videos that CCA provided as a reference and guide many times. I would like to thank Catholic Charities Atlanta for the wonderful help that my son and I have received. Most importantly, I have applied all the tools given to me in raising my son. Special thanks to my Parent Specialist for the good heart, wonderful teachings, and listening."

*Names have been changed.



*Counseling & Parenting
Services Client
Emily's Story*

“I wanted to thank you for all of the help you have given us. My 9-month old son was in the hospital to have surgery. He ended up being in there for 3 weeks. While we were at the hospital, tornadoes hit our area. We had no idea of all the damage they had caused.



We did not have home insurance at the time. Both my husband and I had recently lost our jobs. We were

Resource Services-Disaster Relief Client Stephanie's Story

worried, but confident that we could gain new employment and get back on our feet quickly. But, once the tornadoes hit, everything changed.

We had no income to repair the major damage that the tornadoes caused to our home. Plus, our son was still recovering from his surgery. We did not know what we were going to do!

Then, I spoke to someone at the Georgia Recovery Project and they told me about Catholic Charities Atlanta. That was when I knew there was hope. I can't thank you enough for all of the help that you gave us. God always works things out for the best, and he did for us. Thank you for allowing God to use you to help so many in need. You guys are great!"

*Names have been changed.

Two sisters were abandoned at the door of an elderly couple. Their parents intentionally had not registered them with local Chinese authorities so that they could try to have a son. The girls remained with the couple into their early teens. That was when a man came to their village looking for girls to work in a factory in the U.S., with an offer of generous wages and free immigration documents.

Accepting his offer, the girls were given “documents” and travel arrangements were made. Their documents were later taken and they were flown to Mexico City where they boarded a van. The van, filled with young Chinese girls, headed to the U.S. border.

Along the way they learned the trip was not free. The sisters would work in brothels—young teen and pre-teen girls to be exploited in the illicit sex trade. Their captors prepped them on illegal border crossing, which was done on foot at night. The older sister made it; the younger one did not. Alone and frightened, the younger sister was forced to hide out for weeks before attempting another crossing. Eventually she succeeded only to be “sold” to a man in New York City. She spent months in his apartment forced into acts of prostitution. Meanwhile, the older sister was forced to work in a Texas brothel. One evening she fled to a nearby gas station. There she called for help and was reunited with family friends and a distant relative.

In New York, the younger sister escaped and made her way to a homeless shelter. Online at a Chinese-language version of Facebook she found an ad posted by her older sister. They reunited and made their way to Atlanta to stay with a family friend who happened to be familiar with the work of Catholic Charities Atlanta Immigration Legal Services program.

With the help of Catholic Charities Atlanta staff, the sisters applied for and received Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and are now lawful permanent residents. They enrolled in high school, and hope to go to college to realize their dream of a better life. It has been a humbling experience for Catholic Charities staffers to work with these young women.



Immigration Legal Services Clients
Two Sister's Story