



# CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY<sup>®</sup> OF MILWAUKEE

## WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

### Winter 2024 Newsletter

#### From the Presidents

Whew, that storm was crazy!

Everyone has a story about the storm of January 12, 2024. It meant a rare cancellation of Second Saturday, but we wanted to be sure everyone was safe. We need to thank God for all the people who did need to work that day: plowers, electrical workers, first responders, highway workers, sheriffs, and people who came to the aid of their neighbors.

We are finally seeing our hard work in planning for CCS National's Month of Service come to fruition. This year we are addressing the topic of literacy through our School Support & Literacy and My Stuff Bag programs. You'll love the pictures of the Book Vending Machine we donated to Blessed Savior South School. The students were so excited, and Fox 6 showcased the ribbon-cutting event. Punky Kennedy and the School Support & Literacy Committee with Judy Keenan are adding Little Free Libraries with bookcases and books in three of the shelters that we supply with My Stuff Bags.

Communications is critical to staying informed and engaged. We will continue to send a chapter newsletter three times a year, and please watch for our annual report in May. It's a great way to keep sponsors, benefactors and donors in the loop about how we are using their contributions. We also are investigating using a new website company to help us update and streamline our current website. This will help our image to the public and allow us to communicate easier with members and our stakeholders.

It's all part of our proud 75 years of service to the infants and children in the greater Milwaukee area. Our volunteers do amazing work and service - and all with the smiles of satisfaction that they are helping our community's future.

*Judy Keenan  
Kathleen Semrad*

*Nothing is ever too much to do for a child*



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## Literacy Initiative: Book Vending Machine

With smiling children ready to read looking on, the Milwaukee chapter of the Christ Child Society unveiled its donation of a book vending machine, stocked with books for children at Blessed Savior South Elementary School.

The machine is one of several initiatives marking the 75th anniversary of the Milwaukee all-volunteer organization.

“We believe this vending machine will create excitement for reading with the children and get books into the homes of many families,” said Judy Keenan, who is co-president, along with Kathleen Semrad. “Thank you to Punky Kennedy and her team for all the work they have put into this wonderful project.

The event took place on Monday, January 22 at the school, 4059 N 64th St, Milwaukee, Wis, and children from each grade came to test the machine. A videographer from Fox 6 shot footage of the event, which appeared on the 6:00 news later that day.

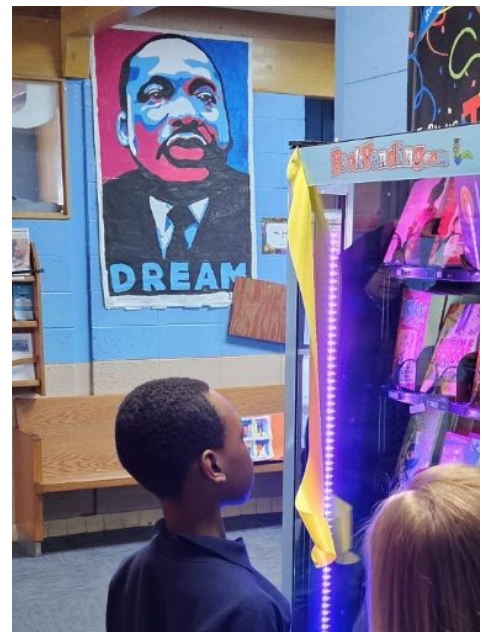
### Members select books

The machine, which cost over \$7,000, now carries books carefully selected by the Christ Child Society literacy program with additional suggestions from teachers and others. The machine should hold about 250 books at a time, serving the 135 students at Blessed Savior South.

According to Keenan, Christ Child Society has a long history at the site. “The Blessed Savior South Campus was Our Lady of Sorrows Parish many years ago, and CCS developed and maintained a resale shop in the convent,” she said.

“Eventually, the Resale Shop moved to our current 41st & Good Hope location, but the close connection with Blessed Savior has continued. CCS donates back-to-school student and teacher supplies, and provides volunteer teacher assistants for reading and math skills,” Semrad added.

