



CONNECTIONS

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 NCCS Convention
- 2 CCST News / Pio Decimo
- 4 Layettes
- 8 Literacy
- 10 United In Service Project honoring MVM
- 13 Wings Care Bags
- 15 MVM Memorial Mass
- 16 Beloved member passes—
Betty Stevenson
- 17 Key Upcoming Dates
- 18 In Closing ...

CCST OFFICERS (2025–2027):

President:
Deborah Auclair

Immediate Past President:
Nancy Thorpe

1st Vice President:
Vita Balsino

2nd Vice Pres. & Membership Chair:
Dianna Balsamo

Treasurer:
Nancy Thorpe

Recording & Corresponding Secretary:
Jennifer Seby Anderson

CCST Highlights



NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

2026 Convention

September 10-12 at Embassy Suites,
5100 Upper Metro Place, Dublin Ohio

— 22 miles from the Columbus Airport —



Karen Znamenacek-Baker, John Baker, Nancy Thorpe, Angela Schneider, Deb Auclair are the members from the Tucson Chapter that attended the 2024 convention in Iowa.

CCST SUPPORTS PIO DECIMO CENTER

Pio Decimo Center has been serving Tucson families for 80 years. Founded in 1946 by the Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic, the center began as a convent dedicated to helping people experiencing poverty and hunger in Tucson's Barrio Santa Rosa neighborhood. That early mission of compassionate service continues today.

Pio Decimo has grown into a welcoming community center that provides children, teens, and families with practical support and opportunities to build stronger futures. Its high-quality childcare and early childhood education programs help young children develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in school.

The Youth Center offers teens a safe and supportive place to participate in recreational activities, develop important life skills, and form relationships with caring adult mentors. Pio Decimo also provides services designed to strengthen families, promote stability, and create home environments in which children can grow and thrive.

The Christ Child Society of Tucson is pleased to support this important work through a monthly donation of \$25. Our contribution will assist with childhood nutrition or be directed toward the center's area of greatest need.

Although our monthly gift may be modest, consistent support can make a meaningful difference over time. Through this partnership, CCST joins Pio Decimo Center in helping Tucson's children and families receive the nourishment, encouragement, and opportunities they need to flourish.



\$25/month – Provides healthy, nourishing snacks.



A VIBRANT MURAL WELCOMES CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO PIO DECIMO CENTER.



BRIANNA MORALES STANDS IN FRONT OF THE WALL REPRESENTING 80 YEARS OF PIO DECIMO SUPPORT OF CHILDREN.



A PLACE OF WELCOME, SUPPORT, AND OPPORTUNITY.

A LETTER OF THANKS FROM PIO DECIMO CENTER

Deb, I am so glad you were able to connect with Brianna Morales, she is the director for the Pio Decimo Center Early Childhood center. I believe members of the Christ Child Society are very familiar with Brianna as they coordinate the annual Santa visit and through the baby bag distributions.

I will send a separate email with you and connect to our David Shack who can assist you with setting up automatic donations.

Our Food Pantry has been overwhelmed by the growing number of families seeking assistance with food, particularly families with children. Your support comes at an important time and will help us purchase nutritious, child-friendly food items such as cereal, peanut butter and jelly, and other essentials that children enjoy and need.

Because of your generosity, we are able to help ensure that children in our community have access to nutritious food during times when their families are struggling to make ends meet.

Thank you once again for your kindness and for your commitment to meeting the needs of children and families in our community. Your support truly makes a difference!

With sincere gratitude,

Gloria Hamelitz

Gloria Hamelitz
Associate Director for Children and Family Services
Pio Decimo Center
848 S. 7th Ave
Tucson, AZ 85701
August 28, 2026



Because of your generosity, we are able to help ensure that children in our community have access to nutritious food during times when their families are struggling to make ends meet.



SAVE THE DATE

CCST'S 2027 FUNDRAISER

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 28, 2027, as the Christ Child Society of Tucson gathers at The Highlands at Dove Mountain for our annual fundraiser and a very special celebration — 56 years of serving children and families in need throughout Southern Arizona.

Earlier this year, our Luau became the most successful fundraiser in our chapter's history, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donors, supporters, and friends.



COMMUNITY GENEROSITY

A Gift from J. Braun Salon & Spa

We are grateful to J. Braun Salon & Spa for generously donating a gift card to support our recent Christ Child Society of Tucson fundraiser.

