Calendar

March

15 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM (teleconference)
25 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower 8:30 AM

Clothing Center Open for Members
Wednesday, 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
8:30 AM-1:00 PM

April

4 Happy Easter!
17-23 Boot Drive
19 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM (teleconference)
25 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower 11:30 AM

Clothing Center Open for Members
Wednesday, 7, 14, 21, 28
8:30 AM-1:00 PM

May

5 Diaper Drive
17 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM (teleconference)
17 Summer newsletter deadline
25 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower 11:30 AM

Clothing Center Open for Members
Wednesday, 7, 14, 21, 28
8:30 AM-1:00 PM

Foster Hope: Filling a Need

Recently the Christ Child Society’s Board of Directors unanimously approved a new program, Foster Hope, which was created to serve children entering the foster care system. Not only does CCS provide new clothing, shoes, and a coat, but the children also receive age appropriate toiletries, a stuffed animal, a fleece blanket, slipper socks and pajamas. Each child receives his or her own duffle with a name tag to hopefully help the children feel special and have something to call their own.

CCS has partnered with two foster agencies in St. Joseph County. National Youth Advocate Program and Benchmark place children in emergency therapeutic foster homes for those who have been the most severely neglected and abused. CCS is contacted by the agencies when a child enters the foster system and items are gathered and distributed as needed. This will be a year-round program with an anticipated 30 children a month.

The new program has its own policies to adequately serve foster children. The ages served in the Foster Hope program are birth to 17, unlike the Clothing Program which ends at age 12. When a child is placed in foster care, his or her case worker fills out the sizing form and provides other information pertinent to that child’s likes such as color, fit, or other special considerations. Volunteers prepare the bags, making sure to consider the child’s preferences. The filled duffle bags are delivered to the two foster agencies to quickly provide these children with basic necessities.

As of January, CCS has served over 150 foster children. The case workers at both agencies have expressed that the children are thrilled with their duffles, many reacting with disbelief. Most children in the foster care system are unfamiliar with receiving gifts or having something that they can say belongs to them. Both NYAP and Benchmark have stated that CCS is the organization that they have been praying for in the hope of helping these children. The goal of the program is to continue providing children in the foster care system with life necessities and with the knowledge that there are many who want them to have HOPE for their future.
Feeling Grateful and Blessed

Monique DeGuara
Co-President

We did it! We served our community’s children during a pandemic while keeping our members and families safe. The sense of relief and success were so real during our last official client day on January 28. Our client service season reminds me of Margaret Mead’s quote “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world.” It is not that we were able to change the pandemic circumstances, but that we were able to find ways to effectively work and fulfill our mission.

At the center we noticeably benefited from our supportive Christ Child Society community as we gathered for announcements and prayers prior to opening our doors each session. The front lobby was filled with volunteers, masked and at arm’s length, united in our desire to serve and understand our need for each other’s support, especially as we prayed for sick and troubled family and friends. For many of us this was our only social outing during pandemic times and necessary on so many levels. The Christ Child Society provides the necessary physical and emotional support to our clients while filling our own need to nurture and care for others. Volunteers, members and clients all benefit from working together to make a stronger community.

This is the time of year when we reflect on our accomplishments before starting again to find the need and fill it. I know the center will continue to be active during this ‘quiet’ time with volunteers preparing for our many different programs. The Spirit brings out the best in all of us as we share God’s blessings with all. I am blessed to be a part of this strong community. Thank you all!

Meet the New President Elect

It is with great respect and pride that we introduce our President Elect, Patti Banet.

Patti grew up in Orchard Lake, Michigan and moved to Indiana in 1978. She lived in Fort Wayne for twenty-six years before moving to South Bend. She has been married to her husband, Steve, for forty-one years. Like all of our significant others, Steve has been a big help in getting our new Center in tiptop shape by providing numerous furniture donations from his workplace. Patti and Steve’s family includes two daughters, their spouses and four grandchildren.

Patti enjoys being near water, whether it is the lake or the ocean. She gardens, sews, and enjoys working outside.

Working with people and volunteering is important to Patti and she does it well, as seen by what she has achieved as a volunteer at the Center. She presented a cheery face to clients as they selected sizes for their children and navigated the many changes in procedure due to COVID restrictions.

Patti co-chaired the major fundraiser this year. Let Love Shine was virtual for the first time which presented unique challenges. Her video presentation looked professional and she dedicated much time and energy to the silent auction. Of course we all appreciate her dedication to the Christ Child Society.

The CCS members are looking forward to Patti being the 2021-2022 Co-President.

