



CONNECTIONS

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CCST Officers (2021-2023):

President:
Deborah Auclair

Immediate Past President:
Nancy Thorpe

Vice President:
Vita Balsino

Vice Pres. Membership Chair & Chapter Liaison:

Dianna Balsamo

Recording Secretary:
open

Corresponding Secretary:
open

Treasurer:
Nancy Thorpe

Board Members at Large:

2023 Fundraiser Announced— Save the Date Cards in the Mail

This year the CCST main fundraiser will be held at a new venue, The Highlands at Dove Mountain. It will be held on a Sunday afternoon. Please save the date April 23, 2023 for this exciting gala.

You can greatly help with a donation of personal or business goods or services.

Monetary contributions are always appreciated.

We make every penny count! All funds are used to continue to provide program services for more than 6,700 moms, infants, school aged children and teens each year. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Every donation makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the women, infants and school aged children in Tucson area.

Thank you for your consideration!

Bernie Chuinard, Acquisitions



Letter from the President

These past few months have given CCST a tremendous opportunity to help children in Tucson. In September we hosted the National Christ Child Convention at Lowes Ventana Canyon. Tucson's hospitality and scenery was on full display and several attendees mentioned that this was the best convention they had ever attended. CCS Tucson's own Angela Schneider was inducted as the President of the National Christ Child at the convention!

In October we held the National Day of Service and



collected and donated over 1,500 books to children. Our Tucson Chapter found a need and filled it. We did our part for this Day of Service by helping re-establish the library at Our Mother of Sorrows (OMOS) Catholic School. What we were taught at the NCCS convention was to "... get the word out, develop your elevator speech and 'talk up' Christ Child whenever you get the chance." The Bishop's article about her showcased the Christ Child. Deb got a call from a retired teacher, Cassandra, with 30 years of books ready to find a home with children who could use them. She called Deb who connected her with Shakenya and the rest of the story is continued inside this newsletter.

In November we prepared for Christmas. This year we will help twenty families at Catholic Community

Services. We will be giving children at Pio Decimo presents, when Santa visits on December 6th. On December 14th we will be hosting a Christmas party and supplying children with Christmas gifts at Our



Mother of Sorrows.

Inside this newsletter you'll find more information about what our programs have accomplished over the last three months.

Deb Auclair,
President, Christ Child Society of Tucson



National Christ Child Society names Tucsonan as Board President at National Convention in Tucson



September 29, 2022

By Carissa Krautscheid

One heartfelt gift to a child in need blossomed into the second oldest Catholic charity in the United States. The National Christ Child Society (NCCS) was founded by a young woman who devoted her life to serving children in need, even during her own paralysis and other challenges. Mary Virginia Merrick was “fueled by her vision of seeing the Christ Child in every child — and treating each child accordingly” (NCCS).

Named Servant of God in 2003, Mary Virginia Merrick said, “When I read ‘She wrapped him in swaddling clothes,’ I longed to do the same, and Christ Himself taught me that I might still do so in the person of His poor, and a great desire was born within me to go out and find the poor that I might find Him.”



Over the past 135 years, this vision has grown to 45 chapters across the Nation, including 5,600 volunteers who contribute 400,000 hours of service to more than 75,000 children and their families annually. Chapters in cold climates often host coat drives for kids, and many chapters encourage literacy through reading programs in school, collecting books, or tutoring. While each chapter can direct their efforts towards a variety of needs, they all develop layette baby bundles with essentials for newborns.

The Tucson chapter has been making a difference in the lives of local children for the past 51 years. Currently with 36 members in the local chapter, recent projects include:

- Hosting a Christmas party for the preschool students at Pio Decimo
- Making bags for children in foster care
- Raising money for Santa Catalina Parish for

snack packs to fill the refrigerator for the hungry children

- Funding a new reading and comprehension program and a nutritious snack initiative at San Xavier Mission School
- Facilitating the donation of a Book Vending Machine to Santa Cruz Catholic School

Each year, the National Christ Child Society gathers for their National Convention. This year, the convention was hosted in Tucson! Coincidentally, the newly installed Board President of the National Christ Child Society is from Tucson. Angela Schneider has served in Tucson since 2012 and was the local president for four years.

“I love the mission and what I do for others though Christ,” said Angela. “We’re serving — that’s the bottom line. It’s a God thing. Every time I turn around, God is working — working through us to provide for these families.”