Although the gift card arrived after our event, we certainly didn't let such a wonderful donation go to waste! Instead, we raffled it off at one of our monthly meetings, giving our members another opportunity to join in the fun.

Congratulations to Karen Z. Baker, who was the lucky winner!

J. Braun Salon & Spa offers a variety of services for men and women, including hair care, massage therapy, and skin care. Their thoughtful donation is another example of the generosity shown to CCST by businesses in our community.



KAREN Z. BAKER (LEFT) PROUDLY SHOWS OFF THE J. BRAUN SALON & SPA GIFT CARD SHE WON AT OUR MEETING, WHILE JENNIFER SEBY ANDERSON GETS RIGHT TO WORK IN HER NEW ROLE.



J. BRAUN SALON & SPA

9110 N. Silverbell Rd. #130 • Tucson, AZ 85743
Phone: (520) 744-5011

THANK YOU

We sincerely thank J. Braun Salon & Spa for supporting our mission and helping us continue our work on behalf of children and families in need throughout Southern Arizona.

LAYETTES

Collection Event at Santa Catalina Catholic Church

SAVE THE DATE

LAYETTES OF LOVE COLLECTION • SEPTEMBER 26-27

The Christ Child Society of Tucson (CCST) will hold its annual Layettes of Love Collection at Santa Catalina the weekend of September 26-27. Your generosity will help us provide a "baby shower in a bag" to mothers in need throughout Southern Arizona.

This year, we are especially in need of five items:

- Hooded baby towels
- Size 1 diapers
- Receiving blankets
- Board books
- Baby sleepers

Cash and check donations are also greatly appreciated and allow us to purchase the items most urgently needed to complete each layette.

For more than 55 years, the Christ Child Society of Tucson has served children and families in need throughout Southern Arizona. Through 11 community partner agencies, we now provide nearly 700 mothers and their newborns each year with layettes filled with essential baby items. Sadly, we are sometimes told that a mother receiving one of our layettes has almost nothing else for her new baby.

Our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, Servant of God, whose cause for canonization was opened in 2011, challenged Christ Child members to "Find a need and fill it." She also reminded us that "Nothing is ever too much to do for a child."



FIVE PRIORITY ITEMS FOR THIS YEAR'S LAYETTES OF LOVE COLLECTION.

The need in Tucson continues to grow — and with your help, so can our response.

Please save the date and help us welcome some of Southern Arizona's newest little ones with love.

Thank you in advance for supporting the mission of the Christ Child Society of Tucson!

"FIND A NEED AND FILL IT."

"Nothing is ever too much to do for a child."

— Mary Virginia Merrick

WHO WE GIVE LAYETTES TO

♥ Answers for Life
♥ Aviva Childrens Services
♥ Casa de los Ninos
♥ Northwest Women's Center
♥ Hands of Hope
♥ New Life Pregnancy Center
♥ Walking With Mom's in Need
♥ Pima Health
♥ Pio Decimo Center
♥ Banner /Diamond Children's Hosp.
♥ Reachout
♥ Catholic Comm. Svs. of S. AZ
♥ Gospel Rescue Mission



DIANNA BALSAMO WITH LAYETTES AND SUPPLIES READY FOR ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY TO FAMILIES.

LAYETTES

"Little Touches That Make a Big Difference"

The work of the Christ Child Society of Tucson is made possible not only through the generosity of our members, but also through the kindness of friends throughout our community.

Recently, Creative Giving of SaddleBrooke Ranch donated an adorable group of handmade stuffed llamas. Each one is lovingly sewn in cheerful fabric and is sure to bring a smile to a child who receives it. Dian Gowen and Colleen Wright from Creative Giving are pictured delivering some of these special creations to CCST.



Dian Gowen and Colleen Wright from Creative Giving deliver handmade llamas for children served by CCST.

From handmade llamas to carefully prepared bags, every gift reflects the same spirit: letting mothers and children know that someone cares about them.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind the scenes, our work continues to grow as well. Vita Balsino is shown proudly displaying the CCST banner in our newly established 'office area' inside our storage unit. It may not be a traditional office, but it gives our volunteers a much-needed place to organize supplies and prepare items for the families we serve.



Vita Balsino in the CCST storage area — an unofficial "office" that helps keep the work moving.

Even the smallest details are chosen with care. One example is the green tag attached to the toiletry bags we provide for mothers. Its message — "Motherhood is a forever love story — Enjoy every minute and treasure it!" — adds a warm, personal touch to a practical gift. We have heard how much the mothers appreciate both the toiletries and the encouraging message that accompanies them.