“We’re very grateful for CCS’s commitment to Blessed Savior and to literacy – a critical component in these children’s lives,” said Renee Manikham, principal.



## Layettes: Every donation counts

The Mothers who received Layettes were recipients of many amazing items donated at the Shower of Love and the Christmas Mass and Brunch. Thank you very much for your generosity.

### How you can help:

- Every third Monday of the month, about 25 caring, enthusiastic CCS volunteers meet to assemble approximately 150 layettes for needy Moms and their infants. We meet at 10 a.m. at the Christ Child Center, 3315 N 124th St. in Brookfield, to assemble bundles that we deliver to seven area hospitals and two social service area locations. Everyone is welcome.
- We are always looking for people to sew receiving blankets (flannel is provided), knit baby hats and knit sweaters.
- Consider getting some friends together for a baby shower to benefit Layettes! Or have a shower at your church for Mother's Day. We'd be happy to help with ideas.

If you have any questions about layettes, please call Jean Phelan 262-853-7020 or Pat Dorr 262-377-5284.



*Above: Judie Hermann, Nadine Drobac and Marilyn Beaumeier sort layette donations. Even grandchildren get into the act!*

## Thanks to layette volunteers



Jim & Bev Washcovik

Layettes is the signature program of the Christ Child Society, and all members are asked to contribute in some way to the program. One member's family has gone above and beyond in volunteering for the program.

Bev Washcovik joined the Christ Child Society in 1976. She served as co-chair of layettes with both Ellen Johnson and Pat Driscoll. In the early years, layettes were assembled in members' homes and delivered to hospitals by members and their husbands.

For many years, Bev's husband Jim, who passed away in 2018, delivered layettes, put together printed materials for the Mothers and helped write thank-you notes to people who donated items. When Jim stopped writing the notes, Bev took over. Recently Bev asked if someone could replace her. We are grateful to the Washcoviks for the hundreds of thank you cards they sent over the years.

*(Note: Since we are all expected to participate in making the program a success, thank yous are not sent to members—even though every contribution by a member is greatly appreciated.)*



## Vision Screening

The Christ Child Society, working with Prevent Blindness Wisconsin, offers vision screening to area Catholic schools. We are just starting the Spring Vision Screening program at the eight schools we serve. Mary Stroebel, our scheduler, talks to the schools about how many students are involved and the available dates. Mary then determines how long it will take to screen all the children and determine the schedule, which is posted on [Signup Genius](#).

**How you can help:** We can always use more screeners. If you are interested in screening, please text or call Jean Phelan (262)853-7020. She can give you the contact numbers to call at Prevent Blindness for Vision Screening Training and at the archdiocese for “Keeping all God’s Children Safe.” To be with the children in the classroom, you must have taken the archdiocesan class.

## Connection to Literacy

As we work along with the National Christ Child Society’s emphasis on literacy, it’s clear vision screening is the beginning of a successful Literacy Program.

If a child can’t see, they probably have difficulty reading. We can identify problems and send them to professionals to resolve problems.



## Christmas Brunch & Mass

The annual Christ Child Christmas Mass and Brunch was held on Saturday, December 2 at the Wisconsin Club downtown. Almost 120 guests were present to attend the Mass celebrated by our Spiritual Director, Fr. Michael Lawinger. It’s always a special occasion as our members dressed in bright holiday attire bring colorful infant items during the Offertory.

After Mass, we enjoyed brunch and the delightful Diving Savior Holy Angels Angelaires, led by music director Zachary Ziegler. Their Christmas carols and other tunes of the season brought joy to every heart.

We want to recognize these members for their invaluable help in creating this enjoyable event:

- Invitation labels: Ann Lamberg
- Invitation assembly: Katie and John Clark
- Invitation mailing: Mary Lee Hannan
- Poinsettia centerpieces: Mary Stroebel and Corine Sherman
- RSVP & Table Seating: Mary Baxa Mertens
- Nametags: Diane Hicks
- Spiritual Directors: Eileen Jarosz and Ellen Kloth

These are fun and easy tasks. Don’t forget for next year!



