



St. Louis Center

—2017—

ANNUAL REPORT

St. Louis Center serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an intentional, faith-based community.

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Dear Friends,

I want to greet every one of you and say THANK YOU.

2017 was another great year for St. Louis Center, as the Loving Lord blessed us repeatedly. This year we completed the \$10M Legacy Campaign. Thank you to all who contributed and to the members of the Legacy Campaign Committee who raised these funds. Without their support this would not have been possible.

At the beginning of 2017, SLC hired Deana Fisher as its first Chief Operating Officer. Among her responsibilities is the planning of new service delivery in the Village, geared toward more therapeutic care.

The staff prepared several of the younger children for reunification with their families or for adoption. Additional new residents were welcomed into the program. SLC has increased staffing to meet their specialized needs.

Through a grant from St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea, the fitness program was extended to people with I/DD who reside in the greater community.

The construction of the new Children's Homes is nearing completion, and a new wastewater treatment facility for the entire campus is fully functioning. Architect Marco Silveri began working on the remaining components of the Village, and many families have expressed interest in moving in with their loved ones when the single-family homes are ready.

We appreciate those donors who helped to sustain SLC's operations during the Legacy Campaign. This includes the many Knights of Columbus members who collected funds throughout their local communities during the Tootsie Roll Drive. The Alhambra Caravans,

Manresa and Galicia, need to be mentioned as well for their efforts to support SLC in 2017.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Chelsea Proving Grounds employees donated many hours to complete several maintenance projects at SLC. Many other volunteers were also involved with SLC fundraising events, bringing these events to a new level of success.

At the end of the year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Fr. Joseph Rinaldo and Fr. Fortunato Turati on December 16, 2017. Both of them have dedicated their lives to the well-being of SLC and its residents.

A special THANK YOU also goes out to all the donors who helped SLC carry out its programs and contributed to the Legacy Campaign.



FR. JOE AND FR. FORTUNATO 50 Years of Service

Fr. Joseph Rinaldo and Fr. Fortunato Turati are both from Italy, also the homeland of St. Louis Guanella (1842-1915), who founded the Servants of Charity Congregation. St. Guanella had a passion for caring for persons with developmental disabilities and the frail elderly. His motto was "The whole world is your homeland," and his vision was to send priests throughout the world to care for "God's Special Children."

Both Fr. Joseph and Fr. Fortunato were attracted to this Congregation for different reasons, but their vocation brought them together to become a powerful team that has ministered and cared for persons with special needs

here in the United States. Fr. Joseph's hometown is Naro, Italy, and he witnessed the horrors of WWII growing up, while the Allied and Axis powers battled for control of Sicily. Fr. Fortunato came from the village of Robbiano near Milan and, sadly, lost his parents at a young age. This led him to enter the minor seminary at the age of 12, and five years later he became a novice in the Congregation at Barza d'Ispra.

Fr. Joseph began his theology studies in Chiavenna in 1963, where he and Fr. Fortunato became best of friends. Following their ordination in December 1967, their paths crossed again in 1968 when they received their new assignments from their superiors. "In September

"If you have a little love for these children and the Good Lord, it's not a sacrifice anymore...it fills you with so much joy."

1968, I got a letter from General Secretary Fr. Peter Pasquali that said, 'We've decided to send you to America,'" said Fr. Joseph. He joined Fr. Fortunato in Como, and they flew together to New York City, then continued to Don Guanella School in Springfield, PA.

Fr. Fortunato was later sent to St. Louis School in Chelsea, Michigan, and Fr. Joseph remained in Springfield until 1980. Fr. Fortunato describes his early days at St. Louis School, "There were 60 kids in two groups; I took care of the younger children. They were called 'educable' and 'trainable.' The Center was different then, because it was a residential school in those days with four classrooms. We had four lay teachers who would come every day and





Fr. Fortunato Turati

teach, and we were involved with the kids 24 hours a day. I enjoyed being with the kids. It was my vocation to take care of them. I never felt like I needed to go out and do anything else."

Fr. Joseph was assigned to St. Louis Center for the first time in 1980 and discovered a facility with many needs. Renovation began. Individual bedrooms were built for the children in the main building, and space was added for administrative services and private rooms for the priests. St. Joseph Hall was built in 1984 for young men over 18. Fr. Guanella Hall was built in 1988 for young adult men with more acute needs.

Fr. Joseph believes that the presence of the religious community is what makes a difference for the residents of

St. Louis Center. "The difference is that we live with them. We are their brothers, we are their fathers, and we are their friends. One of our priests is always here. Sometimes the kids want to talk with us to resolve their problems."

Fr. Fortunato added, "I enjoyed every minute of it; I really did. It was a life of sacrifice, but if you have a little love for these children and the Good Lord, it's not a sacrifice anymore. It fills you with so much joy."

These two men were honored at a special 50th Anniversary Ordination Mass at St. Mary (Chelsea) Parish presided by Most Rev. Bishop Earl Boyea. A banquet at St. Louis Center followed.

