



# CONNECTIONS

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### CCST Officers (2021-2023):

President:

**Deborah Auclair**

Immediate Past President:

**Nancy Thorpe**

Vice President:

**Vita Balsino**

VP Membership Chair & Chapter Liaison:

**Dianna Balsamo**

Recording Secretary:

**Jean Brabenec**

Corresponding Secretary:

**Cindy Horner**

Treasurer:

**Nancy Thorpe**

Board Members at Large: **Bonnie Alberts,**

**Frances Smith, Pat Lunsford**

## The Little Red Wagon Story

We recently had an opportunity to see "The Little Red Wagon Story" as created by the Phoenix chapter. We found it so compelling that we wanted to share it with our Tucson members and friends...



The Little Red Wagon became a symbol of the Christ Child Society, founded by Mary Virginia Merrick, as the result of a Christmas wish. Paul, the son the Merrick family laundress, designated himself as Mary's errand boy.

In 1884, Miss Mary asked him what he wanted for Christmas. He replied that he wanted a red wagon to help his mother deliver the wash, but then quickly added that his family was not celebrating Christmas because his father was out of work. She then suggested that he write a letter to the Christ Child asking Him for the red wagon. Paul asked, "Who is He?" She replied, "He is the Giver of all good gifts!" and Christmas was His birthday.

A few days later Paul returned with the letters from his siblings and friends. Mary gathered her sewing circle friends, asking each to fill a wish. On Christmas Day, the red wagon and other gifts were given to the children, marked simply "From the Christ Child". Since then volunteers have been driven by faith, love and a desire to make a difference.

Today over 5,500 members in 45 chapters volunteer nearly 400,000 hours and serve more than 75,000 children and their families annually.

# Christ Child Society of Tucson's own Red Wagon Story

CCST and Our Lady of the Desert donations allowed eighty families to have a Merry Christmas. We are very grateful to Fr. Pat Grile, Fr. Brian Johnson and Our Lady of the Desert parishioners (they are truly a blessing) for their above and beyond support. Here are pictures of the gifts that were delivered to Catholic Community Services along with some thank you notes from the families and their case workers.

*"I just wanted to reach out and share that, especially as someone who is new to my families; it meant so much to both me and my families to be able to share the holiday season with them. Bringing some joy to the kids by being able to drop off stockings and gifts was such a treat for all of us. All of the kids seemed so surprised to be receiving something, and the gifts were so thoughtful and lovingly packaged, the kids really felt like they were being thought about as individuals. One child in particular opened an action figures, gasped, looked at me and exclaimed, "HOW DID YOU KNOW?!" It was really great to do, and I'm so grateful to the donors, as are their families."*



*"All the children that I delivered the gifts to were very appreciative. The little ones were excited to play with the boxes and anything that made noise. The elementary age kids were extremely excited with the fact that they were getting gifts.*

*They smiled and showed off each and every gift they received. The teenagers were extremely thankful for the gifts; they thanked me and hugged me without being told to do so!"*



*"The art supplies my twelve-year-old received is not just for having fun; she is using her art to work through some very difficult emotions, so that she may be able to have a life that doesn't include so much unhealed hurt from not being with her parents. I believe that this is something that may literally change the course of her life."*

## Cont. Christ Child Society of Tucson's own Red Wagon Story

*"The gifts provided by the Christ Child went to two families. One family was a single mother with three children who has been really struggling. She works full time, but the costs continue to rise and eat away at her paycheck, so Christmas gifts would have been very difficult for her to manage for all of the children. There was immense gratitude from her and all three of her children when I arrived with a bundle of gifts. All three children were very excited to see and be able to place all of their gifts under their tree. The oldest boy looked at everything and said, "This was the best Christmas."*

*The second family was a couple and three children. They had been having financial difficulties due to the father being out of work. The children are all very young so they didn't understand the significance of the moment, but the parents sure did. Not only did this family receive toys and new clothing for the children, they received bedding and plush blankets which is something they desperately needed as their home gets very cold. Both mom and dad were very grateful for everything we were able to provide them and repeatedly said, "Thank you!"*

## Santa Bernie and CCST Visit Pio Decimo

Santa Bernie Chuinard and his CCST elves (Judy, Cindy, Angela, Bonnie, Nancy) made Christmas happier for pre-school children at Pio Decimo this December. Pio Decimo appreciates CCST donations!



