



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF SOUTH BEND

WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

2366 Miracle Lane
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Summer 2026

Nothing is too much to do for a child.

Clothing Center Opens for 2026

The Christ Child Society Clothing Center opened its door for the 2026 season on August 5. 98 families with 267 children came ready with their referral forms to receive new clothing, coats and shoes, as well as books, used clothing and dental supplies.

After a busy summer of buying and stocking shelves, volunteers greeted families, interviewed parents to gather



Top Right: Daria loves her new coat and her Minnie Mouse. Center Right: Patti Paschke decorated the Used Clothing window to welcome clients. Below Right: The line of clients waiting to enter the Clothing Center on Opening Day stretched past several stores. Top Left: Maisey makes faces as her Mom reads to her. Center Left: Jane Joubert and Jamie Diller help children find the perfect book. Above: Jordan and Chloe are all smiles in their new coats.



the correct sizes for children, entered all the information into the client database and handed big bags of new and used items to families pulling red wagons throughout the Clothing Center.

With some children building block towers in the play area, others dancing in their light-up shoes and still more shrieking with joy as they hugged fluffy teddy bears, the Center was filled with happy voices.

These pictures are a glimpse of the day's hustle and bustle.



Calendar

August

5 CLOTHING CENTER OPENING

4, 11, 18, 25 Open for volunteers
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

12 Additional Volunteer Hours
5:30 - 7:00 PM

17 Board Meeting - Desmond
Conference Room 10:00 AM

22 Additional Volunteer Hours
9:30 - 11:30 PM

25 In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower 8:30 AM

Clothing Distribution

Wednesday, 5, 12, 19, 26
8:30 - 10:30 AM

Thursday, 13, 27 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Sunday, 9, 23 1:00 - 2:30 PM

September

1, 8, 15, 18, 22, 29 Center Open for
volunteers 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

9 Additional Volunteer Hours
5:30 - 7:00 PM

19 Additional Volunteer Hours
9:30 - 11:30 AM

21 Board Meeting - Desmond
Conference Room 10:00 AM

25 In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower 8:30 AM

Clothing Distribution

Wednesday, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
8:30 - 10:30 AM

Thursday, 10, 24 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Sunday, 20 1:00 - 2:30 PM

October

6, 13, 20, 27 Open for volunteers
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

7 Additional Volunteer Hours
5:30 - 7:00 PM

15 FALL LUNCHEON 11:30
Morris Park Country Club

19 Board Meeting - Desmond
Conference Room 10:00 AM

24 Additional Volunteer Hours
9:30 - 11:30 AM

25 In Memoriam Mass - Little
Flower 8:30 AM

Clothing Distribution

Wednesday, 7, 14, 21, 28
8:30 - 10:30 AM

Thursday, 8, 22 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Sunday, 4 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Carolyn Sherman
Co-President

It Takes a Village... of Volunteers!

The summer has been flying by as we prepare for our August 5 opening! Many volunteers have received and sorted orders of coats, shoes, socks, sweatshirts, books, beautiful gently used clothing, household goods, baby items, and so much more. Our shelves were full and ready to fill the wagons of those coming to the Christ Child Center on Opening Day and throughout the fall.

Spring and early summer found bustling activity at the Center. The referral committee was busy working with the schools and agencies to be up-to-date and ready to provide referrals to those needing our services. Training in many areas at the Center took place in July, so volunteers were ready. We have benefitted from the extra hours that volunteers put in during our trial period of evenings and Saturday mornings, and we decided to continue with these additional times throughout the coming year. The dates and times will be listed on our website and in the Bi-Weekly Reader.

Activity was not limited to the Clothing Program. The Scholarship Committee reviewed applications and conducted interviews before selecting the 13 scholarship recipients, new and renewals, for the upcoming year. CCS also celebrated the recent graduation of one of the Scholarship winners.

The *Let Love Shine* committee is actively planning the gala scheduled for November 12, our largest fundraising adventure, with sponsorship requests and Save the Date cards already mailed. Once again, it will be held at the Gillespie Center.

