



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF SOUTH BEND

WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

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

Winter 2023

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

Calendar

December

- 5, 12**, Open for members
Tuesdays, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- 13** Volunteer Christmas Luncheon
- No Board Meeting in December
- 25 Merry Christmas!**
- 26** In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower Church 8:30 AM

Clothing Distribution

Wednesdays, **6, 13** 8:30-10:0 AM
Thursday, **7** 4:30-6:00 PM
Sunday, **3** 1:00-2:30 PM

January

- 1 to 14** Center CLOSED
- 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31** Open for members 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- 16** Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM
- 23** In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower Church 8:30 AM

February

- 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28** Open for members 9:00 AM-1:00 PM
- 20** Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM
- 20** Spring Newsletter Deadline
TBA Day of Reflection
- 26** In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower Church 8:30 AM

Watch your email for date and details for the **Day of Reflection**

Former Member's Della Robbia Watercolor Continues to Represent Christ Child's Mission

The Christ Child logo with della Robbia watercolor rendered by artist and member Alice Schlesinger has been used to represent the important mission of the Christ Child Society of South Bend (CCS) for many years. "I grew up with that image," said former CCS President Maureen Cahir. Cahir's mother, Rosalee "Puddy" Crowley, a founding member of the CCS of South Bend and a friend of the artist, held on to the original artwork. In 1970, Cahir decided to frame the watercolor and display it at the Center.



Alice joined CCS in 1953. Her husband Dr. Bruno Schlesinger had established the Humanistic Studies program at St. Mary's College. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria, before coming to the United States in 1939. Alice and

her husband had four children. During her career, Alice illustrated over 20 children's books and was an instructor at the former South Bend Art Center, now the South Bend Museum of Art.



Her della Robbia Christ Child design was used on the CCS 50th anniversary plate in 1997. "The anniversary plate was a nice way to commemorate the 50th anniversary with something more than a mug," said Cahir.

The design was also used on Christ Child Christmas cards in 1961 and 1997. Notecards with the design are still being used today.

The style is named for 15th Century artist Luco della Robbia and refers to foliage, flowers and fruit which encircle the central design.

In 1998, Alice gifted the rights to the artwork to CCS to be used in any manner and for whatever purposes the organization chose. "The 15 Charter members who came together to start the Christ Child Society all brought different skills," said Cahir. "That's the beauty of our membership even today."



Alice Schlesinger in 1997, holding a 50th Anniversary plate (above right).

The Christ Child Society: A Very Cool Place to Volunteer

Sue Seall
Co-President

Dear Members and Friends of the Christ Child Society,

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. As we reflect on the incredible work being done within our organization, it's clear that the heart and soul of The Christ Child Society is embodied by our dedicated volunteers. Today, I want to celebrate and acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of those volunteers who go above and beyond to make our organization truly a "Cool Place to Volunteer."

Our mission to clothe underserved children remains at the core of our work, and the commitment of our volunteers is the driving force behind our success. It's heartwarming to see how some of our volunteers step up in ways that extend far beyond the call of duty.

Many of our volunteers take on multiple positions to ensure that all tasks are covered efficiently and effectively. Their willingness to wear multiple hats to serve our clients demonstrates not only their dedication but also their adaptability and versatility. This level of commitment makes The Christ Child Society stand out as a unique and dynamic organization, which is undoubtedly a "cool" place to volunteer.

In addition to their selfless service, some of our volunteers have taken the initiative to plan potluck lunches to celebrate the hard work and dedication of those who put in countless hours serving our clients. These gatherings provide a space for volunteers to relax, share stories, and strengthen the bonds that unite us in our mission.

Some of our volunteers bring specialized skills to the table, such as their training as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteer. They utilize these skills to identify and help our clients find solutions for difficult family situations, going the extra mile to address the underlying issues affecting the children we serve.

