

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Thomas Merton Family Center Announces the 30th Annual Celebrity Breakfast Featuring Dan Orlovsky to Support Expanding Community Needs**

BRIDGEPORT, CT – Thomas Merton Family Center, a beacon of hope and assistance operated by Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, invites the community to its 30th Annual Celebrity Breakfast. The event, which has become a cherished tradition, will take place on May 15th from 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM at Sacred Heart University West Campus Guest House. This year, we are honored to welcome Dan Orlovsky, former NFL quarterback and current ESPN football analyst, as our guest speaker.

Celebrating its 50th year of serving the Bridgeport community, the Thomas Merton Family Center is proud to announce this fundraising event from its new facility, opened in December 2023. The center continues to expand its services in response to the growing needs of the community, highlighted by the significant increase in families served by our Eat Smart pantry program.

"Since moving into our new building in December, we've noticed a significant rise in the number of families reaching out to our food pantry for support. Additionally, we've seen an increase in guests joining us for breakfast and lunch," said Bill Colson, Director of the Thomas Merton Family Center. "We are committed to serving the Bridgeport community, a dedication we've upheld for the past 50 years. To sustain our efforts, we rely on the ongoing support of our donors and volunteers."

The data speaks to the urgency: The number of individuals served by the Eat Smart pantry has nearly tripled, from 378 to 1,080 individuals. The number of households relying on our services has more than doubled, from 207 to 434 households, with newly registered households increasing from 43 to 115.

The 30th Annual Celebrity Breakfast aims to raise critical funds to support the center's expanding services amidst the high cost of living that is impacting our community. The fundraiser will not only commemorate half a century of unwavering support to those in need but also look forward to a future where no one in Bridgeport goes hungry.

Join us in supporting the Thomas Merton Family Center as we continue to provide nutritious meals, essential services, and hope to our neighbors. Tickets for the event can be purchased at <https://TMFCBreakfast.givesmart.com>. Your participation and contributions are vital in helping us meet the growing need in our community.

For more information about the event, ticket sales, or how to become a sponsor, please contact Marianne Kahn at [mkahn@ccfc-ct.org](mailto:mkahn@ccfc-ct.org) or call 203-520-9507.

#### About Thomas Merton Family Center:

The Thomas Merton Family Center, a program of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, has been a pillar of the Bridgeport community since its inception. The center provides critical services such as meal programs, food pantry services, education, and job training to individuals and families in need, fostering a community of care and support.

For more details on the Thomas Merton Family Center and its services, please visit [www.themertoncenter.org](http://www.themertoncenter.org).