A SMALL MESSAGE WITH A BIG HEART

The green tag on each mother's toiletry bag turns a practical gift into something personal — a reminder that she is seen, valued, and cared for.



The green tag attached to mothers' toiletry bags shares a heartfelt message of encouragement.

LAYETTES: PROVIDING SECURITY WITH BLANKETS— LINUS PROJECT

A handmade blanket can seem like a simple gift, but for a child facing illness, crisis, or uncertainty, it can become something much more — a source of warmth, security, and comfort.

That is the heart of Project Linus, a volunteer organization dedicated to providing new, handmade blankets to children in need. The Tucson chapter has been a generous friend to the Christ Child Society of Tucson, helping us extend an extra measure of love to the children and families we serve.

Rene Lassise of Project Linus Tucson summed up their mission beautifully when she wrote, “Our whole mission is to provide the blankets to those in need.” That spirit of generosity is evident in every lovingly made blanket placed into the hands of a child.

We are deeply grateful to Project Linus Tucson and to the many volunteers who crochet, knit, quilt, and sew these special gifts. Their work reminds us that acts of kindness do not have to be large to make a lasting difference.

“*You are cared for.
You are not alone.*”



BI-ANNUAL QUILT BLESSING AND SEW DAY

Project Linus quilts were blessed during the 9:00 a.m. Mass on June 14. Parishioners had the opportunity to see the beautiful handmade quilts created by the Catalina Community Quilters. The quilts were on display in the church during all weekend Masses.

On Monday, representatives of the Project Linus Tucson Chapter picked up our 200 blessed quilts. PLTC distributes more than 650 blankets each month.

The day also offered a wonderful opportunity for those who enjoy quilting—or wanted to learn—to gather, sew, and share their talents. Several sewing machines were available, and participants brought their own sewing tools and machines if they wished. Some spent the entire day sewing (bringing a lunch), while others joined for just part of the day.

For families going through difficult moments, a soft blanket can quietly say, **You are cared for. You are not alone.**”

Project Linus

Providing Security Through Blankets

Catalina Community Quilters
Tucson, AZ Chapter

“*It's not how much we give,
but how much love we put into giving.*”
— Mother Teresa



Contact the parish office at 520-825-9611
or email communications@santacatalinaparish.org.



LAYETTES

Faith in Action: Catholic Daughters Support CCST

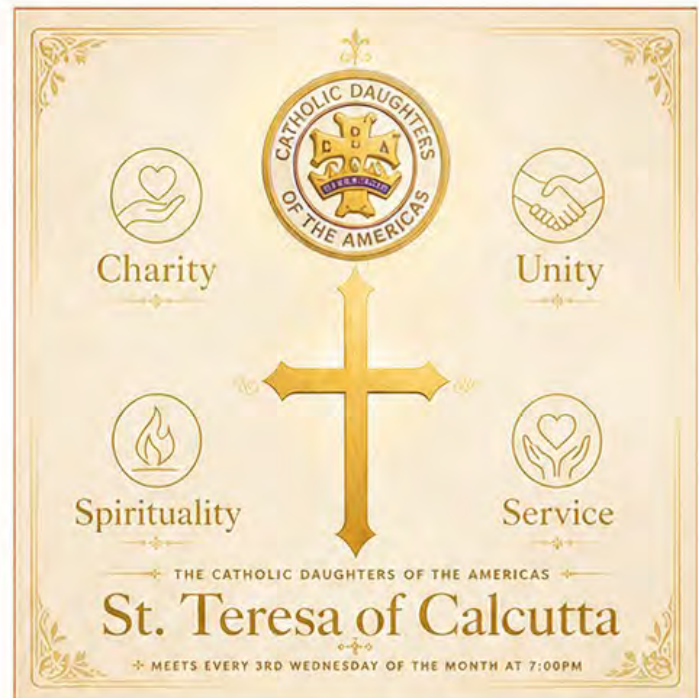
The Catholic Daughters of the Americas at St. Christopher's Parish in Marana have become extraordinary partners in supporting the Christ Child Society of Tucson and the families we serve.

During just the past six months, these generous women have donated more than \$5,000 worth of diapers and other essential baby items for our Layette Program. Their gifts help CCST provide mothers in need with practical supplies for their newborns at a time when even basic necessities can be difficult to afford.

