

# St. Louis Spirit



**Summer 2020**

*Lisa is enjoying a summer cookout and building her life skills.*

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COVID-19 has curtailed almost all social gatherings, including the many fundraisers SLC holds each year. More than leaving us feeling disconnected from one another, it also has a big impact on the bottom line of the organization. “Each year, we raise approximately \$500,000 from events like Golf & Glory, the Auction and our Memorial Golf Outing, not to mention other events held by groups across the state,” said Christina Ferris, SLC development director. “So this year, we’re getting creative!”

With the assistance of the newly formed development committee, SLC is looking at new ways to hold events. The Memorial Golf Outing was the first. “We were sticking our toes in the waters of virtual fundraising with this,” said Christina. “We wanted to retain the fun, laid back atmosphere of this particular outing, while at the same time remembering a friend of the Center.” Jerry D’Adamo, a great friend of SLC who passed away in 2019, was recognized in a moving tribute.



The “outing” allowed participants to golf at the course of their choice the week of July 11th – 18th and send their scores to SLC. Because of the added flexibility of a virtual event, walkers were included for the first time. Sponsorships were available, as well as mulligans at varying price points to help offset the cost of care for residents.

On July 18th, SLC recognized sponsors, as well as winners and losers in a fun, virtual event live on Facebook. “We chose a platform most people were familiar with for the event,” said Christina. “The best part was picking the winner of the Crazy Pants Contest from the pictures participants sent of themselves wearing their wildest golf pants or exercise gear. Everyone had a great time with it!” The outing was a great success, raising \$15,000 to care for residents at SLC.

The development committee is looking down the road to fall fundraisers, as well, holding a 60th Anniversary Celebration (originally planned for June) and the beloved fall auction online. Stay tuned for more details.

16195 W. Old US Hwy. 12,  
Chelsea MI 48118  
phone 734-475-8430  
[www.stlouiscenter.org](http://www.stlouiscenter.org)

## From Fr. Enzo

The pandemic has challenged everyone mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We hope and pray that it will be over soon and that everyone could go back to normalcy.

Thus, I want to thank all of you for caring for St. Louis Center through your generosity and concerns in knowing how the residents have been doing. The Good Lord has blessed us and as of now no one, either residents or staff, has been sick with COVID-19.

Because of the pandemic, many fund raising events have been cancelled or postponed; my worry has always been the wellbeing and health of people above the money raised for the financial needs of the Center. We keep our faith in the Lord who 'doesn't forget those who are precious in His sight' (St. Louis Guanella) and cares for them in many different ways through the generosity of loving people.

We had planned a celebration for the 60th anniversary of the Center, but it had to be cancelled due to the pandemic; we hope to organize an event for next year.

The Memorial Golf Outing in the middle of July became a virtual one. The cruise scheduled for Spring 2021 has been cancelled and we are looking at other opportunities for the Fall of 2021. The event (9-20) at the Italian American Club of Livonia has been cancelled. The Car-Show (9-27), the Taste of Chelsea at St. Mary's (10-10), and the Fall Auction (11-14) have been cancelled as well.

The construction of the buildings in St. Louis Guanella Village resumed in the middle of June and should be completed by the end of August. At that point we will make plans for a formal dedication.

St. Louis Center, as you know, continues its founding tradition of caring for people who cry out 'Lord I don't have anyone' keeps offering care and advocates for the rights of the people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are fully members of society and who give it major hidden contributions of humanity through their lives.

Following these thoughts, we are looking at the new needs of the present aging population in Fr. Guanella Hall and assessing the programs and services to offer them in order to proclaim the dignity of their lives.

The pandemic has also put a lot of stress on staffing needs; suddenly we had to increase the number of staff to cover the morning hours for schools and day programs being shut down. Starting at the end of June, only a day program for the adult population has reopened on a part time basis. We keep working on contingency plans for the future to be ready in case the pandemic will last longer than expected.

Through the blessing of the Almighty, stay well and be safe.

Fr. Enzo Aschieri



## Around the Village

### Keeping Residents Active



*Social Services staff reading to the children during 'school.'*

With this time in quarantine, we have been providing opportunities to keep our resident's minds and bodies active. As an Occupational Therapy student, I have an interest in everyday activities that provide meaning to lives, as well as, work on different performance skills.

