



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH

MISSION STATEMENT The Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh is a non-profit Catholic association of lay volunteers embracing members of all denominations, expressing its members' love of the Christ Child through service to God's children regardless of race, color or creed.

December 2013

We hope you all have celebrated a blessed & bountiful Thanksgiving. This year has flown by and as you receive this issue of the newsletter, we are into the season of Advent, as we prepare and await for the coming of our Savior.

Fast forwarding is now a norm in our lives and times of waiting require patience, giving us the time to reflect of what is at hand. We were fortunate to have had a well attended Red Wagon Fare. Although we could have accommodated another 100 guests, we thank you all for your dedication, time, and donations. We received many positive comments on the video describing the life and works of Mary Virginia Merrick. Thanks to Ellen O'Brien for chairing the event and having the idea to include the video which helped our guests to understand what we do and how it all began with Miss Mary.

Our membership has declined this year, but God has opened new doors for us and we are pleased to have 2 new members, Charlotte Collins & Mary Ann McDermott. It is interesting to review our membership list and see how many of you were given the name of Mary or a form of the name; 25% of you, as well as our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick! Should we try to recruit more Mary's?

Our Chapter will be celebrating the 20th anniversary since the charter of the Pittsburgh Chapter. We are blessed to have some founding members still with us. These ladies have been the rock and support of this group for 20 years. They have followed the path of Miss Mary and continued her mission to this day.

The 2 year term for our Officers will be ending this spring. At this time we need to form a nomination committee and fill these offices. All of the current officers have elected not to continue for another 2 year commitment, therefore leaving all the positions open. We have had no one express any interest in an Officer position. Please think about this commitment, reflect, and pray on it. Our Chapter's future depends on your help. Please feel free to contact either of us or any Board Member if you have any questions or would like to talk about the positions.

In the Name of the Christ Child, Marian & Laura

OPEN Board Positions, 2014-2016
President (can be co-presidents)
Vice President
Treasurer
Recording Secretary
Corresponding Secretary
Contact Marian Flowers or Laura Merzlak for more information.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

FATHER KEVIN POECKING

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents
LAURA MERZLAK
MARIAN FLOWERS

Recording Secretary
KATHLEEN FITZGIBBON

Corresponding Secretary
MARIE LOWRY

Treasurer
MARY ANN GONOT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BARBARA FREDETTE
CHERYL GEORGE
MOLLY KELLEY
MARY JO KELLY
JUDY KERN
MARIE LOWRY
PAT MAIDA
ELLEN O'BRIEN

NEWSLETTER

JUDY KERN

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE. . . .

The Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh has lost a member of our organization. **JANE LEAVY** passed away on Monday, December 2, after a lengthy illness. Jane became a member of CCS about 15 years ago. Before her illness, she was active for years at Angels' Closet. She was also an active supporter of the Red Wagon Fare and a faithful contributor to the Basket Auction for over ten years. As family and friends mourn her loss, we ask that you continue to keep Jane in your prayers.

RED WAGON FARE—2013



The 16th Annual Red Wagon Fare, benefitting The Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh was held at the Pittsburgh Field Club on Saturday, October 12, 2013. A total of 191 guests attended. After all expenses were paid, a **net profit of \$9880.59** was realized. I have prepared complete financial accounting along with job descriptions of each committee chair, and a list of contacts that may be helpful for Red Wagon planning in the future.

As the 2013 Red Wagon Chair I am offering the recommendations and observations for future planning. They are divided into things that I believe, CCS should Discuss & Decide, keep the way we have done it, and those things that we must do to continue to improve the Red Wagon Luncheon. As a charitable group, we must keep in mind that the Red Wagon is first and foremost a fundraising effort that provides most if not all of our money to continue our ministries in service to needy children

I will be sending the Presidents, and the Red Wagon 2014 Chairs the full report with appendices. Also, I will prepare a copy of this report to be kept in the files of the Christ Child center. Copies of the full report will also be available at the January 16th General Meeting. If you are unable to make the meeting and would like a copy, please contact Laura or Marian.

Finally, I wish to thank each member of The Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh who serve and have served consistently on Red Wagon committees year after year and offer their time, talent, and treasure to help raise funds for Christ Child. I also wish to thank the entire membership for your forbearance with me as I served (very imperfectly!) as your 2013 Red Wagon Chair. I encourage those who haven't taken a role in Red Wagon, to jump in. We were all new at one time, and despite all of us being 'green' at running a charity luncheon initially, Red Wagon has been successful for 16 years. Your talent and creativity will be challenged, Christ Child will benefit, and the children we serve will be even better served in the years to come. I have secured a date at the Pittsburgh Field Club for Red Wagon 2014. Mark your calendars for **October 11, 2014**, and plan to help for our 17th Red Wagon and celebrate our 20th year as a Chartered Chapter of the National Christ Child Society.

