

St. Louis Spirit



Special Needs Forum

Montessori Approaches for Dementia

Tuesday, March 24, 2020
7-9 pm at St. Louis Center

See page 7 for details



Winter 2020

The structures are ready for interior crews to work throughout the winter.

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60 years of care on June 17, 2020...



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The calendar says its winter, but the temperatures remain fall-like this year, and that allows our contractors to continue to make progress on Phase II of St. Louis Guanella Village.

Many of you are excited about the new additions to SLGV this year, and the mild weather has resulted in all five structures being built, which will allow interior work to continue during the first quarter of the year. Three out of five buildings have their outer skins sealed with facie' material and the Administration Building is now heated, with preparations being made for drywall, flooring and paint. The family homes will soon follow. According to architect Marco Silveri, "People are going to love these family homes, as they all follow Universal Design principles and are ADA compliant. They will be excellent homes for people to age in place with their loved ones."

Many renovations are also being made to the main building this winter, with the entire building receiving an electrical

upgrade, and HVAC upgrades nearly complete in the gym and lobby. The renovations to Martin Hall are also progressing well, and it will soon be an office suite for our Social Work Department. Needless to say, there's no



standing still at St. Louis Center, as we continue to upgrade our facilities for the needs of the 21st century."

St. Louis Center Celebrates 60 Years



Greetings to all and blessings for the New Year!

2020 brings another milestone in the history of the Center; its 60th anniversary.

I want to thank all of you for embracing the future vision of the St. Louis Center; it is becoming a village with new building construction and the remodeling of some areas of the original building.

A committee is working on the plans for the dedication along with the 60th anniversary celebration of the Center. The date will be June 17, 2020.

SLC enrollment has increased and has brought new challenges and new service needs; thus we are hiring new staff and professionals in order to deal with the trauma needs of the new residents.

At the time of this writing we have been blessed for we have been able to raise more than half of the dollar amount needed for the \$555,555.55 challenge match. We still need to raise another \$216,000 to meet the goal. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to the match.

The families of the residents have been involved with the politicians in Lansing in fostering services for their loved ones.

Various volunteer committees are working on different fund-raising events for this year. As in the past, these events are very effective in raising the needed money for the benevolent care offered by the Center and to build the endowment trust fund for its future.

The Christmas season has been animated by different groups and organizations whose members wanted to spend time with the SLC residents, treating them in a very special and personalized way.

Fr. Euro Ashlari

To read more about these events and see more photos, visit our website: www.stlouiscenter.org

Please mark your calendars for the afternoon of June 17, 2020, as St. Louis Center will celebrate its 60th Anniversary on that day, with the celebration of Mass by Very Rev. Bishop Earl Boyea, followed by a dedication ceremony and blessing of the new buildings in St. Louis Guanella Village.

A thanksgiving Mass is planned in the gym at 4:00 p.m. followed by a procession to the new buildings, guest speakers, a blessing by the Bishop, food and entertainment.

St. Louis Center milestones...

- 1960** – St. Louis Center's Main Building was built.
- 1961** – Main Building was dedicated by John Cardinal Dearden of Detroit in October.
- 1975** – Knights of Columbus Hall and Alhambra Hall were added to the main building with 18 bedrooms and a chapel.
- 1984** – St. Joseph Hall was built on the hill to the east for 20 young men transitioning to adulthood.
- 1988** – Fr. Guanella Hall was built to mark the 75th Anniversary of St. Louis' visit to the U.S., with room for 20 residents.
- 2010** – St. Louis Center celebrated its 50th Anniversary Sept. 19th and launched the first ever legacy campaign.
- 2011** – St. Louis Center dedicated the Family Welcome and Orientation Center July 24th; a westward addition to the existing Administration Building.
- 2013** – New Special Needs Playground was dedicated during the Recognition Dinner on April 28th.
- 2014** – Fr. Guanella Hall was renovated and dedicated as an Assisted Living facility on June 8th. Thus, expanding the residence to fourteen rooms with occupancy for 20.
- 2018** – Dedication of St. Louis Guanella Village with Mass said by Bishop Emeritus Carl Mengeling and 400 people in attendance for the June 12th event. Four Children's Homes were dedicated.
- 2020** – June 17th we will celebrate the 60th Anniversary and dedication of the new buildings in St. Louis Guanella Village.

