



**CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY**  
OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN  
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

**Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan  
Project/Committee Descriptions  
2023-24**

**ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT (Summer)**

This is our ONLY annual fundraising event. It takes place on the last Sunday of July. Approximately 50-75 volunteers are needed to organize and execute this event. Many different committees are formed under the leadership of the event's co-chairs. From decorating to finance, all skills are needed and welcomed to ensure our success.

This is yet another opportunity to meet and work with other members. There's a palpable sense of excitement from arrival at the event's venue the morning of the fundraiser to set-up of the decor, tables, auction items, reception, IT area, and other activities! It's a huge undertaking that you will love being part of. Just to see so many members working together at the same time to make this a beautiful and successful event is so rewarding. Every member is encouraged to attend and/or help in some way on this project.

It's a lot of work, but it enables us to carry on our mission to serve the needs of infants and children in Northern Michigan:

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

TBD / Chair

TBD / Chair

**BLANKET BRIGADE PROJECT (Year-round)**

The project is a good way to begin to meet members while working on the fleece blankets in our Christ Child House. There is no need to know how to sew. The blankets are cut to the correct dimensions and all a member needs to do is follow the written directions for making small slits and tying knots. There are two ways to participate: either come to one of the monthly sessions and/or pick up a bag of blankets and work at home. There is a blanket sign out sheet on a clip board as you enter the Christ Child House. These blankets are used for the Head Start Backpacks and Foster Care Kits.

In 2022, 320 blankets were made and distributed.

Claire Forney / Chair

231-526-3919 or [peforney@gmail.com](mailto:peforney@gmail.com)



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**CHRISTMAS PARTIES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN [CHAR-EM]**

Christmas parties are conducted for select classrooms of special needs children in Charlevoix and Emmet [Char-Em] counties.

Laura Dinon

231-348-3634 or [dinonld@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dinonld@sbcglobal.net)

**CHRISTMAS FAMILY PROJECT (December event)**

This is a big project for our project chairs and members. Our project chairs work with several agencies to avoid overlap of serving families in need. Once our project chair has a list of families, our volunteers are provided with a name of the family. The volunteer then contacts the family and develops a list of desired gifts. Christ Child allows \$125 per child for gifts and a \$250 gift certificate for food only at a local grocery store for families of four or less and a \$300 food certificate for families of five or more.

The shoppers make arrangements with the head of the family to deliver the gifts. Then the shopper completes the reimbursement form with receipts and provides it to the Treasurer. The Christ Child organization reimburses the member shoppers.

In 2022, 224 children (including 20 Petoskey High School transient/homeless children) from 105 families received support.

Karen Smith / Chair

734-740-5692 or [kdsmith@comcast.net](mailto:kdsmith@comcast.net)

Hellene Glaser / Co-Chair

231-203-8656 or

[hglaser@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org](mailto:hglaser@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org)

**CLASSROOM SUPPORT (Harbor Springs & Petoskey)**

The project allows for direct contact with students in a classroom. The project chair coordinates with the school principals to create a schedule of dates and times for teacher requested support and availability of each helper. There is always a need for helpers in the classroom. We serve schools in Harbor Springs and Petoskey.



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In 2022, volunteers provided support to 42 children.

Debbie Esenther / Chair

708-205-8714 or [debra.esenther@sbcglobal.net](mailto:debra.esenther@sbcglobal.net)

**DIAPER PANTRY PROJECT (Year-Round)**

The Diaper Pantry Project provides diapers to families in need. The pantry is located in the Manna Food Pantry building (8791 McBride Park Court, Harbor Springs, MI 49740) and diapers are available for pick-up on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday from 9:30-11:00 am.

In 2022, 310 packages of diapers for infants and toddlers were dispensed.

Beth Cooper / Chair

231-526-0482 or [tbcooper1@charter.net](mailto:tbcooper1@charter.net)

Cindy Blasius / Co-Chair

231-838-1302 or [clblasius@gmail.com](mailto:clblasius@gmail.com)

**DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

The Development Team calls on local business owners and foundation directors for the purpose of promoting the Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan and securing donations. This team is essential for introducing the business community to our Chapter's Mission and how they can help us continue to serve our community and expand our reach.