Founded in 1903, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas is one of the oldest and largest organizations of Catholic women in the Americas. Its members support charitable works, scholarships, spiritual growth, and community service. Their mission calls them "to be helping hands where there is pain, poverty, sorrow, or sickness."

The generosity of the St. Christopher's Catholic Daughters is a beautiful example of that mission in action.

We are deeply grateful for their continued support, friendship, and commitment to helping mothers and babies throughout Southern Arizona. Their donations strengthen our Layette Program and remind us how much more we can accomplish when Catholic organizations work together in service to others.



THE CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS AT ST. CHRISTOPHER'S PARISH HAVE BECOME GENEROUS PARTNERS OF CCST.

MORE THAN \$5,000 IN SIX MONTHS

Diapers and essential baby items donated to help CCST provide practical support to mothers and newborns.



St. Christopher's CDA members (L to R): Mary Ochoa, Carmella Stanizzi, Mary Thibault, and Linda Gray donated and delivered diapers for Layettes.

LITERACY: NANCY JONES

A Lasting Legacy of Learning and Service

Longtime Christ Child Society of Tucson member Nancy Jones may no longer be able to attend meetings because of poor eyesight, but she continues to support the chapter in meaningful and lasting ways.

A former teacher, Nancy has always believed deeply in the importance of literacy. The fact that former students still keep in touch with her decades later says a great deal about the impact she made in the classroom. Recently, over lunch, Nancy presented CCST with a treasured pin that reads, **“Grab Me, Read Me, Love Me!”** — a perfect reflection of her lifelong encouragement of children to discover the joy of reading.

Nancy also brought creativity to the Christ Child mission. She designed a Mary Virginia Merrick T-shirt featuring the beloved words, **“Nothing is ever too much to do for a child!”** Nancy sold the shirts to fellow teachers, who wore them together on the first day of school. As nervous parents dropped off their children, seeing the entire teaching staff wearing that reassuring message brought comfort and confidence.

Nancy’s contribution today is equally valuable: experience, perspective, and wisdom. Fellow member **Nancy Thorpe** listens closely when Nancy shares her thoughts, knowing how much knowledge she has to offer.

Though Nancy Jones may not be present at every meeting, her influence continues to help guide CCST’s growth and mission.

“Nothing is ever too much to do for a child!”

— Mary Virginia Merrick



NANCY JONES WITH THE MARY VIRGINIA MERRICK T-SHIRT



THE TREASURED PIN NANCY PRESENTED TO CCST



NANCY JONES (LEFT) SHARING HER WISDOM WITH FELLOW MEMBER NANCY THORPE

LITERACY: San Xavier Book Machine Featured Nationally

The Christ Child Society of Tucson received national recognition this summer when our literacy program was featured in the June newsletter of the National Christ Child Society (NCCS).

The article highlighted one of our book vending machines at San Xavier Mission School, where students can earn the opportunity to choose a brand-new book of their own. The machine is filled with colorful, age-appropriate books and helps make reading both exciting and rewarding.

Students may earn a special token through kindness, good behavior, or academic effort. They can then visit the machine, make their selection, and take the book home to keep. It is a simple idea that combines encouragement, achievement, and literacy in a way children truly enjoy.

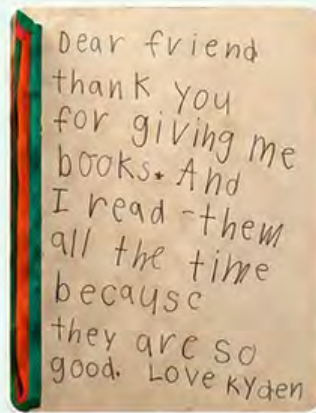
CCST supports book vending machines as part of our commitment to helping children develop a lifelong love of reading. We also return during the year to replenish the machines with new books.

Seeing our San Xavier book machine featured in the NCCS newsletter was a proud moment for our Tucson chapter and a wonderful reminder that putting a book into a child's hands can make a lasting difference.

Literacy

Through the third grade, children learn to read. After that, they read to learn.

If a child isn't reading at grade level at the end of third grade, they're likely to fall behind in school. Our Tucson chapter donated a book vending machine to an elementary school, which is a great way to get children's books into homes and get them excited about reading.



We also tutor, read to classrooms, organize reading enrichment events and give away lots of books. Our chapters distributed 135,000+ children's books last year.



Angela Schneider and her granddaughter, Madison, are helping the literacy committee categorize books for distribution.

