**South Bend Celebrates 75th Anniversary**

On August 6, 1947, Rosaleen ‘Puddy’ Crowley founded the Christ Child Society of South Bend. Seventy-five years later, the organization is still growing, still thriving and still finding new ways to serve the community. The 75th Anniversary will be celebrated throughout the year.

The anniversary slogan is: “Honoring our past. Embracing the future.” As much as the current members of CCS value the people, traditions and successes that brought the organization to this point, there is so much more to do. While much will be made of where the chapter has been, new programs such as Foster Hope herald exciting things to come.

The first celebration of CCS history will occur during the Spring Luncheon on March 14 which will feature a movie about Mary Virginia Merrick and a display of photos and artifacts from the South Bend Chapter’s early years. The origins and evolution of the educational program, SUCCESS, will be displayed as well.

In May, Derby Day will celebrate the past presidents of CCS and their impact on the chapter. They have been very strong, forward thinking - and stylish - women! A ‘through the decades’ style show will be featured.

The major anniversary event will be a grand open house in August, near the founding day of the chapter. The community will finally be welcomed into the new Center where evidence of the chapter’s successful past and enthusiasm for the future will be on display.

Of course, the Fall Luncheon and Let
75 Years and Still Changing,  
Still Moving Forward

We live in a time of continual change and I find the best way to handle the change is to stay flexible. The Christ Child Society of South Bend is a very flexible organization while staying focused on its mission of supporting the children of St. Joseph County for the past 75 years. Those years are filled with changes as we continually improve how we serve. This flexibility is evidenced with our move in 2020 and all the process changes that occurred due to both the pandemic and new Center logistics. We continue to grow both in members and ways we provide support.

Change came to Megan Fitz who was our Administrative Assistant for over 7 years. She was faithful in supporting our organization and children in countless ways. The time was right for her to accept a teaching position after years of staying home with her young children while working for us. We thank her for her time of service, wish her well in the classroom and look forward to seeing her at member events. We started our search for a new assistant in January and were extremely fortunate to find an excellent match with Lexie Fisher. Lexie has a strong desire to serve her community along with experience in fundraising, donor software, event planning and working with those in need. She has jumped into the job with both feet, trying to learn as much as possible before she takes a maternity leave of absence for the birth of her second child mid-March. Please join me in welcoming her into this new role.

Change affected families fleeing Afghanistan as they became refugees in a new land. Catholic Charities and URC along with several Catholic parishes are serving these new refugee families settling in St. Joseph County. These families left their homes with very few possessions and are beginning the hard work of resettling here. We served the families, many of them with lots of children, providing clothing, coats, shoes, books and comfort. We work with a translator to understand their needs and they show their gratitude with smiles. We are blessed with a wonderful Center stocked with all sizes of clothing along with a wonderful assortment of donated used clothing. It feels very good to help them adjust to this new change.

The pandemic continues its course while our responses to it change over time. We are now planning more in person events hoping that, with precautions, everyone will stay healthy. We will hold our first Spring Membership meeting since 2019 on March 14. It will kick off the celebration of our 75th Anniversary with a theme of Let Love Grow. Bishop Kevin Rhoades will celebrate Mass at St. Bavo Church and lunch will follow at Riverside Terrace, Mishawaka. Again we needed to be flexible with our locations due to changes caused by Covid. Derby Day is back on May 5 and we will have an Information Coffee for interested new members on May 11. Christ Child Society members continue to gather to support each other as we serve our community and celebrate our 75th Anniversary together. Hope to see you soon!

Meet 2022 President-Elect Sue Seall

The Christ Child Society is grateful that Sue Seall accepted the role of President-Elect because she brings experience, talent and enthusiasm to the role. Sue is a lifelong resident of South Bend and has been married to husband, Rick, for 45 years.

Rick is a familiar volunteer at the Center as well. Their three daughters, their spouses and six grandchildren all live locally and make for a fun Sunday dinner crowd.

Sue joined Christ Child in 2013, following in the footsteps of her mother, Mary Carmola. She served on the Board of Directors on and off for 11 years in various positions including at-large and Vice President of Membership. She chaired Derby Day and the very successful Let Love Shine 2021 and served on various committees for both events in the past. For the past eight years, Sue has been the buyer of school uniforms for the New Clothes Department.

The Member Merchandise display was her brainchild and she greatly expanded its offerings. She also works in the Client Intake room and helps with Student Volunteers. She can also be found calling out client numbers and pulling wagons.