Furthermore, some of our volunteers have extended their kindness by helping children who may not fall directly under our Mission Statement. This goes to show that our volunteers not only fulfill the mission of clothing underserved children but also understand the broader needs of our community. Their dedication to creating a better future for all children is truly commendable.

In closing, I want to express my deep gratitude to all the volunteers who make The Christ Child Society a "Cool Place to Volunteer." Your dedication, compassion, and willingness to go above and beyond are the reasons our organization continues to thrive and make a significant impact on the lives of countless children and families.

We look forward to the coming months with enthusiasm, knowing that our volunteers will continue to shine and make The Christ Child Society a place where the spirit of giving and kindness prevails. Together, we will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.



Co-President Sue Seall presented "cool" sunglasses to exceptional members (from left) Mary Heller pictured with Sue, Patti Banet, Carolyn Sherman, Sarah Conroy, Barb Reihl and Laura Trippel.

Local Grantors Aid Clothing Mission

Every year, The Christ Child Society (CCS) mission is made possible, in part, through grants awarded by local organizations. We thank them for their generosity.

The Pokagon Fund, a nonprofit private foundation, envisions communities where all residents can access the resources needed to care for themselves and their families and have the freedom to shape their futures. Since 2007, the Fund has strived to honor the generosity of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and the ingenuity of its founders. The Pokagon Fund's \$3,618 grant is being used to purchase new-clothing inventory.

The St. Mary Mother of God Parish

Heritage Fund was established in 1997 to help provide financial assistance to the poor and needy throughout the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Upon the approval of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, the Fund Committee awarded a grant of \$2,250 to CCS to support our clothing distribution efforts.

The Mission Fund at Christ the King Lutheran Church in South Bend supports its members who volunteer and work with local organizations. The Fund supports specific needs, projects, and initiatives. In FY 2022-23, CCS was granted \$3,500 to cover a portion of our Dental Health Program, which provides our client families with items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Queen of Peace Catholic School welcomed Susan Wendowski to

inform students about CCS, Mary Virginia Merrick and their mission. The students and their sponsors donated proceeds from their October Rosary Challenge to support children who need warm clothing.

Other funding was received from Marian High School's Eric's Promise and a neighborhood women's group.



Gabriella Byall, Reading Intervention Specialist, presents Susan Wendowski a check for \$2,172 from Queen of Peace.



Jill Harms, Mission Coordinator, presents a check to Beth Barrett at Christ the King Lutheran Church.

Recent Client Survey Results Confirm Positive Experiences

Criteria outlined in a specific grant application has prompted The Christ Child Society of South Bend to conduct a client survey to update data captured in a similar survey administered in 2019.

The earlier feedback was designed to help gauge opinions about logistics related to our pending Clothing Center move. This year's survey asked clients to rate the level of their satisfaction with the quality and the styles of our clothing selections and the helpfulness of the volunteers they encounter.

Over eight weeks in October and November volunteers accepted 200 completed surveys from both English- and Spanish-speaking clients visiting the Mishawaka Clothing Center.

The survey's overwhelmingly positive responses supported the general feeling that our clients are happy with the clothing and feel respected

during the distribution process at the Center.

Several dozen clients added personal comments about their visit. "Wonderful place and wonderful people. So incredibly helpful," said one. That sentiment was echoed by several other survey participants, who also mentioned what a blessing the Clothing Center is and how kind, polite, and patient the volunteers are. "Every time I come here has been a great experience," noted another client.

One patron, noting that this is her third year coming to Christ Child, said, "This is so helpful. Clothing is expensive and (my kids) grow out of them so quickly." Another client even gave a shout out to our teen volunteers!

The Christ Child Society looks forward to using this client input to guide decisions about choosing our clothing offerings in the future.

2023-24 Executive Board

Co-Presidents

Sue Seall

Melissa Baltz

President Elect

Vickie Sleevi

Vice President (Fundraising)

Lisa Smessaert

Vice President (Membership)

Tricia Shafer

Vice President (Clothing)

Judy Farrell

Vice President (Communications)

Mary Hazel

Board Secretary

Karen Van Meter

Treasurer

Sue Kinnucan

Let Love Shine Successful Again!

