

Happy New Year, Care Team Volunteers!

As we begin 2026, we look forward to all that lies ahead for our ministry. In the coming months, we're excited to offer new learning and sharing opportunities to strengthen our current Care Teams and inspire one another. We also hope to form new teams so even more people can experience the gift of visits and connection.

As you continue your service, please remember to record all your hours—including phone calls, writing cards, attending trainings, retreats, and webinars, making visits, and even the driving you do. Every effort matters, is a generous gift of your time, and helps us celebrate the impact of this ministry.

For inspiration, see Cricket's letter on page 2 and enjoy the photos on page 3 from Queen of Apostles' day at the Adult Day Center, where volunteers shared joy through crafts. These moments remind us what's possible when we come together.

We can't wait to reconnect with everyone in January and jumpstart this year with service, growth, and support for you on the front lines—from additional team-level trainings to refreshing your Care Team brochures. Just let us know how we can show up for you.

Thank you for being the hands and heart of this ministry.

May your new year be blessed!



OAKWOOD
FOUNDATION

We are deeply grateful to the **Oakwood Foundation** for its continued support of our Care Team Ministry in 2026. Oakwood reflects love, care and respect for their residents in so many ways. One of which is supporting Care Team Ministry since 2007. We are humbled to collaborate with Oakwood on our shared effort to support seniors in living their best lives! Thank you, Oakwood Foundation, for your steadfast commitment to care, community, and the well-being of our neighbors.

~ Catholic Charities
Diocese of Madison

The Gift of Connection

In 2025, our annual Care Team Ministry retreat centered on the Gift of Connection. As I look back on the past year and consider what I hope to carry into the new year, connection rises to the very top of the list. In a world that often feels fast paced or overwhelming at times, one of the most meaningful gifts we can offer is the simple act of connecting with others. Unlike material items, connection fosters belonging, creates bonds, and encourages emotional well-being. It's about being present—sharing time, listening, and creating moments that matter.

Connection is powerful. It reminds us that we are seen, heard, and valued. For someone who feels alone, a conversation can bring light to a dark day. For someone who feels forgotten, a smile can restore hope. These small moments create ripples of belonging that reach far beyond the present. What makes this connection so powerful is that it's never one-sided. Volunteers often begin with the intention of giving back, only to discover that they're receiving just as much in return.

Recently, an individual paused in my office doorway during his daily walking laps. He offered a warm hello and then proceeded to sing. His mind shifted from the pain he was experiencing to a moment of joy as I found the song on my phone and we sang together. Before long we continued down the hall to finish his walking laps and settled in the foyer to rest. After a short time, another gentleman overheard the music, recognized the song and joined us. Pure joy and pure connection. Not only did the moment provide connection, it also provided shared smiles, reminiscing, and a reminder of how simple moments can mean so much.

Later that same week, I stopped at an intersection and noticed a gentleman standing on the corner with a backpack and wearing warm clothing. He was holding a sign which read, if you can't provide money or food, a smile is all I need. I glanced up from the sign and saw his beautiful smile. As I smiled back his face brightened even more. In that simple exchange, my own heart smiled too.

The most meaningful moments are sometimes the quietest and simplest ones—the ones shared between two people who choose to show up for each other.

As we move into the new year ahead, may we remain open to the quiet ways God works through simple moments. May each connection, small act of kindness, and your presence bring comfort, hope, and light to those you meet and serve.

Happy New Year
Cricket





Queen of Apostles at the Adult Day Center

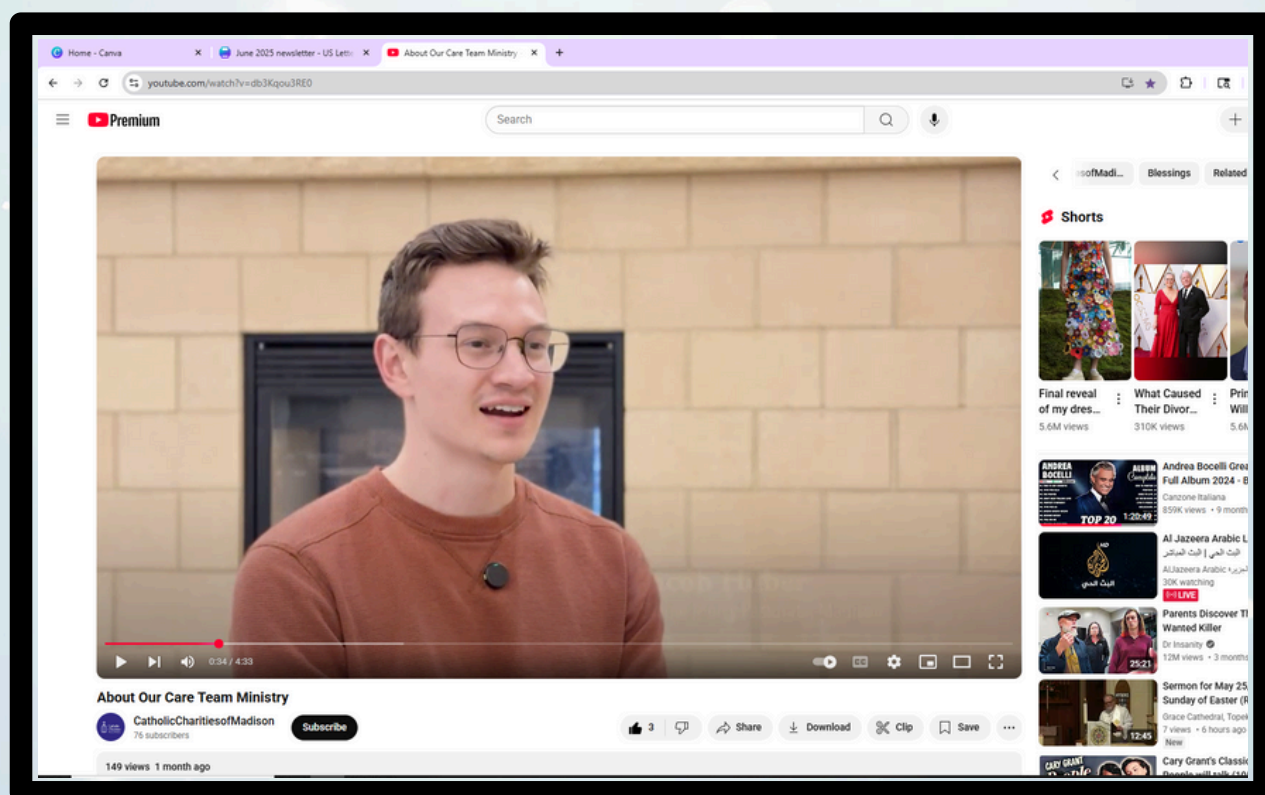


A little reminder to start the year off right!

1. Set boundaries
2. Take breaks
3. Delegate tasks
4. Exercise regularly
5. Maintain a healthy diet
6. Practice mindfulness
7. Sleep well
8. Love work
9. Say no
10. Seek support
11. Enjoy hobbies
12. Stay hydrated
13. Vacation
14. Reflect



Remember to share our wonderful Care Team video. This resource is perfect for use in your parish to highlight our ministry and inspire others to join our efforts. If you're interested, just ask us how to get started!



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