MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members & Provisionals - Our Friends,

It’s been an exciting couple months, I feel like I’ve said that in one of my last letters. But it’s truly sincere again!

At our September Business meeting I mentioned a new ‘Outside the Wagon Award’ for Volunteerism. Upon receiving some Red Wagon pins from a member it gave me the idea of a special award for our members. Ones who were suggested by our project Directors and from my observations for ‘outside the box/wagon’ volunteerism. More of you, I feel should be thanked for all you do. There are more and more that should be added to this list but THIS year the following were selected: Arlene McNamara for Beds; Julie Jerdonek for Cribs; Kathy Cole for Showcase; Lynne Gerase for saving us thousands of dollars - Layettes; Dolores Wiemels for Layettes; Kathleen Printy for Head Start; Karen Bush for St Rocco’s & the team of Mary Ellen Petras & MaryLou Walsh for outstanding efforts for our Silent Auction.

Ladies, thank you for all your talents and character and efforts, it is so appreciated.

To all of you, for your support of our new (in so many ways) Starlight Soirée, I am speechless. Success beyond my wildest dreams. I can’t wait to share the news with you.

Have a wonderfully Happy Thanksgiving.
Celebrating all our thankfulness for our family and our friends and our beautiful country.
I thank all of you!

Fondly,
Cathy

REFLECTION WITH FATHER RALPH

Don’t the years seem to go by faster and faster? Isn’t it a good reminder to us to treasure the present moment? Time is such a precious gift given to us and what a wonderful thing it is to make good use of time. Being a part of the Christ Child Society can really help to enable making good use of time to happen, after all what better use can we make of our time than to touch the lives of little ones in ways that help them experience what love is all about? It is not only a precious gift to them in time, but also a precious gift to us for eternity!

With Thanksgiving and Christmas blessings,
Fr. Ralph
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
December 2019 - February 2020

Layette Packing
First Monday, 10:00-12:30
December 2, January 6, February 3
Contact: Jean Boldt

Euclid –St. John of the Cross Sewing Group
Fourth Thursday, 9:00-12:00
No sewing in November or December 2019.
2020 dates are January 23, February 28
Contact: Andrea Dean

Grandmothers’ Program Merrick House
Note: Volunteers must wear socks.
Contact: Stephanie West

Shaker Heights-St. Dominic Sewing Group
Third Tuesday, 10:00-12:00
December 17, January 21, February 18
Contact: Irene Chalko

Independence Sewing Group
Second Wed. & Thurs., 10:00-2:00
Dec. 11 & 12; Jan. 8 & 9; Feb. 11 & 12
Contact: Laura Cengic

Merrick House Pre-School Reading Enrichment
First, Third and Fifth Tuesdays 9:30-11:00
January 6 & 20; February 3 & 17; March 2, 16 & 30
Contact: Stephanie West

“My Stuff” Packing
Third Monday, 10:00-12:00
January 20, February 17
No packing in December
Contact: Kathy Moehring

Parkview HeadStart Reading Program
First and Third Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00
Dec. 3 & 17; Jan. 7 & 21; Feb. 4 & 18
Contact: Marsha Gleine or Sharon Skotko

St. Francis Library
During the school year Tue: 9:30-2:00 / Wed: 9:30-2:30
January 7 until May 6
Contact: Anne Mooney

St. Rocco Library
During the school year Mon: 8:30-12:00
January 13 until May 18
Contact: Paula Conrad

Showcase
Shifts available on Tuesday-Saturday:
11:00-2:00 / 11:00-4:00 / 12:00-4:00
Contact: Marge Ansel

*Contact information can be found in our Chapter roster.
Looking for help with your Christmas shopping? Here are some ideas to consider as you think about your holiday gift giving this year...

- Consider using the DONATE button on our website (or the envelope provided with the new roster) to honor a loved one this holiday season – it can be congratulations, in memoriam, or simply a “Merry Christmas” way to say I’m thinking of you.