The *Let Love Shine Dinner and Auction*, held on November 9, was a wonderful experience for all those able to attend. Nearly 300 guests filled the Ribbon Town Ballroom, and thanks to the beautiful work of our decorating committee, the room looked spectacular!

Gary Sieber of WNDU was the emcee for the evening, and he did a great job of showcasing three travel packages and two works by artists who were painting in the ballroom throughout the night. The oral auction helped to raise much-needed funds for the children served by The Christ Child Society. Gary encouraged donations for Bids for Kids at the end of the evening, and the total surpassed \$100,000 in Bids for Kids alone!

One of the highlights of the evening was honoring Mary and Tom Liddell with the Heart of a Child Award. Co-Presidents Melissa Baltz and Sue Seall gave a heartfelt introduction of Mary and Tom, explaining why they "absolutely" deserved this award. Both Mary and Tom then shared how they have been inspired through the years to give to The Christ Child Society.

Mary shared a story of how she learned of the need to provide new clothing and to allow children to have dignity through imaginings her mother and aunt asked her to

consider: Imagine how you would feel if you pulled someone else's old tissue out of a coat pocket when receiving a used coat or having underwear that's two sizes too big when changing for gym class.

Thanks to the care and concern of Mary and Tom, The Christ Child Society of South Bend has greatly changed for the better! They've used their talents especially to keep us current with technology needs and to solve logistical puzzles when moving from location to location. Thank you, Mary and Tom!



Emcee Gary Sieber set the tone for a fun night with an enthusiastic crowd.

The silent auction items were beautifully displayed, and nearly every item was sold (a few of the centerpieces remain). A few innovative things were tried this year, a trend that will continue in order for the auction to be as good as



Chris and Mary Hazel and Joan Hardig watch the Liddells receive their award.

possible for raising funds to clothe children. CCS is grateful for the support of all individuals and businesses who helped to make this event successful. The list of sponsors can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

The video produced for the evening and the student volunteers helped make this a successful event. Christian Verstraete, who put together the video about the CCS Clothing Center on a rather short timeline earned deep gratitude. One can hardly fathom being able to accomplish the evening without the help from the students! Thanks, too, to Jonathan Watson who once again photographed the event.



Tom and Mary Liddell receive the Heart of a Child Award as Co-Presidents Melissa Baltz and Sue Seall look on.



The generous crowd enjoyed delicious food, good company and fun entertainment while the stunning table decorations set a festive mood.

The evening would not have been possible without the talents and generosity of all the *Let Love Shine* 2023 committee members. Sue Montalbano and Carolyn Sherman, the co-chairs, thank Melissa Baltz, Patti Banet, Beth Barrett, Susan Coulter, Lexie Fisher, Kathleen Hennessy, Sharon James, Chris Krueper, Karen Kubsch, Mary Liddell, Barb Mickow, Joy Newman, Barb Reihl, Sue Seall, Kathy Seidl, Tricia Shafer, Vickie Sleeve, Lisa Smessaert, Kae Sobczyk, Laura Trippel, and Suzanne Wiwi. They are especially grateful for the ways everyone rallied during the final trying week.



Co-Chair Carolyn Sherman welcomes the record crowd to *Let Love Shine*.



Alex Ann Allen paints a striking portrait for the live auction.



Gary Sieber begins the auction of artist Chris McLaughlin's painting which represents the heart of CCS.

