



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY[®] OF SOUTH BEND

Honoring our past. Embracing our future.

2366 Miracle Lane
Mishawaka, IN 46545
574 288 6028
info@christchildsb.org

Winter 2022

"Nothing is ever too much to do for a child."

Calendar

December

- 6, 13** Center open for volunteers
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- 14** Volunteer Lunch
- 25** Merry Christmas!
- 27** In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower Church 8:30 AM

Clothing Distribution

- Wednesday, **7, 14**
8:30 AM-10:30 AM
- Thursday, **1** 4:30-6:00 PM
- Sunday, **4** 1:00-2:30 PM
- NO BOARD MEETING IN DECEMBER

January

- 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 31**
Center open for volunteers
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- 17** Board Meeting - Desmond
Conference Center, 10:00 AM
- 24** In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower Church 8:30 AM

February

- 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28**
Center open for volunteers
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- 21** Board Meeting - Desmond
Conference Center, 10:00 AM
- 25** In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower Church 8:30 AM

TBA Day of Reflection

Day of Recollection

Back by popular demand, Father Peter Rocca, CSC of Notre Dame will lead reflections. The day will include reflections, Mass and lunch.

Please watch for email blasts with date and location.

CCS Scholarships Empower Clients

The Christ Child Society Scholarship was introduced as a Board initiative in 2010 in support of their belief in the value of postsecondary education or training to positively impact families and the community. CCS financial scholarships are funded through their Endowment Fund to support the mission: **Education is Empowerment.**

CCS awarded the first scholarship in spring of 2011 in the amount of \$1,500, renewable yearly depending on academic criteria and renewal application for up to the equivalent of four years, or \$6,000. The goal is to aid a parent or guardian currently or formerly assisted by the CCS Clothing Program.

In 2022, due to the generosity of the Incropera family, the **Andrea J. Incropera Scholarship** was created in memory of Andrea who was a long-standing, dedicated member of this Chapter. This scholarship for *Achieving Upward Mobility Through Education* will be awarded annually for up to \$2,000 per year to a high school graduate/GED equivalent OR parent/guardian currently or formerly assisted by CCS. It may be renewable for the equivalent of four years or \$8,000.

All applicants for both scholarships must be residents of St. Joseph County and be currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a college, university or accredited vocational program during the school year. Scholarship finalists must provide a high school or postsecondary transcript and be interviewed. Scholarship funds are submitted directly to the school.

Scholarship applications are available at the Clothing Center or on the CCS website. In addition, referral agencies and all local high schools have been provided scholarship information. Each family receives scholarship information and a flyer at the Center.

Since 2011, a total of over \$35,500 has been awarded, with some recipients earning Associate Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees or Technical certifications, and some are looking forward to earning Master's Degrees. With the addition of the Incropera Scholarship, families may further realize their dreams of a bright future.

Applications, including references and personal statements, must be submitted in person or by mail to the CCS Center by **February 15, 2023.**



Scholarship recipient Loretta Adams delivered an inspirational speech about her experiences to the Let Love Shine guests. In her 3rd year of Pre-Nursing at IUSB, Loretta has received three semesters of scholarships from CCS. She moved the audience with her story of perseverance and dedication to making the lives of her two children better.

Warm Holiday Wishes

**Co-President
Sue Seall**

As I sit and watch our first snow of the season, I am grateful that the nearly 3,800 children that made their way to our Center so far this year will be warmly outfitted with new shoes, clothes, coats, hats, and mittens. Of course, our season is not quite over so we are well stocked and prepared to serve many more. Because of our generous donors that continue to shine all year long, we have been able to keep up with inflation and provide quality items for all in need.

Having just finished *Let Love Shine*, I'd like to thank our co-chairs, Vickie Sleevi and Lisa Smessaert, along with their committee members, for their great work in creating a wonderful evening. Not only were their fundraising efforts exceptional, but they were also able to inform our community of the need to help the under-resourced children in St. Joseph County. Together we can help eradicate poverty in our area.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a blessed holiday season. Enjoy your families and be kind!

Join the Board!

CCS is looking for a few good Board Members. All members are eligible for nomination to the Board.

Please consider bringing your talents and enthusiasm to a leadership position. Previous work or volunteer experience can make you a valuable asset to the board.

Board members make important financial and organizational decisions that shape CCS and help it grow. Attendance is expected at monthly board meetings and, as part of a working board, members assume leadership of committees, events or programs. There is no financial obligation.