Without volunteers and generous donors, none of our work would be possible. Too many children in St. Joseph County would not have a winter coat, shoes that fit properly, or any of the essentials we will have ready for them this year. Thank you for your dedication and love for those in need. We look forward to the excitement of the children and the many new stories we will share!

Christ Child Society Recipient of Grant Sponsored by Local Diocese

Christ Child Society of South Bend received a \$3,000 grant in July from the St. Mary's Heritage Fund sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Funds will be used during FY2026-27 to support the Christ Child Clothing Program.

The Heritage Fund endowment was established in 1997 for St. Mary Mother of God Parish in Fort Wayne to help provide financial assistance to the poor and needy. The Society applied for a grant in April and received one of 30 awarded by Bishop Kevin Rhoades to parishes, schools, and agencies across the diocese.

Heritage Fund support will help The



DIOCESE of
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

Christ Child Society maintain its inventory of the adult-size clothes needed by many teenagers. It will also allow the Foster Hope program to expand options for comfort items such as art supplies and journals.

President Elect Position Open

Are you willing to use your time and talents to serve The Christ Child Society? Make a big impact on the organization and on children in the community! Contact Carolyn Sherman if you are interested.

2026-27 Executive Board

Co-Presidents
Carolyn Sherman & Karen Van Meter
President Elect
TBA
Vice President (Fundraising)
Ellen Jessen
Vice President (Membership)
Cindy Krupp
Vice President (Clothing)
Vicky Kasznia
Vice President (Communications)
Sara Conroy
Board Secretary
Cheryl Stuckey
Treasurer
Sue Alwine

The Fall Membership Luncheon and Meeting



**Thursday, October 15
11:30 AM**

Morris Park Country Club

**Watch for invitations
in the mail!**

Christ Child Society Book Club 2026 - 27

Discussion meetings will be at 3 PM
at River Park Public Library
2022 Mishawaka Ave., South Bend

AUGUST 17

The Last Thing He Told Me by
Laura Dave

Discussion: Pam Green

SEPTEMBER 21

Mad Mabel by Sally Hepworth
Discussion: Mary Ann Chandler

OCTOBER 19

The Briar Club by Kate Quinn
Discussion: Terry Slamkowski

NOVEMBER 16

Whistler by Ann Patchett
Discussion: Melissa Baltz

**NO MEETINGS IN DECEMBER, JANUARY
AND FEBRUARY**

MARCH 15

The Last Bookshop in London by
Madeleine Martin
Discussion: Louise Anella

APRIL 19

Grace of the Empire State by
Gemma Tizzard
Discussion: Mary Lou Mullen

MAY 17

Book to be determined
Discussion: Judy Kearns

JUNE 21

The Correspondent by Virginia
Evans
Discussion: Pat Short

July 19

Meeting to discuss books for the
next year.

Let Love Shine 2026 Plans Begin

The 2026 *Let Love Shine Gala* is set for **Thursday evening, November 12 at the Gillespie Center** in South Bend, with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres beginning at 5:30pm.

This elegant evening is the largest fundraiser of the year for CCS and provides most of the funding for our Clothing Program. Co-chairs Vickie Sleevei, Ellen Jessen and Tracey Hahn are hard at work planning the fun-filled night and the LLS committee has met several times already.

At the end of July, the Sponsorship committee mailed letters to the generous sponsors who support us in advance of the event to help make it all possible. Save the Date cards have been mailed. If you did not receive one,

contact info@christchildsb.org to be sure you are on the mailing list.

If you are interested in joining the team to help out in some way but aren't sure exactly what's needed or where you may be able to use your talents, the co-chairs will gladly fill you in and point you in the right direction. Email info@christchildsb.org or contact Vickie directly at vsleevi@yahoo.com

Please consider donating in support of *Let Love Shine* through a sponsorship or donation of a gift card or two valuing \$25 or more for the Bubble Grab.

If you know someone who would like to receive an invitation to *Let Love Shine*, please send the name and correct mailing address to info@christchildsb.org as soon as possible.

Clothing Program Evaluation Inspires Changes

In Spring 2025, the Christ Child Society of South Bend's Board of Directors approved a new 5-year strategic plan for the organization. Part of the plan was to review all of its programs to make sure they are meeting the needs of the St. Joseph County families CCS serves. A committee reviewed what some of the other organizations in the County provide for children and families. Additionally, a survey was created to ask our clients questions about the clothing they received from Christ Child.