<https://nationalchristchild.org/what-we-do/literacy.html>

"Putting a book into a child's hands can make a lasting difference."

Helping children develop a lifelong love of reading.

WINGS CARE BAGS

What began with a single conversation about an unmet need in 2021 has grown into a ministry of compassion, dignity, and hope for foster teens and other vulnerable youth throughout Southern Arizona.

As of August 2026, the Christ Child Society of Tucson's **Wings Care Bags** ministry has provided **3,066 handmade care bags** to young people who may be moving into foster care, changing placements, or facing other difficult transitions. Each bag is thoughtfully filled with practical items, comfort, and a simple but important message: **You Matter**.

As we prepare for the National Convention and the Foster Teen Ministry panel discussion, we hope to share not only the story of Wings Care

Bags, but also the lessons learned along the way. Our goal is to offer other Christ Child Society chapters ideas and resources they can adapt to meet needs in their own communities.

Wings Care Bags is helps to inspire a new approach to serving children in need, its purpose remains rooted in the vision of Christ Child Society founder Mary Virginia Merrick.

Her enduring challenge still speaks clearly to us today:

"FIND A NEED AND FILL IT."

Sometimes that need begins with one conversation. And sometimes, one conversation grows wings.

One Bag. *Growing Impact.*

Every handmade bag represents one teen who was reminded:

You Matter.

Handmade with love.
Given with hope.

GROWING TOGETHER.

2021 → 2026

While they were growing up... Wings was **growing** with them.

OUR IMPACT

3,100+ Wings Care Bags Delivered Thousands of teens reminded that they matter.	6 Dedicated Volunteers A small group making a big difference.	863 Volunteer Hours Time, talent, and hearts poured out.	99% Locally Handmade Supporting our community and honoring dignity.	5 Years of Growing Hope Serving since 2021 and looking ahead with hope.
---	--	---	--	--

2021 — Growing Wings. —> 2026

Inspiring Hope.

“ This will mean the world to them.
It tells them someone cares. ”

ST. AUGUSTINE FEAST DAY SERVICE PROJECT

Faith, Fellowship, and Service

On August 28, the Solemnity of Saint Augustine, Christ Child Society of Tucson members joined the junior class of St. Augustine Catholic High School for a special day of faith, fellowship, and service.

Saint Augustine was a bishop, theologian, preacher, writer, and Doctor of the Church whose works—including Confessions and *The City of God*—helped shape Western Christianity. Yet, of all the titles attributed to him, perhaps the one he valued most was the simplest: “servant of God.” His life reminds us that our gifts and accomplishments have their greatest value when they lead us to know, love, and serve God more deeply.

“One of his quotes particularly resonated with the students: ‘Conquer yourself and the world lies at your feet.’”
— St. Augustine

”

CCST always enjoys working with the St. Augustine junior class. Together, the students and volunteers made blankets for young people served by StandUp for Kids Tucson. Campus Minister Stephanie Gaona shared that the juniors had been eagerly anticipating the project because making blankets with CCST has become a beloved rite of passage for each junior class.

“These kids are simply amazing,” Liz said. “They are kind and gracious, and they know how to get the job done. It is always a pleasure to work with them. They will go far.” Pat agreed: “It was a good day, as always. The students are wonderful. They listen, work hard, and seem to genuinely enjoy what they are doing.”



An impressive day's work: the St. Augustine juniors completed 60 blankets, with five more prepared and ready for their finishing ties.



CCST member Liz helps a student get the measurements just right—an important step in creating the perfect blanket for a young person in need.



CCST member Pat works alongside St. Augustine juniors as they measure, cut, and prepare fleece blankets for young people served by StandUp for Kids Tucson.

ST. AUGUSTINE FEAST DAY SERVICE PROJECT (CONT.)

Growing Relationships Through Faith and Service

Deb told the students how much CCST members receive from spending time with them. Their enthusiasm, generosity, and potential offer hope and reassurance that the future is being left in very capable hands.

The day began with Mass celebrated by Father Manu (Emanuel) Franco-Gómez, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Tucson. His warm connection with the students was evident throughout the celebration.

Deb also met with St. Augustine President Melissa Lopez Gruenhagen, who has led the school for the past three years. Melissa spoke warmly about the joy of guiding the unique, faith-filled community that makes St. Augustine so special.

The day also opened the door to two exciting new connections. St. Augustine plans to restart its 'Pack the Playpen' competition, challenging each grade to collect diapers and baby wipes and fill playpens displayed in the school's front office. These much-needed supplies will benefit the families served through CCST's layette program.