Nominations will be accepted in January and the three-year terms begin on July 1.

Executive Board

Co-Presidents
Patti Banet
Sue Seall
President Elect
Melissa Baltz
Vice President (Fundraising)
Lisa Smessaert
Vice President (Membership)
Kae Sobczyk
Vice President (Clothing)
Vicki Sleevi
Vice President (Communications)
Beth Barrett
Board Secretary
Karen Van Meter
Treasurer
Sue Kinnucan

Thank You to the Generous *Let Love Shine* Sponsors

Mary Virginia Merrick
Premier Sponsors \$10,000

The Tepe Family
in Honor of
Dolores "Dee" & Elmer "Sonny" Tepe



Shining Star Sponsor
\$5,000

Kristy and Walter Botich
Jean and Jim Fuehrmeyer
Harmony Healthcare IT
Tire Rack

Winter Coat Sponsors
\$2,500

1st Source Bank
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dennen
The Dillon Family
Express Print, Inc.
Hahn/Walz, P.C.
Joan and Ed Hardig
John and Catherine Hiler Family
Charitable Fund
Jamil Packaging
Carol and Don Nash
Diane and Gerry Quinn
Kathryn and Paul Schoenle Foundation
Lisa and David Smessaert, Metropolitan
Title of Indiana, LLC
Anita and Tom Veldman



New Clothing Sponsors
\$1,000

Louise and Steve Anella
Beth and Dan Barrett
Peg Claeys
Coulter Family Dentistry
Sharon and Matthew Edmonds
Fostek Corporation
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Hughes
Connie and Michael Joines
Sue and Rick Seall
Kathy and John Seidl
Thorne Grodnik, LLP
Deb and Bob Urbanski
Wygant Floral Co. Inc.

New Shoes Sponsors
\$500

Anonymous
Sheila Emge
Betty Ann Gibbons
Melissa and Joey Hickey
Mr. Leonard A. Kanczuzewski
Judy and Hugh Kuzmich
Bette O'Malley
Michiana Eye Center
Norris Equity Partners
Mary Pat and Dick Nussbaum
Mr. and Mrs. Mark A. Wiwi

Let Love Shine Wows the Crowd

Let Love Shine 2022, a gala celebration of the 75th Anniversary of The Christ Child Society of South Bend, was a huge success. The Armory, beautifully transformed into a wonderland of shimmering gold, silver and pink metallic ribbons, was the backdrop for an evening of delicious food, great company and inspiring generosity.

The magnificently stocked dessert table was a huge hit and apparently sweetened up our wonderful donors, since, even without final numbers, we are confident that we raised enough to fund half our mission budget for next year.

Emcee Gary Sieber did an excellent job of encouraging bids in our Silent Auction and eliciting participation in our Oral Auction of Experiential Travel packages as well as direct donations in Bids for Kids. His humor set a joyful mood.

The speakers shared comments about our dedicated members, our heart-felt mission and the impact we have on the lives of children and families. In the words of one attendee, "It was a Christ Child love fest!"

Manette Tepe, whose family provided a Mary Virginia Merrick sponsorship in honor of her parents, Dee and Sonny Tepe, entertained us with a "ditty" in the style of her late mother,



Event Chairs Vicki Sleevi and Lisa Smessaert pose with Dessert Table Chair Sue Montalbano by the beautiful array of amazing desserts.

telling the story of her work with The Christ Child Society. Frank Incropera, recipient of the Heart of a Child Award, shared with us what CCS meant to his late wife, Andrea, in whose name the family endowed two annual scholarships. And Loretta Adams, a current Christ Child Scholarship recipient, explained how CCS has impacted her life and the pursuit of her dream of becoming a registered nurse.

Overall, the night was magical!