# Christ CCST Fundraiser Denim and Diamonds: we are going to build on our success from our 50th Gala...

We are doing it again on Saturday, May 14, 2022. This fun event makes it possible for us to help the children of the greater Tucson area. Please save the date and join us for dinner, silent & live auctions, dancing and more!



***Join the members of the Christ Child Society of Tucson in their fundraising celebration dinner and auction to raise funds to help the under-served children of Tucson!***

***4:00 Mass Celebration (optional) for 135th National Christ Child Anniversary  
Our Lady of the Desert Church, 7101 W Picture Rocks Rd, Tucson***

***5:30 Check-in / Cash Bar (The Oasis at Wild Horse Ranch)***

***6:30 Dinner, Music, Dancing, and Live & Silent Auctions throughout the evening***

***8:30 Silent Auction bidding closes...winners announced***

***Donation: \$85 per person. Hosted Tables Available  
RSVP by April 30th***

# Recap of CCST 2021 Service Activities

The flyers on this page have been created to help communicate the various CCST activities that help serve the underserved children in Tucson.

The flyer on the next page helps communicate how CCST uses donated funds and the benefits to both CCST and the donor.

Bernie and Judy Chuinard have had great success raising donations with these communications.

If you would like copies of these flyers, please contact Bernie ([berniechuinard@hotmail.com](mailto:berniechuinard@hotmail.com)) or Deb ([Deb@auclair1.com](mailto:Deb@auclair1.com)).

## Christ Child Society of Tucson Serving the Under-served in 2021

Catholic Community Services  
Christmas gifts for 80 children

Pio Decimo  
Christmas  
Party with  
Santa

Aviva Children's  
Services Foster  
Teens Support

St Augustine  
High School  
fleece blankets  
for under-served

Handmade  
quilts provided  
to low-income seniors

Layettes - Newborn  
Essentials for new mothers



**NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY  
OF TUCSON**

[info@christchildtucson.org](mailto:info@christchildtucson.org)  
[www.christchildtucson.org](http://www.christchildtucson.org)  
(520)256-9576



## **NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY OF TUCSON**

# **You are invited to support The Christ Child Society of Tucson's (CCST) "Denim and Diamonds" Fund Raising Event**

**What ways can I contribute?** You can greatly help with a donation of personal or business goods or services. Monetary contributions are always appreciated.

**Who sees my donation?** You will receive ample exposure to our members and friends of the Christ Child Society of Tucson through multiple pre and post event advertising, our newsletter, your logo on our event advertising and an announcement of your name on auction night with a display showcasing your donation. Our goal is to provide maximum advertising of our event highlighting event sponsors and donors. We will try to accommodate any special recognition requests.

**Where does the money go?** We make every penny count! All funds are used to continue to provide program services for more than 2,500 moms, infants, school aged children and teens each year. The funds are vital to our programs. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

**How Do I donate?** Return the attached Donation Form (CCST, PO Box 36212, Tucson, AZ 85740) or contact us at (520)245-2485 if you have any questions or for donation pick-up.

Every donation makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the women, infants and school aged children in Tucson, the San Xavier and Sells Reservation schools.

Thank you for your consideration!