In the past few months, we have provided many activities that range from playing games to getting active.

Some examples include playing Uno, baking, walking, and chair yoga. Each activity provides an opportunity for the resident's to work on different sets of skills. Playing cards and baking can give the resident's an opportunity to work on processing and social skills. This is through choosing the correct tools necessary for the task, inquiring when help is needed, taking turns, and transitioning throughout the task. Walking and chair yoga provide practice for gross motor skills. These types of physical activities can benefit overall fitness but also



*Melanie Hughey with Sarah and the bird feeders they made.*



*Charlie enjoyed the Marshmallow Challenge.*

coordination, endurance, pacing, bending, reaching, and crossing the midline. Other activities include painting, wii bowling, reading as a group, and holiday crafts. Each activity not only providing entertainment during quarantine, but

also benefiting our resident's skills needed for their everyday occupations.

*Melanie Hughey is the Day Program Activities Coordinator, a position funded by a grant from St. Joseph Mercy Hospital for the past two years.*



## Pam Retires after 20 Years of Service

Friday, June 12, 2020, was the end of an era, as Pam Fredette said goodbye to her friends at SLC after 20 years of service as a bookkeeper. Pam has moved to Dayton, OH, to spend more time with her three children and her granddaughter Arianna. Pam started working at SLC in December 1999 after answering an ad in the *Chelsea Standard*. "Being there was like being home. In SLC I found a family. It just felt right," said Pam during her farewell party. "My favorite things were being with the residents and my co-workers, and enjoying the surroundings. Seeing God's beauty inside and out. It was satisfying work, because I knew what I did benefitted the residents. We went through many changes, and went from handwritten ledgers when I started to a fully computerized operation. It was a great 20 years of work, and I'll miss everyone."

Lisa Dobis has transferred from a position in Development to Pam's position in accounting, and after two months of learning the ropes from Pam, she's up and running in the new position.



## Everyone Loves a Parade

Every year on Memorial Day, the residents of SLC load into vans and head off to watch a local Memorial Day parade.

This year due to COVID-19, all gatherings and parades in Michigan were canceled. Staff member Ashley Bertke

had an idea to provide the children of SLC a parade. She asked the adult residents if they would like to make signs and throw treats to the children. The residents of Fr. Guanella Hall and Our Lady Providence were very excited about the idea. To maintain social distancing, the adult residents walked with their staff members in front of the Children's Homes while the children anxiously waited for them on their front porches. Our maintenance crew drove lawn mowers in the parade to provide more entertainment. The priests and supervisors walked with the adult residents and waved to the children. All the residents were very pleased with the Memorial Day Parade, and they put their experience to work on the 4th of July parade.



## Political Advocacy: State Legislators & Together for Choice

During the second quarter of 2020, we have had to face one of the most difficult challenges in our lifetime in fighting and containing the COVID-19 pandemic. And while we've written previous articles about the impact of this virus on St. Louis Center, what has been done politically during the past three months? Once the "stay home" executive order was issued by the governor, not only were many of us confined to working from home, but so were our elected officials and their staffs. This provided us with an opportunity to get caught up with them on some of our major issues and to ask them for continued help and support. State Sen. Lana Theis asked us to provide her with documentation for how money allocated for persons with I/DD flowed from the Federal Government to the State Government, and then out to the local community through the County Community Mental Health system. So we provided her and other legislators with information specific to SLC in order to illustrate this process.

The MI Department of Health and Human Services has continued to move forward with its Five Year Transition Plan to revise the requirements for Home and Community Based Services in Michigan. This program is specific to adult residents, and St. Louis Center must be in full compliance with the State's new regulations by September 17, 2021. Drawn from Federal CMS Guidelines, the program is meant to ensure that people with I/DD are not isolated from the community.

SLC has become partners with Together for Choice; a national advocacy organization that advances the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Coffee for Staff



With assistance from Brad, Direct Care Professional, Ryan offers coffee and cookies to staff each Thursday.