In her “spare time,” Sue enjoys knitting, sewing, working outside, and strumming her ukulele. She noted, “Lending a helping hand with our six grandchildren brings my husband and me great joy and keeps us young.”
Third Year for Mother’s Day Diaper Drop

Imagine being the mommy of a little person who needs a diaper change and there is no money to supply more than a handful of diapers daily. This is the sad reality for many families living in poverty. That is why The Christ Child Society pledged to help with this on-going need through supplying diapers to some of their referral agencies, selected because they distribute or use diapers daily or weekly in their year-round missions.

On May 4 from 9 AM to 2 PM volunteers will collect diaper donations on the drive in front of the Miracle Lane Clothing Center. Because that is the Wednesday before Mother’s Day, it is a tangible way to celebrate motherhood and honor the struggles of mothers in our community.

Christ Child Society’s Diaper Drop collected 17,500 in 2020 and 40,610 last year. The goal for 2022 is to deliver 60,000 diapers and here is how you can help!

- Begin buying and storing diapers now on your trips to the grocery store or pharmacy.
- Clip coupons to alleviate soaring prices. Send diapers directly to CCS through an on-line purveyor such as Amazon.
- Ask family and friends to help you celebrate Mother’s Day or another occasion by foregoing a gift and gifting diapers instead. (Last year, board member Mary Ann Chandler did this for her birthday and delivered 1,075 diapers on the day of the drop!)
- Tell neighbors about the Diaper Drop and be willing to deliver their donations.
- Honor your mother or her memory, or a mom whom you admire, by donating diapers to this worthy cause.
- Consider organizing a diaper drive at your church (last year the congregation at Christ the King Lutheran Church collected diapers during the month of April and delivered 2,692 donations to us on Drop Day!) If this interests you, the CCS organizers are recruiting chairs from 2-3 more congregations to spearhead this effort. Contact Diaper Drop Co-Chairs Lisa Smessaert 574 340 5497 or Debbie Low 574 261 0898 for details.
- Deliver diapers to referral agencies on the afternoon of the event, especially if you have an exceptionally large vehicle.

Annual Appeal Moves to April

The Annual Appeal will be mailed in late April, a change from the pre-holiday mailing of past years. After realizing that most of the Christ Child Society fundraising occurred within a short span during the Fall, the board opted to move the Annual Appeal closer to Mothers’ Day, an appropriate connection since the chapter serves children and helps their Moms.

This year, the Annual Appeal form will feature a special place to honor mothers, grandmothers and other special women in our lives. Should donors wish to contribute in the name of their favorite maternal role model, they can do so through the Appeal.

Each woman so honored will be recognized in the next CCS newsletter which will be published in June. By adding the address of the honoree on the Appeal form, the donor will ensure that Mom or Grandma receives a copy of the newsletter in the mail.

Watch for the Annual Appeal mailing! You can make a positive difference in the lives of children and honor the women who made a significant difference in your life.

Executive Board

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Vice President (Membership)
Melissa Baltz
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Betsie Pendarvis
Vice President (Communications)
Beth Barrett
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Elizabeth Van Doren

Cheryl and Ron Stuckey from Christ the King Lutheran Church delivered 2,692 diapers collected at their church in 2021.

Mary Ann Chandler celebrated her birthday by generously collecting diapers from her friends and family.
75 Years of Finding a Need

“Find a need and fill it.” From the moment Rosaleen ‘Puddy’ Crowley gathered her friends to form the South Bend Chapter of The Christ Child Society, that exhortation from founder Mary Virginia Merrick has resonated in the hearts and minds of CCS members. Since 1947, this chapter has explored, discovered and answered the needs of the community. The chapter has evolved with the times and has grown stronger through its members’ resourcefulness and creativity.

The founding story of The National Christ Child Society is well known. Mary Virginia Merrick, though physically challenged herself, sought to better the lives of impoverished children by gathering like-minded women and initiating service programs. After starting with sewing infant clothing, they soon realized that “babies grow” and children needed clothing, shelter and recreation. Before long, the mission of CCS spread across the country and now 45 chapters, with several more in formation, continue this good work.

I congratulate you and your Board and extend a cordial welcome to our National Organization. If there is any way in which I can help you please write me.

Wishing you every success and the blessing of the Christ Child, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Mary V. Merrick
National President.

The closing of Mary Virginia Merrick’s letter welcoming South Bend as a Christ Child Society chapter in 1947.

The women of the South Bend Chapter were immediately industrious, taking “find a need” to heart. The first program in South Bend, as with all Christ Child Chapters, was the Layette Program. Local charities were contacted and dues were used to purchase supplies. The Family Welfare Office notified CCS of their first layette recipient, an infant born in the early hours of Christmas Day, 1947.