The Whole World is your Homeland

Following in the footsteps of their founder, St. Louis Guanella, the Servants of Charity are now present in 23 countries around the globe:

- 1886** Italy
- 1898** Switzerland
- 1925** Argentina
- 1940** Paraguay
- 1947** Brazil
- 1948** Chile
- 1959** United States
- 1965** Spain
- 1975** Israel
- 1983** Mexico
- 1987** Colombia
- 1989** Philippines
- 1992** India
- 1992** Nigeria
- 1995** Guatemala
- 1996** DR Congo
- 1996** Ghana
- 2001** Poland
- 2006** Afghanistan
- 2009** Vietnam
- 2013** Germany
- 2015** Romania
- 2016** Solomon Islands

St. Louis Center

Hardworking Staff

Employment at SLC means more than just having a job. Aside from the usual benefits of full-time work, SLC employees find that they become members of a large family. Staff members are committed to the well-being of each resident who calls SLC home.

Resident Care

Program Director	1
Direct Care Supervisors	7
Direct Care Workers	55
Nursing Staff	2
Fitness Staff	1

Nutrition Care

Kitchen/Housekeeping Supervisor...	1
Cooks	4

Social Work Care

Social Work Supervisor	1
Social Services Specialists.....	2
Assistants	1

Facility Care

Maintenance Staff.....	2
Housekeeping.....	7

Administrative Support

Management.....	6
Development	2
Public Relations.....	2
Religious.....	6

PAM FREDETTE

Warming Hearts & Crunching Numbers

Help wanted.” Two words in a newspaper ad that began Pam Fredette’s eighteen and a half year daily commute to the scenic outskirts of Chelsea. Drawn to the casual atmosphere and sincere mission, the residents and employees are ultimately who have kept her here and she has become an irreplaceable asset.

Pam has the very honest and confident demeanor that a strong gatekeeper of funds needs. She is the Bookkeeper and so much more. Her years of experience have made her a matriarch of sorts; the go-to woman for staff, agency supporters, parents, and residents alike.

Pam is from Gardner, Massachusetts and has three children; Kurt, Kathy, and Kelly, and a granddaughter named Arianna. She is very caring and protective of her famiy and carries that into her work. When a resident is in her office, she is sure to ask about his or her day and what she can do to help. In a way, they are like her own children, as she has watched many of them grow up.

“It’s been interesting to see the residents mature over the last 18 years. I have loved watching them develop into nice young adults who become members of the community and are being accepted. They teach the community that it’s okay to be different,” said Pam. “The successes we have had with children, seeing them leave and achieve wonderful accomplishments, such as renting their own apartments and finding their own jobs, is great to see and says a lot about the Center.”

One of Pam’s memories of SLC was when the adult women moved in for the first time in 2001. “When the ladies moved in, it was a change for the better and brought about the realities of a real community. It was good for SLC.”

Significant process changes have impacted Pam’s job over the years. She remembers the hand-written reports in the journals of yesteryear that were then processed on the computer. Now the majority of her work is on the computer.

Looking forward, Pam hopes for SLC to continue to look to the future and, as a result, grow and prosper through the construction of the new homes in St. Louis Guanella Village.

“I have loved watching them develop into nice young adults who become members of the community.”



NIASIA PERDUE

Leading the Way in Direct Care

NiAsia has lived her entire life as part of a team. She teamed up with her mother and brothers to help create a loving home atmosphere for her family. She participated in team sports in her high school career. She worked in a team setting at her first job at Wendy's and later in the Dietary Department of Allegiance Health. When a family emergency ensued, she even set aside nursing school to provide daily care for six of her young cousins, some of whom have disabilities.

When she was able to return to school, NiAsia also decided to apply for a direct care position at St. Louis Center at the suggestion of a friend. Thus her two and a half year journey with the most challenging residents began. She was able to really get to know these residents and their behaviors. She was always here even as much as seven days a week. "They counted on me," she said.

As her direct care skills improved and her rapport with the residents strengthened, a direct care supervisor position came available and her supervisor encouraged her to apply. NiAsia may have been a bit reluctant at first, but an hour after her interview, she was offered the position. She says that this position has nurtured her in her career as well as her personal life. "I have become a little more outgoing."

NiAsia does have hope that the construction of St. Louis Guanella Village will create an opportunity for career advancement. She added, "I am comfortable here. This is my comfort zone. If there is a place for me as St. Louis Center expands, I'll be here."

"This can be physically and mentally draining, but it is so rewarding."



In her current position, she finds it extremely important that her staff members build relationships with the residents and learn as much as possible about their behaviors and their likes and dislikes. She knows from firsthand experience that doing what is in the best interest of the residents is also what is best for the staff. When residents' needs are adequately met, the staff can be their best, too.

NiAsia looks to the Village with great anticipation. She feels that the residents will feel more like they are living in a home. "It will be more like building a family. There will be more house chores, but it will bring back or present family values. It will make a better quality of life for persons with I/DD."

To sum up NiAsia's experience working here she says, "This can be physically and mentally draining, but it is so rewarding."

St. Louis Center

by numbers

Age and Demographics



10 Women age 19-59



34 Men age 19-68



9 Teens age 11-18



5 Youth age 5-10

Counties of Origin

Barry	1
Ionia	1
Jackson	2
Kalamazoo	1
Lenawee	1
Macomb	1
Newaygo	1
Oakland	3
Ottawa	1
Saginaw	1
Van Buren	1
Washtenaw	25
Wayne	18
Out of State	1

Audited Financials

St. Louis Center's financial statements
for the fiscal year July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017.