# Matching Grant Helping SLC Celebrate 60 Years

You have been very generous to St. Louis Center through our spring Covid relief appeal and other fundraisers. In fact, more than 340 people responded with donations- and we couldn't be more grateful.

Looking forward, we know that the challenges will continue. Funding cuts of 20% or more from state and federal funders are on the horizon. Staffing costs, including a \$2 an hour hazard pay premium, will continue to be higher than normal



for the remainder of the year. Cleaning supplies, PPE and increased food costs add to the list. Our in-person fundraisers are pivoting to virtual events, or are being postponed, providing us with fewer funds to offset these deficits.

Even in the face of this uncertainty, however, we take heart in the fact that St. Louis Center has a long history of providing loving care for people with I/DD—this year celebrating our 60th anniversary! Although we do not know with any certainty what the next year will bring, we have faith in you, our family, who help ensure that the 73 children and adults entrusted to our care will always have a home. Our histories together go back generations, with Fr. Fortunato,

Fr. Joe, Fr. Enzo and others—serving at weddings, christenings, funerals and many family celebrations.

And we will continue to be there with you in the future.

We are grateful for your past support and in helping make this, our 60th Diamond Anniversary, a positive experience in spite of all that we face. We look forward to your continued support as we navigate our way through the coming year. And when it is safe, we joyfully look forward to once again being there with you to share those important milestones of life.



*Christina Ferris*

Christina Ferris  
Development Director

## Receive Newsletter by Email

To keep you informed about the latest news and events and help us control costs, **please share your email address with us today.**

We will not share your information with anyone else. This will make it possible to communicate important information quickly and reduce costly mailings.

Just email us at [slcdev@stlouiscenter.org](mailto:slcdev@stlouiscenter.org) it is a small step that can have a big impact.

## Double Your Donation

### \*\*\* It is Easy to Give \*\*\*

1. **Mail** the completed form below to: Development Dept., St. Louis Center, 16195 W. Old US Hwy 12, Chelsea, MI 48118
2. **Donate online** at [www.stlouiscenter.org/giving/give-now/](http://www.stlouiscenter.org/giving/give-now/)
3. **Email** Christina at [cferris@stlouiscenter.org](mailto:cferris@stlouiscenter.org) with your phone number and she will call you to so that you can make your donation over the phone.

Make a Donation and HAVE IT MATCHED – If you are able at this time, we ask that you make a contribution to help St. Louis Center. We are incredibly blessed to have a very generous matching donor, so **YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL BE DOUBLED!** Your donation is tax deductible.

----- ↩ Return this completed form with your donation ↪ -----

## Yes, I want to help St. Louis Center and DOUBLE MY GIFT

### Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Cell ☐ Home ☐ Work

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Donation Amount

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$2500 ☐ \$5000 ☐ \$10000 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type: ☐ Credit Card ☐ Cash ☐ Check (*Payable to St. Louis Center*)

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number : \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 3-Digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_



# Construction Update

## New Buildings

**Construction work resumed on St. Louis Guanella Village May 15th.**

According to John Franklin, AZ Shmina's construction superintendent who is overseeing the project, "Covid has really changed the work process. All contractors working onsite have to provide a health assessment, have their temperature taken and sign in every day that they are here."

The new construction includes four- and six-bedroom cottages for residents currently living in Knights of Columbus



Hall located in the main building. Families who have a child with I/DD will also find a place to call home in the new single family and duplex homes located among the resident cottages. Across the street, a new administration building will provide space for current supervisors and staff, as well as a future leasing agent and security staff. Contractors are in the final stages of construction, finishing the drywall, installing cabinets, trimming and painting.

Furniture deliveries, landscaping and hydroseeding of the lawns are scheduled for August. Occupancy of the buildings is anticipated in the fall once the necessary permits have been received. Dedication of the new buildings, originally scheduled for June, will be held sometime in 2021.

## Renovations

**The main building at SLC, built in the 1960s, requires ongoing repair and maintenance.**

**Retaining Wall** – Currently, work is underway to replace a retaining wall just outside of the kitchen and bus stop area. The wall was deteriorating and it, along with a staircase to the basement, are being replaced.