Angela also helped to launch the newest chapter in Oahu, Hawaii, after she met some Hawaiian students attending the University of Arizona. “It was so exciting to see a young couple helping those in need,” said Angela. “They want to mentor kids about careers and encourage them to do something, which is better than nothing.”

Angela brainstorms ways that the Tucson chapter can continue serving the children of our Diocese throughout changing times. She also hopes the Christ Child Society can be a resource to parishes as they establish their new Walking with Moms in Need programs. “In order to keep this going another 50+ years, we need to adjust,” she said. “We’re willing to work with anyone in the capacity that they’re willing to volunteer.”

Santa Cruz School receives Book Vending Machine from the National Christ Child Society

By Carissa Krautscheid

While members of the National Christ Child Society gathered in Tucson from across the country for their annual Convention, they visited Santa Cruz Catholic School for the ribbon cutting and dedication of a new Book Vending Machine donated by the National Christ Child Society.

Theresa Dolan Dixon, the new Principal of Santa Cruz, led the dedication with a prayer. "Bless these books and grant that all who use them grow in



they can share the book if they want. We're providing our students with something that they might not have. It's an exciting time. We are encouraging lots of reading at Santa Cruz!" The Tucson Chapter of the Christ Child Society has supported Santa Cruz Catholic School in the past as well, having previously fundraised for Chrome-books and a new Science Lab.

Angela Schneider was just named the National Board President but has led the Tucson Chapter for the

past few years. "I want to thank Santa Cruz for being so open. It was God's plan that the Book Vending Machine ended up here. I'm happy that all the children will be able to benefit from it, from the Christ Child Society."

"Thank you, from the national level all the way down to the local level, for all that you've done to make this possible for our students," said Mrs. Dolan Dixon. "The local chapter has committed to provide funds for replenishing the books throughout the years. This will continue to be a great thing because of the work that you've done here. I thank you immensely for that."



wisdom and grace before you and your people."

"The Book Machine is wonderful!" said Principal Dolan Dixon. "It's a blessing and has sparked a lot of curiosity from our students." How does a Book Vending Machine work? Each teacher sets their own classroom goal for students to earn tokens. Some classes have a reading goal while others have a grade goal. Some students with individual learning needs have their own individual goal. "We're really giving the teachers the power in setting the goal and giving the tokens to the students," the principal explained. "Then the students come choose a book from the Machine. The book is theirs to keep forever, though



NCCS Annual Appeal

Over the past year, CCST continues to benefit from being a part of a national organization. We are one of 45 chapters throughout 22 U.S. states. A portion of our member dues goes to National. Being under their umbrella we receive information about fundraising, communicating with potential donors, help recruiting new members, etc. Specifically, the NCCS gave CCST \$1,500 to use towards nutrition. We gave that money to San Xavier Mission School. The Business Office at San Xavier said they are holding the nutrition money because they plan on reopening. They also they said if they do not open they will return the money to us so we can give it to another school.



In September of this year, NCCS also gave CCST \$5,000 for the book vending machine that was given to Santa Cruz School. All in all, National does a lot for us.

Please help them with their annual appeal if you can by December 31, 2022.

THE NCCS IMPACT: **\$37,610 IN GRANTS** Passed on to our chapters to support their programs

HELPING OUR 2,870 CHAPTERS Volunteered by board members \$63,964 value of board hours if paid

Our budget may be small but the dedicated, loving work of our volunteers has a **HUGE IMPACT!**

- 37,285 Children Served
- 31,000 Families Served
- 69,000 Books Distributed
- 362,000 Volunteer Hours
\$8,326,000 value of volunteer time if paid
- 22,000 Layettes Distributed
- 790,000 Diapers Distributed

THE IMPACT OF OUR CHAPTERS 2021

Over 135 years ago, Mary Virginia Merrick gathered friends and family into a sewing circle to create a layette for a family in need. Soon after that she founded an organization that combined the best of charitable ideals and the new field of social work. The first chapter grew, programs came and went to fill needs, more chapters formed across the country. After 135 years, one program remains in place—layettes. These bundles of necessities for baby's first weeks of life reflect the ideals of Mary Merrick. Each bundle, including items made lovingly by hand, packed by volunteers with a prayer for an unknown baby and family, is distributed through partnerships with area hospitals, clinics and pregnancy help centers. As chapters assemble layettes, the members of the NCCS board regularly do research to make sure each layette includes the safest materials and advice including our safe use of blankets label, "Read to Me" and "Calm Your Baby" cards. We strive to fulfill Mary Merrick's vision of the combination of loving service and "modern" social work.

