



**NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY**  
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

6110 Executive Boulevard, STE 504  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Phone: 301.881.2490  
Fax: 301.881.2493  
office@nationalchristchild.org

[www.nationalchristchild.org](http://www.nationalchristchild.org)  
[facebook.com/nationalchristchild](https://facebook.com/nationalchristchild)  
[instagram.com/nationalchristchild](https://instagram.com/nationalchristchild)  
[www.maryvirginiamerrick.org](http://www.maryvirginiamerrick.org)  
[facebook.com/maryvirginiamerrick](https://facebook.com/maryvirginiamerrick)

# Connections

“Nothing is ever too much to do for a child.” Mary Virginia Merrick, Founder



Spring / Summer 2026

## President's Letter

### Happy Spring!

The national board had a productive and energizing winter. For the second consecutive year, we gathered in Plymouth, Michigan, for our annual in-person board meeting. It was a valuable time to connect, listen, exchange ideas, and thoughtfully plan as we look ahead to the next term.

We are currently working on several important initiatives, including updates to the Chapter Guide and enhancements to our website—both aimed at strengthening support for our chapters and improving overall effectiveness.

A key part of our strategic plan is to build a stronger national presence and brand recognition. The National Office is currently providing every chapter with professionally developed marketing materials. This fully funded initiative is designed to elevate each Christ Child chapter's visibility, strengthen outreach efforts, and showcase the incredible work being done across the country. Examples of marketing materials include tablecloths, banners, tents and print ads with the Christ Child logo and chapter information.

As we look ahead, we continue to be inspired by the dedication and impact of each chapter.

We look forward to sharing many more of your stories in the months to come.



*Katie Gantner*



## Director's Letter

### It's Time For A Change

This summer will be a busy and exciting time for our office team. As we prepare for the September National Convention in Columbus, we'll also be turning our attention to an important transition—sorting and organizing years of files in anticipation of our upcoming move.

After more than a decade in our Rockville, MD office—our home since June 2013—we will be saying goodbye to a space that has served us so well. With the building recently purchased, the national office will be relocating this December.

While it's always bittersweet to leave a familiar place, we're truly looking forward to this next chapter. Our new space will offer a fresh start as we head into 2027 and a welcoming environment for Christ Child members to visit.

We're excited for what's ahead and can't wait to share this new chapter with you!

*Mona Lynch*



# Why Marketing Your Chapter Will Make a Difference



The Christ Child Society of Tucson (CCS Tucson) recently took advantage of a fully funded marketing opportunity offered by the National Christ Child Society (NCCS) office to assist chapters with marketing and outreach.

The professional marketing materials provided by NCCS will help chapters clearly communicate the Christ Child mission, attract new members and supporters, enhance fundraising efforts, and increase awareness within the community. CCS Tucson plans to use these materials at fundraising events, community fairs and at their monthly meetings held at a local restaurant. CCS Tucson President Deb Auclair said,

***“Many people who pass by our meetings often stop to ask about our organization, and these materials will help us easily introduce them to the Christ Child Society and the work we do.”***

In fact, CCS Tucson has already seen how effective simple outreach can be. At a recent meeting, a tri-fold display board was placed outside the room. A passerby stopped to learn more about the mission. Touched by the work of the Christ Child Society, the man asked the restaurant manager to give every member at the meeting a gift card to the restaurant—a generous gesture valued at \$300.

When chapters share the Christ Child Society mission, hearts can be moved in unexpected ways. With the new marketing materials, CCS Tucson looks forward to continuing to spread awareness of CCS Tucson and the work they do as well as increase membership.



## CCS Dallas-Ft Worth Pulling for Kids

The Christ Child Society of Dallas-Fort Worth tried something new. They wanted to bring in new donors and have an event that attracted members of the community outside of their current membership base. They accomplished both with a “Pull for Kids Skeet Shooting Tournament.”

Each team paid \$600 to enter. (There were four people per team.) Each person got to shoot 100 sporting clays. They received a continental breakfast and a BBQ lunch. Prizes were given for best shots with and without mulligans, plus there was a prize for the best shooting team.