The goal of the survey was to see if CCS was giving the type of clothing most useful to the children. The survey asked for the three most wanted items and three least wanted items of new clothing they received at the Clothing Center and the available items were listed for them. If they had received a layette at some point for their baby from Christ Child, at either the Center or at the hospital, the same questions were asked as to layettes. There was also a space for comments.

The survey was given to clients last fall on 8 separate days when the Center was open to distribute clothing to children. It was given in different months and on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays to cover the various times of clothes distribution.

The results indicated that, not surprisingly, shoes, coats (hats and

mitten) were most wanted. The least needed items varied greatly by client. Some items we thought might not be most wanted were in fact very appreciated.

The survey results were reviewed by a committee and the Chair of Clothing Buyers and the Chairs of Layettes. Their input and the survey results were presented to the Board of Directors. Based on the funds and storage space available it was decided to make a few changes for distribution in 2027. Two shirts will be given out instead of one and more toddler underwear will be given out. Layettes will use up the rest of their baby gowns and then give out two extra sleep and plays instead of the gowns.

This upcoming year more programs will be assessed to make sure they are effective and relevant for our community.



Diaper Drop Final Numbers

The Christ Child Society's 7th annual Diaper Drop was a success! On Wednesday, May 13, CCS collected over 43,600 diapers and 141 packages of wipes which were distributed to 10 community organizations that refer clients to CCS. An additional donation of 500 pull ups was purchased for the Foster Hope program.

The morning began early as both WNDU and WSBT presented live interviews from the Clothing Center. Sara Conroy and Karen Van Meter were excellent spokespeople for the project. The segments captured the scope of the project, the community need for diapers and the mission of CCS.



Above: Kyland Hall from WSBT interviews Sara Conroy. Below: The WNDU cameraman catches volunteers gathering diapers in front of the Clothing Center.



In order to investigate how donors learned about Diaper Drop, a sample survey was conducted with donors who dropped off diapers on Diaper Drop Day. 51% of the donors were connected to CCS through member relationships to businesses or family or were from businesses with whom CCS interacts. 38% saw the TV interviews on WNDU and WSBT. Facebook posts brought in 7.5% and parish bulletins attracted 2.5%. With half of the donations coming from the community outside of the organization, it appears the message was positively received.

United in Service Project Returns

Every year the 45 nationwide chapters of The Christ Child Society are encouraged to do a special project to honor Mary Virginia Merrick in November, her birthday month. The last two years the South Bend Chapter has collected art supplies to distribute to children who come to the Clothing Center. It was a big hit with both children and parents so the Chapter will be doing it again this year.

Volunteers will assemble packets of donated age-appropriate supplies. The back-to-school sales are going on now so please pick up some of these items and leave them in the bin under the sign-in table at the back entrance of the Clothing Center. Items needed include

Crayola crayons, colored pencils and markers, watercolor sets, glue sticks, children's scissors, construction paper, drawing paper and stickers.

Money donations are always welcome; simply place the donation in an envelope labeled with donor's name and 'United in Service' and drop it in the mailbox in the office. Volunteers will shop for designated items.

Thanks for making a difference in a child's life!



CCS Star Volunteer Earns Scholarship

Reyna Santos Martinez, a dedicated Christ Child Society volunteer, has received the Bishop Rhoades Scholarship which provides a first year college student with full tuition. A 2026 graduate of St. Joseph High School, Reyna will attend Holy Cross College where she will major in Theology in preparation for becoming a high school Theology teacher.

Reyna began volunteering at CCS as a translator for Spanish-speaking families and soon she was a dedicated and frequent presence at the Clothing Center. "Seeing families go from worry to relief because someone could communicate with them changed my life," she said.

Reyna plans to continue to volunteer at CCS through her college years, reflecting her desire to serve others and manifesting her aim to "Always do what helps you become the best version of yourself."



Reyna translates the size choices for a client on Opening Day.