\$555,555 Matching Gift



Late last fall, a generous donor made a challenge match of \$555,555.55.

That means that any donation of \$1,000 to \$25,000 received by March 31, 2020, will be matched by this contribution. We are well on our way, with \$339,076.60 in matching funds raised to date.

We still have \$216,678.95 to raise, so if you are considering a gift, or would like to add to your year-end gift made in December in order to make your donation eligible for the match, please let us know. Every dollar you contribute will be DOUBLED.

Feel free to contact [Christina Ferris, Development Director](mailto:cferris@stlouiscenter.org), at cferris@stlouiscenter.org or 734-475-8430.

Deadline for Matching Gifts - March 31, 2020

Therapy Programs Expanding

In 2019, St Louis Center was thrilled to be able to add specialty services to the children’s program.



Tammy Ratz

Tammy Ratz, MA, has joined us as the trauma therapist. Tammy has 30 years’ experience working with children with IDD and trauma, and is a welcome addition to our staff. She completed her Masters degree at Eastern Michigan Univeristiy in 1989 and has been helping clients at New Beginning Counseling Center in Brooklyn MI

Dr. Martha Hashimoto, MD, is providing psychiatric services to residents in the children’s program. Dr. Hashimoto graduated from Wayne State University School of Medicine in 1993 and has been in practice for 25 years, specializing in Psychiatry. She will be coming directly to St. Louis Center to see the children.



Kristen Hjelmstad

For the past year, **Kristen Hjelmstad, BCBA**, has been providing Applied Behavioral Analysis behavior plans to the children with autism. Kristen has a bachelors degree from Central Michigan University, Masters of Social Work from University of Michigan and completed ABA certification at Florida Institute of Technology.

DID YOU KNOW?

We received a small grant to expand the music therapy program so that we will now be providing music therapy to all children and adult residents. The canine therapy program has also expanded, so that we are able to provide an additional therapy dog visit each month.



Advocacy Day II - Members of the St. Louis Center Family Association, administrative staff and friends descended on the Michigan State Capital Tuesday, October 29th to visit with their local elected leaders and share their stories of hope concerning SLC. Fourteen family members and one SLC resident took the message to their state representatives and senators that living at SLC was critical to their quality of life. Visiting legislators included State Senator Peter Lucido of Macomb County, State Senator Lana Theis (R-Brighton) and State Representative Donna Lasinski (D- Scio Twp.)



U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg (R-7) visited SLC on Tuesday, November 5th to see the new Children’s Homes dedicated in 2018 and Phase II of St. Louis Guanella Village. “St. Louis Center does a great job of combining private and government funds to accomplish its goals in caring for people with I/DD, and I’m pleased to see the progress they’re making in the construction of St. Louis Guanella Village. It’s a model program that others can follow,” said Walberg.

SLC Leadership Meets wth State Senators

Thanks to State Sen. Lana Theis (R-Brighton), Fr. Enzo, Deana Fisher and Joe Yekulis attended a meeting that included Sen. Theis, Senator Peter Lucido (R-Macomb) and Sen. Curtis VanderWall (R-Ludington) on December 4th. This provided a much needed opportunity to discuss issues related to the guidelines for Home and Community Based Services. SLC’s concerns were expressed and the discussion will continue with these leaders on HCBS ruling in 2020.

The Joy of Giving

The holidays are a time of giving and you demonstrated a most generous holiday spirit this past December by remembering SLC residents in many wonderful ways. There were parties and gifts for residents and special treats for the staff. There were generous financial gifts, as well. That support is so important in helping us provide round the clock care to the more than 70 residents who call SLC home. We would not be able to serve all of the people we do without your generosity. Please know how grateful we are.

Federazione Siciliana and Federazione Abruzzese del Michigan teamed up to prepare a gourmet meal for the residents, sing Christmas carols, and help Santa distribute gifts to the residents on Saturday, December 7th.



