



April/May 2019

The Christ Child Society  
Naples, Florida

## Red Wagon Gala most successful ever

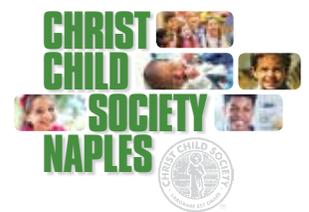
**T**he Red Wagons rolled again Saturday evening, April 6, right into Royal Poinciana Golf Club and left with a record setting sum for the children in need of Collier County.

The Radio Flyer Red Wagon has long been a hallmark theme for the Christ Child Society Gala. Held every two years, the Gala provides the funds to support the mission of the Christ Child Society Naples, a multi-denominational organization established to help the 15,000 children living at or below the poverty level in Collier County. The programs served by Christ Child Society are the Children's Advocacy Center, Fun Time Academy, Golden Gate Elementary School, Grace Place for Children

and Families, and Habitat for Humanity.

The Radio Flyer wagons, filled with flowers and accompanied by layettes, a signature piece of the Christ Child mission, greeted an enthusiastic crowd of supporters and guests as they entered. After signing in, attendees were encouraged to purchase a flashing heart necklace. The necklace permitted the wearer to participate in an exciting game of *Heads or Tails*. The last person standing was the winner of steak knives and gift cards to Capital Grill and LaMoraga restaurants. Vendors also sold tickets for an opportunity to win a raffle of David Yurman jewelry

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Janis Morrisroe, *Red Wagon Gala* Chair with Kathy Pezzuti.



## Board of Directors

Kathy Clark  
*President*

Colleen Mayes  
*Past President*

Barbara Franks  
*First Vice President*

TBD  
*Second Vice President*

Cheryl Grant  
Mary Henrickson  
*Co-Secretaries*

Bobbi Rossi  
*Treasurer*

TBD  
*Finance Director*

Maureen Kincaid  
Colleen Kaminski  
*Co-Membership VPs*

MaryAngela Smith  
*Communications VP*

Sharon Prentice  
*Infant Care VP*

Kathryn Wagner  
*Basic Needs VP*

Mary Polizzotto  
*Literacy VP*

Jane Austermilller  
Gail Garratt  
Arlene Rossi  
*Members at Large*

The Rev. Kathleen Kircher  
*Spiritual Advisor*

## Members honor Marge Crnkovich

**O**ur dear member Marge Crnkovich passed away in January. The National Christ Child Society had requested that all chapters honor the birthday of our founder Mary Virginia Merrick on March 25. What better way to honor Mary Virginia and Marge than to attend mass for them on that day at St. John the Evangelist? Some 25 members attended as well as Marge's husband, Nick, and friends. Pat Limbach spoke of meeting Marge and of the many wonderful things she had done for Christ Child. Kathleen Flynn Fox compared the similarities in the lives of Mary Virginia Merrick and Marge:

"Our Christ Child founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, honored the legacy of her parents by using her family wealth and influence to change the national conversation about poverty long before Franklin D. Roosevelt took office. Christ Child Society was the working model for FDR's New Deal when it came to caring for children who were abandoned during the Great Depression.

"Marge Crnkovich's life was formed by that Great Depression. She honored her working class parents by caring for her brother. She

also honored her vows of love and fidelity to Nick, her husband of 66 years, and Marge honored their six children with devotion and high expectations. She honored her friends and neighbors with her gracious and bountiful hospitality. At Christ Child Society of Naples, she honored us by being an unshakable advocate for children and women who are underserved or at risk. Marge's tenacity and hard work became the hallmarks of her life of service to children and women who were in need.

"Marge was a true keeper of her faith.

"Mary Virginia Merrick, Servant of God. Pray for us.

"Marjorie Ann Crnkovich, friend of all God's children, pray for us as we pray for you. May you rest in peace, dear friend."