Support & Revenue	2017
Program Service Revenue	\$2,967,542.00
Fundraising & Grants	\$1,115,097.00
Other	\$428,266.00
Total Support & Revenue	\$4,510,905.00

Expenses*	2017
Program Services	\$3,284,723.00
Management & General	\$612,839.00
Fundraising Projects	\$304,444.00
Depreciation	\$256,293.00
Total Expenses	\$4,458,299.00

*Figures are based on Audited Financial Statements and do not include Legacy Campaign donations or expenses.



Committed to Wellness

Funds generously gifted by the St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea Community Benefit Program allowed for SLC's Fitness for Life program to expand in 2017. Thanks to SJMC, individuals w/IDD who live in the greater community are transported to and from SLC to attend fitness classes.

Music Therapy

"Music Therapy is so fun. I look forward to Wednesdays when she comes. She sings and lets us play the strings on her guitar. She has us play all kinds of instruments. Maracas, drums and we sing my favorite song, *You are my Sunshine*."

Nancy, SLC Resident



Program Partners

5 Healthy Towns Foundation
 Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church
 (Friendship Bible)
 Ballet Chelsea
 Chelsea High School – Company C
 Chelsea High School – Independence Hall
 Chelsea High School – Robotics Club
 Chelsea Senior Center - Meals on Wheels
 Chelsea Wellness Center
 Cooper Fun Run
 Eastern Michigan University
 Harmony Garden Music Therapy Services
 Kiwanis Aktion Club
 Kiwanis International
 Knights of Columbus
 LightUp!
 Marines Toys for Tots
 North Rock Christian Church – Ann Arbor
 Run for the Rolls
 Saturday Morning Challengers Bowling
 League
 Sitting Tall Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
 Special Olympics Michigan
 St. Andrew's Saline Youth Group
 St. Francis Camp on the Lake
 St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea 'Heart & Sole'
 Tom & Joanne Weber – Therapy Dog

GERALDINE YEKULIS-BROOKS & JOSEPH YEKULIS

Mother & Son Supporting St. Louis Center

This is a story about a mother and son from Michigan. They are Joe Yekulis, SLC's Public Relations Director since 2005, and his mother, Jeri Yekulis-Brooks. It is safe to say that everyone in the SLC community knows them. They have made major contributions to SLC and its residents. Joe was a member of the Community Advisory Council from 1994-2005, and his mother became a volunteer in 2008.

A conversation with Jeri and Joe offers the opportunity to dig deeper into this mother-son relationship. Joe is highly regarded not only at SLC, but also in the city of Chelsea, within the Knights of Columbus statewide, and across Washtenaw County.

"A provider" and "protective" are the words Joe uses to describe the way his mother raised him and his two siblings. "She made sure we were protected...I had a certain amount of flexibility to do what I needed to do to be successful." And that is exactly what happened. Joe earned both his bachelors and masters degrees from Eastern Michigan University, then worked for 27 years for Washtenaw County, 17 years in the Sheriff Department's Road Patrol Division and 10 years as a Washtenaw County Commissioner (1994-2004).

"He has always been great," is how Jeri describes Joe, the oldest of her three children, as she looks at

him and smiles warmly. "He worked hard as a police officer, but he's done a wonderful job at SLC. Joe has a lot of integrity."

Jeri was born in 1932 and was raised in Detroit. She worked full-time in occupational health as a registered nurse for 41 years, first at General Motor's Willow Run then at the Fisher Body plant. With three children at home, working was challenging. "Working and trying to make sure kids are safe is really hard," said Jeri, and she continued, "...but we had fun."

According to Jeri, what does it take to raise strong, resilient children? "Love," she said. "Love and affection. I love my children unequivocally. Those are the main things."

Then she spoke about why she became part of the SLC community. "I got involved at St. Louis Center because of Joe. I wanted to be helpful to my son, and I felt like I wanted to do something to help the residents. And it's a wonderful place to be."

Jeri's involvement began as a member of the Fall Auction Dinner Committee. What keeps her



volunteering at SLC is, in her words, "the people." What has she gained from volunteering? "Love and affection," she replied. "It is more than friendship. I love being involved with SLC. It's part of my persona." Many of the residents of SLC know Jeri by name, a testimony to her place in their lives.

Joe's mother's influence in his life extended into his parenting of his two daughters, Melissa and Margaret, with his wife of 38 years, Denise, another longtime SLC volunteer. "I made sure I was there for my kids as a father. I read to my kids. I made sure they had everything they needed. I coached them in sports and attended their games."

Jeri's advice to parents is this, "Keep your children close."

According to Jeri, what does it take to raise strong, resilient children?
"Love," she said. "Love and affection."

TONY & ERNESTINE NOBLES A Mother's Love

When Tony was born in 1974, the doctors predicted that with proper nutrition and care he might reach the age of 40. His mother, Ernestine, listened closely and did her very best to care for her special child. "When he was a baby I could never leave him. He never cried even if he was hungry. I really needed to be attentive to him."

When Tony was only 4 years old, his father passed away, leaving Ernestine to care for him and his two older brothers on her own. She lived in Detroit, and to provide for her boys, she took classes at Wayne State. Mornings were hectic because she had to make sure that everyone got out of the house on time and with everything they needed to be successful. Because of Tony's special needs, it took longer for him to complete his morning routines. Ernestine realized that if everyone was going to be on time, she had to just do things for him.

In her heart, she knew that this wasn't what was best for Tony, but she didn't know how to teach him. She struggled to find the right school for him and

had him on the waiting list for many programs. She tried getting him into a parochial school, but it was not able to accommodate his needs. Ernestine was feeling helpless; she wanted to find him an appropriate place. "I thought it would be best for Tony to get out and be away from me so that he wouldn't become too dependent."