Bernie Chuinard, Acquisitions  
520-245-2485 or [berniechuinard@hotmail.com](mailto:berniechuinard@hotmail.com)

[info@christchildtucson.org](mailto:info@christchildtucson.org)  
[www.christchildtucson.org](http://www.christchildtucson.org)

# National Christ Child Convention 2022



If you have never experienced an NCCS Conference or Convention then this is the opportunity of lifetime. In 2022 it is in our backyard...Tucson! Bishop Wiesenberger is attending. He is very appreciative of the work our chapter does in Tucson. We would love for you to come and enjoy it. Blessings, Angela Schneider, NCCS President Elect

## Program Updates

### Literacy (Bonnie)

The literacy committee has been active making the books we collected ready to distribute to children in need. Bonnie and Nancy and Deb's friend from NYS, Gloria, spent an afternoon placing "Gift of CCST" stickers that Pat L. printed in books!



# Program Updates, cont.

## Layettes Program (Dianna & Vita)

Dianna and Vita delivered forty layettes to the mothers of newborns at Answers for Life, a Tucson Pregnancy Center. Their motto is "Your first step to a changing life." The CCST Layette Committee also gave them knitted hats and beautifully sewn quilts. Answers for Life was beyond thrilled at CCST's generosity. The Layette Committee also delivered age appropriate books to Casa de Los Ninos. Dianna has been working with St. Augustine's Pack the Playpen event which will occur during the 40 days of Lent.

**Editor's Note:** Just as I was completing this month's newsletter, I received an email from "Mary". I just had to include it. In case you were ever wondering whether crocheting an afghan could make a difference, just read her heart-felt note.

Our chapter members and I are so proud of our layette committee for creating such wonderful outcomes.

-Deb

ttello

This is our daughter, Grace. In the first photo she is four days old, in the second photo, she is 9 months.

We adopted Grace when she was three days old. Her amazing birth mother chose life for her, and ultimately adoption-when she realized she couldn't parent her. There was a short period in her life between leaving the hospital and us flying to Tucson to meet her, where she had neither an adoptive parent or a biological parent to hold her. Our amazing social worker wrapped her in this blanket and held her, waiting for her forever family. You kept her warm, she felt loved and wrapped in your strength and prayers.... she was never alone.

Thank you for all that you have done for the women in your community. Please share this with the amazing women who make the beautiful layette packages. We are forever grateful for those that wrapped our daughter when we were not able to.

We are eternally grateful for you.

God bless,

Mary



Picture mosaic added at "Mary's" request.

# Message From the President

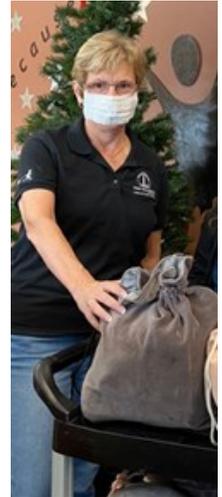
*What summed up these past three months for me was the Wings Foster Teens Collection at Santa Catalina Catholic Church. I am so happy to report that because of their generosity, we are able to continue to donate to Aviva Children's Services for many months!*

*Here is the pulpit pitch I gave at the Santa Catalina Wings Collection. Not only did this talk resonate with the parishioners, but many told me their stories of being in Child Protective Services and how important what CCST is doing is.*

*Deb Auclair*



Hi! I'm Deb Auclair, a fellow Santa Catalina parishioner and president of the Christ Child Society of Tucson, an organization who has been helping underserved children in the Tucson area for over 50 years. We are so thankful that Fr. Lamar and Santa Catalina Church is allowing the Christ Child to hold a collection event next weekend at all Masses again this year!



I'd like to take a moment to give you some background on what this really is. Last year, many of you have already donated to this event. Thank you!

A lot of people don't realize that when Child Protective Services removes a teen from a home there is not a lot of time. The foster

teens leave with nothing and their foster family is often unprepared. This is why we collect!

The items you donate, whether it is toiletries, socks, or blankets, are placed in a drawstring bag that our members hand sew (example here). The bags contain a pocket for a special daily devotional book, called "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young (hold up book).