Respectfully submitted in the Name of The Christ Child,
Ellen H. O'Brien ~ Red Wagon Chair, 2013

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MY APOLOGY TO THE MEMBERSHIP

I offer an apology to the entire membership for all the errors in the 2013 Red Wagon Program Booklet, and other mistakes in the execution of Red Wagon 2013. Included among the mistakes I made was omitting several names of members from the membership list, the Red Wagon Committee, the menu, and the date on the cover of the booklet. Many of you I have known and worked with for 20 years, I consider you good friends and I do apologize for my mistakes. I have made a recommendation that the person who agrees to take responsibility for the booklet should have another person, who will be a second pair of eyes, and help with proof reading. I hope this will help avoid these problems in the future.

I have made recommendations in the full Red Wagon Report that I think may improve and help make the task of Chairing Red Wagon somewhat simpler. These recommendations and suggestions are just that, they are not a comment on the quality of the work done by each committee chair. Each of you worked diligently and carefully, and I thank you for your efforts.

I am very aware of the hurt and puzzled feelings of those whose names, and contributions were omitted. I am so very sorry for these mistakes I made, and pray that in time you will forgive me.

Ellen H. O'Brien

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CHRIST CHILD MASS AND LUNCHEON CELEBRATES FOUNDER'S BIRTHDAY

Twelve members and one guest met for the noon Mass at St. Sebastian Church on November 1st to celebrate the birthday of Mary Virginia Merrick, the founder of the Christ Child Society. Following Mass all proceeded to Bravo Restaurant for lunch and fellowship. Those in attendance included the following: Marian Flowers, Audrey Friel, Ceil McCabe, Gretchen Coyne, Molly Kelley, Diane Reich, Kathie Fitzgibbon, Mary Jo Kelly, Barbara Fredette, Mary Ellen Ploeger, Mary McCormick, Suzette Venturini and her friend. All enjoyed the afternoon.

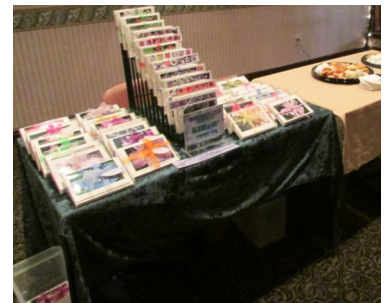
Our sincere thanks goes to **DARLENE BAHEL**, sister of Cheryl George, who served as photographer for. . .

Red Wagon Fare, October 12, 2013



Christ Child Society Christmas Luncheon

The Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh held their annual Christmas luncheon at Scuglio's Restaurant in Greentree on Monday, December 2. Twenty eight members were present for the holiday celebration which included a delicious lunch of Eggplant Parmesan, Virginia Spots, or Chicken Romano. Lunch was followed by ice cream and cookies, as well as a little Christmas singing, the sale of beautiful cards created by Barbara Fredette, and door prizes (holiday wrapped by Judy Kern). We are grateful to Margie DiDomenico for making and donating four pair of her beautiful hand-made Swarovski crystal holiday earrings to include as door prizes. A very special thanks also goes to **Pat Maida**, who planned this relaxing and most festive event!



CC MASS AND MEMORIALS

Please use the following donation form for any tribute gift or general donation to the Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh. We hope to have this form available in the near future on our website at www.christchildsocietyofpittsburgh.org

CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH DONATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Amount of donation: ___\$50.00 ___\$25.00 ___\$10.00 \$ _____ other amount

___ in honor of ___ in memory of ___ in thanksgiving for

Name _____

Please send an acknowledgement of my gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

Please enclose this form and your check payable to the "Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh" and mail to:

**Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh
Mary Ann Gonot
1028 Tropical Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15216**

Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh is a 501(c)3 (non-profit) organization. Your donation qualifies as a charitable deduction.

My Stuff Bags *From Diane George*

Thank you to everyone for your support of the My Stuff Bags this year. We have delivered 75 bags since June to the Women's Shelter of Pittsburgh. The Shelter is fortunate to receive donations for Christmas, but will need us after those donations become depleted. We will keep watching our inventory and will most likely be scheduling a packing late in January.