Executive Board

Co- Presidents
Suzanne Wiwi
Monique DeGuara
President Elect
Patti Banet
Vice President (Fundraising)
Susan Coulter
Vice President (Membership)
Sue Seall
Vice President (Clothing)
Betsie Pendarvis
Recording Secretary
Ruth Nieboer
Corresponding Secretary
Nancy Meyer
Treasurer
Elizabeth Van Doren

Boot Drive

The Christ Child Society will be collecting children’s boots at parishes and schools **April 17-23.**

After the snow melts, please save gently used boots, sizes preschool through youth 4, and drop them in the CCS boxes.

Call 288 6028 for a pick up.
A Message from the Co-Presidents:

Calendar Changes
We have so missed our Christ Child social gatherings this year while completely understanding this necessary sacrifice to keep each other safe and decrease the reach of the pandemic. We are confident that the pandemic will end but the timeline is very fuzzy as to when we can gather together as in the past.

We don’t have enough information now to plan the annual Members Meeting, Spring Luncheon and Mass, normally held at the end of March, Derby Day nor the New Members Informational Coffee.

Imagination Library
The Christ Child Society likes to support programs that go along with their mission to enrich the lives of children. Volunteers have been signing children up for The Dolly Parton Imagination Library since August 2018. Under this program, sponsored locally by the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, any child in the county, regardless of income, can get a book mailed to them every month until their fifth birthday.

From August to January, CCS signed up 257 children, despite pandemic restrictions, and since 2018 they have signed up over 900 children. That is a lot of books!

CCS is proud to share the Imagination Library with the children they serve.

Local Artist Adds Joy and Color to Center
The Center hallway was brightened by a mural titled A Child's Journey, created by local artist Alex Allen.

Center decorators Sue Seall and Susan Coulter, seeking a way to add vitality, were inspired by the murals in South Bend. Sue’s daughter, Nicole, who is Marketing Director of Visit South Bend, connected them with Alex. She has created vibrant public art on downtown buildings that capture movement, music and color. Alex noted, “I’m developing a language, my own stories of color, using shapes and patterns to evoke an emotion of joy…”

Alex was enthused after hearing about the CCS mission. She drew up some ideas that were a perfect fit for the Center and the children served by CCS. She was able to complete the mural during Thanksgiving week while the Center was closed, even working on Thanksgiving evening. Support for the mural project was graciously provided by Sue and Rick Seall.

CCS volunteers are grateful for the brightened hallway and the positive messages. All are eager for the time when their clients, especially the children, can experience it.

Merrick Award Delayed Amid Year of Changes
This past year - and perhaps much of this next year - has seen a variety of changes in how CCS meets the needs of its clients and keeps membership safe while doing so.

Since March of 2020, changes in procedures, celebrations, and much more have limited the possibility of gatherings. Additional changes include the new Foster Hope program and hosting Let Love Shine as a virtual fundraiser.

Thus it should come as no surprise there will be a delay in awarding the Mary Virginia Merrick Award, given for outstanding service. According to the policy revised in 2019, the award would be announced this month. In truth, there were very possibly a hundred members that gave outstanding service this year!

Everyone knows the saying, “It takes a Village.” Well, making all these changes did require many hands. What better tribute to what Mary Virginia Merrick believed: “Take my hands and let them work for you; take my mind, my memory, my will and make me use them all to do Your will on earth…”

A committee will be formed later this year and the award will again be given to a dedicated member in the Spring of 2022.
Let Love Shine: A Virtual Event

The Christ Child Society’s biggest fundraiser, *Let Love Shine*, had to be postponed from fall of 2020 because of COVID. However, CCS moved ahead with a virtual version highlighting its programs, the children they serve and how the new center better serves the community. The evening even had the ever popular silent auction - virtual version.

The event was warmly received and as of the date of this newsletter over $63,000 in sponsorships, silent auction bids and donations was received and even more mailed donations are expected.

Anyone who missed the event should look for future emails and on the CCS website for links to some of the film clips shown during the *Let Love Shine* virtual event.

Committee Chairs Melissa Baltz and Patti Banet would like to thank everyone who made this event a success and especially the donors and sponsors who generously support the CCS mission. A special thank you goes to Angelo Di Carlo who most capably hosted the evening’s events.

Annual Appeal a Huge Success

In the past most unusual year, the Christ Child Society marched on. They moved into the new Clothing Center on schedule, truly a miracle on Miracle Lane, and opened to serve clients in August as scheduled.

They clothed thousands of children using new protocols and technologies designed to keep members, volunteers, and clients safe.