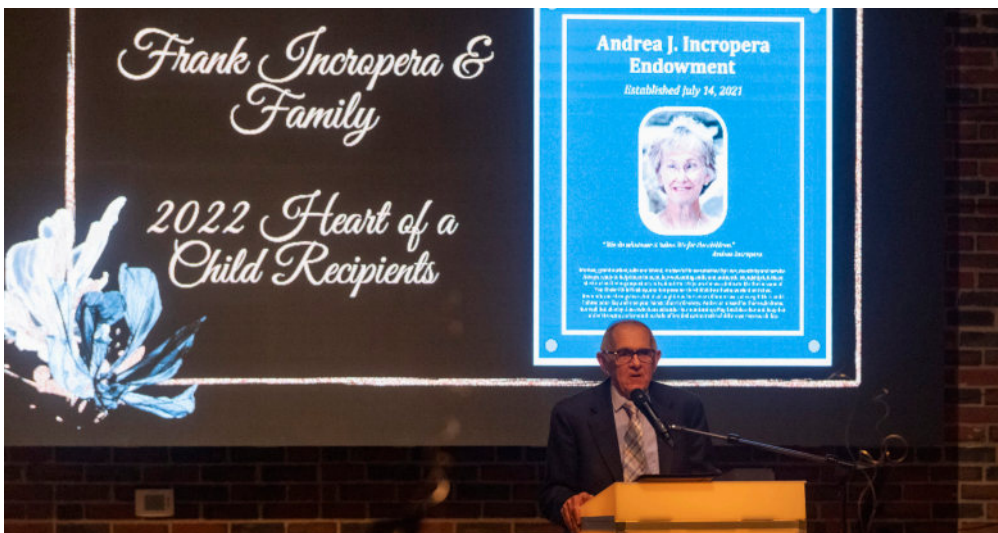
Thanks to Jonathan Watson for donating his photography talent!



Above, Manette Tepe spoke lovingly of her parents, Dee and Sonny. Below, Frank Incropera accepts the Heart of a Child award.



Gary Sieber was an entertaining emcee for the event.



Christmas and CCS Intertwined

Christmas has always been a special time of year for Christ Child Society Chapters. A special tradition began with founder Mary Virginia Merrick's first philanthropic act at the age of sixteen when she gathered friends to sew baby clothes for an expectant mother living in Washington D.C. Her infant daughter was born on Christmas morning, 1882 and named Mary in honor of Miss Merrick.

Every chapter's first program is Layettes. Whether by coincidence or divine guidance, the first layette in South Bend was for an infant born just after midnight on Christmas Day, 1947 at St. Joseph Hospital. Soon after Christmas, Monsignor John S. Sabo, Pastor of Our Lady of Hungary, and CCS Spiritual Advisor at the time, asked for layettes for twins who were also born on Christmas. Thousands of infants have been clothed by CCS in the past 75 years.

In 1883, Mary Virginia asked Paul, a boy who often ran errands for the Merricks, what he wanted for Christmas. "I want a red wagon," he replied, "but we're not having any Christmas at our house, my father's got no work." She suggested he write a letter to the Christ Child and ask Him for the red wagon. "Who's He?" asked Paul. "He's the Giver of all good gifts," she replied. A few days later he appeared with a handful of letters, written by his sisters, brothers and playmates.

Miss Merrick called her friends together and told them of Paul's prompt response. All the requests were carefully filled – including Paul's red wagon. Each wrapped package was marked "From the Christ Child." After that, children sent letters to the Christ Child requesting Christmas gifts and the friends would fill the requests "from the Christ Child." Because of Paul's request, the red wagon has become a symbol of the work of The Christ Child Society.

In the Fall of 1951, South Bend members began to answer children's letters much like Mary Virginia and her friends had. That first year, they answered sixty-five letters. More recently, members have provided gifts for families through the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



CCS Bazaars were frequent features in the South Bend Tribune.



Christmas Bazaars were the first major fund raiser of the fledgling South Bend Chapter. In 1948 members sold handmade items in Dorothy McCarthy's home and then Jane Egan's in 1949. Because of the popularity of the Bazaar, it was moved to St. Joseph Parish Hall in

1953 and then in 1957, St. Anthony Parish's new gym became its long-time location, and the name became The Red Wagon Craft Show. Committees included The Children's Corner, The Beadery, Country Kitchen, Doll House and Miniatures, the Cookie Walk and Christmas Decorations. Through 1998, the gym was crowded with women searching for the perfect wreath, the latest fad in holiday crafts or delicious baked goods for holiday entertaining.

The Bazaars took many hours of creative work by CCS members yet profits barely surpassed \$20,000. The labor-intensive bazaar gave way to a raffle and then, in 2002, the Red Wagon Holiday Benefit Luncheon.



Rose Lyphout models at the 2002 Red Wagon Holiday Luncheon.

The first luncheon was held at Windsor Park Conference Center and featured a Talbot's fashion show, silent auction items and a raffle. Later, the location moved to Century Center and crowds neared 500 members and their quests.