Chapter President Jamie Horning said they found a completely new list of sponsors in places they had never looked before. They made new relationships. Guys loved wearing their favorite camo (as the weather was a bit cool) and people who didn’t know about Christ Child learned about us.

Another success at this fundraiser: the whiskey pull. Attendees paid \$40 and in return got to take home a mystery bag of whiskey/bourbon. All the whiskey/bourbon prizes were valued at \$40 and up. Christ Child members got local stores to donate many of the bottles.

The chapter is already talking about how they might make the event even bigger and better next year.



## CCS Northern Michigan’s Food for Wolverine Project

The Christ Child Society of Northern Michigan supports children and families in Wolverine, Michigan, where many face poverty and limited resources. The chapter provides essentials like clothing, books, and educational opportunities.

In 2022, the group partnered with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and the Joy Fellowship Food Pantry to launch a mobile food distribution. After training and planning, the first event was held on December 10, 2022.

Now held six times a year, distributions provide 10,000–13,000 pounds of food per event. Volunteers organize outdoor drive-through pickups. These drive-through events serve local families, and any extra food is shared with nearby organizations, including the senior center and Joy Fellowship Pantry. The project has grown to also include pet food distribution by Little Traverse Bay Humane Society.

This initiative has become a vital and meaningful effort, providing food to over 700 children in 2025 and strengthening community partnerships.

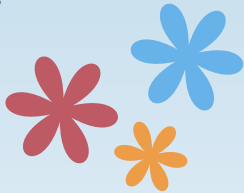


# A New Home for Healing and Hope

The Detroit Chapter recently celebrated a milestone years in the making with the opening of the new Christ Child House. Christ Child House is a trauma-informed residential treatment center for boys ages 6 to 16, serving children facing complex emotional, behavioral and physical challenges rooted in severe abuse and neglect. Building on more than 75 years of supporting children and families, the new House creates greater opportunities for healing and hope, offering a place where boys can feel safe, grow in confidence and simply be kids again.

This project spanned nearly eight years, from early planning through fundraising, design and construction. It was made possible by a grassroots campaign that raised \$14.8 million through the generosity of members, donors and friends of the mission.

The result is a home designed with care and intention, balancing spaces for learning and play with areas that offer calm when it is needed most. A dedicated classroom, sensory room, indoor recreation space and welcoming gathering areas create an environment grounded in both structure and comfort.



Even small, everyday moments are considered, including time spent in the barber shop where a boy can feel a quiet sense of confidence and dignity. Every detail reflects a deeper understanding: surroundings matter, especially for children in need of stability and connection.

Christ Child House is one of three arms of outreach of Christ Child Society of Detroit, along with Layettes and Literacy. Together, these programs reflect a shared commitment to walking alongside children with compassion and care. Inside this home, that commitment takes shape each day in quiet, meaningful ways. A sense of safety. A moment of trust. A step forward. This is where hope begins and where futures can change.



# Celebrating 90 Years: CCS Boston, a Legacy of Love and Service

The early history of the Christ Child Society of Boston (CCS Boston) is filled with tradition, service, and deeply rooted family connections. Current Chapter President, Jane McGuire, recalls that her aunt, Catherine Dennehy, along with Jane’s mother, Ann Manning, were among the original members of the Boston chapter. Their commitment to service helped shape the early mission of the Society

Founded in 1936 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the chapter maintained notable connections within the community. Rose Kennedy was considered an honorary member of CCS Boston. Jane said her aunt once invited Mrs. Kennedy to speak at a Communion breakfast. Mrs. Kennedy graciously replied with a handwritten note, expressing her desire to attend but explaining she was unavailable on the proposed date due to her son John’s wedding. The original breakfast had been scheduled for September 12, 1953, the day John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Bouvier! The Society adjusted the date of the breakfast to accommodate Mrs. Kennedy’s schedule. Jane still treasures the handwritten note from Mrs. Kennedy to her aunt—a tangible link to both her family’s history and the Society’s legacy.