Kathy Schroeder / Past President

248-227-0491 or [ksptown26@gmail.com](mailto:ksptown26@gmail.com)

Debbie Dicken / Past President

231-526-7061 or [dld5cows@yahoo.com](mailto:dld5cows@yahoo.com)

**FOOD FOR WOLVERINE**

Our chapter has developed a relationship with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, Joy Fellowship Food Pantry in Indian River and the Wolverine School District to provide food support for families in the Wolverine School District and surrounding area. On food distribution



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days volunteers will work outside the Wolverine Elementary School boxing and bagging food that has been delivered on pallets to the parking lot. Each event is approximately a 3-hour commitment.

Members of the Food for Wolverine Committee are: chair Debbie Dicken, co-chair Laurie Van Wormer, Kim Jones, and Kathleen Davis.

Debbie Dicken / Chair

231-526-7061 or [dld5cows@yahoo.com](mailto:dld5cows@yahoo.com)

### **FOSTER CARE KITS / BACKPACKS (Year-round)**

The goal of the Foster Care Project is to provide basic needs to a child who is removed from his/her home by the Department of Health & Human Services (DHSS) for a variety of tragic reasons. Hopefully, having a backpack, new clothes, stuffed animal (younger children), handmade fleece blanket, book, journal material (older children), earbuds (older children), and a toiletry kit helps the child achieve a sense of security in this difficult time in his/her life. A small piece of luggage was added in 2020 to avoid having the child place their belongings in a trash bag. The Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan is now providing a birthday card with an enclosed gift card on the birthday of each child who remains in the Foster Care System.

In 2022, 33 children received support.

Linda Henry / Chair

231-838-0048 or

[lbhenry@christchildsoctynorthernmichigan.org](mailto:lbhenry@christchildsoctynorthernmichigan.org)

Sharon Knoodle / Co-Chair

231-526-8050 or

[dsknoodle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsknoodle@sbcglobal.net)

### **GRANT WRITING**

Grant awards is one way that the Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan raises the necessary funds to continue financing its projects. Not only is completing the application process important, but it also helps identify potential resources available in the community. Any member who is interested in being involved with either writing or identifying funding sources or both, please contact either:

Linda Henry / Chair

231-838-0048 or

[lbhenry@christchildsoctynorthernmichigan.org](mailto:lbhenry@christchildsoctynorthernmichigan.org)



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**Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan  
Project/Committee Descriptions  
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**HEAD START BACKPACK PROJECT (August Event)**

Children who qualify for the Head Start Program receive a colorful backpack filled with educational supplies, toiletries, and change of clothing including socks and underwear. Members meet at the Christ Child House to assemble the items in a backpack, which includes a fleece blanket made by the “Blanket Brigade” volunteers – members who work all year long making blankets either in their own homes or by meeting once a month at the Christ Child House. The Head Start Programs provide the project chair with the number of backpacks needed for their specific location. Volunteers assist the project chair in delivering the completed backpacks to Head Start Programs in Charlevoix, Cheboygen, and Emmet County.

In the winter, these children also receive hats and mittens from our organization.

In 2022, 320 children were served.

Kathy Reed / Chair

248-248-5158 or [kreed@dykema.com](mailto:kreed@dykema.com)

**HOUSE & PROPERTY MANAGERS**

These “House Angels” manage the house the Chapter owns at 192 West Third Street in Harbor Springs. This is our headquarters where Board Meetings and many project events take place.

Vicki Vassalo / Co-Chair

248-227-0491 or [vvassalo6690@gmail.com](mailto:vvassalo6690@gmail.com)

Diane Burnett / Co-Chair

574-268-8454 or [dburnett429@gmail.com](mailto:dburnett429@gmail.com)

**LAYETTE PROJECT (October)**

This is our signature project. Our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, devoted her life to ensure that newborns received needed clothing and supplies during their development. All Christ Child Chapters throughout the U.S. carry on this tradition.

This two-day project is held at the Birchwood Farms Golf & Country Club every October. The Christ Child chair orders the items, which are then stored at Birchwood. The layette contains



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sleepers, onesies, blankets, books, a handmade knitted item, and many other items. Christ Child Society members and non-members knit all year long in preparation for this event.

The Child Abuse Council of Charlevoix and Emmet Counties is promoting a statewide initiative called "Safe Sleep". The goal of this council is to educate parents, grandparents, and caregivers about safe sleep practices for infants. The Christ Child Society is now participating in evidence-based safe sleep practices by providing a new item called a "sleep sack" (a zip-up pajama bag).

Layettes for newborns are assembled and distributed to health departments in Emmet, Cheboygan, Charlevoix, Antrim, and Otsego Counties.

For 2022, 220 layettes were assembled.