- Do you shop on Amazon.com? If so, please consider AmazonSmile, which contributes a small percentage of each purchase to a charity of choice. Same low prices, with an added bonus that doesn’t cost you a penny! Simply sign up at smile.amazon.com and select Christ Child Society of Cleveland as your charitable organization. Our chapter has received a total of $454.64 to date.

- “The Twelve Days of Christmas” for Showcase Beginning December 14 (or any day), select one gently-used item from your closet or cupboards each day until Christmas, with the intention of donating the 12 items to Showcase. Your total donation will count as one hour of service and you will be rewarded with the good feeling of helping those who have less this holiday season.

- Does your parish have a “Giving Tree”? Please consider requesting Christ Child gift tags for your parish tree (checks or gift cards included). Think of it this way:
  - $125.00 would pay for a new bed, pillow, sheets and blanket for a child.
  - $65.00 would pay for one new crib and sheet for a newborn.
  - $40.00 would pay for a My Stuff bag.
  - $45.00 would pay for an infant layette.

  This particular program, run at just one parish last year, netted our chapter an additional $1,665.00.

If you have any questions or need more information about incorporating any or all of these ideas into your holiday gift giving, please contact Carol Janas.

THANKS FROM WINTER COATS

Our chapter just distributed over 1,400 new winter coats to children in Cleveland. We were fortunate this year that Joe and Mary Fink from St. Albert the Great Parish allowed us to use their centrally located warehouse. Joe got us a great price on shipping and their employees accepted the shipment for us. Thank you to the 14 volunteers who worked 164 hours to carry cases of coats and set up, pack orders, and carry orders when the 43 agency representatives came to pick them up. Additional thanks to everyone who donated hats and mittens. Paired with the coats, they will certainly help keep children warm this winter.
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
2020-2022 Executive Board Applications

In June, 2018, the outgoing Board of Directors elected a Nominating Committee of five members and one alternate per article VI, Section 1(a) of our bylaws (which are printed in our Christ Child Society roster). The elected Nominating Committee members are Janie Nickodem (Chair), Rose Dziak, Kathy Yoakum, Sue Simon and Carol Janas. Paula Conrad is the alternate.

Due to a delayed November newsletter, if you are interested in becoming an officer, contact Janie Nickodem via telephone or email for an application. We ask that you contact Janie by Monday, November 25th if you are interested in applying for office. The Nominating Committee will review all completed applications and develop a slate of officers for the 2020-2022 term. The slate of officers will be published in the Chapter and Verse in the month prior to the winter business meeting at which the officers are to be elected.

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible for elective office, a member must have served on the Board for at least one term, except for the financial secretary, recording secretary and corresponding secretary, who do not need prior Board experience but who must have three years of membership (including the provisional year) and/or the specific qualifications necessary for the job (such as accounting or bookkeeping experience for the financial secretary position). To be considered for any elective office, a member must be active and in good standing.

CHRISTMAS BOOK SUNDAY

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas…tis the season to be jolly…the season to spread the good news of the Christ Child…to bring joy to the world!

Representatives from our chapter recently met with the director of the Cleveland Kids' Book Bank to brainstorm ways our organizations could partner to get books into the hands of underprivileged children. An interesting idea arose from that discussion. What if the Christ Child Society could give Christmas books provided by the Book Bank to families in less fortunate neighborhoods of our city? What if we could go to churches during the Advent season and, after Masses, offer the gift of Christmas to children and families who might not have Christmas books in their homes? We would not only bring joy to the world of these families, we would promote literacy (a primary focus of the National Christ Child Society), and as an added bonus, get the name of the Christ Child Society out into the community. Seems to be a win/win proposition!