Thank You to These Generous LLS Sponsors

Mary Virginia Merrick Sponsor

\$15,000

Gurley Leep Automotive Family



1947 Founders Sponsor

\$10,000

In Memory of Dee and Sonny Tepe

Shining Star Sponsors

\$5,000

Kristy Botich
Jean and Jim Fuehrmeyer
Harmony Healthcare IT
Mary and Tom Liddell
Nancy and Del Meyer
Tire Rack
Anonymous

Winter Coat Sponsors

\$2,500

Frederick Dean
Barbara Dillon and Family
Sandy and Brian Clauser
Hahn|Walz, P.C., Attorneys-at-Law
Joan and Ed Hardig
John and Catherine Hiler Family
Charitable Fund
Jamil Packaging Corporation
Lisa and David Smessaert,
Metropolitan Title Company
Carol and Don Nash
Barb and John Phair
Diane Quinn
Paul and Kathryn Schoenle
Family Fund
Maricor and Patrick Trippel

New Clothing Sponsors

\$1,000

Louise and Steve Anella
Beth and Dan Barrett
Susan and Rich Carlton
Loretta and Randall Chrobot
Peg Claeys
Family Foot Care Clinic
Fostek Corporation
Jennifer and Frederick Helmen
Audrey and Rick Herzberg

Carol and Jim Holt
Sharon A. James

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Konopa
Amy and Matthew Koscielski
Teresa and Greg Kosse
Judy and Hugh Kuzmich
Brenda Sands
Sue and Rick Seall
Kathleen and John Seidl
Carolyn and John Sherman
Thorne Grodnik, LLP
Mr. and Mrs Robert Urbanski

New Shoes Sponsors

\$500

Mrs. Katy Cressy
Rev. Barry England
Laura and Pat Flynn
Betty Ann Gibbons
Granger Dental Group
Dr. and Mrs. Walter Halloran
Margaret Hosinski
Leonard Kanczuzewski
Midland Engineering Co.
Ben Norris - Norris Equity
Partners
Original Pancake House
Bonnie and Steve Seall
Laura and Mark Sisti
Terry Slamkowski
Mary Jane Stanley in Memory of
Jane Kuzmitz
Joan and Tom Varga in Memory of
Joan's Mother - Cal O'Connor
Mary and Tom Wisniewski



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 OCCASION

Sally Flask – Retirement (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Janice Goossens – Cancer diagnosis
 Sharon Gries (Sue Seall)
 John Imler – Good recovery (Joe & Marie Burt)
 Margaret Schaller – Continued health (Julie Bussert)
 Sean Setnick (Montel Menting)
 Barbara Staton – 60th Birthday (Connie McClanahan, Pam)
 David VandenBossche – Get well (JoAnn Axelberg)
 Rev. Bob VanKemper (Carol Bauer)
 Anne & Paul Waruszewski – 50th Anniversary (Toni Pikuza)
 Carol Wasoski (Julie Bussert)

IN MEMORIAM

Jayn Barson (Jim & Nancy Yohe)
 Kurt Belting (Toni Pikuza)
 Diane Boehnlein (Peg Riggs, Tim & Jana Wiley, Jim & Marie Hummell)
 Brandon Boeker (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Jamie Daniel Brown (Peg Riggs)
 Walter Botich (Barb Reihl, Sue & John Shirrell, Kathy Seidl, Vickie Sleevi, Tom & Mary Wisniewski, Beth Barrett, Jeff & Linda Botich, Ann Finn, Sharon Jones, Anne Choinacky, Margaret Hosinski, Deb & Mike Low, Barbara A. Mickow, Diane Quinn, Peg Riggs, Susan Walsh)
 Donald Buczynski (Tom & Mary Wisniewski)
 Michael B. Cahir (Tom & Maureen Cahir)
 Larry Carmola (Susan and David Walsh)
 John Christianson (Ed & Joan Hardig, Beth Barrett, Judy & Hugh Kuzmich, Marti & Frank Moriconi, Joe & Marie Burt, Margaret Hosinski, Patti & Lowell Paschke, Fred & Carol Wasoski, Kathy Seidl, Mike & Laura Trippel, Jean Richards)
 Nancy Coram (Louise Anella)
 Joseph Corcoran (Leland Macmillan, Abigail Igarta, Barry and Maryann Keating, Ashlee Jackson, Thom Lustik, Beth Barrett)
 Colleen Kelly, Keng Nei Wu, Susan Walsh
 Judith Benckart)
 Maureen Anella Corrigan (Tami McNally)
 Frank Cunnigham (Jim & Pat Short)
 Beverly & Joshua Ditsch (Esther Cyr)
 Florence Duesterberg (Patricia Kocent, David Huber, Thomas Duesterberg & Susan