Though she cannot remember who it was, someone suggested St. Louis Center to her. She had never considered a residential program because, as she said, "I wanted him home with me every night." Nonetheless, she made the trip to Chelsea to visit SLC. "No other place was as nice as St. Louis Center, and there was a waiting list. It took me three years, but I decided to take a chance. I'm so glad I did." When Tony was 10 years old, he moved to St. Louis Center. It took about a month for him to assimilate into the routine, and Ernestine noticed that he was now able to do things he hadn't done before. "The nuns who were there at the time really knew how to teach him. He was able to hang up his coat. And when it was time to return to SLC after a weekend home, he had packed his bag, and he was waiting on the step."

Tony has always been gentle and observant. He is non-verbal but understands what people are saying. He is very easy going when given directions. He really enjoys coloring and would do that all day long if given the chance, but Ernestine likes the idea of him getting more exercise and being active. She feels very blessed to have Tony as her child and is grateful for the love and support of her older sons. "Ted looks after Tony as if he were his own son."

"I don't know what lies ahead, but I have to keep on so that I can take care of my son. St. Louis Center has truly been a blessing. I don't know what I would've done without it."



"St. Louis Center has truly been a blessing. I don't know what I would've done without it."



AKTION CLUB Service in Action

On a cold winter night, Club President Lisa Roberts sounded the bell at 7:00 p.m., and the SLC Aktion Club members were called to order. Lisa, like many of her peers, enjoys her leadership role, and especially likes helping other people. That's exactly the role played by the Kiwanis "Aktion Club," which was formed in 1987 by Kiwanis International and now boasts 12,000 members around the world.

According to SLC Program Director and Club Advisor Rick Visel, "The Club allows people with I/DD a chance to give back to the community and demonstrate to the public that they have value and can contribute to society." The St. Louis Center Club was organized in 2011 and is sponsored by the Chelsea Kiwanis Club. Members assist the parent club at local events throughout the year and have helped at Chelsea Kiwanis events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, the food trailer at Summerfest and the

Chelsea Fair, and the Chelsea Halloween Costume Judging Contest.

Since 2011, the Club has also sponsored its own fundraisers by selling Christmas cards and hosting a statewide bowl-a-thon at Belmark Lanes in Ann Arbor in 2014. "We've raised nearly \$5,000 during that time and have used the money to support the Grass Lake Sanctuary and Breast Cancer Survivors, the 'Eliminate Project,' which protects women and babies in Third World countries by providing tetanus shots, and 'Sleeping Children Around the World,' which provides bed kits for poor children."

This year's officers are Lisa Roberts, President; Lee Booth, Vice-President; Joe Baker, Treasurer; and Brian Hunt, Secretary. During a recent meeting, Ray Black and Tony Cossentino received lapel pins and were sworn in as new members of the Club. There are now 25 members in the SLC "Aktion Club."

"The Club allows people with I/DD a chance to give back to the community."

JOE BAKER Model Resident

Kind, considerate, friendly and very hard working is how Program Director Rick Visel describes Joe. "He is a role model to many of the adult residents on our campus," said Rick.

Joe has lived at SLC for nine years and has been working at a Meijer in Ann Arbor for over seven years. He is responsible for gathering carts from outside and bringing them in for shoppers to use. Joe is very proud of his job and takes it very seriously, rarely missing a day of work. He has become very independent since being employed and is now accustomed to taking public transportation to and from his job.

When asked one thing he would want others to know about him, he responded, "That I'm helpful, like with cooking and just helping others out, I guess."

"What I like most about Joe is that he is a hard worker...He is always busy," said a friend and housemate. "Joe can be funny at times and will tell a joke. He is always very respectful to me and others."

Joe has been a member of the Aktion Club for the past seven years and was nominated by his peers to be a member of the Aktion Club board. His duties include conducting monthly meetings, and as Treasurer, account for the Club's funds and recommend how many funds could be donated following a fundraiser. He has participated in several community service projects for the Club, has actively fundraised, and has attended many social functions.





“What I like most about Joe is that he is a hard worker ... He is always busy.”

Some of Joe’s favorite things about SLC include going to Detroit Tiger’s baseball games in the summer and having dinners at home, “I like how they taste, they’re yummy,” said Joe.

Other things Joe enjoys doing include listening to music, watching a comedy or basketball games on TV, and visiting his uncle Marty during the holidays.

Joe’s wish list for St. Louis Center is a pool, more ways to listen to music (he thinks that “everyone should have an iPod”), and his own bedroom.

VIRTUE TRAINING Friendship Bible

Friendship Ministries began in 1982 in response to the spiritual needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Tsai family of Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church (AACRC) began Friendship Bible in 1992 to provide a place for their son with severe autism to be nourished spiritually. It started as a small group where he could comfortably interact socially with other individuals with special needs.

Friendship Ministries has grown to include over 1000 Friendship groups in 60 different denominations and 20 different countries worldwide. The organization is guided by the principles outlined in a document called First Things: Fundamental Themes Guiding Friendship Ministries. These principles are **Equality, Interdependence, Compassion and Hospitality.**

St. Louis Center residents began attending Friendship Bible from almost the very beginning. Of the fifty ‘Friends’ who gather bi-weekly, more than thirty live at St. Louis Center. New participants are slowly folded into the group so that they become comfortable with the new faces and experiences.