In turn, CCST will support St. Augustine's 'Step Up for Tech' campaign by reserving a step bearing the CCST name. The campaign supports the school's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and helps provide iPads and electronic textbooks for its more than 250 students.

It was a joyful day rooted in service—and the beginning of even more ways for CCST and St. Augustine Catholic High School to work together for children and families in our community.

“Their enthusiasm, generosity, and potential offer hope and reassurance that the future is being left in very capable hands.”



Melissa Lopez Gruenhagen, President of St. Augustine Catholic High School.



Stephanie Gaona, Fr. Manu and Deb Auclair discuss how CCST and St. Augustine's can expand our partnership.

NEW CONNECTION: PACK THE PLAYPEN



St. Augustine plans to restart its 'Pack the Playpen' competition, challenging each grade to collect diapers and baby wipes and fill playpens displayed in the school's front office. These much-needed supplies will benefit the families served through CCST's layette program.

CCST SUPPORTS STEP UP FOR TECH



CCST will support St. Augustine's 'Step Up for Tech' campaign by reserving a step bearing the CCST name. The campaign supports the school's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and helps provide iPads and electronic textbooks for its more than 250 students.

FINDING A NEED AND FILLING IT

St. Augustine Juniors Serve Tucson Youth

At the service assembly, Deb proudly told the students about CCST's founder and Servant of God, Mary Virginia Merrick. Her life stands as a powerful testament to compassion, resilience, and action. Despite being paralyzed at a young age following a spinal injury, Merrick dedicated her life to serving children in need. Her guiding philosophy is beautifully captured in her best-known quotation:

“*Find a need and fill it!*”

This principle continues to resonate deeply with CCST's mission and values. When Deb shared the quote, one student nodded approvingly, recognizing the timeless importance of stepping forward to serve others.

Merrick's legacy came to life as Deb, Pat, and Liz addressed the students at the beginning of the blanket activity. The junior class put this mission into action by making blankets for StandUp for Kids Tucson.

Other classes also joined the effort, completing service projects that included assembling essential hygiene kits. By working together to create blankets and pack supplies, these students learned the value of hard work and experienced the deep joy that comes from helping others.

Most meaningfully, these juniors are helping young people their own age. StandUp for Kids Tucson is a relationship-based organization committed to ending the cycle of youth homelessness. Since 2004, its dedicated volunteers have provided vital street outreach and advocacy. In 2023, the organization expanded its services by opening an Outreach Center that offers mentoring, guidance, referrals, and drop-in support for young people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.



TEAMWORK IN ACTION! These proud St. Augustine juniors completed an impressive 10 blankets—providing warmth and encouragement to young people their own age who are facing difficult circumstances.



DOING THE JOB WELL! CCST friend Donna Goodman helps a group of focused students wrap up their blankets. Thanks to Donna's wonderful prep work ahead of time, the day's service activity was a seamless success.

OUR PROGRAMS • WINGS CARE BAGS

UNITED IN SERVICE EVENT HONORING MARY VIRGINIA MERRICK

United in Service: "Find a Need and Fill It"

On August 28, the Feast of St. Augustine, the Christ Child Society of Tucson joined the students of St. Augustine Catholic High School for a special United in Service project that brought together faith, service, and the spirit of our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, Servant of God.

Approximately 65 members of the St. Augustine Junior Class gathered to make fleece blankets for teens experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The blankets were given to **StandUp** for Kids Tucson, which has become one of CCST's community partner agencies and provides outreach, practical assistance, and a welcoming environment for vulnerable young people.

This year, however, the idea grew beyond the Junior Class. Stephanie Gaona, St. Augustine's new Director of Campus Ministry, encouraged all four grade levels to participate in service benefiting homeless teens. While the juniors created blankets, other students prepared hygiene kits and participated in additional projects supporting the young people served by **StandUp** for Kids.

CCST members were also given a wonderful opportunity to introduce the students to Mary Virginia Merrick and the philosophy that has guided the Christ Child Society for more than a century: "Find a need and fill it." Her story was especially meaningful when shared on the feast day of St. Augustine. Both remind us that faith is not simply something we profess—it is something we put into action through love and service.

Nine CCST volunteers contributed 52 volunteer hours to the project. About 65 St. Augustine juniors participated, and their efforts benefited approximately 65 teens/people, bringing together some 130 young people in an experience of giving and receiving.