On December 8th, **Jack Tocco, Jr.**, his friends and elves brought presents as well as the gift of music performed by famous jazz performer Johnny Trudell, and opera performers Eva Evola and Dino Valle

U.S. Marines accompanied Santa to SLC on December 11th to deliver **Toys for Tots**. They also led a Christmas Carol sing-a-long with the residents.

On December 15th, SLC welcomed their family and friends for their annual **Christmas Program**. This year Randy Seitz, a new staff member, wrote an original piece for the men of KofC Hall to perform entitled, "The Lonely Pine Tree."



Three **Knights of Columbus** councils from Jackson teamed up to bring Christmas gifts and good cheer to the SLC residents on December 20th. The evening began with the celebration of Mass followed by dinner.

Marriage Begins with Service



Photo Credit: Melanie Reyes Photography

Planning a wedding takes a lot of time and effort with so many details to remember. Weddings usually also mean gifts and bridal showers complete with probably more stuff than you need. So for Jenny and Matt

Mackey, who were married on December 29, 2019, they knew that they wanted to do things a bit differently. Jenny reached out to St. Louis Center to make her gift registry a shopping list for the needs of the SLC residents. She also had a 'Giving Tree' at the reception to encourage cash donations. The new bride had this to say about their decision:

"Weddings are such a 'pomp and circumstance' these days. I fear people have lost the focus of what the true purpose is. We had a special wedding blessing said over us during our wedding mass (I had never heard of this but the priest said it... maybe it's common) and part of it included, 'May you always bear witness in the world to God's charity, so that the afflicted and the needy who have known your kindness may one day receive you thankfully into the eternal dwelling of God.'

WOW! Can you imagine the glory of a reception like that?! How can that not inspire you to reach out and help everyone who needs it?! To someday be able to see the impact you've made without even knowing?!

Marrying Matt, who's in a slightly more public eye than others, (being the director of campus ministry for a teenage population....) we have taken this great privilege to be an example.

We do our best to set an example with self control, prayerfulness, generosity.... and just every virtue we can. We are constantly out done by others. But wouldn't it be great to spread the message of how more marriages can start with an act of service??"

On New Years Eve, they brought all of the gifts to SLC. They knew that they would get to see the residents and play a bit of floor hockey. What they didn't know is that they would be greeted by enthusiastic athletes, wedding cupcakes and a custom made poster of 'Congratulations'. Their seemingly small act of generosity turned a long quiet holiday into a joy filled afternoon of laughter and fun. It was a day that the SLC residents will remember for a long time and one that the newlyweds will never forget.

Montessori Minute

As we approach the one year anniversary of beginning the Montessori lifestyle here at St. Louis Center, it is interesting to learn all the ways this training is impacting the daily lives of the residents.

The Day Program staff offers participants many choices for activities throughout the day. Many residents enjoy going to deliver Meals on Wheels. Other activities they like include puzzle books, coloring, making crafts, playing cards and exploring the country by looking at the United States map and picking a place to research and learn about. It is especially rewarding to see the residents keeping themselves occupied while staff is able to step back and watch them thrive.



Residents play a quick game of Uno before delivering Meals on Wheels.

The kitchen rolled out a new menu program for the New Year which allows the residents to select the meals that will be prepared and delivered from the main kitchen several days each month. This gives them the opportunity to voice their opinions about what foods they will eat.

First -Time Visitors



On Friday October 25th, eleven members of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish from Ann Arbor visited St. Louis Center to attend a 10:00 a.m. Mass, deliver a donation from their parish, and tour Fr. Guanella Hall, the Children's Homes, and the new construction in St. Louis Guanella Village.

Around the Community



Benefactors Enjoy a Taste of Chelsea - This year's Ninth Annual Taste of Chelsea event at St. Mary Parish grew even larger, as 25 restaurants, bakeries, and coffee shops rounded out the providers of culinary delights to 140 guests who came out to support St. Louis Center on Saturday, October 5th.

