



Newsletter

Issue

#02

Fall 2022



Rachael Jensen

Partnership Spotlight: UNO

Within 48 hours of emailing a flyer about the Christ Child Scholarship Program to a couple of advisors, Rachael Jensen, then Director of Youth Safety and Health Security, had 49 applications. Every application detailed tremendous financial need, and many shared very personal struggles.

In February 2022, Christ Child Society approved the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) as a certified agency for the Scholarship Program. The agency promotes the Scholarship Program, seeks candidates, and assists with the application process. Once approved, it walks alongside the student, helping

with their unique needs, and ensuring their success. The beauty of the partnership is that the certified agency finds eligible candidates and applies on their behalf while the Christ Child Society scholarship committee selects the awardees.

With such a tight deadline, Rachael was surprised at the enormous response to her flyer. Student responses to the scholarship poured in. Zoom calls were scheduled so Rachael could interview each candidate before submitting their application. Several students juggled the responsibilities of being pregnant and parenting, had multiple jobs, or made their way back to school once their kids were a little older. One overwhelmed young woman even came into Rachael's office and asked, "Would you help me process my life?"

In response to the newly identified need, UNO created the Office of Hardship and Resiliency Support (OHRS) and put Rachael in charge. This office not only supports the pregnant and parenting students at UNO but also supports students with lived foster care and justice experience, and students with incarcerated parents. In this first round, Christ Child awarded six \$5,000 renewable scholarships to current UNO student parents. Working together, UNO and Christ Child are helping students on the path to new beginnings and future stability. As Rachael says, "Education influences futures. We have an opportunity to help change the narrative, infuse hope, and encourage generational prosperity. And we do that together, as a community."

Christ Child Society has shared the love of Christ, giving hope, vital resources, and support to families in Omaha for 116 years.

Our programs have grown. Here's what we've done since 2019 (the first year of our scholarship program):



\$325,000
PLEGDED IN
SCHOLARSHIPS



63
SINGLE MOMS HELPED
BY SCHOLARSHIPS



25
SINGLE MOMS HAVE
GRADUATED



6,500
NEWBORNS AND MOMS
RECEIVED LAYETTES



70
FAMILIES RECEIVED
CAR SEATS



A Successful Soiree!

A beautiful fall evening among friends and supporters of the Christ Child Society of Omaha was celebrated on Thursday, October 14 at Happy Hollow Club. Over 175 guests attended Soiree to raise essential funds in support of the mission and programs of the Christ Child Society.

The hard-working committee, spearheaded by Chairwomen, Cathy McNamara and Ann Tjaden, delighted guests with a delicious dinner served on tables beautifully adorned with pumpkins, hydrangeas, eucalyptus greens, and rose hips. The program included a newly launched video that highlighted scholarship recipients, programs, and partner agencies. After the poignant presentation, Master of Ceremonies and Board member, Tim Reed, led the attendees in a Raise the Paddle. The combined efforts of the dedicated committee, Honorary Chairpersons, Mary Anne & Dr. David Hoover, and our generous donors, have filled our hearts with gratitude as we exceeded all imagined hopes and expectations, raising over \$220,000.

Welcoming New Members

Nearly 30 women attended the New Member Social September 29th at the Christ Child Center. The women heard about Christ Child foundress, Mary Virginia Merrick and her lifetime of service to the poor from her recumbent wheelchair. Merrick resolved to do something every day for the Christ Child and directed her efforts to the relief of children in need. A national organization grew from her small beginnings!

Attendees also learned about the volunteer auxiliaries that make up the Omaha chapter, what they do, and what it's like to start a new one. Auxiliaries strive to find bite-size opportunities to do good amid busy lives, building community at the same time.

Organizers see the potential to start two new auxiliaries: One involving mothers of babies and children not yet in school; and one for single women and those who are not mothers. Everyone is welcome! Over 50 years of auxiliary experience affirms that lifelong friendships spring from the fun and work that is part of launching a new auxiliary and serving those in need.



Anyone interested can get in touch via email at omaha@nationalchristchild.org.

Dear Friends,

When I reflect on the last two years as President of Christ Child Society of Omaha, one word comes to mind: "growth". Growth has occurred at many levels in Christ Child. We now have a physical presence at the Eileen Ryan Christ Child Center; we have expanded our programs, added new partner agencies, and involved high schools in layette assemblies. This could have not occurred without the extraordinary devotion of our board and auxiliary members, administrators, past presidents, and benefactors who have gone above and beyond to carry out our mission: "To bring Christ's love to the community through layettes and programs that serve children and families in need."

I am humbled, thankful, and honored to have been part of this evolving process. I have always believed that individuals are born with an innate desire to help others. Philanthropy improves one's own life along with the lives of others. It is not just giving monetary resources, but giving one's expertise, talent, passion and experience. The Christ Child Society of Omaha and its members embody this concept. As we transition to new leadership, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to this amazing experience. Christ Child and its mission will continue to remain a large part of my family's life and I am excited for this next chapter.