But the numbers tell only part of the story. Each handmade blanket represented hours of work, conversation, laughter, creativity, and care. For the students, it was an opportunity to discover the joy that comes from seeing their own hands and talents lift someone else. For the young person receiving that blanket, the message was just as simple:

*"You matter."
Someone cares about you."*

SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS



6 CCST volunteers

contributed approximately 48 volunteer hours.



Approximately **65 St. Augustine juniors** participated in blanket-making.



Benefiting approximately **65 young people** through **StandUp** for Kids Tucson.



Bringing together some **130 young people** in an experience of giving and receiving.

More than a century after Mary Virginia Merrick began serving children in need, these St. Augustine students demonstrated that her invitation remains as relevant as ever: see a need, show the gifts you have, and do something about it.



Ann MacDonald, Deb Auclair and Donna Goodman organize the blankets for the service day.



Betty and Dick Ryan are working on preparing the blankets at the storage room.



Karen Klavetter works with Alyssa Tesar while Dick and Betty Ryan pack bags in the background.



Georgia Proudly displays the quilt pouches that Marge Post gave for the Wings Care Bags.

11/2/26 — Celebrating Her 150th Birthday!

On November 2, 2026, what would have been Mary Virginia Merrick's 150th birthday, the Christ Child Society of Tucson will remember and honor our beloved founder with a special Mass intention at Santa Catalina Catholic Church.

We are grateful to Fr. Huy Vu for offering this Mass for the repose of Mary Virginia's soul and for the mission she began that continues to bless children in Southern Arizona today.



ABOUT MARY VIRGINIA MERRICK

Servant of God and founder of the Christ Child Society, Mary Virginia Merrick devoted her life to children in need. Her invitation remains as urgent and inspiring as ever:

"FIND A NEED AND FILL IT."

Please consider attending a Mass for Miss Mary at Santa Catalina Church, 14380 N Oracle Road, Tucson, at 8 AM on 11/2/26.



Santa Catalina Catholic Church
14380 N ORACLE RD.
TUCSON, AZ 85739
520-825-9611
WWW.SANTACATALINAPARISH.ORG

Santa Catalina Catholic Church



*A Mass Offering
for your Intentions*



With the sympathy of

Christ Child Society of Tucson

*The
Celebration of the Eucharist
will be offered for
the repose of the soul of*

Mary Virginia Merrick

Servant of God, Founder of CCS

Date: 11/2/2026 Time: 8am

Rev. Huy Vu, C.S.S.R



Thank you, Fr. Huy, for celebrating this Mass and for your continued support of the Christ Child Society of Tucson.



Elizabeth Cornelia “Betty” Baechle Stevenson

Elizabeth Cornelia Baechle Stevenson, known to all as Betty, passed away surrounded by love and family. Born in Utica, New York, she was the second of six children of Carl and Frances Baechle. Growing up in a lively household, she formed a lifelong bond with her older sister, Maryrose—despite the childhood mischief of occasionally being locked in kitchen cabinets.

As a young woman, Betty lived and worked in Chicago before marrying Albert Schroeder, President of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway Company. The couple made their home in Minneapolis and then moved to Tucson. Al passed in 1966.

In the years that followed, Betty found her calling as a special education teacher. She devoted herself to her students at the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind, touching countless young lives with her patience, compassion, and steady warmth.

In 1973, Betty married Carl Stevenson, beginning a partnership filled with adventure, hard work, and deep affection. They settled in Red Rock, where Betty learned the rhythms of life at a feedyard and embraced the community around her. Together, they kept a sailboat dock in San Diego for many years and traveled the world, collecting memories and friendships wherever they went. Betty was known for her gracious hospitality—her home was always a place of welcome.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Carl and Frances Baechle; her siblings; her first husband, Albert Schroeder; and her beloved husband, Carl Stevenson. She is survived by four stepchildren—Tom, Mary Jo, Dave, and Barbara—four grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews who cherished her presence in their lives.

✝ A Mass was said on May 19, 2026 at St. Christopher Catholic Parish followed by Mass of Christian Burial at the Marana Cemetery, Marana.