Holiday Luncheon 2007.



A Red Wagon welcome in 2007.



The Candlelight Balls in the 60s and 70s made the *Tribune* Society pages. The early holiday balls were held at the Indiana Club, the Knights of Columbus building on West Jefferson Boulevard that, in its heyday, included a ballroom, a gymnasium, meeting room, billiards and bowling. With the Dick Carlton Orchestra from Chicago, an elegant dinner and dancing (all for \$20 per couple!), the first Ball in 1963 made nearly \$2,000. Later balls, held at the Elks Club and Century Center, were fashionable, seasonal highlights.



Whatever the event or project, the spirit of Christmas is felt in the hearts of Christ Child Society volunteers who serve under-resourced children and families every day, inspired by seeing the Christ Child in every child.

2nd Grade Math Party at St. Adalbert School

One component of the SUCCESS partnership with St. Adalbert School is the Direct Support program including classroom tutoring and special events.

A recent math literacy party was a huge SUCCESS as evidenced by the smiles, energy and enthusiastic comments from both members and students alike.

Small groups of four students rotated through five math stations focusing on geometric shapes, visual-spatial reasoning, patterning, number sense and money. Comments such as, "I want to keep doing this!" and "Look, I did it!" brought out self-confidence and a positive attitude toward math in children for whom learning is often more about confusion and struggle. Each child took home a bag of math materials to reinforce these skills - and more - at home.

With in-person activities having been on hold for so long, volunteer Judy



Kuzmich said it all, "It was good to be back 'in the saddle again' with the students. Great CCS mentors and eager students who love to learn. I think we made an impact on those we touched, including myself."

The volunteers agreed it was rewarding to help these young students learn. As for the students, young Allison said it best when returning to the classroom she turned to her teacher asking, "When can we do this again?"

SUCCESS Program Celebrates Autumn

SUCCESS Program Chair Kathy Miller brought smiles to the faces of the PreK students at St. Adalbert School



with her recent visit. In conjunction with teacher Ms. Kim Elliot's learning unit on autumn, Kathy brought the best of the season in the form of an engaging book, pumpkin themed learning activities, and, of course, a PUMPKIN for each student!

Our more than 20-year partnership with St. Adalbert Catholic School encompasses academic support for students grades Pre-K to 8, cultural opportunities, social interactions and FUN!



Do you knit or crochet?
CCS is in need of hand made
infant sweaters & blankets.

Yarn and patterns are available
in the Layette Department.

Contact info@christchildsb.org for more information.

CCS, Local Schools and Organizations Work Together



Charlie Schoenle (above), an 8th grader at St. Pius X, held a Blanket Drive for the Foster Hope program. He was inspired by his grandmothers, Kathy Schoenle and Lynne Dzierla, who are Christ Child Society members and volunteers. On November 3, Charlie, his mom Mallory, and his grandma Lynne delivered 129 new blankets to the center, far exceeding his goal of 100! Thanks to Charlie and all who helped with his worthwhile project.



Mary Ann Chandler accepted a check from the **South Bend Elks Lodge #235** for \$2,000 on September 26. Members of the Elks stayed to volunteer in the Coat Department.



CCS Member Ruth Niebor inherited an abundance of high-end knitting supplies which Nancy Sinnott, owner of Farmers Market shop **A Wee Bit Warped**, sold with profits donated to CCS.



Raidlyn (top) models her new coat which was donated by Granger Rotary on November 9. Above, Patti Banet, Susan Wendowski and Mary Ann Chandler accept the Rotary donation of \$500 worth of new coats.



On October 25, **St. Pius X School** delivered a generous donation of clothing gathered during a collection at the school.



St. Joseph Grade School students filled four Christ Child donation boxes with boots plus clothing and coats. They were given a dress-down day for their support of The Christ Child Society. Above, Sam Howard, Rebecca Lizarrago, Jessa Howard, Azley Johnson loaded the boots.

The **Granger Sunrise Rotary** is a group of local individuals, united as part of the worldwide Rotary International organization. They are People of Action, committed to service above self. Each meeting begins with the 4 way test: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships? Is it beneficial for all concerned?

Rotary seeks opportunities to assist individuals and organizations locally, to help make the world a better place globally. In October, they donated \$500 worth of coats to CCS!