LAYETTES FILLED WITH LOVE

A photograph showing a collection of baby layettes, including blankets, clothing, and cards. One card visible says "A Gift Christ Child of Summer".

Layettes Program

(Dianna Balsamo)

Happy Thanksgiving Christ Child Members!
I hope everyone's having a wonderful Fall season. As you well know, a group of us meet almost every Wednesday to assemble items for layettes and pack them.

I am proud to say that we have given out at least 76 layettes since the last printing of this newsletter.

This month, Vita, Deb and I met with Marcia Wells who recently retired to Tucson. She is a seamstress who helped out the Christ Child Society member in her hometown in Indiana at South Bend. She hand-stitched receiving blankets for babies and donated dozens of them to CCS over the years. We are so pleased that she would like to support our Tucson chapter!



Marcia Wells, Vita Balsino, Dianna Balsamo
meeting for coffee before beginning work at
the storage unit

Please Visit

Our Website

www.christchildtucson.org

A screenshot of the Christ Child Society of Tucson website. The banner features a circular logo on the left with a figure and the text "SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1967". To the right of the logo, the text "CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF TUCSON" is displayed in large, bold letters, followed by the tagline "WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION". Below the banner is a navigation bar with links: Home, About CCST, Programs, Newsletters, Events and Fundraising, and Contact Us. On the left side of the main content area, there are four orange buttons: "I'd Like To Donate!", "How Can I Help?", "View Our Brochure", and "I'd Like To Join!". The main content area has a dark blue background with the heading "Dedicated to Supporting Tucson Children In Need". Below this heading is a paragraph of text about the society's history and mission. To the right of the text is a colorful illustration of five children of different ethnicities standing on a path of flowers, holding hands, with a sun and stars in the background.

Wings Foster Teens Program

(Deb Auclair)

New Partner Children's Advocacy Center
<https://www.cacsoaz.org>



Deb Auclair met Renee Hartje, Director of Advocacy of the Children's Advocacy Center, on October 24 to discuss CCST's Wings Foster Teen Program. One of the Wing's volunteer seamstresses from Santa Catalina Church, Lourdes, is a friend of Renee's and happened to show her the Wing's drawstring bag. Now Lourdes sews about 10 drawstring bags per month!



Crystal Narcho and Renee Hartje receiving gifts at The Children's Advocacy Center

The children Renee serves are in court because of sexual or physical abuse trials. The children arrive at their foster caregivers with nothing, have experienced a lot for their

young ages and are appreciative for being given something they can call their own. Lourdes wanted Renee to meet Deb and see if CCST could support the Children's Advocacy Center.

Renee had only one request - that the bags be a little bigger. They are currently 16" x 18". They can be made 18" x 22" and still get two bags out of a yard of fabric. Deb made a larger sized bag and gave it to Renee. Renee told her that this size was just perfect! The reason for the increased size was that the Children's Advocacy Center adds

shoes and clothes to plastic grocery bags and these larger bags will be perfect for the children. Deb got Board approval of going for-

Hope and Healing for the Holidays

Wish List

- Stocking Stuffers (including toiletries and personal care items)
- Small Craft Kits (bracelets, model planes, etc)
- Journals w/ Color Gel Pens
- Clothing, all sizes up to adult
- Gift Cards for coffee or treats (\$5 - \$10)
- Gift Cards for Grocery Stores (\$20)
- Family Games
- Baby Toys
- Hair Accessories
- Dolls / Action Figures
- Trucks / Hot Wheels
- Video Games (no violence please)
- Sports Balls (junior and full size)

COLLECT NEW, UNWRAPPED GIFTS ... WE'LL PICK THEM UP!
(520) 724-6600 frontdesk@soazadvocacy.org

ward with this.

The Board approved/ CAC would like to begin receiving drawstring bags in January Of 2023. Action: need help making the larger size bags. I have 7 months' worth of the smaller bags thanks to many talented seamstresses. The Plan is to start at starting at 20 / month (although they serve 100 children per month). Items included will be a blanket, hygiene items, cards, towel and water bottle. Pat Lunsford told me that this was the first agency Wings partnered with when the program originated in the 1970's.

Literacy / National Day of Service

(Bonnie Alberts / Deb Auclair)

Our National Day of Service was held the week of October 23rd- 29th. 2022 Read, Imagine, Succeed: Embrace the Possibilities was the theme for the 2022 National Day of Service. Our chapter collected and distributed over 1,500 books during this week.