We are assembling teams of Christ Child angels and elves to distribute Christmas books. Are you interested in spreading some Christmas cheer? Churches have yet to be confirmed, but we are looking at St. Ignatius of Antioch, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and St. Agatha/St. Aloysius, for starters. Announcements would be made in parish bulletins leading up to the give-away day. Christ Child angels and elves would then distribute books after a specific mass at the designated church during the weekend of December 7th and 8th.

If you have any interest at all, or would like more information, please contact Liz Niehaus.
Christ Child members should be very proud of Showcase! We have awesome volunteers who work with Loesje (Lucia) Orteg, our store manager, and our customer service is second to none.

A typical day includes helping to carry in donations, pricing, steaming/ironing clothes, moving items to the floor, arranging displays, tidying up the store, and helping to service our customers. Every spring and fall, there is an entire store changeover. We thank everyone who volunteers to make all this happen so efficiently.

We recently had a meeting and wish to share the following hints on donated items:

- Good quality new and gently used items for kids, teens, men, and women are always in demand.
- Only t-shirts and sweatshirts from area teams and schools, as well as popular colleges are accepted.  
  *We are unable to accept other types of T’s.*
- Only new socks and underwear in original packaging are accepted.
- Only new sheets and bedding in original packaging are accepted.
- Bathing suits and lingerie are no longer accepted. Nightwear is still accepted.
- Small household items in working order are accepted.
- Lamps with shades are accepted, but not shades alone.

We hope that you understand that the quality and price of the merchandise is what drives customers to our store. These above listed changes are necessary due to some state and local laws. Should you have any questions, please contact our store.

Showcase is open every Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please contact Marge Ansel to schedule time to help us in the store. If you need assistance with a pick-up of donated items, please refer to page 1-11 in the new roster for a complete listing of those members who have volunteered to help pick-up your articles to move them to our store.

Recently, a woman drove in from Mentor to buy something she saw in the window while visiting Lakewood. She loved the store and said she will be back. Why don’t you follow her lead, stop by, bring a friend, and SHOP!
The 68th Annual Charity Event, The Starlight Soirée, was held at The History Center (former Western Reserve Historical Society) in University Circle on November 2nd. President, Cathy Caruso, emphasized the great story of the Christ Child Society remains unknown to many Clevelanders. Volunteers quietly continue the work of their founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, helping thousands of impoverished children each year. Her hallmark philosophy that “Nothing is too much to do for a child” is the driving force behind their charitable work. An attendance of 320 guests enthusiastically supported the all important mission of the Christ Child Society of Cleveland. The Society named Sam and Anne-Marie Petros as their 2019 Persons of the Year. Sam Petros, CEO of Petros Homes, Petros Development Co. and a partner in the One University Circle development, has been a long-time supporter of the Christ Child Society. In thanking the Society for this honor, Mr. Petros eloquently spoke from his heart. He complimented the work of all volunteers and supporters upon showing their cascade of love for all children…no matter what race, color or creed.

Before dinner, Caterer, Taste of Excellence offered hors d’oeuvres while guests browsed through the classic car exhibits, rode the former Euclid Beach Carousel for old times sake, and were musically entertained by the band, Bottom Line. The Most Reverend Nelson Perez, Bishop of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese, offered a blessing while asking everyone to recall the face of a child known to them and to reflect on the children’s needs in our community today. The Emcee, George Michael Phillips, professional sports broadcaster and businessman, encouraged participation in the silent and live auctions as well as a “call from the heart” to financially support the Society’s service projects. Kate Toma, Starlight Soirée chairperson, and her committee of over 30 ladies, hoped to raise $125,000 to fund expenses for the organization’s growing projects. With the onset of the opioid crisis, social service agencies are desperate for extra help. They ask for basic needs we all take for granted like toiletries, uniforms, winter coats, baby clothes/blankets, beds and special “My Stuff” bags.