Each meeting begins with singing, dancing and joke telling. Friendship Ministries provides a core curriculum that the local groups follow to engage ‘Friends’ in the day’s lesson. All materials are designed with the ‘differently-abled’ in mind. In keeping with Friendship Ministries’ Mission, the mentors who lead Friendship Bible work hard to help each Friend realize and develop their talents, grow in their knowledge of Jesus, and know that they are loved.



BALLET CHELSEA Adaptive Movement

Adaptive dance programming is most commonly found in major U.S. cities like New York, Chicago, and Boston. But one local not-for-profit ballet company, Ballet Chelsea, offers adaptive dance classes that serve over a hundred children and adults from ages three to 93 at multiple sites throughout Washtenaw County annually. Each class is tailor-made to fit the needs and abilities of participants and aims to improve coordination and balance, endurance, flexibility, self-confidence, and teamwork.

Jane Thompson, President of the Board of Directors of Ballet Chelsea, likes to call this program “Dance for All Ages and Abilities.” Ballet Chelsea’s adaptive dance programming began at St. Louis Center in 2014 when Jane approached staff to ask if Ballet Chelsea could partner with the Center. This was a golden opportunity for SLC. Ballet Chelsea now offers three classes at SLC.

Ballet Chelsea was opened in 1995 and serves hundreds of children and adults annually through professional-level classes offered at its Chelsea studios and in the greater community at multiple sites.

For the past four years, Ballet Chelsea instructors trained in adaptive movement have worked with

Ballet Chelsea truly cares about the welfare of people of all abilities, and we are very grateful.

SLC’s residents. Through these classes, residents are gaining strength and balance and developing their gross and fine motor skills, sensory awareness, and self-esteem. Since 2017, several SLC residents attend classes at the new, state-of-the-art Ballet Chelsea studios. The expansion of Ballet Chelsea’s work with the residents of SLC was made possible by a 2016 grant from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan and the Chelsea Community Foundation.

In addition, residents of SLC enrolled in the Chelsea Public School’s Young Adult Program attend classes every Thursday morning at the Ballet Chelsea studios. All of them take the local WAVE bus from their classroom site to the Studios.

SLC also annually receives complimentary tickets from Ballet Chelsea for the residents to attend its Nutcracker and other performances. This is an opportunity for them to dress-up and be part of an extraordinary community cultural event.



SARAH SAFFER Talented and Athletic

If you ask anyone who knows Sarah Saffer to share a few things about her, “talented,” “musical,” “kind,” “athletic,” and “responsible” are a few descriptive words you might hear. Sarah describes herself as ‘very athletic,’ and she is. She credits her mother and father, David and Ann Saffer, who have provided her a strong foundation and continue to support her in many ways, for her athletic prowess. “They taught me to exercise. They taught me a lot.” She continues, “I have always been a walker. I also like bowling on Saturdays, and I always go to (SLC’s) exercise program.” In addition to working out here, Sarah attends aerobics classes at the Chelsea Wellness Center, thanks to the generosity of the 5 Healthy Towns Foundation. She also attends fitness classes at the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center in Ann Arbor through a program facilitated by LightUp, a regional non-profit organization.

Sarah attends these classes after working hard in the community all day. “I go to keep moving and to build muscle, to keep my legs moving and strong...I like yoga and riding a stationary bike. I like to stay in good shape and healthy.” Sarah’s commitment to fitness and health inspires everyone at SLC.

She is also gifted in music. Each summer, Sarah plays her recorder at the Lad & Dad Golf Outing in Oakland, MI that benefits the Center. Over 200 people attend, and when Sarah begins playing the room falls silent. When she finishes, thunderous applause breaks out and a smile lights up her face. “I can play many songs on the recorder by heart...I had a music teacher at Our Lady of

Sarah’s commitment to fitness and health inspires everyone at SLC.

Providence (where Sarah lived prior to SLC). She taught me how to play the recorder. I used to play piano a long time ago. My sister Lisa taught me when I was about 15 years old. I also like to sing. I’m a high soprano like Lisa.”

Her two sisters, Lisa and Rachel, are very special to her. “They are very nice to me, and I always call them on the phone.” Sarah has learned to travel by plane alone to see her sisters in California and Maine.

“I’m a good person...I always do what I’m supposed to do. I always follow directions and listen to the staff. I like to write letters. I write to my mom



and dad when they’re in Florida... I like to ride horses a lot. I ride all alone, and I like singing songs to the horse when I’m riding it.” Sarah rides in Jackson through a program for people with disabilities and also at the Fowler Center in Mayville, Michigan, which she attends once a month and again for two weeks in the summertime.

Another of Sarah’s many gifts is her capacity to remember important information. “I remember everyone’s birthdays. I just remember peoples’ ages and their birthdays.” Sarah’s favorite color is turquoise, and her favorite flower is the dandelion.

When she is asked what else she likes about living at SLC, she talks about her friends and the staff, “I like living (at St. Louis Center) a lot because of my roommate, Cathy. I like being with her. Cathy and I talk, and I express my feelings. I like Deanna (one of SLC’s supervisors) because she’s taught me a lot. I like Fr. Enzo and Fr. Franklin, and I do like Fr. Joe because they are very nice. I like to help by playing my recorder in the chapel at Mass every other Sunday.”

STRATEGIC PLAN: Refocused

In 2017, St. Louis Center set out to rewrite its Strategic Plan to develop a focused plan of action as the St. Louis Guanella Village project unfolds.