OBITUARY

Elizabeth B. Stevenson

FEBRUARY 11, 1924 — MAY 10, 2026



This was published on Betty's Memorial page

[Elizabeth B. Stevenson Obituary - Marana, AZ - Share Memory](#)

Betty was a cherished member of the Christ Child Society of Tucson (CCST) and a devoted supporter of our mission for many years. Fellow member, Pat Lunsford, remembers her as a beautiful, kind, and gracious lady whose warmth touched everyone she met. Many of us were inspired by Betty's dedication. She regularly made the long drive from Red Rock to attend our luncheons, fashion shows, and special events, continuing to do so until the distance became too difficult. As a lifetime member, she remained steadfast in her support, generously contributing financially to our activities even when she could no longer attend in person. Betty's kindness, loyalty, and generous spirit will be fondly remembered and deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Sep, TBD	St. Joseph's Book Machine Ceremony 215 South Craycroft Rd.
Sept 10-12	NCCS Convention in Columbus, OH
Sep. 21	CCST Board & Mem. Mtg.-Scordatos 2nd Mon. except Sep. & Jan.
Sept. 26-27	Santa Catalina Layette of Love at 5 Masses
Nov. 2	Daily Mass at 8 AM at Santa Cat. for Mary Virginia Merrick
Nov. 4?	?Kindness Fair @ The Highlands 1 - 4 PM
Dec. 2026	CCST's Santa visits 5 schools (Santa Cruz, OMOS, IHA, SXMS, St. Ambrose, St. Joseph's) and WWMN, TAPP, Pio Decimo. Also Our Lady of the Desert Tree Activity
Dec. 2026	CCST help Children's Advocacy Center's Giving Tree CCST helps Cath. Comm. Svs. With Kinship families' gifts
Jan 8-10, 2027	Whetstone Prison Ministry Retreat, REC03
Jan. 18	CCST Meeting at Scordatos - NEW TIME
Feb 10-Mar. 26	St Augustine Lent Pack the Playpen?
Feb. 13-14	Wings Collection at Santa Catalina at 5 Masses
Feb. 28, 2027	Red Wagon Fare @ The Highlands noon-4 PM (time TBD)
Mar. 3, 2027	CCST Retreat with Fr. Paul (location TBD)
Apr. 2, 2027	Santa Catalina Ministry Fare
May 5, 2027	Cath. Comm. Svs. Fostering Hope Kinship Families
May 16	Layette of Love at Dianna' home
Jun. 18	Get-on-the-Bus AZ Children Visit Incarcerated Dads

SEP-26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCT-26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOV-26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- Special Event
 National Event
 Board/Member Meeting
 CCST Collections & Layettes
 Ministry/Retreat/Fair
 Outreach Event
 CCST Community Activity
 Fundraiser/Event



If you would like to become a member or learn more about The Christ Child Society of Tucson, please visit our webpage:

<https://christchildtucson.org/750-Contact-Us.html>

585-309-9064, or write CCST, PO Box 36212, Tucson AZ, 85740

choose joy ♥

Mary Virginia Merrick has 182 quotes attributed to her. Below are 10 that capture her themes of service, personal charity, children, trust and doing small things with great love.

- 1 *"Nothing is ever too much to do for a child."*
- 2 *"The spirit of the Christ Child Society is one of personal love for the Christ Child expressing itself in the personal service for the least of His little ones."*
- 3 *"It is the personal element that brings true charity into life."*
- 4 *"Personal contact with the needy for love of Christ develops true charity and gives it a vital force."*
- 5 *"I resolved to do something every day for the Christ Child...I was confident that it was His work and He would supply my deficiency."*
- 6 *"Our Lord only asks the will and is ready to accept lovingly the smallest service."*
- 7 *"Do not consider that in order to be great either in the eyes of men or God, it is necessary to do great deeds."*
- 8 *"Let Christ live in you and act in you in small deeds as well as great."*
- 9 *"Do all things for God and do not look for appreciation."*
- 10 *"All disappointments come as a lesson to trust God alone, to look to Him alone for help and guidance. Never to worry, always to trust."*

The Difference

I got up early one **morning**,
and rushed right into the day.

I had so much to **accomplish**
that I didn't have time to **pray**.

Problems just tumbled about me,
and heavier came each **task**.

"Why doesn't God help me?" I
wondered.

He answered, "You didn't **ask**."
I wanted to see joy and **beauty**,
but the day toiled on, **gray** and bleak.

I wondered why God didn't show
me. He said, "But you didn't **seek**."

I tried to come into God's **presence**.
I used all my keys at the lock.

God gently and **lovingly** chided,
"My child, you didn't **knock**."

I woke up early this **morning**
and paused before entering the day.
I had so much to **accomplish**—that
I had to **take time to pray**.