## My Stuff Bags: Advent donations fill hearts



December was a very busy month for all our volunteers. We had our monthly assembly on December 7, and we also picked up Advent donations from six parishes — clothing, toiletries, stuffed animals, nerf footballs, winter hats, gloves and scarves. St. Mathias, St. Sebastian, St. Monica, St. Martin of Tours, St. Jude the Apostle, and Lumen Christi also donated over \$1,000 worth of gift cards to be used to buy more items for our bags.

Not only did these parishes contribute items, but they went above and beyond by donating many toys, games, books, children's winter coats, and extra clothing along with thoughtful messages to the children receiving their gifts! The generosity of these parishes was overwhelming, and we are so very grateful. All the shelters received these extra gifts before Christmas, and then more in January. The shelter and agency directors expressed their gratitude and thanks for all we do for the children in their care.

Over 15 volunteers took time out of their busy holiday schedules, on two separate days for four hours each day, to clip and sort all these donations before and after Christmas. That is the true spirit of giving! We appreciate each and every one of you. Your time, talent and friendship make what we do so worthwhile. What a Christmas blessing!

All told, since October 2023, more than 20 volunteers each month have assembled 382 bags, averaging 77 bags each month. We continue to serve six shelters/agencies in the greater Milwaukee area, including Meta House, Joy House, New Horizon, Children's Services, The Cathedral Center and Milwaukee Women's Center. We assembled only 53 bags in January and 79 in February. One of our goals this year is to add another shelter to our program.

**How you can help:** Please join us to assemble these bags for children! We also have some volunteers who shop for the new clothing and extras for the bags. We're always looking for more. Contact Kathy Lau (414-630-2351 / [kasaboo72@hotmail.com](mailto:kasaboo72@hotmail.com)) and Pat Lye (414-588-1386 / [pslye@icloud.com](mailto:pslye@icloud.com))



## Second Saturday Warms the Winter

### November

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The November Second Saturday gathering buzzed with excitement as moms and children, hand in hand, gathered in the All Saints community center. The Ko-Thi Dance Company, a world premier African and Caribbean drum and dance group, swirled and stomped, their vibrant costumes painting the air with rhythm and color.

Everyone loved the performance, and laughter echoed as we shared a nourishing lunch, hearts dancing to the beat of unity.



### December

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On a cozy Second Saturday, the air buzzed with excitement as Santa himself graced the event. Moms and kids gathered, their eyes wide with wonder as Santa visited each table and took photos with families.

Tiny hands dipped into paint pots, creating vibrant masterpieces on paper. Laughter echoed as crayons danced across coloring books. And in the heart of it all, a delicious lunch awaited, filling the room with warmth and joy.

### February

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After canceling January's Second Saturday because of very inclement weather (only the 2nd time in 21 years!), we enjoyed greeting our families with some stretching and movement, then shared a beautiful book about being kind. The children made cute Valentine faces and did some coloring, all provided by our wonderful Divine Savior Holy Angels High School volunteers. The moms enjoyed making Valentine suncatchers and learning to make origami Valentines, then joining in a delicious lunch of taco soup and fruit.



### Coming Up

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**March:** Our next event is March 9. Celebrate an early spring and St. Patrick's Day!

**How you can help:** Just once a month, come for a few hours to read to children, help moms with craft projects, prepare and serve lunch, or coordinate teen volunteers. Contact Reine Assana (414-535-7184/assanabebe@gmail.com) and Holly Ryan (414-861-4031 / hollyanneryan@gmail.com).



## Monthly Mass

### Monday, March 18

St. Dominic. 8:30am  
18255 W Capitol Dr  
Brookfield

### Thursday, April 18

St. Charles. 8:30am  
313 Circle Dr.  
Hartland

### Wednesday, May 15

Lumen Christi. 8:30am  
2750 W. Mequon Rd.  
Mequon

## Literacy Expanded

We are so happy to report a message from Deborah Robinson, Supervisor at Meta House, one of our shelters for My Stuff Bags. They have a bookcase and we supply books for their little library.