The evening’s end was thrilling for members, Mary Feikle, Mary Jo Dailey and Andrea Dean, who won raffles for the $1,000 in gift cards, Diamond stud earrings donated by Marlen Jewelers, and $5,000 in cash, respectively. In summary, all members of the Christ Child Society Cleveland Chapter are winners because these women bestow the CCS legacy with style, passion and endearing love to all children we serve.
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**NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019**

Energize...Inspire...Advance, was the theme of the National Christ Child Conference held in Bethesda, Maryland September 27 & 28th. President, Cathy Caruso, and President Elect, Mary Herrick, attended the conference to represent our Cleveland Chapter.

The weekend began with a bus trip to the Washington D.C. chapter’s Opportunity Shop, a visit and a prayer service at Mary Virginia Merrick’s gravesite was then followed by lunch.

Friday afternoon, Keynote speaker Meghan Cox Gurdon, author of The Enchanted Hour, The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction, reminded us of the importance of reading to children from this age of distraction in the tech era. It was fascinating to listen to the research that is being conducted at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. This presentation included the thrill of looking at what happens in the toddler’s brain when a grown-up reads a story to them and then to understand how reading to children at an early age provides long-term advantages to them throughout their life.

The entire weekend was filled with networking, sharing ideas and enjoying the company of many compassionate people. The perfect ending to the weekend was the evening Mass at the Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda Maryland.

Thank you to Carol Pickle, the National Board President, and to Moira Lynch, National Executive Director, for hosting a wonderful weekend experience.

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**Remembrance/Endowment Report**

August 21 - November 1, 2019

**Memory**

Mary Fening (3)  Timothy O'Neil
James Harrison    David Palisin
Kathryn Keenan    Robert Ross
Donald Meigel (3) Marcella Sweetnich
Julia Niedzwiecki

**Honor**

Donna Kelly-Get Well wishes
Gus and Frances Skapek -Happy 60th Anniversary

**In Our Thoughts**

Michael Astor-Brother in Law of Jeanette Aftooraerro
Jack Breen-Husband of Mary Jane
James Harrison-Brother of Peggy Harrison & Carol Panek
Jerrold Samuel Jbara-Father of Lisa Leduc
David Meigel-Brother of Katie Camaglia
Julia Monica Niedzwiecki
Timothy O’Neil-Brother in Law of Meg Kearns O’Neil
David Palisin-Husband of Marilyn Palisin
Norman Visich-Husband of Sally Visich

Please notify the Christ Child office regarding deaths of CCS members or their immediate family members.

**Send Remembrance/Endowment checks to:**

Christ Child Society of Cleveland,
7901 Detroit Avenue, Suite 300,
Cleveland, Ohio 44102

St. John Cathedral Mass for Christ Child members, living and deceased, and for their families.

- Monday, November 25, Noon
- Thursday, December 26, Noon
- Friday, January 24, Noon
- Tuesday, February 24, Noon

Donations August 21-November 1. ............... $645.00

**TOTAL FOR FISCAL YEAR** ............... $3,160.00

Online Remembrance Giving available on our website at christchildsocietycleveland.org
**2019 MAKE A DIFFERENCE WEEK**

On Saturday, October 19, twenty-eight members of our Cleveland Chapter joined with the National Christ Child Society to promote childhood literacy. In keeping with our theme, “Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn”, we gathered to prepare activity folders and to stuff bags with books, crayons, notepads and pencils. On Tuesday of that week, volunteers met with students at Parkview School to read our featured book, Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes and to pass out the items to the children. Also on Tuesday at Merrick House, the same story was read to the students and afterwards they completed a craft activity. A fun and rewarding time was had by everyone!

A heartfelt thank you is extended to all of our members who worked on any of these activities as well as to those who donated books or monetary gifts, baked, or helped in any way to prepare for our week of service!
DATED MATERIAL: Please deliver by November 26th.

Articles for the newsletter
Please contact Kate Toma if you have any special needs or volunteer requests for the newsletter.
Articles for the January/February issue will be due by Monday, December 16th.