



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY[®] OF AKRON

WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

S U M M E R 2 0 2 6

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Bingo Night

On May 2, Christ Child Society of Akron hosted its inaugural Bingo Night, bringing together more than 150 friends, family members, supporters and community members for an evening filled with laughter, friendly competition, delicious food and a shared commitment to serving children and families in need.

Chaired by *Erin Karolewski*, the evening featured rounds of bingo, raffle prizes, a meal catered by TLC Catering and a build-your-own popcorn bar. Local DJ Kyle Molinelli entertained everyone with his bingo-themed jokes and witty cantor.

We are especially grateful to our many volunteers who donated their time and talents to plan, organize, set up, serve and clean up after the event. We also thank all of our community business partners whose generosity contributed to the success of this fundraiser. And thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket, donated a raffle item, volunteered or simply showed up to support our mission.



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Letter from the President

As we complete our 2025/2026 fiscal year, there is much to be thankful for and to celebrate! This summer's newsletter highlights the memorable moments of service our members perform, demonstrating our dedication to the well-being of our community's children. We also recognize those members celebrating special anniversaries and those whom we have sadly lost this year but remember fondly for their devotion to Christ Child Society of Akron.

A key indicator of a vibrant chapter is receiving new members who immediately get involved with our projects and fundraisers, and this year's provisional class did exactly that. On March 21, we returned to Guardian Angels Parish for our annual Corporate Communion Mass and Luncheon, where we worshipped together and installed our new members: *Kimberly Dorsey, Dorene Ellis, Vennie Foster, Ruth Meklus, Jennifer McCormick, Christine Pace, Stephanie Reese, Susan Vernon and Nancy Whitman*. As Fr. Rosing pointed out, it was a beautiful day and without a snow storm. I thank *Susie Wallace Gaebels* and her committee for a most memorable day.

We considered two different projects for our National Day of Service and so, of course, our members stepped up and we did both. We joined forces with Good Samaritan Hunger Center for our National Day of Service. We also had several members volunteer at Ronald McDonald House to prepare a dinner for families who stay there while their children are receiving treatment at Akron Children's Hospital.

We held our first Bingo Party in May with a sold-out crowd of more than 150 attendees. A big thank you goes to *Erin Karolewski* for taking on this new fundraiser. Our expectations were modest, but due to her team's planning and execution of the event, the response was overwhelmingly successful. We are excited that this will be a new annual event.



For the second year in a row, we had record attendance at the May Salad Supper where we recognized guests that included friends of Christ Child Society who helped us in special ways this past year and several potential 2026/2027 provisional members, too. As *Micki Trenta* presented the certificates recognizing those who were celebrating anniversaries, we were so very pleased to hear their favorite "Christ Child moments." It reminded me that we are all doubly blessed because we not only are able to help children in need, but we do so in communion with each other in friendship and with great joy.

Thanks to those who participated this past year in all our service projects highlighted in this newsletter, and also our Literacy programs and Mary's Closet. All of these projects were successful in helping Akron-area children from infancy to adulthood because of the work, dedication and love shown by each of our members. It is such an honor to be a part of CCSA.

Our Red Wagon Committee is busy preparing for our biggest fundraiser of the year and there are many opportunities to participate and support. Our new "Outreach Committee" led by *Martha Mosher* and *Denise Fresh* have been planning additional opportunities to get together with your wonderful Christ Child friends, meet new members and bring potential members to join us in 2026/27.

What a wonderful time I've had being president this year and I have learned so much. I continue to be inspired by the time, talent and treasure you all devote to helping children in need. We couldn't do all we do without the support of our families, donors and sponsors, so we extend a great thank you to them. May we have a successful year with joyful hearts as we work and have fun together.

Gail Pfeiffer

St. Augustine Library

The library at St. Augustine School in Barberton was staffed two days a week by *Meg Lee, Beth Vass, Rita Burkley, and Kathy Kuebel*. Other volunteers came to assist as needed. Regular volunteers included *Micki Trenta, Cheryl Fuhrer, Linda Herberger and Anne Simmons*. Volunteers are required to have a background check and complete the VIRTUS training in order to volunteer.

New for us this year was our technology support. We switched from SWOCA (Southwest Ohio Computer Association) due to the retirement of our contact Tracey Varner. She recommended we work with NEOnet, which is located in Cuyahoga Falls. Our contact there is Tamera Dugan. It was a smooth transition as NEOnet uses the same platforms as SWOCA.

The library was fully up and running the second week of school. We officially closed for the year on May 20 following inventory and the general cleaning/organizing of the room.

The library hosted two book giveaways this year. Before the Christmas holidays, students were invited to select one book to take home as their own. In the spring, they were allowed to take two books to hopefully keep them reading over the summer. As last year, we ended the year with a drawing for a blanket. One girl and one boy were selected.

To prevent loss again this year, we asked that

Kindergarten students keep their library books at school. Each week we gave them a free book to take home. We also provided a book each week for 2nd graders, since they had not received free books in Kindergarten as we had only put this policy in place last school year.

Students in Kindergarten through 5th grade came to the library each week as a class. Upper grades were invited to come as individuals or in small groups as their schedule permitted.