CCS is Blessed with Multiple Donations



Co-President Carolyn Sherman receives a \$2,904.47 check from Allison Limon, Special Event Sales Manager at Gillespie Center as part of Holladay Hospitality's Gillespie Gives Back donation program. The total is 10% of CCS's costs from Let Love Shine 2025.



Many thanks to Barbara Allega, a Used Clothing volunteer, for the 15 cute bears and 4 pillows she made for CCS children.

CCS Annual Appeal Supports Programs

The CCS Annual Appeal, *Let Love Grow*, offers an opportunity to pledge a monthly donation. Levels per month for the 'Christ Child Gardeners' include Rose Gardeners (\$100), Lily Gardeners (\$50), Sunflower Gardeners (\$25) and Daisy Gardeners (\$10).

A one time donation as a 'CCS Cultivator' or a monthly pledge can be made at <https://tinyurl.com/CCSDonor>.

The Annual Appeal helps love grow by cultivating a future in bloom for the children we serve. The Annual Appeal begins in February, but donations are welcome any time of the year. Please consider becoming a "Gardener" today.



Christ the King Catholic Church held a Christmas in July collection during the last month. Not only did CCS receive items for Foster Hope (photo above), but also boots and layette items.

Boots are always welcome as families prepare for winter!



Melissa Manier retired after a long teaching career at Holy Cross School. After cleaning out her 2nd grade classroom for the last time, she donated a carful of books to the Christ Child Society's Book for a Child Program. CCS is grateful that these much-loved books will inspire new little readers.

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 significant life event. Friends or relatives will be remembered in a perpetual monthly Mass and names will be listed along with newsletters on the CCS website. Cards are available in the office or from Joan Hardig (574.277.7787). Donations are also accepted through <https://www.christchildsb.org/monetary-donations>.

In Honor Of

Andrea Balconis (Diane Quinn)
Jan Christianson (Jean/Paul)
Sheila Emge (Margaret Stumpf)
Fr. David Langford (Joe/Marie Burt)
Fr. Sam Martinez (Joe/Marie Burt)
Sand Family (Janice Goossens)

Special Occasion

Tom/Judy Burmeister - 65th Wedding Anniversary (Mary Kubiak)
Charter Member Barbara Dillon's 100th Birthday (Members of the Christ Child Society, Joe/Marie Burt, Peg Claeys, Pat Corcoran, Mary Hesburgh, Bette O'Malley, Diane Quinn, John/Carolyn Sherman)

In Memory Of

Rose Acklin (Marcia/Tom Blum, Joe/Marie Burt, Mary Ann/Henry Chandler, Sheila Emge, Suzy Halloran, Joan Hardig, Charlene/Tony Hutti, Greg/Jean Mee, Teddi Murray, Vicki/Dick Riel, Dean/Peg Riggs, Kathy/John Seidl, Sue Shirrell)
All Deceased Christ Child Past Presidents (Dean/Peg Riggs)
Marty Allen (Marcia/Tom Blum)
James Anthony (Ann Schmiedeler)
Paula Bencie (Marcia/Tom Blum)
Pat Blair (Dean/Peg Riggs)
George Bock (Fred/Carol Wasoski)
Joyce Boyer (Judy/Jerry Kearns)
Carolyn Chrzan (Richard/Donna Bujeker)
Rosemary Crowe (Marjorie Blanz/Jennifer Staud, Bill/Peggy Blauvelt, Mary Rose Eslinger, Ellen Crowe Finan/James Finan, John/Judith Lehner, Sherry/Raymond Pinter, Alastair Warr)
Claudia De Leon (Rolande Parent, Karen Van Meter)
John/Mary Lou Derwent (Louise/Steve Anella, Diane Quinn)
Janet Dippell (Joe/Marie Burt)
Ken Fedder (Art/Julie Zielinski)
Katy Gregg (Sue Alwine, Beth Barrett, Carol/Tom Beech, Crystal Bower, Jessie Bulosan, Tom/Judy Burmeister, Marie Burt, Maureen Cahir, Henry/Mary Ann Chandler, Melanie Chapeau, John/Julie Connolly, Michael/Ewelina Connolly, Lee O'Connor D'Anjou, Janet Fitzpatrick, The Gelchion Family, Joan Hardig, Janet Horvath, Lynne Hudkins, Joan Hurley OFS, Pam/Ashley Huxhold, Robert/Mary Beth Jacobson, John/Wanda Kouzoujian, Judy/Hugh Kuzmich, Dennis/