*"Hi Lou, thank you so much for the books, they are perfect. The older children have started reading the books and mothers with younger children have also been enjoying them. Would it be okay to receive books every other month? That would be great. Thanks"*

## Father Michael: Preparing to Celebrate

During Lent, many are tempted to dwell on the length and drear of penance, fasting and almsgiving. Most if asked would probably answer that Lent is the "hardest" season because it seems like it's the only one that asks some extra of us, but they couldn't be more mistaken!

- Easter is by far the most difficult season because of how much it asks us to celebrate! Most seem like they are ready, "but Father are we really going to use all seven readings at the Easter vigil?" "It's so much longer than Mass normally is already!"
- It doesn't end there either, because we are supposed to celebrate with similar vigor the entire Easter Octave, an entire eight days from Easter Sunday to the following Sunday!
- More than that, we have an elevated focus on celebration for a full seven-week season, culminating in the great solemnities of the Ascension and Pentecost!

Extra readings, (especially on Pentecost) sequences, decorations, spruced up hymns, and much more are skipped because it's "too much" or "more than usual."

How much we miss from our impatience in liturgy and in life! After a couple days, let alone seven weeks, we are often done with celebrating because it takes so much intentional diligent emotional effort to celebrate well, and that only refers to the Litur-



gy and not the rest of our lives. If we aren't ready to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and his invitation to salvations for seven weeks, then how do we think we are going to celebrate it for eternity in heaven?

When we are diligent about our penances in Lent and feel as if the season will never end, remember that we are preparing to celebrate for much longer, and it requires a much greater strength than penance. There are many great things about Lent, but one lesson that is often overlooked is that it teaches us to come together in unity to fast together, so that soon enough we are strong enough to celebrate together.

Bearing the Joy of Easter is hard work! And if we don't enter through the cross, we won't find ourselves strong enough to celebrate so intently the Joy of the Resurrection. If Lent is hard remember, Easter is much more so!

*Father Michael Lawinger is the chaplain for the Milwaukee Chapter of the Christ Child Society and Associate Pastor at Christ King Parish.*

## Membership Challenge a Success

The "Growing Our Membership Challenge," announced at the September CCS General Meeting came to a successful conclusion with 10 new members recruited and three returning members.

The Challenge recognized current members as our best recruiters and provided them with some new handout materials that shared the impact CCS Milwaukee has had in our community, a list of organizations we've helped, and a description of the many ways to volunteer.

The provisional and returning members celebrated at a dinner and orientation on November 29 at Alioto's Restaurant on Mayfair Road. Nine of the 10 provisional members and their sponsors were in attendance as well as co-President Judy Keenan and CCS project chairwomen.

We watched presentations on our many projects including Layettees, My Stuff Bag, Second Saturday, The Resale Shop, Vision Screening and Tutoring. New provisional members who have attended an orientation, a layette activity and at least one general meeting will be installed as active members at the Spring Mass and Dinner on May 9.

Although the specific "Growing Our Membership Challenge" has ended, CCS volunteers are always needed and continued recruitment is encouraged at every opportunity. Application materials and membership information are available at the Resale Shop, at all CCS general membership meetings or by contacting Ellen Johnson or Judie Hermann.



## Red Shoe Award Nominations Due

Each year the Christ Child Society presents the Red Shoe award to a member who truly serves our organization whether she is dressed in gray or wears red shoes. She is committed to serve, lead, and be an active member in our organization. A copy of the poem, "Red Shoes" was given to delegates at a Midwest Regional meeting in 1966 and became the basis for the award.



The past award recipients annually select a member for this award after receiving nominations from our membership. We present the honor during the Spring Mass & Dinner. Please check your handbook for those who have been previously given this award, then send your nomination letters by March 12 to Jean Phelan, at [jean.a.phelan@gmail.com](mailto:jean.a.phelan@gmail.com) or 13340 W. Bluemound Rd., #2 Elm Grove, Wis., 53122. Questions? Please call Jean at 262-853-7020.



## Resale Shop & Boutique: Volunteer Appreciation

### Parish Liaisons

I send the CCS message from time to time to my parish bulletin at St. Eugene's. They recently put my message in a box, which stood out more among the other items in the bulletin. When I fill out the bulletin message request form, I always request the message also be put in St. Monica's bulletin.