Courtney Heller of True North Jerky serves samples of their best delicacies. (above)



Fall Dinner Auction, now in its 32nd year as a major benefit for SLC, continues to impress through its attendance and financial support from the local community. This year, 190 benefactors were in attendance at this annual event on Saturday, November 9th hosted by St. Joseph Mercy Hospital-Chelsea. According to Chairwoman Kathi Neuman, more attendance and fundraising records were eclipsed this year. "We are truly blessed to have so many people participate in this event," said Neuman."

Residents "Lisa and Joey" display his and hers watches that were up for auction. (above)

Community Learns about Trauma - The fourth in a series of Special Needs Forums in 2018-19 was held at SLC on Tuesday, November 19th. Deana Fisher, COO of SLC, presented a program titled, "Informed Trauma Training Initiative." Attendees learned how trauma may have played a role in their own lives.

SLC Legacy/Sustainability Campaign



During its 50th anniversary in 2010, St. Louis Center embarked on the creation of St. Louis Guanella Village, where persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and those without, could live together in an integrated community. With the help of many generous donors, SLC raised \$13 million to support the following:

- *Family Welcome and Orientation Center (2011)*
- *Endowment (2011-2019)*
- *Site Improvements (2011-2018)*
- *Special Needs Playground (2013)*
- *Dedicated Program Expansions (2013-2018)*
- *Fr. Guanella Hall Renovation (2014)*
- *Village Infrastructure (2017-2018)*
- *Waste Water Treatment Facility (2017)*
- *4 Children's Homes and Furnishings (2018)*
- *Martin Hall Remodel*
- *Gymnasium and Lobby HVAC System Replacement*
- *1 Single Family Home (for lease/rent to families) (A)*
- *1 Duplex Home (for lease/rent to families) (B)*
- *1 Four-bedroom Cottage for Residents (C)*
- *1 Six-bedroom Cottage for Residents (D)*
- *Administration Building (E)*

As SLC leadership looks forward, we know that we must innovate and adapt to continue to build a thriving community and meet the needs of persons with I/DD and their families. A plan of sustainability of SLC, for today and for the future, must incorporate all of the factors affecting its fiscal health and vitality. So, after extensive review, forecasting and analysis, we have developed and are launching the LEGACY/SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN. This robust, long-term plan includes not only the capital needs of the organization, but operations and endowment, as well. For the next five years, we will focus on raising funds for the following:

Operations – As the Center expands, so will its operating needs. The cost of caring for aging residents continues to grow and the buildings and grounds of the expanding St. Louis Guanella Village must also be maintained. We have projected those needs for the coming years and have a plan to generate additional revenue each year, both through increasing fundraising dollars and by expanding earned revenue by pursuing additional licensing and certifications.

Capital – The plan provides a long-term vision for constructing more housing for current and new residents, providing adequate housing for religious staff, maintaining and updating infrastructure, and adding amenities like an on-site chapel, a retail center and a fitness center. In addition, families who have children with I/DD that want to remain living together in an integrated environment will have the opportunity to lease/rent single family and duplex homes. As soon as the plans for new construction and renovation are ready and finalized, we will share them with you.

Endowment – In order to provide a steady income source to support future operations, it is crucial for the Center to establish and grow endowment funds today. These funds are invested in perpetuity, with only the interest and gains used for support.

We will be launching our new Legacy/Sustainability Campaign in the coming months. If you have questions or would like to be involved in connecting us with those who can support this dynamic and much needed work, please reach out to our development director, Christina Ferris at cferris@stlouiscenter.org. We would love to hear from you.

Receive Newsletter by Email

To reduce our postage costs, receive the newsletter digitally by emailing: kellyf@stlouiscenter.org

Development News

We appreciate your patience

as we switch our files over to a new donor database. It's a major step forward for the organization because we'll have all donor records in one place and be better able to communicate with you.



In the process, if you've received a mailing that you did not want or if you need to make corrections to your contact information, please let us know by contacting Christina at **734-475-8430** or **cferris@stlouiscenter.org**.

We apologize for any inconvenience and ask for your patience during this transition.