- The process was undertaken throughout the year by an ad hoc committee comprised of staff and other stakeholders and facilitated by Stephanie Freeth, a nonprofit strategist and Founder of Adaptive Alternatives, LLC.
- The Strategic Plan outlines SLC's values and goals and the action steps needed to achieve the goals.
- New mission and vision statements were created to clearly explain the Center's purpose and direction.

\$10M LEGACY CAMPAIGN Goal Met

St. Louis Center has reached its Legacy Campaign fundraising goal of \$10M, thanks to the generosity and support of over 500 private individuals, foundations, corporations, businesses, and organizations. The Campaign was announced in 2010, and fundraising began in earnest in 2011. This Campaign was the first formal fundraising campaign in St. Louis Center's history.

What has resulted from your generosity is positive and lasting change, innovation in the delivery of housing and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, renovation, new construction, partnerships and friendships.

Thanks to all of our supporters, we are carrying out our visionary goals while also maintaining annual sustainability.

Renovation.
New construction.
Partnerships.
Friendships.

THE LEGACY PROJECT: Progress Report

Making a life commitment to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families continues to be the focus of the Legacy Project.

Major Capital Projects Completed in 2017:

- St. Louis Guanella Village Infrastructure Work (grading, utilities, wastewater treatment system, street lighting, landscaping)
- Village Children's Homes (4)

Other Legacy Projects Completed since 2011:

- Family Welcome & Orientation Center, 2011
- Special Needs Playground/Park, 2013
- Fr. Guanella Hall for Assisted Living renovation, 2014



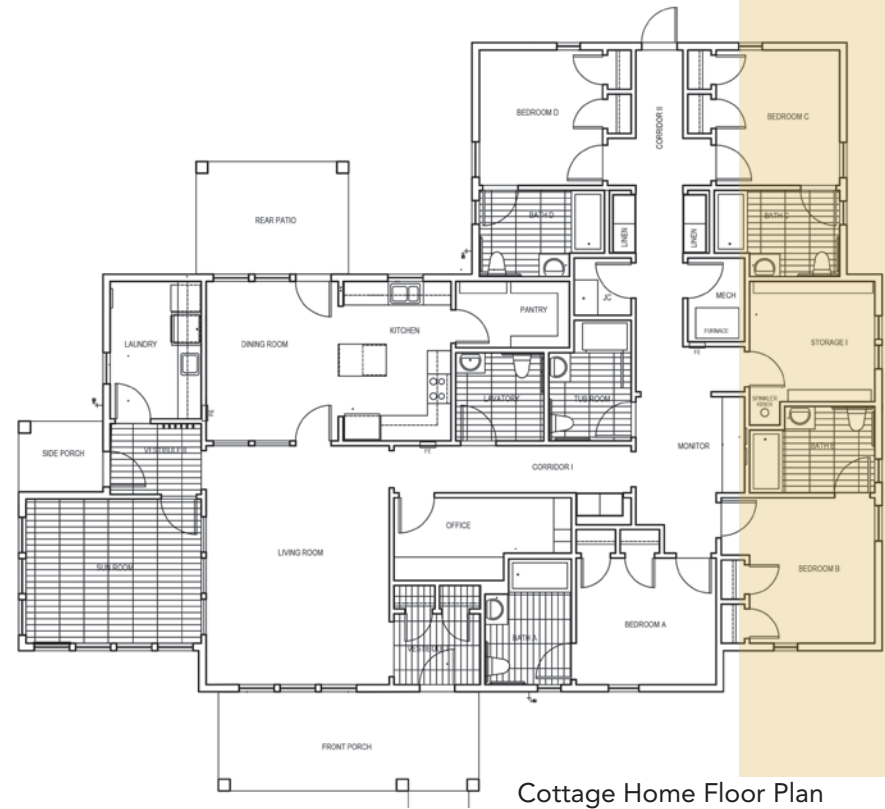
HELPING TO REALIZE THE VISION: Village Family and Cottage Homes

The Center's vision, as articulated in the Strategic Plan, is to be an innovative leader in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families by providing evidence-based programs in an integrated community that promotes the fullness of life.

To help realize a key element of this vision, creating an integrated community, architectural and civil engineering work on Phase II Family and Cottage Homes continued in 2017. Construction documents for the Cottage Homes for adults with I/DD are being prepared, and the Family Homes have reached the advanced design development phase. Additional infrastructure work will need to be completed before these homes are constructed beginning in 2019.

Funds Needed to Build Remaining
Infrastructure, Cottage Homes,
Family Homes, and Gathering Spaces: **\$10M**

Funds Needed to Construct the
Village Fitness Center: **\$2M Remaining**



Family Home



Cottage Home



Fitness Center

THE PAYEUR PROJECT Toys and Joys

Russell “Russ” and Catherine “Kay” Payeur are happy, kind people who love nature. A field of white trillium that blooms on their property in the springtime seems to be a reflection of their happiness. Kay loves flowers and gardening. They are members of St. Andrew’s Catholic Church in Saline, where Russ is a member of the Knights of Columbus and was the Commander in the Knights’ Fourth Degree. They are longtime friends and generous supporters of St. Louis Center. When SLC was the St. Louis School for Boys, Russ and Kay attended a dinner at the school. A young student was having a hard time at the dinner, so one of the priests spoke with him and immediately calmed him. That made an impression on the couple, and they have been supporters ever since.