Each week, Meg, Beth and Rita provided programming focused on the holiday celebrations, current events, reading skills or literacy skills during the students' library time. Meg continued to purchase the latest in books and honor book requests from students and teachers.

A new rotating shelving unit worked like magic to draw students attention to books they somehow didn't seem to notice on the regular shelves.

The students continue to express gratitude for our work. During "Librarian Week," we received many adorable thank you's. We also had a lot of students stop by as they passed the library while we were cleaning. We especially loved the little ones who were sad the "library" was closing for the year.



First graders get to take home books.



Lucky blanket winner.

Clothing Center

The Clothing Center Program has wrapped up its work for the 2025/26 school year.

Chairs *Kathy Kuebel, Patty McCluskey and Mary Barnes* printed the orders and pulled needed items from our inventory. Packing orders was done by a small group of members on an as-needed basis. *Kathy McCarron* continued as our buyer this year. Deliveries were managed again by *Judi Hill* and *Barb Newman*, with volunteers rounding out their teams.

We ended the year providing clothing for 968 students in need in the Akron area. Of that total, 615 were for Akron Public School students, 328 from charter schools, and 18 from Catholic schools.

We again offered paper shoe vouchers good at J.C. Penney's in Montrose. This year, due to rising costs, we increased the value of the voucher from \$60 to \$75. Students used 253 in-store vouchers.



ers.

Project RISE, a subcommittee of APS that works with unhoused students, used an online shoe voucher due to the fact that transportation is often an issue for the families they work with. The shoes are sent to us and then delivered to the school by our delivery team. This year 315 pairs of shoes were ordered for Project Rise students.

We have been fortunate enough to receive some generous donations again this year, including:

- *20 hats knit by member *Anna Hall*
- *10 hat/scarf sets from *Patricia O'Brien* (Mary Ann Walter's mother)
- *30 tubes of toothpaste – *Becky Davis*
- *47 coats from the St. Hilary Knights of Columbus #14551
- *155 items from King CLC
- *1,500 pairs of Bombas socks
- *100 travel-size toothpaste and 576 toothbrushes from Delta Dental



Grants

We've been very blessed with many grants recently. A special thank you to the following:

- ◆ \$10,000 from DAFgiving360 from Dave and Susan Dudas
- ◆ \$3,000 Dirk Nowitzke Foundation – Clothing Center
- ◆ \$2,500 from Akron Rotary Foundation for Mary's Kitchen
- ◆ \$1,200 from WITAN for LAYETTES
- ◆ \$464.20 from Guerrero and Duby Family Funds Akron Community Foundation



Day of Service

This year our National Day of Service again was combined with our Diocesan Day of Service and was held on March 18.

Thirty-two CCSA chapter members joined forces with Good Samaritan Hunger Center volunteers at Byrider Hall at St. Sebastian Parish and packed "weekend lunches" for Akron-area students who receive lunches in the Akron School Lunch Program.

Members packed lunches for 3,000 students with a variety of food items, which were supplied by GSHC. The event was so well attend-

ed, the GSHC coordinators commented that we had completed the lunches in "record time."

Afterwards, many of the volunteers went to Los Cabo's, a local Mexican restaurant, to share laughter and gratitude that we were able to work together with a great organization like GSHC on a project that aligns so well with our mission. Members found the experience so gratifying that many plan to volunteer again as GSHC performs this activity every other week throughout the school year.



Summer Social

CCSA members enjoyed socializing with spouses and prospective members during an outing at The Winery at Wolf Creek, June 28.



Mary's Kitchen

Mary's Kitchen members sponsored a packing party on May 7 at the Beck Center. This year we were joined by members of the Akron Rotary Club.

The Rotary Club donated \$2,500 to the Mary's Kitchen project and they asked to be included in our packing day. It was a wonderful group of folks gathered together for a good cause.

We assembled 25 storage bins, full of kitchen essentials, for young people aging out of foster care. The bins included dishes, mugs, glassware and cutlery. In addition, donations of kitchen linens were collected from our members at the April meeting. Thanks to the generosity of the Rotary Club, we were able to include a \$50 gift card to Aldi this year. Also included in each tote was a handwritten note of good wishes and blessings.

The totes will be distributed to deserving young adults through the charity organization. Many thanks to all who helped make this project a success.



Layettes

The layette program at CCS Akron is organized by *Patty Smith, Carolyn Schmidlin* and *Christina Mastromatteo*. We pack layettes throughout the year with much help from members and other volunteers. This summer we look forward to having assistance from some confirmation candidates from St. Hilary School.

Patty orders most of the supplies needed for the layette bags but very special items that are included in each bag are a hand-made knitted or crocheted baby blanket and a hat. *Diana Tornichio, Barb Neman, Barb Will* and others generously donate their time and talent to make these and other items.

The layettes are distributed on an as-

needed basis to various organizations that serve parents with newborns who have nothing or very little for their infants.

The organizations include the following: Akron General Hospital, Caring for Kids, Greenleaf Family Center, Shelter Care, Summa Hospital (Akron City), Queen's Village/Project Ujima, Touchstone, and United Way at North High School.