Gail Torreano / Chair

313-310-0952 or [torrgm@gmail.com](mailto:torrgm@gmail.com)

### **LUNCHEON COORDINATORS**

The Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan has a Spring luncheon in June, a Fall luncheon in September, and a Christmas luncheon in December. There is always a need for volunteers to assist the coordinators with all of the details of the luncheon planning.

Sandra Kraai / Chair

231-242-4506 or [sandra.kraai@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.kraai@gmail.com)

Connie Donovan / Co-Chair

517-290-0958 or [donovanconnie@att.net](mailto:donovanconnie@att.net)

### **MEMBERSHIP TEAM**

The Membership Team is responsible for welcoming new members, conducting orientations, providing handbooks containing information about Christ Child National, our chapter's specific information, mentoring new CCSNM members by encouraging them to participate in committees and/or events, and maintaining the database that contains member contact information. Casual luncheons at Christ Child House are also sponsored by this committee on a regular basis, which encourages new and standing members to mingle.

Ann Fertuck / Chair & Tech Advisor 248-245-1724 or



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**Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan  
Project/Committee Descriptions  
2023-24**

[annietuck@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org](mailto:annietuck@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org)

Carol Hansen / Orientations  
Claire Forney / Mentoring

221-242-0330 or [c44cloud@me.com](mailto:c44cloud@me.com)  
231-526-3919 or [peforney@gmail.com](mailto:peforney@gmail.com)

**READ TO ME**

Members read age appropriate books to preschoolers once a month and the book that was read is gifted to each child to take home. By doing this, we hope someone at home will read to the child and encourage a love of reading. Volunteers read in seven classrooms in four different school districts (Harbor Springs, Petoskey, Pellston, and Alanson) and serve approximately 100 preschoolers.

In 2022, 275 children participated in “Read to Me” with a distribution of 1,377 books. The 2022 Book Drive distributed 1,558 books to 1,558 children for a grand total of 2,935 books distributed to 1,833 children in 2022.

Claire Forney / Chair

231-526-3919 or [peforney@gmail.com](mailto:peforney@gmail.com)

**SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT**

Each spring, ten \$3000 scholarships are given to local high school seniors who are selected by the scholarship committee. Selection is based on applications submitted by the students.

Laura Kors / Chair

231-526-7049 or [lakors@yahoo.com](mailto:lakors@yahoo.com)

**SHOWER OF LOVE PROJECT (August-September event)**

The name “Shower of Love” was derived from new mothers/infants who are “showered” with gifts either before or after the birth of an infant. In this project, Christ Child Society members are “showering” school age children with new clothes, shoes, socks, underwear, and sweatshirts or any other clothing item that the parent identifies that the child needs prior to entering school in the fall.



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The project chair coordinates with staff from Petoskey and Harbor Springs, Alanson, Pellston, and Wolverine School Districts and receives names of children who have been identified in need of our services. These are children who would not have new clothes and shoes for school. The project chair contacts the school and receives the list of needs. Christ Child members are then contacted with a clothing list for a designated family.

In 2022, 72 children were served.

Hellene Glaser / Project Chair / Community Liaison Board Members	231-203-8656 or hglaser@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org
Vicki Vassalo / Alanson Schools	248-227-0491 or vvvassalo6690@gmail.com
Joanne Kelley / Alanson Schools	248-520-0305 or jtkelley03@comcast.net
Debra Esenther / Harbor Springs	708-205-8714 or debra.esenther@sbcglobal.net
Amy Hackman / Pellston Schools	231-526-6486 or alanhackman@charter.net
Christy Marazzo / Pellston Schools	775-287-0082 or keek36@sbcglobal.net
Hellene Glaser / Petoskey Schools	231-203-8656 or hglaser@christchildsocietynorthernmichigan.org

**WOLVERINE OUTREACH PROJECT (School Session)**

The Wolverine Outreach project serves the needs of the students in the Wolverine School District. The Christ Child Project Chair contacts the local school district quarterly to assess their needs and provides any items identified by the staff. This may include shopping, delivery of items and/or provision of funds.

The Wolverine School District maintains a clothing closet for the students. This closet is stocked by the chairperson with support by Christ Child volunteers and includes jeans, sweatshirts, coats, shoes, shirts, socks, and basic toiletries. The Christ Child Society also provides washers, dryers, and detergent in both the Middle School-High School and Elementary buildings.

In 2022, 254 children were served.

Lisa Pulaski / Chair	989-619-4554 or lpulaski@wolverineschools.org
Colleen Shaw / Co-Chair	231-313-4091 or cms101@hotmail.com