

Caritas of Waco Historical Highlights

- Caritas was established in 1967 by the Department of Catholic Charities of the Austin Diocese of the Catholic Church.
- Tony Rocha, a Catholic layman, was the first Executive Director of Caritas until he resigned in 1970.
- From 1973-1976, Kenneth Solberg, former pastor of the First Lutheran Church, Waco, was the Executive Director.
- From 1976-1978, Father Murphy, a Catholic priest, served as Executive Director.
- In 1978, Caritas received its charter from the state of Texas and became an ecumenical organization.
- In October, 1978, Dr. Eugene Jud was named "temporary" Executive Director.
- In 1980, Caritas had its first thrift store, managed by Esther Jud.
- In 1985, Caritas, with a matched grant from the Mabee Foundation, purchased the building at 318 South 5th Street at a cost of \$125,000.
- In 1985, Caritas moved its total operation from the First Presbyterian Church and the basement of South Junior High School to the new headquarters at 318 South 5th.
- In 1986, Caritas purchased the building at 3016 Bellmead Drive, which now houses the Bellmead Hidden Treasures Thrift Store.
- In 1999, Caritas opened the NU 2 U Thrift Store in West, TX at 108 E. Oak St.
- Dr. Jud served as Executive Director until early 2000.
- Marge Kultgen succeeded Dr. Jud and served until the end of 2001.
- Dr. Kenneth Moerbe was selected Executive Director in January 2002.
- In November, 2003, Caritas moved its administrative offices, food warehouse, and Ladies of Charity Thrift Store to 300 S. 15th Street, enlarging its total space to 35,000 square feet.
- In 2004, the Gifts-In-Kind program was begun in cooperation with the Wal-Mart Return Center in Waco.
- In 2005, the Helpings/Food Stamp Outreach Program was established at Caritas in conjunction with the McLennan County Hunger Coalition.
- In December, 2008, Kenneth Moerbe retired and Buddy Edwards became the Executive Director.

- In May, 2011, the NU 2 U store in West was closed as a Caritas operation.
- In November, 2011, the Ladies of Charity Thrift Store was relocated to 3116 Franklin Ave and later renamed Hidden Treasures Thrift Store.
- In February, 2012, Caritas implemented a H-E-B Return Center program which allows Caritas to sell H-E-B return products in our thrift stores.
- In October, 2012, the 1st Annual "Caritas Charity Golf Classic" was organized and implemented.
- Following the completion of a successful \$1.75 million Capital Campaign, Caritas in April, 2013, finalized a renovation of its existing facilities that included an expanded food pantry, client waiting areas, new offices for interviewers, training room and improvements in the warehouse.
- In April, 2013, Caritas entered into a relationship with The Texas Hunger Initiative to provide office space to them in the newly renovated areas.
- In December 2013, Caritas began a "Case Management" program that helps clients become more self-sufficient and have less need for emergency services.
- In April 2014, Caritas added a "Development Director" position to its staff in an effort to further enhance its fundraising activities.
- In January 2016, Caritas began a new "Client Food Choice" distribution process allowing clients to walk through the Caritas pantry and select their own food items.
- In 2016, Caritas was awarded a grant to extend to Veterans Case Management by the Texas Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.
- In 2017, Caritas was awarded a three year grant by Prosper Waco to house a WERN (Waco Employer Resource Network) case manager to support individuals seeking full-time employment.
- In May, 2020, Buddy Edwards retired as Executive Director.
- In June, 2020, Ann Owen and Alicia Jallah became the first local female Co-Executive Director team for Caritas of Waco.