Both Russ and Kay were raised in Ann Arbor and went to high school together. He saw her and said to a friend, “See that girl? I’ll bet I can get a date with her!” On January 17, 1959, they were married. At that time, Russ was serving in the U.S Army Active Reserve. He served a total of six years in the Army. Kay is an accomplished seamstress and community volunteer who took care of the finances of the family-owned business while raising their three children, one son and two daughters. They now have four grandchildren and live in Saline.

On their property, Russ and Kay built a pond and cabin and even produced maple syrup for a time. In 1995, Russ, an accomplished builder, carpenter and woodworker, constructed a pole barn to house the workshop he had always envisioned. Every inch of space in his well-organized workshop is occupied by machines, tools, wood, awards and fair ribbons



he won by showing his vehicles, collections of antiques, framed newspaper articles – one about his grandfather – and many other treasures.

When you walk into the atrium at SLC, you will find custom built oak cases. On the shelves are over 60 wooden ‘toy’ vehicles, a collection Russ handcrafted in his workshop. In addition to the vehicles, SLC now proudly displays at Christmas time Russ’ collection of eight wooden reindeer pulling a sleigh.

Russ began to craft his vehicle collection after he retired from Payeur Foundation, a company started in 1926 by his father, Harry, and eventually run by Russ and his brother. According to Kay, Russ needed to keep busy. He started another business after he retired, but gradually decreased his workload.

His woodworking years began at the same time as his personal business. A friend had encouraged him to donate a kind of Jacob’s Ladder toy Russ had

made to Mott Children's Hospital. Russ liked the idea and ultimately donated 300 of them to the hospital. It was around that time that his work on wooden vehicles took off.

While Russ gingerly dusted each of the vehicles he was preparing to donate, he told Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, Treasurer of SLC, the story of how he made each one of them. His favorite vehicles are the ladder truck, bucket truck, bulldozer and cement truck. He considers these the heart of the collection. "I like my cement truck," Russ said as he dusted it, "It took a full day to set up the table saw I used to make it...everything on it works...complete with the chute." He moved the tiny chute with his right hand to demonstrate. "The barrel of the cement truck is made out of oak and walnut. I wanted to get the contrast so you can see it."

The collection is comprised of intricate utility, construction, farm, service, transportation, and recreation vehicles, including pieces such as golf carts, a John Deere B, a Hummer, a camper (complete with a retractable sleeping compartment), a pumper, a ladder truck, and a heavy-duty log truck. He pointed into the distance and said, "The logs on the logging truck came right out of my woods, right over there."

"Sometimes Russ would retire for the evening thinking about a particular design issue and would wake up at 2 or 3 a.m. saying, 'Darn it! I got it!'"

He explained that each of the bigger pieces took 200 to 300 hours of time to make. Kay added key details to his stories and could finish his sentences. "Sometimes Russ would retire for the evening thinking about a particular design issue and would wake up at 2 or 3 a.m. saying, 'Darn it! I got it!'"

Most of the vehicles were made with patterns, but several were designed by Russ, such as his Model T, an exact replica of a full-size Model T he had bought and refurbished. He explained that the hardest components to make on any of them were the tires on the army jeep "because of the wheels...trying to get all of those tire logs equal. I'll bet I made 50 of them before I got one right." He laughs again. "Once you have the pattern, there's nothing to it."

Ultimately, Russ wanted the vehicles to be enjoyed by many people and trusted that SLC would keep the collection together. He also felt that SLC residents would appreciate it.

He was right. Recently, one of the youngest residents came home from school, and walked into the atrium with his backpack on. He flung off the backpack, sat down in front of one of the cases, and gazed at the vehicles. He proudly began naming them.



NANCY GRAEBNER The Connector

Nancy Graebner is living out her childhood dream as the Chief Executive Officer of St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea, and, as a result, she has become a true “connector.” Her parents saw greatness in her as a small child, “I was an avid reader from the minute I could hold a book. I loved school and learning from a very young age.” Nancy thrived in high school, and her first work experience was in a high school co-op work program. “The most coveted position was at St. Mary’s in Saginaw in the Medical Records Department. I wanted it so badly, and I worked there from 10th through 12th grades for 28 hours a week. My advisor encouraged me to get my first degree in Medical Records Science.”

Nancy’s work at St. Mary Hospital taught her what Catholic health care was all about. “It was a wonderful environment to have your first job experience because Catholic health care has always been strong in ‘Mission – Vision – Values.’ You really understand what you’re providing for the community, which is care for everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable.”

Nancy completed degrees at Ferris State, Saginaw State, and the University of Michigan, utilizing her own resources. She supervised Medical Records at Covenant Health Care in Saginaw, worked as a Health Care Consultant for a multi-state agency in Chicago, returned to Michigan to work for Mercy Health, and traveled to South Carolina to work for Bon Secours Hospital. After eight years in SC, Nancy wanted to return to Michigan and applied for the CEO position in Chelsea. “I accepted in the

fall of 2011; the hospital had been through a lot of change when I arrived, so I knew I was joining a high performing team. I’ve been very blessed.”

After arriving in Chelsea, Nancy was connected to SLC through two special friends, former Chelsea

Hospital CEO Will Johnson, who “cherished” his involvement with the Center over the years, and Bob Trudell. Nancy explained, “Bob was the Human Resource Director of SLC at the time and invited me out for lunch and a tour. Now I’ve fallen in love with SLC because it’s a very special place. I

love that it’s Catholic and faith-based because I know that you’re going to be tending to ‘mind, body and spirit.’ I want to give the residents of SLC and their families a voice.”