Grant Support

In order to provide the level of support for the residents here and to grow and maintain our facilities, St. Louis Center receives a number of grants each year. In the last half of 2019, we have received support from:

- Anonymous Foundations
- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- Catholic Foundation of Michigan
- FCA Foundation
- Knights of Columbus
- Newman's Own Foundation
- St. Joseph Mercy – Chelsea

One such grant, received from the Barden Family Fund at the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation for \$4,227, will help support the SLC residents' participation in the Meals on Wheels program in Chelsea.



Upcoming Events

Special Needs Forum

Montessori Approaches for Dementia

Tuesday, March 24, 2020
7-9 pm at St. Louis Center

In this presentation, we will review the results of how the Montessori Method has been integrated into the life cycle of St. Louis Center following a year of implementation by Supervisors and Direct Care staff. Examples will be provided for where the program has been the most successful. The Montessori Inspired Lifestyle® is, basically, a way of living a good life as a human being. Persons with I/DD want purpose and meaning in their lives, to be in control of their lives, and to be able to contribute to their communities in general.

SPEAKER: DR. CAMERON J. CAMP, PH.D

Please contact Cindy Lesser at 734-475-8430 for more information or to register.

Italian American Club of Lansing Announces

Italian Dinner Night

Saturday, April 25, 2020

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Hall
3815 S. Cedar St., Lansing MI

Tickets: \$20/Adults \$10/Children

For tickets or info, please call **Bill** at **(989)277-2914** or **Tony** at **(517)974-1706**

THE ITALIAN AMERICAN CLUB OF LIVONIA'S

—2020 Guardian Angel—

Dinner-Dance

Sunday, April 26, 2020
at

Admission \$80 per person

For tickets or questions, please call IACL representative **Sandy Pulice** at **(734)930-6597** or **Joe Yekulis** at SLC **(734)475-8430**.

More details can be found at: **stlouiscenter.org**

The ITALIAN AMERICAN
BANQUET & CONFERENCE CENTER
of Livonia

39200 Five Mile Rd., Livonia MI 48154

Upcoming Events

Special Needs Forum
 Tuesday, March 24, 2020
 St. Louis Center - Chelsea MI

Lansing Italian American Club Fundraiser
 Saturday, April 25, 2020
 Lansing MI

Italian American Club of Livonia Dinner Dance
 Sunday, April 26, 2020
 Italian American Banquet Center - Livonia MI

60th Anniversary and Dedication
 Wednesday, June 17, 2020
 St. Louis Center - Chelsea MI

Paesano Dinner
 Sunday, June 21, 2020
 Ann Arbor MI

Golf & Glory Outing
 Monday, June 22, 2020
 UofM Golf Course - Ann Arbor MI

For more information,
 please visit our website:

www.stlouiscenter.org

St. Louis Center Community Advisory Council

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In Memory of Our Friends

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 Betty Hinderer
 Colleen Houle
 Jeffrey McKeone
 Mary Ann Merkel
 Emma Niebauer
 Denise Silverio
 Nancy Wagner
 John Yekulis

Mary Ann Merkel was one of the most well-known women in the Chelsea community, and she passed into the Lord's hands on November 14, 2019. Her funeral Mass took place at St. Mary Parish on Friday, December 6, 2019, and she will be fondly remembered for a life well lived in giving to others as a nurse, a mother, an interior designer at Merkel's Furniture, and a community supporter. She and her husband Jack, lived in Chelsea for 67 years, and together they had five sons, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Along with the countless number of community groups she was a part of, Mary Ann, with her husband Jack were part of a group of young Catholic



parents in the 1960s known as the Christian Family Movement. According to their son, Tim, "They always made sure that a priest was present for their meetings, so they would drive out to SLC and pick up Fr. Umberto Mellare to bring him to their meetings. They've always been very supportive of SLC." Mary Ann and Jack were also members of the first Dinner Auction committee, an event held at then Chelsea Hospital. Along with her support of the local community, her faith made her an active member of St. Mary Parish in Chelsea. Mary Ann believed firmly in acting locally to make the world a better place. The love of her family, friends and community were reflected in the way she lived her life.

Double Your Gift



See page 3 for details.



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