Blessings,

Christ Child Omaha Board President
(pictured above is Denise and her daughter)



Hand-Sewn Hugs

Since its inception, the one constant of Christ Child Omaha has been providing layettes for unwed mothers and their newborn babies. Over the years, the contents of the layette has evolved with one exception: a hand-sewn flannel blanket.


Dedicated members of two auxiliaries sew these flannel blankets: Ses Enfants in Omaha and Ses Amies in Fordyce. To create 2000 blankets needed for the layettes each year, the auxiliaries seek help from volunteer seamstresses. A team of new Christ Child fans has been recruited to assist. In July, Christ Child teamed up with the Fashion Arts Collective (FAC) to sew blankets. During a one-night blitz, over 25 volunteers gathered at Midtown's Empire Room and, using the sewing machines set up for FAC, created over 200 blankets. It was so successful, plans are underway



to repeat this sewing blitz with FAC in 2023.

The flannel used is paid for by generous donors and purchased using a new bulk pricing contract. Each layette blanket is made from the softest of flannel fabrics, tied with love, and folded into the layette along with other necessities a newborn needs during its first days in this wonderful world. The hand-sewn blankets represent a loving hug from the Christ Child himself for the newborn baby!

MARY VIRGINIA MERRICK DAY AT DUCHESNE



Eighty Duchesne Academy seniors gathered on a beautiful fall day for the “Mary Virginia Merrick Day of Service.” Inspired by the founder of the Christ Child Society, the students and some pint-sized Duchesne preschoolers shared the hands-on project of filling 500 backpacks with baby essentials which were delivered to 30 agencies across Omaha, Council Bluffs and Lincoln. The agencies will give them to new mothers in need of these vital newborn necessities. Watching the students in swift action proved that “many hands make light work!”

“It was a great opportunity for our seniors to learn about an important person [Mary Virginia Merrick], a great organization, and expand their awareness to some of the social needs that are out there. In particular, I am really grateful that Christ Child reaches out like this, and is structured as a partnership of many hands. I believe that people are born with the innate desire to help others...and so allowing our students to express and live into that desire is a true gift.”

— SCOTT QUINN, CAMPUS MINISTRY DIRECTOR AT DUCHESNE ACADEMY

Accelerating the Car Seat Program!



Christ Child Society of Omaha's newest program of providing car seats to expectant mothers is picking up speed. In August, we partnered with the Heart Ministry Center to surprise 20 new and expectant mothers with a grow-with-me car seat. The mothers attended a car seat safety and installation class taught by a specialist from Children's Hospital. Following the class, the expectant moms beamed with delight upon learning they each would receive a brand new car seat to safely travel with their newborn baby!

This fall, the car seat program also traveled to Lincoln and delivered car seats to the Women's Care Center. In December, members of Christ Child's Les Angeles auxiliary will return to the Heart Ministry Center to host a “Holiday Car Seat Giveaway.”

The Car Seat program assists under-resourced mothers for whom a quality car seat is simply unaffordable. We are thankful to our generous donors for supporting this vital program!



WITH GRATITUDE

Advent is upon us and Christmas is not far behind. As we anticipate the arrival of the Christ Child, our thoughts are filled with gratitude for His faithfulness in providing for the needs of the Christ Child Society and the children and families we serve. We are also tremendously grateful to our generous supporters for walking alongside us and making it possible to expand our services to reach more families across the Heartland. With your help, we continue to strive to reflect Christ's love to the world.




'Tis the Season of Giving

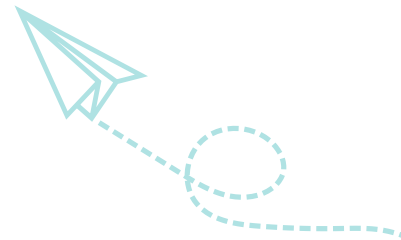
All we have is a gift from God and we are invited to return those gifts to the Lord, and to do what we can to serve those who are less fortunate. If you would like to share a gift before the end of the year, please use the enclosed envelope. Your gift is fully tax deductible.

Dues Are Due! OH MY, OH MY, THE DAYS DO FLY!

It is time again to collect dues from our members. A small \$34 portion of your dues supports the National Christ Child Society and the many services it provides all chapters. The balance remains with your auxiliary to support auxiliary functions. Did you know...The entire amount you pay for dues is tax deductible? **Please include the name of your auxiliary in the Notes with any form of payment.**

Your 2023 dues of \$50 can be paid:

-  Online at christchildomaha.com
-  Mail a check to: Christ Child Society of Omaha
2920 S 110th Court, Omaha, NE 68144
-  Scan the QR code and pay with Venmo



Follow us!

2920 S 110th Court | Omaha, NE 68144

CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
OF OMAHA
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