Since her arrival, Nancy has become the Vice-Chair of the Community Advisory Council and has assisted SLC in many ways. Most significantly, with the help of a grant from SJMH-Trinity Health, SLC has modernized its medical records system. “One thing I saw early on was the need for an IT platform at SLC to get their care plans together for the residents in some kind of an electronic records format,” said Nancy. “I know how important it is to document and to perform different studies and research. I see myself as a connector, so when I’m listening at CAC meetings about our challenges, if I know somebody who can help us out, I’m able to reach out to broaden our St. Louis Center family.”



“I love that it’s Catholic and faith-based because I know that you’re going to be tending to ‘Mind, Body and Spirit.’”

FRANK & SHARON PIGNANELLI THE DYNAMIC DUO

Franks and Sharon Pignanelli are the volunteer “Daring Duo” of St. Louis Center, and each has their own set of talents they use throughout the year to benefit our many events and activities. Frank became involved with SLC in 2001 as a member of the Chelsea Knights of Columbus, but it didn’t take long for Sharon to step in after that.

“It’s a joy doing the work that I do for SLC,” said Frank. Sharon added, “The priests keep me coming back because they are such a holy group of men. You don’t always see priests with that kind of dedication who are so pious, loving and caring. The three new priests give me such a hope for the future of the priesthood.”

**“It’s a joy
doing the
work that I
do for SLC.”**

The Pignanelli’s met as college students at the University of Michigan, and, according to Frank, “I needed a date for my pledge formal and Sharon lived in Stockwell Hall, so I invited her. We were pinned in my junior year, and after Sharon’s graduation, we were married on July 1, 1961. By then I was working as a pharmacist; however, I was drafted into the U.S. Army on Feb. 2, 1962. Sharon began teaching second grade at Willow Run and then followed me to Fort Knox, KY until I finished my two years of service.” Frank returned to his career as a pharmacist in Ann Arbor. Sharon became a computer software instructor at Warner-Lambert/Pfizer and was the senior

manager of a desktop support group until she retired in 2004.

Frank became a volunteer for SLC through his dedication to annual K of C projects. “I became the chairman of the ‘Tootsie Roll Drive,’ and then I was REALLY involved in raising money for SLC. ” Frank’s commitment to SLC grew as he became the Volunteer Coordinator of the annual Golf & Glory Outing in June.

Meanwhile, Sharon volunteered for the annual Fall Dinner Auction at St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea. “It was clear that I had a needed skill-set, so I started working more closely with Chairwoman Kathi Neuman, and now I’m the logistics person, working to put things together.” Sharon also assists Fr. Joseph Rinaldo with editing books before they go to print and is Vice-Chair of the Guanellian Lay Movement and publisher of the Guanellian Newsletter.



Faithful Friends

There are so many groups and individuals whose generosity make the day-to-day operations of SLC possible we cannot possibly list them all. Each of you is remembered in our daily prayers.



THE POWER of Planned Giving

In 2017, St. Louis Center received a letter from a law firm indicating that a significant gift had been left the Center through the will of a former supporter. It was a gift from the heavens.

Wills and trusts are a type of planned gift, a charitable contribution that is arranged in the present and allocated at a future date. The foresight and support of people who have named St. Louis Center in their wills or trusts will help to sustain the Center's charitable work for generations to come.

There has been an uptick in planned gifts to St. Louis Center in the past several years. Gifts vary in size and scope, but they all have served the same purpose: to positively impact St. Louis Center's future success. We are very grateful for all of these gifts.

To find out how you can include a gift to St. Louis Center in your estate planning, please contact your financial advisor or the St. Louis Center Development Department at 734.475.8430 or peggy@stlouiscenter.org.

St. Louis Center celebrates all of its supporters, including those who make a mark on its future by including St. Louis Center in their estate plans and through other planned gifts.

YOUR SUPPORT is vital and appreciated

Through your generosity, our work has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of individuals and families across Michigan and beyond.

Your support makes it possible for St. Louis Center to provide the specialized care for the children and adults who reside here and to develop projects that help meet growing needs.

There are many ways to show you care:

Outright Gifts make an immediate impact and are the most common ways of supporting St. Louis Center financially. These gifts include:

- **Cash Donations** – personal check, credit card authorization, money order or bank draft
- **Gifts of Stock or Securities** – offer a charitable deduction to you, the donor, and eliminate your capital gains tax liability
- **In-Kind Gifts of Goods and Services** – help reduce operating costs

Matching Gifts increase the value of your gift by making use of your company's matching gift program.

Planned Gifts provide financial support to St. Louis Center while potentially providing significant financial benefits to you, the donor. Examples include:

- **Will or Trust** – name St. Louis Center in your will or trust. You can make a significant impact without affecting your current finances.
- **Life Income Gifts** – gifts that name St. Louis Center as a beneficiary while you or your loved ones are paid an income. These can include the Charitable Gift Annuity, Charitable Remainder Trust, or others.
- **IRA, 401(k) beneficiary** – name St. Louis Center as a percentage beneficiary of your retirement plan account. This requires only a simple change of beneficiary form.
- **Life Insurance** – name St. Louis Center as a beneficiary of your fully paid or new life insurance policy.

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