Rotary holds fundraising events like Trivia and Mini-golf tournaments and they do service projects monthly. They are always looking for new members interested in making Michiana a better place and for speakers to present at weekly club meetings to raise awareness of community needs.



Laura Trippel and Judy Farrell accepted a donation of four large boxes of new coats on October 18 from Brian Masterson and Greg White of the Knights of Columbus.

Boot Collection

The CCS Boot Drop was held on October 8 at the Center One woman saw the boot drive and went home to collect clothing and boots. On her return, she said CCS helped her in previous years and she wanted to give back.



Pat Falvey dropped off four brand new pairs of boots. Pictured with her are Barb Reihl, Barbara Mickow, Mary Ann Chandler and Stephanie Witt.

Gifts and Memorials

The Christ Child Remembrance Card is a convenient way to send donations in any amount to the Christ Child Society to honor a memory or special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary or accomplishment. Deceased friends or relatives will be remembered in a perpetual monthly Mass. When requesting a Remembrance Card, please print legibly. The names will be printed in each newsletter with the donor's name in parentheses. Extra cards are available in the office or from Joan Hardig (574.277.7787).

SPECIAL OCCASSION

Carol Bauer – Healing (Esther Cyr)
 Nancy Baranay (Jim & Pat Short)
 Mary Fran Burt (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Mary Ann Butts –Get Well (Bette O'Malley)
 Mary Dietz – Birthday wishes (Carol Bauer)
 Ken & Mary Dunn – 50th Wedding
 Anniversary (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Kris Falvo – 70th Birthday (Suzanne McMillion)
 Don & Elisa Fischesser – 50th Wedding
 Anniversary (Janet Turnock)
 Greg Gehred (Ed & Joan Hardig)
 Marge Hosinski – Get Well (Jim & Carol Holt, Esther Cyr, Bette O'Malley)
 Helga Jean – Get Well (Bette O'Malley)
 Jill Johnson (Jim & Pat Short)
 Arlo Francis Robert Kuharic – Baptism
 (Peg & Dean Riggs)
 Nancy & Del Meyer – Thank you (Peggy Gerstbauer)
 Brian Niederhauser (Jim & Pat Short)
 Everett Joseph Morris Riggs – Baptism
 (Peg & Dean Riggs)
 Denise Roemer – Get Well (Bette O'Malley)
 Kathy & John Seidl – Thank you (Peggy Gerstbauer)
 Lowell & Patti Paschke – Wedding
 Anniversary (Esther Cyr)

IN MEMORIAM:

Laverne Auger (Ed & Joan Hardig, Peg & Dean Riggs, Evelyn Olson, Sharon James, Esther Cyr, Ed & Joan Hardig)
 Walter Barnes (Jane Horning)
 James S. Bruno (Otto & Marlene Martinec)
 Pat Chodzinski (Peg Riggs, Shari Rettig)
 Elva Davis (Ann G. Jones)
 Dr. G. Paul DeRosa (Fred & Carol Wasoski)
 Luz Eliana Dlugos (Fran Austin)
 Matthew Ennis, Jr. (Marlene & Otto Martinec)
 Nancy Fehlner (Gregory & Jean Mee)
 John Fritts (Marcia & Tom Blum)
 Daniel Geist (B.J. O'Brien)
 Felicia Governale (Patricia Falvey)
 Pat Guzzi (Marie Burt)
 William Hawver (Patricia Brady)
 Mark Hayse (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Nancy Heiserman (Kathy & John Seidl)
 Wil Henderson (Esther Cyr)
 Mary Herschberger (Carol & Jim Holt)
 Bobby Hoffman (Jean & Greg Mee)
 Tom Houdak (Carol & Jim Holt, Rolande &