Thanks to her mother and aunts, Jane’s connection to CCS Boston began in childhood. Some of her earliest memories are of her father lovingly crafting toys for the chapter at Christmastime, including handmade dollhouses. Other family members contributed to the cause as well—one of Jane’s aunts made gloves and hats at Christmastime as well as blankets for layettes.

One of the chapter’s most impactful initiatives was the Christ Child Settlement House, located on Kinard Street in Cambridge. This community center served neighborhood children for many years, offering both daily support and a summer camp program. The Settlement House remained active until the 1950s and stood as a cornerstone of outreach for families in need.

Today, the chapter continues its mission of serving children with compassion and care. Through its annual Christmas Program, more than 300 children receive clothing and toys, bringing joy and dignity to families during the holiday season. The chapter supports partner organizations by providing toddler bags filled with essential items. Members remain dedicated to the Christ Child Society’s signature program by lovingly creating layettes for newborns, ensuring that the youngest are welcomed with warmth and comfort. Through these ongoing efforts, the legacy of service remains as strong and meaningful as ever. Happy 90th Anniversary to CCS Boston. Thank you to the members who have devotedly served children in need in the Boston area.

## Here are other chapters celebrating great milestones in 2026

Boca Raton, FL	35
Boston, MA	90
Cleveland, OH	110
Columbus, OH	45
Dayton, OH	115
Door County, WI	30
Monterey Bay, CA	10
Omaha, NE	120
San Jose, CA	20
Texas Capital Area, TX	25
Tucson, AZ	55

# Register Today! NCCS Convention 2026

September  
10-12, 2026

Embassy Suites,  
Columbus, Ohio

Join us for an unforgettable  
experience featuring:

- Inspiring speakers
- Engaging sessions & workshops
- Networking with other Christ Child members
- Exclusive experiences you won't want to miss

We can't wait to see you there!



For details and registration information click on the link below:

## Convention Registration Information

# “See a Need and Fill it”

Mary Virginia Merrick

### 2024-2026 NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:**

Katie Gantner

**President-Elect:**

Sue Seline

**Past President:**

Angela Schneider

**Treasurer:**

Kathy Thompson

**Recording Secretary:**

Jane Larsen

**Executive Director:**

Moira Lynch

**Vice Presidents:**

Tina Bailey

Jeanette May

Terri Mohler

Margaret Whelan Strong

**Directors at Large:**

Bobbie McArthur

Donna Perrine

**Spiritual Advisor:**

Rev. Msgr. Ronny E. Jenkins

## SERVANT OF GOD MARY VIRGINIA MERRICK



Advocate for Dignity and Education  
for Children in Need

### QUICK FACTS

- November 2, 1866  
Washington, D.C.
- Founder of Christ Child Society
- January 10, 1955

**Buried:** Washington D.C.

- A childhood accident left her partially paralyzed, shaping her life's mission.
- She once hoped to become a nun, but instead founded a lay movement.
- As a child, she prayed for her mother's conversion—and it happened.
- The Christ Child Society provides gifts, clothing, camps, and care for children in need.

### BIOGRAPHY

Mary Virginia Merrick (1866–1955) was an American Catholic laywoman dedicated to serving children in need. Born in Washington, D.C., she suffered a spinal injury in her youth that left her partially paralyzed. Rather than limiting her, this experience inspired deep compassion and a desire to serve others. At age 13, she vowed to dedicate her life to Christ through helping the poor. In 1887, she founded the Christ Child Society, welcoming children of all races and backgrounds during a time of segregation. She later helped expand Catholic social services and education for children with special needs. Through her faith and perseverance, she created a lasting legacy of dignity, inclusion, and care for society's most vulnerable.

Mary Virginia Merrick  
PRAY FOR US



### LEGACY

- A lifelong vow to care for 13 to live a chaste life and to "serve Christ in the poor"
- Founded the National Christ Child Society (open to all races and creeds during segregation), which currently has 44 Chapters nationwide.
- A lasting national movement of lay Catholics serving children in need for 139 years.
- She was born and spent her life serving poor and disabled children in Washington, D.C.

LEARN  
MORE



“”  
THE  
CHRIST CHILD  
WILL PROVIDE