Layette Report *From Audrey Friel and Pat Schimmel*

The Layette team packed 50 layettes in November. Thank you to all who were able to help. Marian and Mary Ann will be delivering about 40 to Magee Hospital and to Birthright before Christmas. We will schedule another packing in January.

Angels' Closet *From Molly Kelley*

We have had a very good year. As of the 7th week of distribution we have helped over 400 children stay warm this winter. Saturday, November 23rd was our last day and we have 120 kids scheduled. So we will definitely reach over 500 coats for the year. Having the closet open a couple of Saturdays has proven to be successful and we seemed to have reached families who otherwise would not have been able to come. Thanks to all the members who came so faithfully and worked so hard for the Angels!!

NEWS FROM NATIONAL

From Ellen O'Brien, National Board, Program Chair

The National Board of the Christ Child society has been offering mini seminars repeating some of the mini seminars offered at Conference 2013. They have been enthusiastically received, and so more will be offered. Additionally the information in these seminars is posted on the web site. I urge each of you to access the web site and log in. The wealth of information and ideas grows each day. Each chapter can benefit from exposure to a new fundraising, grant writing, idea and tailor it to its specific circumstances. Contact information is included, and chapters are encouraged to network with each other and "tap the brains" for a new perspective to issues each chapter faces. The address of the web site is <http://nationalchristchild.org/site/?q=node/94>. To log in, the user name is "**chapter**" and the password is "**redwagon**".

The Newsletter from National will be mailed soon, and will contain information on Conference 2013, and our upcoming Convention 2014, to be held in Phoenix. Registration information will be included, and as a Chapter, Pittsburgh should continue its commitment to fun the travel and costs of two delegates. Pittsburgh will be recognized the final evening of the Convention, with an award for reaching the 20 year mark as a chartered Chapter of the National Christ Child Society. Attendance is not limited to delegates however. Every Chapter member is welcome to attend. The benefits of having more attendees from a chapter include, the ability to connect with members from other chapters and learn how they approach mission, the ability to have a representative at each seminar and learning session prepared for attendees, and learning more about how National operates as an umbrella for all 40+ Chapters, and facilitates the establishment of more chapters and spreading the mission and vision of Mary Virginia Merrick.

One of the tasks for the immediate Past President of the National Christ Child Society is to form a Nominating Committee to find new candidates for positions on the Board for the coming term. This year, Patty Myler, will chair the committee and be reaching out to each Chapter for nominations. Please think seriously about 'throwing your hat into the ring'. I have found this experience to be very enriching and satisfying. Any questions? Please call or email me (Ellen O'Brien) at ehob3@comcast.net or 412.967.0613.

I wish each member and their families a Blessed Christmas 2013.

*******Please remember the National Christ Child Society annual appeal. The first \$50 of your donation is credited towards our National Support responsibility. This is a tax-deductible donation. Thank you for helping us to continue our affiliation & the support that National provides to our Chapter!**

MEMBERSHIP

Do you have a friend, neighbor, relative who might be interested in receiving an informational packet about the Christ Child Society? The packet includes copies of our last 2 newsletters, our history, and a brochure along with a personal note inviting the addressee to the next meeting or social event. Please call or e-mail me with any names who come to mind. Mary Jo Kelly, 412-661-3933, or mijik33@msn.com

Christ Child Society of Pittsburgh

P.O. Box 11324
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1324
www.christchildsocietyofpittsburgh.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Wesoły Świąt Bożego Narodzenia

TO:

Dates to Remember

2014

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| January | - Board Meeting (Date TBA) |
| January 16 | - General Membership Meeting |
| March 20 | - General Membership Meeting |
| April 14 | - General Membership Meeting |
| April | - Christ Child Retreat (Date TBA) |
| May | - New Officers Installation Luncheon (Date TBA) |
| October 11 | - Christ Child Society Red Wagon Fare |

NOTEWORTHY:

- A special thanks to **Doris Delserone**, **Phyllis Dombrowski** and **Diane Reich** who have offered to Chair the *Installation Luncheon* in May.
- A special thanks to **Suzette Venturini** and **Pat Schimmel** who have volunteered to Chair the *2014 Red Wagon Fare* in October.
- Many thanks to **Suzette Venturini** and **Marian Flowers** for serving as Lunch Coordinators for the November 21 General Meeting.
- Lunch Coordinators for the January 16th meeting are **Cheryl George** and **Kathy Fitzgibbon**.
- The next publication of the CCS Newsletter is scheduled for **March, 2014**. Please submit all information for this newsletter to **Judy Kern** by **February 20**.