Deceased Members

Florence Duesterberg
 Jean Fuehrmeyer
 Kathy Roberts
 Martha Redden

Deceased Spouses

Walter Botich
 John Christianson
 Joseph Corcoran
 James Holt
 Michael Montalbano
 Bernard Randall
 John Uhan

Cooper, Gary Duesterberg and Adora Ku, Richard & Ann Duesterberg, Mary Pandjiris, Kimberly Barr, Andrew Fonacier)
 James A. Eichorst (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Elexis E Ellis (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Jean Fuehrmeyer (Natasha Khemani, Jennifer Ray, Dave Murray, Joan Lee, Mary Beth Abascal, Kathy Shoztic, Beth Ulrich, Dina and Elliot Wiesen, Beth & Dan Barrett)
 Jerry Gerard (Ann & Dave Jones)
 Richard M. Harrell, Jr. (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Chip Heithoff (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Ken Kancuzewski (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
 Carl Klepper (Diane Quinn)
 John Kominkiewicz (Esther Cyr, Rolande & Roger Parent)
 Jane Lang (Peg Riggs)
 Karen Lebieczinski (Ed & Joan Hardig)
 Lyla Lockhart (Julie Bachman)
 Charles Mahank (Joan Hurley)
 Paul Marshall (Marlene & Otto Martinec)
 Laferne Miller (Greg & Jean Mee)
 Michael Montalbano (Charlotte Bradley, Lyudmila Bobova, Blaine Loffredi, William M Schmitt, Karen Celano, Cindy Granse, Lisa Kasprzak, Kathy Galvin, Richard Killigrew, John Michel, Beth Barrett, Margaret Hoepfner, Brooke Kostielney, Kristin Sheehan)
 Michael and Sue Montalbano, the Darlings Of Summer Breeze (Charlene Aguila)

Paul C. Powers MD (Julie Powers, Irina Powers)
 Bernard Randall (Marie Brady, Brian Shevitz, Bill Ostrowski, John Randall)
 Martha Redden (Margaret Hosinski, Teresa & Sam Jermano)
 Flavian Reising (Marti & Frank Moriconi)
 Kathy Roberts (Jane Horning, Rolande Parent, Esther Cyr, Marti & Frank Moriconi, Sheila Emge, Pat & Joe Corcoran, Judy & Hugh Kuzmich, Don & Lisa Fischesser, Barb & John Phair, Peter J. Lombardo)
 Barbara Saggau (Peg Claeys, Barbara Dillon, Rosemary Crowe)
 Ray Scheller (Marti & Frank Moriconi)
 Richard Stanton (Catherine Sergio)
 Rosemary (Rosie) Shafer (Mark Rawie)
 Millie Steveken (Esther Cyr)
 Dennis Troester (Chris & Carmi Murphy)
 John Uhan (Mr. & Mrs. Mark A. Wiwi, Louise & Steve Anella, Beth Barrett, Marie Burt, Toni Pikuza, Peg Riggs, Kathy & John Seidl, Susan Walsh)
 Edna Mae Ulmer (Toni Pikuza)
 James Verboys (Rolande & Roger Parent)
 Rosalie Westropp (Judy & Jerry Kearns)
 Walt Winenger (Papa) (Kristi Harnage)
 Frances & Eleanor Yorio (Marie Brady)
 Patricia Zubler (Karen VanMeter)

Guardian Angels

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 and will be officially enrolled upon their deaths. All Guardian Angels' names are recorded on a plaque located in the Christ Child Society office.

Please refer any questions to info@christchildsb.org.

Have some extra time and yarn?