What brought this need home to me was an interaction I had at Joann's Fabric store. I was shopping for fabric to make Wings drawstring bags for foster teens. A young girl was cutting my fabric and kindly asked (like they always do) what I was making. When I told her I am sewing drawstring bags for foster teens, she exclaimed, 'I was once one of those teens. This will mean the world to them. It shows them that someone cares!' I felt this was truly a God moment.

So please remember at all Masses next weekend, we will be collecting items for foster teens that have been displaced from their homes. We give a quantity of our bags every month to Aviva Children's Services, an Easter Seals organization, who is very happy to distribute them and could use more.

Thank you so very much for your generosity.

# Message From the President, cont.

The Christ Child Society of Tucson would like to thank the parishioners of Santa Catalina Catholic Church from the bottoms our hearts for the generosity they demonstrated the weekend of February 19-20, 2022. We collected over 24 overflowing totes of hygiene items, blankets, and large cash donations to provide for Foster teens that Aviva Children's Services supports. Not only did they donate items, but parishioners even shared their stories of working in the Foster Teen system and how necessary the Wings collection is. Due to Santa Catalina's generosity the Christ Child can support Aviva on a regular basis and expand into their group homes.



← Before  
After →



Special thanks to  
Fr. Lamar & Fr. Pat  
for their continued support!



Due to the generosity of our fellow parishioners, our Wings foster child collection last Sunday was a stunning success! Your donations filled 24 totes to the brim with soaps, toothpaste, water bottles & more!

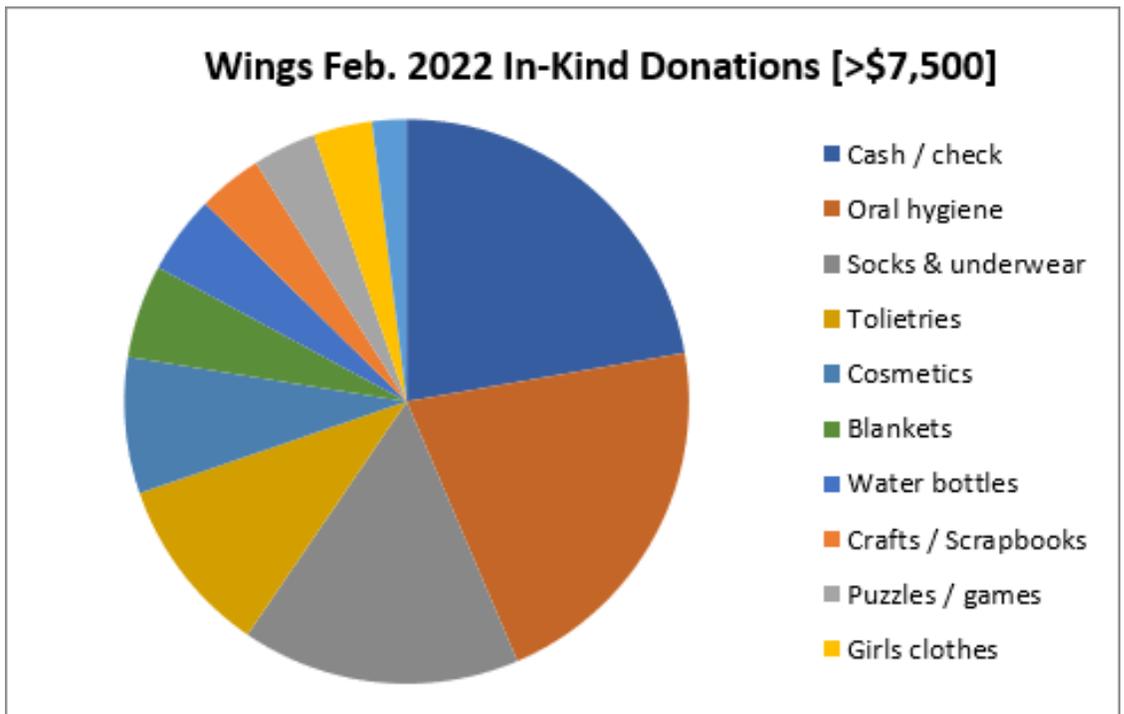


Many Thanks to  
Santa Catalina Parishioners  
CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY of Tucson



Wings





# 501c3 Non-profits were all Jim Click Raffle Winners in 2022

Thank you, Frances Smith, for making sure CCST is a part of the Jim Click raffle. Jim Click rewarded \$1,000 to each of the non-profit organizations that participate in his raffle. Because of your focus and leadership in this regard, CCST benefited from Jim Click's generosity.