CCS leveraged technology and the best practices of industry to serve more clients, more efficiently. Data is used to manage inventory and forecast clothing needs.

Connections with clients are made on their channels of choice – social media, online, and mobile to enhance their experiences. CCS is constantly improving because, “Nothing is ever too much to do for a child.”

The concern of many CCS members focused on fund raising to pay for the clothing, shoes and coats distributed to so many children.

With other pressing needs in the community, would their service, improvements and accommodations resonate? Would the community respond to their mission and message? That question was answered by the enthusiastic response to the Annual Appeal which raised $84,976.89. One hundred more donors contributed nearly $30,500 more than did in 2019.

Thanks to the dedication of Annual Fund Chairs Mary Liddell and Kathleen Mikula and the generous friends of CCS, the Appeal was yet another miracle.

Diaper Drive: A Mothers’ Day Project

Last spring, amid the pandemic shutdown, the Christ Child Society collected 17,500 diapers to benefit partner referral agencies who desperately needed diapers for the little ones they serve.

To celebrate motherhood and honor the struggles of mothers living in poverty, CCS will once again collect diapers in a no contact, drive-by drop off in front of the Clothing Center.

Buy diapers and bring them to CCS’s front door on May 5.
Build-a-Bear Donation Brings Comfort

Items that provide comfort and security are essential to children who are neglected and abused. The case workers at both foster agencies that partner with the Christ Child Society in the Foster Hope Program, National Youth Advocate Program and Benchmark, related how much the foster children loved the stuffed animals that were given to every child in his or her duffle bag.

When the foster agencies were asked at what age should CCS stop including a stuffed animal and replace with another item, they emphatically requested a stuffed animal for every child. Since Christ Child’s budget does not allocate for the purchase of the stuffed animals, individuals or companies that would be willing to donate were sought.

Build-A-Bear Workshop was contacted due to their mission of providing children living in poverty as well as foster children with a stuffed animal. Nonprofit organizations could request minimum of 25 up to a maximum of 1,000 stuffed animals. Forms were completed and submitted (as well as many prayers) with the hopes of possibly being granted 250 bears. Two weeks later CCS received an email praising the work of the Christ Child Society and announcing 1,000 Build-A-Bears would be shipped in February.

On February 10, three large pallets of boxes containing 1,000 teddy bears were delivered to the Center. A number of volunteers were on hand to unload and unpack this wonderful donation. Build-A-Bear Workshop provided CCS with an extremely generous gift that will no doubt provide the children CCS serves with a sense of comfort and security.

Clothe a Child Continues

The Fall Clothe A Child campaign at Notre Dame Federal Credit Union raised $3,735.36. Northwest Bank hosted the mitten kids from December 21, 2020 to January 2, 2021 at two of their drive-thru locations. Profits from this campaign raised $2,204.00 including a generous donation from employee Kerry Hancock (pictured with Mary Ann Chandler) at the Church Street location.

Saint Joseph High School had to reschedule its Dress Down Day due to students attending all virtual classes this past December. The rescheduled date is February 26. Please look for the mitten kids again at Martin’s Super Markets this Spring!

CAC Chair Mary Ann Chandler prepares doll packets for Martin’s Super Markets.
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 (277-7787).

SPECIAL OCCASION:

Ruth Baumgarden – Get well (Carol & Jim Holt)
Esther Cyr – Get well (The Corcorans, Patti & Lowell Paschke, Michelle & David Remley, Carol Bauer, Joan Hardig, Jane Horning, Nancy Meyer, Margaret Hosinski)
John Dega-a-Get well (Nancy Meyer)
Sheila Dolan – 91st Birthday (Carol & James Holt)
Adelle Driscoll – 98th Birthday (Carol & James Holt)
Fathers’ Day (Joseph V. & Kathleen R. Simeri)
Marilyn Heiserman (Nancy Meyer)
Mary & Jim Hesburgh – Merry Christmas (Barbara Dillon)
Don & Stacie Hudson – Wedding Anniversary (Joe & Marie Burt)
Tricia & Rich Kaman – 50th Wedding Anniversary (Joe & Marie Burt)
Judy Kuzmich – Happy Birthday (Joseph & Mary Franco)
Laura Kay Minteer – Happy Birthday (Joe & Marie Burt)
Gloria O’Keefe – 90th Birthday (Janice & Joe Goossens)
Fr. Michael Palmer (Carol Bauer)
Barbara Sorensen – Get well (Barbara Dillon)
Patrick Sullivan (Janice Goossens)
Esther VanderWaal – Regain health (Toni & Bob Kowalski)
Wes Williams (Jim & Pat Short)