DECEASED MEMBERS

Rose Acklin
Katy Gregg
Kathleen Lawton

DECEASED HUSBAND

Jerry Marley

Pam Lee, The Martz Family, Tim/Helen McNeill, Bill/Margaret Moor, Ann Carol Nash, Donna Niemann, Charles Niemier, Jacqueline/George Paletta, Charles/Bobbie Paturick, Julie/Peter Raskind, Jack/Pat Ready, Donna Rehbein, Chris Reimer, Shari Rettig, Laura Rieff, Dean/Peg Riggs, Kathy/John Seidl, Terry Slamkowski, Kae Sobczyk, Catherine E Switzer, Dorothy Syndergaard, Abbey Thornton, Karen Van Meter, Joan Varga, Mary Weber)
Jim Hardig (Sheila Emge, Ed/Joan Hardig, Peg/Dean Riggs, The Children of Rosie/Fred Shafer)
Yvonne Harris (Greg/Jean Mee)
Carolyn Irwin (Marcia/Tom Blum)
Richard Kaman (Joe/Marie Burt)
Jenny Kupfer (Peg/Dean Riggs, Drew Riggs)
Kathleen Lawton (Marie Burt, Marilyn Cain Rajpolt/Priscilla Alden Cain/James Cain, Steven/Jennifer Deane, Bipin/Linda Doshi, Sheila Emge, Tom Ermlich/Family, Farabaugh Family, Wendy Gerber, Beau/Carol Graham, Mary Anne Hoover, Indiana Trust Wealth Management, The Jordanich Family, Judy/Jerry Kearns, Ginger/Brian Lake, Alan/Lynn Larsen, Doris Lawton/Family, Greg/Jean Mee, Norma Meehan, O'Kane Family, Bette O'Malley, Susy Porter, Diane Quinn, Dean/Peg Riggs, Robopac USA, Kathy/John Seidl, Bonnie/Harry Shaffer, Joyce Sopko, Margaret Stumpf, Janet Turnock, The Wednesday Club)
Jerry Marley (John/Suzy Halloran, Mark/Suzanne Wiwi)
Carolyn Matthews (James/Kimberly Keultjes)
John Mortakis (Joan Hurley, OFS)
Rick Newman (Mary Jane Horning)
Rita North (Jeff North)

Josephine Ann Oberlie (Andrew/Katie Diltz, Douglas/Robin Fozo, Charles/Cindy Hamilton, Jane Kelly, John/Bonnie Martell, MSGI (Martell Services Group, Inc.), Michiana Contracting, Inc., Brian/Judy Oberlie, Charles/Rita Oberlie)
Kay Palmer (Mary Earl, Kay Houser)
Donald Short (Joan Hurley, OFS)
Bill Siatkowski (Art/Julie Zielinski)
Phyllis Ann Kubsch Singleton (Greg/Jean Mee, Rolande Parent, Pat/Susan Richter, Ray/Barb Schmitt)
Dr. Robert Sweeney (John/Suzy Halloran)
Ralph Szymanski (Tom/Judy Burmeister, Sandy/Bernie Gorski)
Jeffrey Tadajewski (Joan Hurley, OFS, Mark/Suzanne Wiwi)
Jack Trant (Nancy/Jack Pycik)
Louis (Sam) Vittorie (James/Kimberly Keultjes)
Frank Walerko, MD (Joan Hurley, OFS)
Addie Wesolowski (Karen/Darrell Barnett)
Connie Woods (Marcia/Tom Blum)
Rose Mary Wray (Pamela Borden/Jeffery Allsop, Diane Quinn)
Robert Yoder (Joe/Marie Burt)



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 the annual Mass.

Current members and spouses may pre-enroll and will be officially enrolled upon their deaths.

All of the Guardian Angels' names are recorded on a plaque located in the Desmond Conference Room in the Christ Child Society Center.

Please refer any questions to info@christchildsb.org.