It was Marge's request that any tributes in her memory be made to Christ Child Society of Naples. Her friends and family have been extremely generous. The Habitat Scholars Fund will receive part of the total, as will the Layette mission. Remaining funds will be divided between the Literacy and Basic Needs missions.





Past President Colleen Mayes and incoming President Kathy Clark at Red Wagon Gala.

## New Board induction, Past Presidents honored at final meeting of 2018-2019

Colleen Mayes received a standing ovation as she outlined the accomplishments of the past year including the most successful Gala ever, the new video highlighting the Christ Child Society and the many new members who have recently joined. Past presidents received gold Christ Child Society pins. Kathleen Flynn Fox inducted the new Board, and each received a silver Christ Child pin. Kathy Clark, as first vice president, became president for the 2019-2020 year.

## Time to register your volunteer hours

It is important that our president have a record of our volunteer hours for her report to the National Society. Please register these hours as soon as possible. This can be very easily done by going to our website at

**[www.christchildnaples.org](http://www.christchildnaples.org)**.

On the home page, choose Documents/Forms. Under Member Forms, click on Online Volunteer Hours Form. Be sure to enter your name and simply fill in the number of hours worked.

Count your hours and travel time to Christ Child meetings, activities such as tutoring children, packing books, assembling layettes, and any committee work.

Anyone not wishing to enter their hours on the website may send them to Martha Moore at [indymarni@aol.com](mailto:indymarni@aol.com).

## Golden Gate needs volunteer chaperones

Many of the children at the school have parents who cannot take any time off from work to help chaperone school field trips. If you would be available on a last minute basis to fill in, please call 239-377-6900 to get on their list.



## National Christ Child Society rolls out the New Chapter Liaison Program!

In order to further develop lines of communication with our chapters, the membership committee of the NCCS Board, has developed a new Chapter Liaison Program that will be initiated during the month of May 2019. The purpose of the program is to develop a comfortable channel of communication between NCCS and the chapters, so that we may better serve you. It will also be a way for us to share information and resources that will help the chapters continue to succeed and grow.

Chapter Presidents will be receiving an email introducing them to their assigned National Liaison. A time will be selected that works for both parties to further share thoughts on the program and how it can be most effective for their chapter. A Chapter President may decide that another member of their board or chapter will be serving as the Chapter Liaison in which

case, this newly assigned person will be contacted going forward.

This program will give chapters a chance to share their success stories with National and to find solutions to any problems that may arise. It will give both National and chapters a chance to get to know each other better. NCCS is very excited to open up this new channel of communications with its chapters! Remember, even though you will have a National Liaison assigned to you, you are always welcome to contact our Board President or Executive Office with any questions, comments or concerns you may have.

– **Molly Fanning**

614-571-5462

[mollymfanning@gmail.com](mailto:mollymfanning@gmail.com)

# Red Wagon Gala

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donated by Bigham Jewelers.

The beneficiaries of the proceeds are the underserved children of Collier County. Funds raised at the *Red Wagon Gala* support the work of 220-plus members. Volunteers knit or crochet blankets that are distributed to new, low-income mothers along with baby clothes, diapers, pacifiers and parenting books. So far, more than 11,000 layettes and 31,000 copies of *Bringing Baby Home* in English, Spanish and Creole have been distributed.

More than 75 literacy volunteers provide books and classroom supplies and work in several Collier County Schools to help teachers and students in Reading Readiness Programs. Christ Child Society members also provide beds and bedding for the children of new Habitat for Humanity homes. Many of these children have never had their own beds. Christ Child Society also awards four \$5,000 scholarships yearly to qualifying high school graduates from Habitat for Humanity homes.

President Colleen Mayes emphasized

the theme of, "Making possibilities into reality." She then introduced a recently-commissioned video presented through the eyes of the children who have benefitted from Christ Child works. The audience enthusiastically responded to the video with teary eyes and prolonged applause. This video is now posted on the homepage of our Christ Child Society website.