IN MEMORIAM:

Steve Aiuto (Jane Horning)
Mark Arrowsmith (Toni Pikuza)
Larry Aulbach (Dorothy H. Mady)
Dolores Bankowski (Carol & James Holt)
Joanne Bauer (Carol Bauer, Carol & James Holt, Peggy Bauer, Karen & Darrell Barnett)
Judy Best (Mary Lou Houle)
Betty Bobson (Janice & Joe Goossens)
Mary Brown (Helen Diltz)
John Byorni (Dottie Wallace, Kari Wuszke, Ann Schmiedeler, Art & Mary Lou Houle)
Andrea Casteen (Judy Kuzmich, Norma J. Villanucci, Beth Barrett)

IN MEMORIAM

Deceased Members
Teri D’Hoore
Gay Eades
Mary Ann McGtigue
Joanne Van Avermaete
Ed Zych

Deceased Spouses
Donald Andrzejewski
James Cierziak
Albert Gerstbauer
Chuck Hurley
Charles J. Thomas

James Cierziak (Kathy & John Seidl, Frank & Diane James, Barbara Dillon, Deb & Mike Low, Mary Anne Rutseck, Dee Tepe, Beth Barrett, Diane & Gerry Quinn, Marilyn Toep, Peg Riggs, Kathleen Lawton, Anne Choinacky, James & Nancy Yohe)

Patrick Clancy (Ginger O’Hara)
Tom Conley (Greg & Jean Mee)
James DeWinter (B.J. O’Brien, Esther Cyr)
Teri D’Hoore (Kathy Seidl, Sharon James, Nancy Meyer)

Salvatore DeSapio (Beth & Dan Barrett)
Lee Donovan (Jane Horning)
Paul Dwyer (Tom & Maureen Cahir)
Richard Etter (Beth & Dan Barrett)
Michael Fahey (Janice Goossens)

John Frieden (Tom & Maureen Cahir, Jim & Pat Short)
Robert L. Gable (Elvera Elva Gable)
Al Gerstbauer (Marti & Frank Moriconi, Kathy & John Seidl, Esther Cyr)

Anne Glass (Paul & Lynne Glass)
Mitchell Gohn (B.J. O’Brien)
Betty Goodwin (JoAnn Axelberg)

James P. Greene (Greg & Mary Jane Danner)
Lorraine Haddad (Maureen Jones)
Tom Hofman (Joe & Marie Burt, Marti & Frank Moriconi)

Chuck Hurley (Rolande & Roger Parent, Carol Bauer)

Ginnie Jones (Winnie Vanden Bossche)
Dolores Irene Kalil (Mark & Suzanne Wiwi)

Roger Kelling (Diane & Gerry Quinn)
James Kilbourne (Ed & Joan Hardig)
Ann Korb (Thomas & Adaline Cashore, Beth Barrett, Mary Lou & Pete Muller, Betsy Cooke, Mary Ann Randall, Kathleen Lawton, Lucy Whiteman)

Cleo Kowalski (Jenny & Bruce Micinski)
George Kraus (Fran Austin)
Carmela Lapo (James & Kimberly Keultjes)

Johanna Larson (Lucy Whiteman, Newcomers Bridge Club of Michiana)
Shirley Lazzara (Dottie Wallace, Tami McNally)

Allison Liddell (Neal & Linda Cason)
Marty Lohmuller (Sue & John Shirrell)

Bill McFarlane (Toni Pikuza)
Mary Ann McGtigue (Bette O’Malley, Michiana Garden Club, Dr. Fred & Ann Dean, Betsy Cooke, Peg Claeys, Margaret Johnson, Van & Jean Gates, Daniel & Diane Kreager, James E. Kelley, Tim & Deirdre McGtigue, Barbara Dillon, Katherine & David Braunlich, Marcia & Tom Blum, Karen Hrisomatos, Elaine Coglian, Kathy Malone Beeler, Kathleen Lawton, Peter Lawton, Kitty Fullec)

Nancy Mangano (Constance Hedden)

Baby Banks Gregory Miller (Marcia & Tom Blum)

Joe Moorhouse (Terry Slamkowski)
Jack Morgan (Bernie & Sandy Gorski)
Joseph F. O’Brien (Cloverleaf Villas Association)

James O’Connor (Maureen Jones)

Anthony D. Oliva, Jr. (Sam & Teresa Jermano, Margaret Hosinski)

Patty Jane Pelton (Louise Anella)
Peter Petschauer (Dottie Wallace)
William Pour (Dorothy H. Mady)
Kevin Riggs (Peg & Dean Riggs)