Do you love to knit or crochet? Looking for something to do during the cold winter months? Make a baby blanket, a sweater or a little hat for a CCS Layette!

Sweaters, in 3 to 9 months sizes, may have long or short sleeves. Infant hats and blankets (any size from 18"x20" to 36"x48") are needed, too. Preemie size hats are especially helpful to keep them warm. Your choice of colors and patterns!

Hats and mittens to match the brand-new coats given to children, sizes toddler through adult, would also be welcome.



Donations can be dropped off at the Christ Child Clothing Center, 2366 Miracle Lane in Town & Country Shopping Center, any Tuesday or Wednesday morning (closed December 14 through January 15). To arrange a local pick up, e-mail info@christchildsb.org.

Thanks to all
who donated to
The Christ Child
Society
on
**GIVING
TUESDAY**

Over \$2,200 was donated to
support CCS programs.

United in Service Focuses on STEM

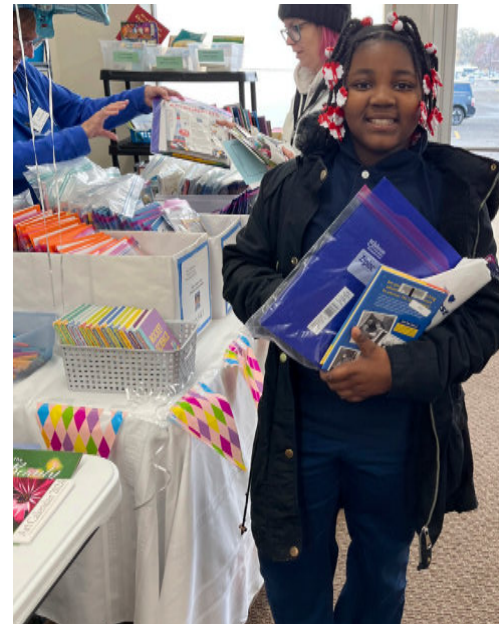
Each fall all 46 Christ Child Society Chapters unite to do a service project to honor the founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, who was born in November.



The South Bend Chapter United in Service Chairs, Jean Fuehrmeyer and Melissa Baltz, chose to provide non-fiction books with an emphasis on STEM to help the students' comprehension skills. The 240 packets were distributed to clients when they came to the Clothing Center starting on November 1. Packets were put together for children aged 4 through 8th grade.



Monique Deguara helped children select a packet that matched their interests.



Sky loves her packet of non-fiction books and activities.

Each packet contained a new age-appropriate non-fiction book, a book mark, drawing paper, puzzles and/or activity sheets. Depending on the age of the child, the packet also contained crayons, colored pencils or pens, safety scissors and glue sticks.

The packets were a big hit. Parents and children alike looked through them, choosing just the right book for their interests.

Thanks to all the members and friends of Christ Child who donated to make this project a big success!

Used Clothing Always in Demand

Every child receiving new coats, clothing and shoes from The Christ Child Society also receives used clothing. Parents are delighted to get the extra playclothes, warm sweaters, an extra coat, boots, or even dressier "church" clothes.

Stocking the used clothing shelves is a constant process. Sorting through donated clothing to ensure CCS gives only gently used items, then filling bins according to size is time-consuming. So, even though the clothing distribution season is coming to a close, don't forget to help the Used Clothing Department get ready for next Fall. Sizes Toddler through Adult XXL are needed, especially Boys sizes 8-12 (because they are tough on clothes!). And don't forget **BOOTS!**

Please remind your children, grandchildren, neighbors and friends to bring their gently used Fall/Winter clothing to CCS!



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WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

2366 Miracle Lane
Mishawaka, IN 46545

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE
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SOUTH BEND, IN
Permit No. 239

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Christmas cheer around the Clothing Center: (clockwise from top left) Mary Ann Chandler and Judy Farrell in the Coat Department; Mary Hazel in Intake, the Shoe Department Santa; Karen Van Meter, Ann Finn and Jane Reed are in the Christmas spirit.