By Spring of 1949, CCS received calls for clothing for older children and, just like Mary Virginia, they understood that babies grow. A Motor Corps was formed to deliver clothing as needed. Visits to parishes to explain the CCS mission resulted in awareness of the need for First Communion dresses and outfits. Another program was born.
As the chapter established itself, they explored many options. At first, they answered pleas for things such as bedding for a foster home, eyeglasses for a young boy, and beds for St. Joseph Hospital’s new Pediatrics Ward. They provided Christmas dinners for families, paid for hospital care for a new mother and provided several cribs and mattresses. The need for clothing grew, and in due course, they focused on providing clothing. By the close of the 20th Century, mindful of the importance of scholarship and reading, CCS recognized another need and established educational programs.

When dues could no longer cover expenses, they turned to fundraising. The first Christmas Bazaar was held in 1948, becoming a much anticipated annual event that continued until 1998. In 1954, coin banks, made from small paint cans supplied by Puddy’s husband, Jerome Crowley, President of O’Brien Paints, served as the depositaries of loose change that turned into thousands of dollars. Those banks were seen everywhere for decades, on members’ kitchen counters and near store cash registers.

Events such as the Candlelight Ball and later, the Holiday Benefit Luncheons and Let Love Shine Dinners, as well as the generosity of supportive donors to the Annual Appeal, Clothe a Child Dolls and the Endowment Fund, provided the sound financial footing that has enabled CCS to serve well over a quarter million local children.

Puddy Crowley noted in 1961, “Our purpose today is still the same as when we met for the first time. It’s simply to benefit conditions of children… any means of brightening and uplifting their childhood.” That purpose lives on 75 years later.
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

Andrea Balconis, OP (Diane Quinn)
Kristy Botich (Jan Magnell, Carol Kemper, Bob Mellander)
Julie Bussert – Good recovery (Marie Burt)
Christ Child Society – Merry Christmas (Janice & Joe Goossens)
Carson Christopher- Birth (Katy & John Gregg)
Tom & Barb Cassady – Merry Christmas (Jim & Nancy Yohe)
Jan Christianson (Jean & Paul)
Zorka DeFreeuw (Carol Bauer)
Margie Farmer – Thank you (Jim & Nancy Yohe)
Mary & Jim Hesburgh – Merry Christmas (Barbara Dillon)
William LaVelle (Brooke, Steve, Olivia & Ella Merrill)
Mrs. Armando Mancini – Get well (Nancy & Del Meyer)
Del & Nancy Meyer – Merry Christmas (Kathy & John Seidl)
Del Meyer – Speedy recovery (Peggy Gerstbauer, Anonymous)
Terry Miller (Jim & Pat Short)
Barb Phair (Jim & Pat Short)
Bill & Diane Robertson – Merry Christmas (Jim & Nancy Yohe)
Toner Family – Thank you (Jim & Nancy Yohe)
Katherine Tillman – Get well (Barbara Dillon)
Father Bob VanKempar (Carol Bauer)
Ed Witte – Illness (Janice & Joe Goossens)

IN MEMORIAM

Jennifer Andrews (B.J. O’Brien)
Alton J. Backs (Alice Backs)
John Baran (Lyla S. Lockhart)
Dorothy Berger (M. Helga Jean)
Lillian Braun (Carol Bauer)
Paul Bultinck (B.J. O’Brien)
Judith Ellen Clark (Dorothy H. Mady)
Helen Classen (Robert & Toni Kowalski)
Mary DeWitte (Joe & Janice Goossens)
Teri D’Hoore (Jeanie Ziolkowski)
Mary Jane Farmer (Nancy Yohe)
Barbara Fedder (Ed & Joan Hardig)
Suzanne Ferry (Jim & Nancy Yohe)