Tom Saccomando (Carol & Don Nash)
Mary Skinner (Toni & Bob Kowalski)

Thomas Slamkowski (Nancy Meyer)
Kathleen Stahl (Louise Anella)

Janice Stanton (Ginger O’Hara)

Richard Starmann (Diane & Gerry Quinn, Maureen Jones)

im Taylor (Winnie Vanden Bossche)
Robert Terry (James & Kimberly Keultjes)
Ginny Toal (Barbara Dillon)

Martin Trombetta (Teddi Murray)

Sr. Margaret Urban, PHJC (Joe & Marie Burt)
IN MEMORIAM (Continued)
Joanne Van Avermaete (Mike & Katy Maes, Jim & Marge Bickert, Sharon James, Tom & Judy Burmeister, Diane Boehnlein, Marilyn Weiss, Jane Mittleman, Dorothy Jacobson, Terry Slamkowski, Juanita Shafer, Bonnie Häuser)
Diane Wagner (Teddi Murray)
Mary Ann Williams (Dee Tepe)
Robert Williams (Winnie Vanden Bossche)
Stephen Young (Marcia & Tom Blum)
Ed Zych (Kathy & John Seidl, Rocky & Janet Geans, Southmore Mutual Housing Corp., Rolande & Roger Parent, Beth & Dan Barrett, Deb Low)

A special membership category was established in 1998. A one time $1000 enrollment fee for deceased members, spouses and friends benefiting the Christ Child Society Endowment Fund will ensure the Society’s ability to continue its 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.

Guardian Angels 1998 to 2020

The Christ Child Society is blessed to have generous benefactors whose memory lives on as Guardian Angels. Please remember these angels in your prayers.

1998
E. Hoover Bankard
Gilbert DuMont
Frances DuMont
Suzanne Kamm

Right Reverend John S. Sabo, P.A.
Dorothy Chamblee
Margaret Joyce Kinerk
Florence Kinerk
Dorothy Reed Whalen
Violet Peterson
Jeanette Conboy

1999
Evanda ‘Shuy’ Claeyss
Rosemary Hardig
Mary Frances Ruuppe

2000
John M. O’Conner
Eleanor O’Brien
Lucille C. Zilky
James P. Conboy, Jr.
Catherine Pfaff Cholis
June Kuzmitz

2001
Anton Strantz, Sr.
Katherine Strants
John Strantz
Anton Strantz, Jr.

2002
Bernard Teah
Teri Gurthet
William R. Screes

2003
Most Reverend Joseph R. Crowley
Darrell F. Lee
Mildred Galbraith

2004
Mary Ann Dixon
Ann C. Ray
Grace Dempsey

2005
Helen Sweeney
Pat Gibbons
Jean Egan
Mary Cecilia Hiss

2006
Robert Szerencse, Sr.
Paul E. Cyr
Kathleen Troester
Pauline Quinlan

2008
John J. Kass
Lucille M. Benson
Winifred O’Donnell

2009
Jane K. Teah
Rosaleen ‘Puddy’ Crowley

2010
Jerome E. Baur
Ernest Butts

2011
Patrick Laughlin
Mary Cecilia Bauters
Georgina Voll
Catherine M. Goeller
David A. Hosinski

2012
Trudy Rose
Joseph F. Dillon, Sr.

2014
John Troeger
Mary B. Fahey

2015
James Dickey
Herschel L. Riley
Don H. Claeyss
James A. Chrzan
Anne Jordanich

2016
Alma Jordanich
Mary Lou Wolfe
Robert W. Screes
Fred Shafer
Eugene J. Hardig
Mary Hardig
Hilda Taylor

2017
Georgianna Sweeney
Rosemary ‘Rosie’ Shafer
Anne B. Monserezz
Jeanne I. Desmond
Cornelius T. Desmond
James V. Gibbons

2018
Anne B. Ganser
Patrick L. O’Malley, Jr.

2019
James Monserezz
Sonny Tepe
Rosa Hahn
Elizabeth Goeller
John T. Bycraft III
Marjorie Lane Bycraft
Verne A. Ganser
Jane Kanouse
Fred Kanouse
Thomas Slamkowski

2020
Gisella Probst
Pat Van Rie
Joseph Z. Lazzara
Shirley N. Lazzara
We love families at the Christ Child Society!

Reading is encouraged for members, too! Take a Book, Leave a Book!

Winter months are for inventory and restocking. The layette team works year round preparing bundles of baby items for newborns.

Storing coats until next August.