Angela Schneider sent Jim a thank you note for his generosity and he responded with the following note:

Date: March 4, 2022 at 11:19:31 AM MST; Good morning Ms. Schneider, I truly, appreciate your nice thank you letter. I am so glad you were able to participate in the raffle. I think the Christ Child Society of Tucson is a wonderful treasure for our great community. My many thanks to you all, for all you do! I hope you will join us, again, this year in our Millions for Tucson Raffle. May 2022 be your best year, yet!

Best regards, Jim Click



## CCST Calendar for the rest of our fiscal year:

Please mark your calendars for all upcoming 2022 CCST **Meetings**, **Fundraisers** and Events (Rev. 28Feb22)

Month	Event	Date	Location / participants
Jan 2022	CCST member meeting	01/10/22	Scordatos, Stone Road
	Layettes of Love collection	01/10/22	Our Lady of the Desert
Feb 2022	CCST member meeting – Annual Business Meeting – Member Appreciation Meeting	02/14/22	Scordatos, Stone Road
	Wings Foster Teens Drawstring Bags items (Collection at all weekend Masses)	02/19-20/22	Santa Catalina Catholic Church. 14380 N Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ
	½ Day of Reflection for all Members	02/14/22	Redemptorist Renewal Center Lead by Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Pat
Mar 2022	CCST member meeting	03/14/22	Scordatos, Stone Road
	St. Augustine Pack the Playpen (Lent )	3/02/22-4/15/22	
Apr 2022	CCST member meeting	04/11/22	Scordatos, Stone Road
	Layette - Shower of Love for Casa de Los Nino's	04/30/22	Dianna' home
May 2022	CCST member meeting -Recognition	05/09/22	Scordatos, Stone Road
	Denim & Diamonds annual event	05/14/22	The Oasis Wildhorse Ranch, Tucson, AZ
Sept. 22	National CCS Convention	09/15-18/2022	Tucson (Ventana Canyon)

Please visit our website at [www.christchildtucson.org](http://www.christchildtucson.org)

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# In Closing...Low Calorie Lenten Fasting

Fast from judging others;  
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from Emphasis on differences;  
Feast on The unity of all life.

Fast from Apparent darkness;  
Feast on The reality of all light.

Fast from Thoughts of illness;  
Feast on The healing power of God.

Fast from Words that pollute;  
Feast on Phrases that purify.

Fast from Discontent;  
Feast on Gratitude.

Fast from Anger;  
Feast on Patience.

Fast from Worry;  
Feast on God's providence.

Fast from Complaining;  
Feast on Appreciation.

Fast from Negatives'  
Feast on Affirmatives.

Fast from Unrelenting pressures;  
Feast on Unceasing prayer.

Fast from Bitterness;  
Feast on Forgiveness.

Fast from Self-concern;  
Feast on Compassion for others.

Fast from Personal anxiety;  
Feast on Eternal truth.

Fast from Discouragement;  
Feast on Hope.

Fast from Facts that depress;  
Feast on Realities that uplift.

Fast from Thoughts that weaken;  
Feast on Promises that inspire.

Fast from Shadows of sorrow;  
Feast on The sunlight of serenity.

Fast from Idle gossip;  
Feast on Purposeful silence.

Fast from Problems that overwhelm;  
Feast on Prayer that sustains.



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

[www.christchildtucson.org](http://www.christchildtucson.org)

or call: 585-385-9064