Two of the Christ Child Habitat for Humanity Scholars who are in their first year at Florida Gulf Coast University spoke about what receiving the scholarship has meant to them. Makayda Archer compared her life to the building of the Statue of Liberty – a piece-by-piece process. She views her education as building her future block by block and is very grateful for her scholarship. She hopes to give back by becoming an entrepreneur assisting the poor in third world countries. Roosevelt Toussaint considers her scholarship a gift that changes lives. She feels motivated to do her best each semester and hopes to go into the medical field.

Chair Janis Morrisroe and her team worked tirelessly to make this the

most successful Gala in the history of Christ Child Society of Naples. Kathy Pezzuti assembled a fine selection of items for both the silent and live auctions. Auctioneer Rick Gallo began the live auction with a quote from Fred Rogers, "Anyone doing something for a child is a hero." The live auction included a seven-night stay at a home on the Irish coast, a Chicago Cubs Dream Day, a special golf package for play at six Naples golf courses, a limited edition print by Dennis Gormley, a trip to Sonoma, California with winery tours and three special dinners – each for several guests featuring premium wines. A silent auction and *Fund the Need* brought in additional donations.

Committee members are: Jane Austermilller, Luann Battenberg, Kathy Clark, Donna Eskra, Francesca Fauls, Cheryl Grant, Mary Henrikson, Maureen Kincaid, Becky Kristof, Stephanie Lohri, Colleen Mayes, Sherri Miske, Martha Moore, Kathy Pezzuti, Mary Polizzotto, MaryAngela Smith, Bobbi Rossi and Marilyn Tenzer.

Thanks to the many volunteers and guests, the 2019 *Red Wagon Gala* was the most successful ever.



Sally and Tom Gleason peruse the program.



Kathryn and Barry Wagner sell heart necklaces for *Heads or Tails*.

# Red Wagon Gala



**Christ Child Habitat Scholar Makayda Archer; The Rev. Lisa Lefko, CEO Habitat for Humanity; Christ Child Habitat Scholar Roosevelt Toussaint; Sharon Bayatta, Community Foundation.**



**Mary Polizzotto and Stephanie Lohri with Auctioneer Rick Gallo and his wife.**

## Red Wagon Gala



### Calendar of Events

#### Board Meetings:

Northern Trust Bank  
Liggett Room (formerly Keewaydin Room) 3 pm

November 7, 2019

January 9, 2020

March 5, 2020

April 2, 2020

#### General Meetings:

Northern Trust Bank  
Fourth Floor  
Larson Room 3-5 pm

November 12, 2019

January 14, 2020

March 10, 2020

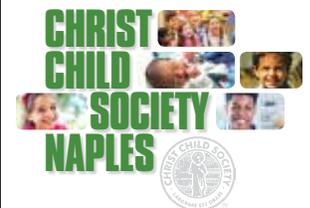
April 7, 2020

#### Save the Date:

December 3, 2019  
Christmas Brunch

January 21, 2020  
New Member Tea

February 11, 2020  
Founders Luncheon



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

## Women of Initiative: Kathleen Flynn Fox

**O**ur own Kathleen Flynn Fox was recently honored by *eBella* Magazine as a *Woman of Initiative*. When Kathleen came to Naples in 2004, she brought with her proven expertise in business and marketing, as well as experience working with non-profit organizations. Christ Child has been so fortunate to have Kathleen, whose sage advice and direction have kept our organization on track. She stepped in as a co-president when Christ Child was in need. When it came time



to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Christ Child Society of Naples, Kathleen successfully guided the response by working with the Community Foundation to establish the Christ Child Habitat Scholars Scholarship Fund. A Joanne Halstead Award winner, she continues to act

as a liaison between the Community Foundation and the Board. In addition to her busy golf schedule, Kathleen tutors students at St. Leo the Great Church, reads to a friend with macular degeneration and is a member of the Board of Habitat for Humanity.



**Left: eBella spread. Above: CCSN members attending Kathleen Flynn Fox's Women of Initiative Luncheon.**