Summa alone delivers an average of 400 babies each month with an average of over 5,000 per year.

We thank every member for their efforts to make this program work.

Membership Anniversaries

Congratulations to these 19 Anniversary Members of our Akron Chapter of the Christ Child Society.

They are celebrating significant anniversaries of their membership and were honored at the May Salad Supper on May 20. We thank them for their many years of support to our organization and pray that they will continue to be a part of our chapter for many more years.

We are especially pleased to honor two members, *Sylvia Johnson* and *Carol Kane*, who have reached the 50-Year membership mark, as well *Patricia Bird* who has become a 55-year. Please

55 Years (1971)

Patricia Bird

50 Years (1976)

Sylvia Johnson
Carol Kane

45 Years (1981)

Christine Cevasco
Patricia Strausser
Carol Witwer

40 Years (1986)

Susan Roberts

35 Years (1991)

Sue Doherty
Sue Sassano
Linda Wiandt

30 Years (1996)

Laura Beringer
Theresa Dobel

25 Years (2001)

Marianne Bertsch
Robin Butler
Patricia Graber
Geraldine "Jerry" Kelly
Sally Olszewski
Nancy Parks
Deanna Vargo

Honoring our newest 50-Year Christ Child Members

The tradition of honoring our anniversary guests at the May Salad Supper began 25 years ago. Twenty years ago (in 2006) we had the privilege of honoring our first 50-year member, our Founding President *Nancy Flanagan*.

Since that time, we have given a special gift to each of our 50-year members. This year we added two more 50-year members to our list and in their honor a gift donation was made to the Christ Child service project of their choice.

Our chapter now has honored 44 members as 50-year members. In addition, since 2017 we have honored ten 60-year members. We are grateful for the longevity of these wonderful members.

Let us recognize and honor the following 50-year members and be grateful for their service.

Sylvia Johnson: *Mary's Kitchen was the project she selected to receive a donation in her honor.*

Carol Kane: *The Layette Center was the project she selected to receive a donation in her honor.*

Happy 100th Birthday
to member Irene Berger (Jan. 7, 2026)

Corporate Communion



The 69th Corporate Communion and Luncheon was held on Saturday, March 21 at Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Copley.

Father Rosing was the celebrant for Mass which started at 10 a.m.

Nine Provisionals were installed, received their pins, and were warmly welcomed as new members. *Susie Gaebel Wallace* chaired the event.

The luncheon started immediately following Mass in the Guardian Angels Parish Hall. The Tangier catered a delicious luncheon for 80 people.

Megan Houk, from the Junior League of Akron, was the guest speaker and shared information about the League's Focus Project on Period Poverty in the greater Akron area.



Please welcome our new members:

Kimberly Dorsey

Dorene Ellis

Vendora Foster

Jennifer McCormick

Ruth Meklus

Claudia Mrakuzic

Christine Pace

Stephanie Reese

Sue Vernon

Nancy Whitman



In Memoriam

Please remember and keep in your prayers CCSA members we've lost this year:

Jacquelyn Del Medico

Catherine Greta

Joanne Gerst

Marilyn Loeffler

Patricia Mascolo

Mary Robertson

Mary Lou Salladay

Frances Schiavonne

Gloria Wathen

Red Wagon

The Floral and Craft Committee has been working diligently since January on unique and beautiful items for our Red Wagon Boutique.

To date, we have 92 florals and hundreds of crafts. Our floral collection includes not only seasonal wreaths, but stunning table decor and wall art.

New to our Pet Collection is a fabric toy known as a Snuffle Ball, which has plenty of nooks and crannies for hiding treats.

Our one-of-a-kind Busy Books could become an heirloom for that special preschool grandchild. These quiet activity books are handmade from felt and feature interactive, skill-building pages for independent play.

Our committee has also hosted monthly workshops where members have created distinctive craft items, including acrylic ornaments and backpack charms.

The Floral and Craft Committee welcomes anyone who would like to join us as we continue to increase our inventory. We meet every Monday and Wednesday at the Beck Center from 10 a.m.-Noon.



Christ Child Society of Akron

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Calendar of Events

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|-----------------|---|
| July 25 | Coffee, Conversation & Book Browsing
Barnes & Noble, Montrose, 9-11 a.m. |
| Aug. 4 | Executive Board Meeting
Karen Beck Center, 6:30 p.m. |
| Aug. 8 | Refuge Host Home Baby Shower
Karen Beck Center, 12-2 p.m. |
| Aug. 13 | 20-Year Club Luncheon
Michael Angelos Winery, Richfield, 12 p.m. |
| Aug. 23 | Invitational Tea
Anne Santin's Home, 1 p.m. |
| Aug. 26 | Summer Music Series ('80s) & Food Trucks
1840 Manor House, 5:30 p.m. |
| Sept. 1 | General Board Meeting
Karen Beck Center, 6:30 p.m. |
| Sept. 3 | 20-Year Club Working Lunch
Beck Center, 10 a.m. |
| Sept. 16 | General Membership Meeting
Our Lady of the Elms H.S., 7 p.m. |