

Home Community when HUD approved the building of 19 units for the poorest of the poor seniors in the community. In 2008, the Care Service relocated 72 families to high ground when Silex flooded. In 2005, the Care Service managed 2,200 families who were relocated to Missouri following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service Food Pantry has grown tremendously in size and scope under Mahan's leadership. Operating from a 25,000-square-foot building built and donated by the residents of St. Charles County in 1991, the food pantry served 1,604 families in 2015—a far cry from its humble beginnings in Mahan's kitchen in St. Peters.

In 2015, volunteers and community support organizations logged some 105,323 volunteer hours with Sts. Joachim & Ann Care Service and its programs, at an estimated in-kind dollar value of \$1,579,845. The Care Service brought Christmas dinner to nearly 700 families and found homes for 3,653.

Though Mahan officially became a U.S. citizen in the late nineties, she vows to return to her homeland when Castro is gone. "The day Fidel Castro dies, or a few days after, I will visit my country," she said. "I cannot thank this country enough for opening its arms to my people, but I truly love my country and truly want to go back. Being an advocate for the most vulnerable does not have a citizenship attached to it."

Mahan said she told the Care Service board it was time to retire two years ago. She will remain at the Care Service as a social justice advocate. "The truth is the Care Service has outgrown me, and it's time to pass the baton. I'm a visionary and an advocate, but now



there is a level of professionalism with regard to social demands. We need new blood to meet those needs."

Today, Mahan serves on the boards of directors of the Equal Housing Opportunity Council (EHOC) and the Good Shepherd Children & Family Services center in University City, Mo.

"Our work is not over," Mahan said. "Poverty and hunger among our children continue to grow. Incidents of homelessness among our seniors continue to increase. Death of our children at the hands of heroin must be stopped. I will remain involved in social justice issues and work among the vulnerable in our communities and my church. I know there are some people who wish I would go away, but I will continue to ruffle feathers when I see things that are unacceptable. I still will be a voice." □