*Jane Frisch*

The St. Sebastian Human Concerns Committee includes our message when they have space, especially during Advent. This year they also posted our thank-you note in the bulletin.

*Barb Haig*

#### CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GIFTS

The Milwaukee Chapter of the Christ Child Society thanks St. Sebastian for the gifts of clothes for children and babies, financial support for our programs to help moms, and prayers for our success in the past year. We look forward with joy to 2024! Questions? Visit [www.ChristChildMilwaukee.org](http://www.ChristChildMilwaukee.org) or call (414) 540-0489.

Lumen Christi's article in the parish bulletin resulted in dozens of gifts for our projects.

*Leslie Lorino*



The Resale Shop and Boutique held its annual Volunteer Luncheon in January. We are so appreciative to all of our volunteers who work so hard to keep our shop successful. A special thank you to the provisionals who recently volunteered for the first time. We are always looking for more volunteers, so please call one of the directors if you are interested in trying us out.

The annual Winter Sale began on Tuesday, February 27th, and usually runs for a few weeks, ending with a bag sale. Therefore, we are not accepting any winter clothing after March 1.

Thank you to all the CCS members for your donations. Please remember that any clothing dona-

tions should be clean, hung on hangers or folded, and not be outdated styles. We are especially looking for nice jewelry to sell in the store or online.

Houseware items should be in good working condition. All items donated should be gone through by the member donating to make sure items are up to standard or are saleable at the shop.

**How you can help:** Everything from sorting clothes and toys to running the cash register. The Resale Shop is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays and on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month. You'll get first choice on some really great items! Contact Jane Frisch, Cathy Smaglik, Pat Dorr, Mary Cuisinier, Mary Johnson or Janice Miller.



*Volunteers gather for our annual worker lunch*

### My Stuff

#### 3315 N. 124th St.

9 a.m.

1st Thursday of the month

Except July

### Layettes

#### 3315 N. 124th St.

10 a.m.

3rd Monday of the month

Except February

### Resale Shop

#### 4033 W. Good Hope Rd

Tuesdays & Thursdays

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

1st & 3rd Saturday

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

## Memorials

### Deceased

- Mickey Armour
- Bob Hoch
- Adrianne Ines
- Dr. Stan Jaskolski
- Carol Knott
- Gwen Lavin
- Bob Lipscomb
- Gerv Rose
- Leroy Stair
- Mary Nell & Peter Treible
- Peter Weber
- Donald Beaudoin
- Lee Konrath
- Eugene Gross
- Don Hooper
- Therese Kozicki
- Carol Spychalski
- Cornelia Koster

### Living

- Barb Pelton
- Jerry Haig (90th birthday)
- Family of Mary Reiss



*Please send memorial requests to Eileen Jarosz -  
N26W22350 Birchwood Ct. Waukesha WI 53186.*

*A plant and mass enrollment is sent to deceased  
Christ Child member or spouse's family*

# Spring Banquet

## Thursday May 9

*Spring Mass with the induction of new members*

*Banquet with Anniversary awards*

*Red Shoe award*

*Venues to be determined*



**CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY  
OF MILWAUKEE**  
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

#### OUR MISSION

To foster a personal love of Christ  
expressing itself in service for needy  
children regardless of race, color or creed.

## Keep Engaged in Social Media

### Facebook

[CCSMilwaukee](https://www.facebook.com/CCSMilwaukee)



### Instagram

[christchildsocietymke](https://www.instagram.com/christchildsocietymke)



### Website

[christchildmilwaukee.org](http://christchildmilwaukee.org)



**CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY  
OF MILWAUKEE**  
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

HOME ABOUT PROGRAMS WAYS TO GIVE DONATE



### Christ Child Society of Milwaukee

Merrick Center at  
Our Lady of Good Hope  
4033 W Good Hope Rd  
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Return Service  
Requested

Phone: 414-540-0489  
E-mail:  
[ChristChildMilwaukee@  
gmail.com](mailto:ChristChildMilwaukee@gmail.com)

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