Deceased Members

Cindy Pankiw

Spouses

Frank Taelman
 Morris Jones

Roger Parent)
 Edna Huntington (Tom & Mary Wisniewski)
 Morris "Casey" Jones (Sharon James)
 Ron Karst (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Ruth Kavanaugh (Mary Earl & Kay Houser)
 Diane Klee (Peg Riggs)
 Jeanne & Bill Klem (Peg Claeys)
 Martha Knapp (Linda Aichele, Bridget Szynski, Frank & Darlene Knapp, Christine Cushman, Rebecca Cushman, Jennifer Cushman)
 Frank Kopcsa (Julann Bauer, Martin & Carolyn Hess, Beth & Mike Bubik, Kathy & Art Large)
 Mary Kuester (Diane Quinn, Layette Room, Nancy & Del Meyer, Monique Deguara, Esther Cyr, Beth Barrett, Carol Bauer)
 Mary & Kenneth Kuester (Sharon James)
 Gloria Lawler (Jane Dietrich)
 Barbara Lemprecht (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Eileen LePage (Marcia & Tom Blum)
 Viv Lutes (Marcia & Tom Blum)
 Peggy Mahank (Joan Frances Hurley, Sam & Teresa Jermano)
 Douglas Miller (Chuck & Rosemary Crowell)
 Dennis Nemeth (Peg Riggs)
 Carmela Nowicki-Salaiz (Melanie Chapleau)
 Suzanne Marie Odle (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Cindy Pankiw (Sharon James, Lola Pataluch, Fred & Carol Wasoski, Mary Kubiak, Kathy & John Seidl, Marie Burt, Julie Bussert, Jan & Denny Keck, Connie & Larry Kipfer, Fred & Judy Sulak, Dick Paull & Ruthann Weil, Marty & Nancy Fransted, Jen & David Prost, Scott & Kelly Mezzenberg, Alex & Amy Lubinski, Lon & Deb Kipfer, Gail & Ron Wasserman)
 Patsy Peck (Patti & Lowell Paschke)
 Carol Reel (Marcia & Tom Blum)
 Clara "Pug" Riggs (Peg & Dean Riggs)
 Mary Roemer (Rolande & Roger Parent)

John Roos (Nancy & John Kromkowski)
 Shirley Scaggs (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Joe Schimpa (Marijo Martinec)
 David Schrader (Diane Boehnlein)
 Catherine Scragal (Her girls)
 James Sikyta (Marlene & Otto Martinec)
 John Simon (Peg Riggs)
 Robert Spencer (Virginia O'Hara)
 Joan Stanley (M. Helga Jean)
 Mary Lou Staples (Toni Pikuza)
 Jeannine S. Sunshine (Peg & Dean Riggs)
 Thomas Swantz (Nancy & John Kromkowski)
 Frank Taelman (Jim & Nancy Yohe, Sharon James, Randy Harnish, Mary Kubiak, Mary Jane Stanley, Jane Horning, Peg Riggs, Sheila Emge, Carol Bauer, Gary & Marcia Hunt, Chris & Sara Myrvold, Jim & Pat Short, Ed & Joan Hardig)
 Renate K. Voepel (Peg Riggs)
 John "Moose" Wack (Jim & Nancy Yohe, Ed & Joan Hardig)
 Donald Widelski (Esther Cyr)
 Todd Wincek (Toni Pikuza)
 Ed Wray (Bette O'Malley, Jim & Carol Holt, Catherine Sergio, Kathy & John Seidl, Sharon James, Judy & Hugh Kuzmich)



A special membership category was established in 1998. A one time \$1,000 enrollment fee for deceased

members, spouses and friends benefiting the Christ Child Society Endowment Fund will insure the Society's ability to continue future good works.

The Guardian Angels are remembered monthly and each year at our annual Mass.

Current members and spouses may pre-enroll in the program and will be officially enrolled upon their deaths. All Guardian Angels' names are recorded on a plaque that is located in the Christ Child Society office.

Please refer any questions to Norma Villanucci at 574-243-0621.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

National Day of Service - the Gift That Keeps on Giving

CCS volunteers never tire of the smiles, the 'oohs' and the gratitude on the faces of the clients and children as they choose just the right book to excite their imaginations and fuel their love of reading. Through the generosity of members and community friends, 248 Creativity Packets were distributed at the Clothing Center as part of the National Day of Service. Each packet contained a new book, creative activities, and age-appropriate prompts to express themselves through drawing or journaling. In celebrating the legacy of our founder Mary Virginia Merrick, we give the gifts of reading, reflecting and self-expression which continue to be explored and enjoyed throughout a lifetime. And for those of us who watch, we grow more deeply committed to the mission that the Christ Child Society gifts to us over and over again!

We are grateful to National Christ Child Society who brings all 45 chapters together each fall to make a greater impact challenging poverty one book and one child at a time. This year's book drive theme, "Read - Imagine- Succeed- Embrace the Possibilities" filled imaginations with ideas to foster thinking, creativity, kindness and a sense of purpose for each child's future.



Save the Date!

Spring Meeting and Luncheon

March 29, 2023

Morris Park
Country Club

*Mass location to be
determined.*