Deceased Members

Jeanne Klem
Barbara Fedder
Marjorie Fisher
Mary Schilling
Dee Tepe
JoAnne Tezich

American Academy of Dermatology,
Ron Costephekn, Tricia Spellman,
Karen Spalding)
Patrick Mack (Jeff & Gina Toeppe)
Donna Mason (Nancy & Jack Pycik)
Alice Miller (John Miller)
Patricia Murray (Sheila Emge, Peg Claey,
Marie Brady, Kathy & John Seidl, Margaret Hosinski, Judy & Jerry Kearns,
Ed & Joan Hardig)
Amy Norris (Carol & Jim Holt)
Cal O’Connor (Joan & Tom Varga)
Gerald O’Donohue (Carol & Donald Nash)
Helen O’Neill (Greta Roemer Lewis)
Kent Perry (Judy Kuzmich, Patricia Falvey,
Peg Riggs, Geri Trippel, Kathy & John Seidl, Dekker Vacuum Technologies,
Inc., Mary Smiler)
Alan Poland (Marti & Frank Moriconi)
Peggy Prugh (Teresa & Sam Jermano)
Dorothy Putz (Toni Pikuza)
Gerald Quinn (Phil & Susan Wendowski)
Jack Beck Rogers (Jacqueline Badics)
Richard L. Rozmarynowski (Joan Frances Hurley)
Marilyn Rzeszewski (Joan Bitz)
Eugenia Santagata (Dan & Beth Barrett)
Mary Schilling (Patty & Paul Crowley,
Tom Schilling, Mr. & Mrs. Mark A. Wiwi,
Suzy & John Halloran, Lynn & John Hapsert, Rosemary Crowe, Judy &
Hugh Kuzmich, Katherine &
Tom Kajel, Louise & Stephen Anella,
Greta Roemer Lewis-Tuesley Hall
Konopa, LLP, Anonymous)
Dan Skwarkan (Rex & Peggy Vorheis,
Jean Fuehremeyer, Beth Barrett, John &
Sue Uhran, Esther Cyr, Deb & Mike Low,
Kathy & John Seidl, Jane Horning,
Bill & Renee Hochstetter, Judy Kuzmich,
Diane Quinn, Bill & Margaret Johnson,
Karen Van Meter, Ed & Joan Hardig
Layette Dept., Peter Lombardo, Bill &
Margaret Johnson, Carol & Jim Holt,
Jeff McKean Family, Linda Jones, Tami
& Lee Stephan, Barbara & John Waszak,
Kent & Linda Dennis,Norma & Jim
Todd, Pat Corcoran, Mary Ann Chandler,
James & Kimberly Keultjes)
David L. Spalding (Rosemary Spalding)
Dee Tepe (Judy & Jerry Kearns, Chris &
Carmi Murphy, Jeff & Maureen Munger,
**In Memoriam continued**


JoAnne Tezish (Sandra & Nicholas DeCicco, Margaret Desenberg, JoAnn Azelberg, Winifred Vanden Bossche, Betty Ann Gibbons)

Cynthia Thiel (Joe & Marie Burt)

S. Bernard Vagner, M.D. (James & Kimberly Keultjes)

Stan Walker (Greg & Jean Mee)

Mary Waterson (Margaret Hosinski)

Amelia Claire Wieland (Jacqueline Badics)

Flora Jean Wilkens McAfee (The Bauer Family)

Margot Witous (The Kirker Family, The Hermans, Jo Hein, Billy & Kate Smith, Colleen & David Scholtes)

Skip Wright (Jim & Carol Holt)

Edgar Ziege (Peg & Dean Riggs)

**Angels Support CCS Mission**

The Guardian Angel program continues to be a significant recognition for deceased members and family. Currently, there are 30 Living Angels and 102 Guardian Angels whose names are engraved on plaques hanging in the Desmond Conference Room.

All Guardian Angel names are read at the Christ Child Society Annual Spring Mass and the names appear in the membership directory.

Living Angels have their names listed in the membership directory until such time as they are elevated to Guardian Angel status upon their death. Living Angels also will receive a letter acknowledging their contribution and its tax benefits.

This wonderful program continues to be a major support of Christ Child Society programs since its inception in 1998. The $1000 enrollment fee helps to ensure that Christ Child Society programs continue and grow. It is an excellent opportunity for members, spouses and families to remember their loved ones.

Norma Villanucci has chaired the program for many years and is the best contact for information. Direct questions to her at 574 243 0621.

**Dolly Parton Imagination Library**

The Christ Child Society supports literacy for all the children they serve. Besides giving them books when they come to the Center, volunteers also ask the parents if they would like to sign their children up for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Under this program any child in St. Joseph County, regardless of income, can receive a free book in the mail every month until their fifth birthday. The St. Joseph Community Foundation statistics show the average child receives 23 books through Imagination Library. Since August 2018 CCS has signed up 1159 children to the Imagination Library! That is a lot of books going to little readers because CCS participates in this worthy program.

**Watch for Christ Child dolls for sale at Martin’s Supermarkets March 14 to April 3!**

**It’s Membership Time!**

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining CCS?

**The Informational Coffee is May 11**

Send names of potential members to Pat Falvey at pwfalvey@gmail.com or call her with questions at 702 686 3800
Celebrate at the Derby Day Luncheon
Thursday, May 5, 2022
Chicory Cafe Event Center, Mishawaka

Check out the newly revised Christ Child Society website
www.christchildsb.org

A huge thank you to Betsie Pendarvis for her many hours of work!

Join the 75th Anniversary fun and wear your Derby hats with style!
Watch for your invitation!