The school has about 300 students from pre-school through eighth grade. Two of our members got together with principal, Shakenya Gholson and her staff to tackle a project they have been wanted to do for some time. They have a great room lined with shelves that needed to be returned back into OMOS' library. The job is far from being done and Shakenya would like to have it ready for students by Easter of 2023.



Our Mother of Sorrow's Catholic School



Our Mother of Sorrow's staff with Pat Lunsford



Our Mother of Sorrow's Principal -Shakenya Gholson with Angela Schneider, Nancy Thorpe, Pat Lunsford



Our Mother of Sorrow's library BEFORE picture



Our Mother of Sorrow's library AFTER our first organization session picture

Christmas Donations from CCST to the Community

December 6, 2022 Christmas party at Pio Decimo – arrive between 9:30 – 10:00. One hundred-twenty-three (85 + 38) Christmas stockings were made by a lovely lady, Renata, for these children. Bernie Chuinard was Santa and handed out stock-



ings to the children. He asked the children what they wanted for Christmas. Being Santa is a tough job, how do you respond to a child that answers the question "What do you want for Christmas?" with "My Dad!"



The day was festive and the children were very hopeful about Christmas! hand out stockings. Several members were there in addition



to Bernie. Bonnie Alberts, Judy Chuinard, Angela Schneider, Nancy Thorpe joined in the celebration some dressed as elves.

December 14, 2022 There will be a Christmas party at Our Mother of Sorrows School. CCST will be giving them Christmas gifts purchased with money received from generous donors.

Christmas Donations from CCST to the Community

The Christ Child Society of Tucson members pooled their money and donated to the families supported by Catholic Community Services.

Lillian Downing is the Associate Director, Child Welfare Programs and has a staff of six who help her work with families all over southern Arizona. Many of the programs they sponsor help families



learn to be better parents. The programs they offer are voluntary for the families, not something they are required to do. This allows them to bond with the families and act as their mentors. One staff member shared a drawing a girl made for her latest visit. The families are eager to get their help and support. The Christ Child Society supplied

gifts for twenty families. Contents included activities families could do together.

We helped twenty families that had 41 children. Each of the CCS staff members took several Christmas drawstring bags and were headed to see their families in the next few weeks.



CCS does important work through their agencies and ministries serving all of Southern Arizona.

Their website says:

"We don't do it alone. Our clients have the courage to make changes in their lives. Our staff has the caring and commitment to touch lives. Our volunteers contribute their time, talents, and effort. Our donors make it all possible."



Our members are going to celebrate Christmas with the preschool children at Pio Decimo on December 6th. Our Jr Christ Child members are pictured here preparing stockings for preschools children at Pio Decimo and Our Mother of Sorrows.

CCST Calendar for the Remaining of Our Fiscal Year (with CCST Meeting and Fundraiser Dates)

Note our meetings are the second Monday of the month at Scordatos Pizzeria on 4911 N Stone Avenue beginning at 11:30 AM.

Oct-22						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 CCST	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29
Jan-23						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 CCST	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
Apr-23						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 CCST	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24	25	26	27	28	29
Nov-22						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 CCST	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
Feb-23						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 CCST	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				
May-23						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 CCST	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
Dec-22						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 CCST	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 27	27 28	28	29	30	31
Mar-23						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 CCST	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Jun-23						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 CCST	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

...in closing

“The Game of Life”

Life – it’s not about the wins and losses

Nor the struggles along the way.

It’s Christ living in you.

It’s how the game is played.

It’s about your relationship with Him, in the end.

He’s your All, your Everything, your Teacher, your Friend.

He’s your Savior, your Father, and mostly your Coach.

He guides you, protects you and must not be reproached.

It’s how we respond to life’s ebbs and flows.

It’s how other witness our ultimate lows.

We must remember; spectators are watching the game.

When it’s all over, “will we have struggled for fame?”

The questions I’ll ask,

“Will they see, Jesus in us?”

“Will they want to know more and learn to trust?”

“Will other see a difference in how we played the game?”

I’ve learned far more from losses,

Than from any win attained.

It’s during the crossroads, dead-ends, and pitfalls

Where everything is gained.

Character is built. Integrity is earned.

Nothing could replace all that I’ve learned.

Put me in Coach. I’m ready to play.

All by the rules of you Book today.

L. Satcher



If you would like to donate, become a member or just find more information about The Christ Child Society of Tucson, please call 585-309-9064

... or visit our webpage: www.christchildtucson.org