**Gymnasium and Lobby** –

The replacement of the HVAC system, including the addition of a new air conditioning unit, will be completed by the end of July. This will provide much needed heating and cooling in the gym, which is seeing higher use during the COVID-19 pandemic, as residents must remain on campus.

**Martin Hall** – As the state lockdown orders ease, work is resuming on Martin Hall renovations. This will become much needed office space for the social work department, who look forward to occupying the new offices in late summer or early fall.



# Benevolent Care

**Q:** What does "benevolent care" mean, and how was it established in the mission of SLC through St. Louis Guanella and the Servants of Charity Congregation?

**A:** "Our activity partakes in the mission of the Church, constituted and sent by Christ to pursue, in history, His work of evangelizing the poor and gathering the lost children of God. Following the example of Mary, Mother of Providence, we witness the merciful love of the Father through our charitable work. We represent Jesus, who healed the sick, did good for all and gave His life to reconcile people with God and among themselves. Our educational service is, therefore, a way of evangelizing and is our specific contribution to the mission of the Church." *Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission*, Premise.

So while many of the residents we care for are funded by state and county Community Mental Health agencies under contract, there are many more who have been placed here by their families, and others still who "have no one" to care for them. Several of these folks have been cared for since their early teens and consider St. Louis Center their forever home. They are here by their own choice, and whenever they've had the chance to leave, their wish has been to remain with their SLC "family." This is what benevolent care is all about, and where your donations are going when you help to fund our operations.

## Community Supports SLC

**Q:** How does the community show support when SLC is in need of help?

**A:** There are many different ways, and certainly financial donations are very important. However "in-kind" donations are very important as well. These contributions of goods and services are another way that SLC is able to save money, but still accomplish its mission. Here are a couple of examples of in-kind donations that occurred during our recent State of Emergency lock-down from COVID-19.

**Hand Sanitizer** – At the end of March, Rob Mida from Ugly Dog Distillery in Chelsea converted his operations from making alcoholic beverages to making hand sanitizer for people in the community who were in danger of running out. He generously donated two gallons of sanitizer valued at \$30 each to SLC, and when the supply ran low again on May 29th, he provided SLC with another two gallons to assist our staff and residents in fulfilling our sanitation protocols.

(continued on p. 8)

# Upcoming Events

## Dad and Lad Golf Outing August 19, 2020



The Dad & Lad Golf Outing was created in 1997 to encourage father and son camaraderie, but it has since turned into a family affair. Dedicated and long-time SLC supporters Mike Chirco and Joe Maniaci

organize the event with the help of Sam Cottone. This year will include Golf and Lunch for \$175/person.

### Day at a Glance

- 11am: Registration
- 12pm: Shot Gun Start & lunch on the course
- 18 Holes of Golf w/cart
- Beverages on the Course
- Mini Silent Auction
- 5pm Raffle Drawing

There is a restricted number of golfers this year. Register early, golfing is on a first come first serve basis.

**Twin Lakes Golf & Swim Club**  
455 Twin Lakes Drive  
Oakland MI 48363

Please contact Barb Gates for registration information  
gatesbarb@mjccompanies.com or  
586-840-3416.

## 26TH ANNUAL Golf and Glory Outing SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

### Golf Registration

- ☐ INDIVIDUAL GOLFER \$200  
☐ FOURSOME \$800

GOLFER(S) NAME(S):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To register online,  
scan here ↓



For more sponsor  
info scan here ↓



### TOTAL AMOUNT

REGISTRATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
SPONSORSHIP \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I WISH TO SPONSOR: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY/SPONSOR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### Event Sponsorships

DIAMOND ..... \$10,000      GOLD ..... \$2,500  
PLATINUM ..... \$5,000      SILVER ..... \$1,500

GOODIE BAG .... \$1,800  
BEVERAGE ..... \$1,000  
GUANELLIAN .... \$1,000  
LUNCH ..... \$1,000  
GOLF BALL ..... \$700

TROPHY ..... \$500  
GOLF CART .... \$500  
GOLF TEE ..... \$250  
BENEFACITOR ... \$230.50\*  
DONATION ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*ONE DAY OF DIRECT CARE FOR ONE RESIDENT

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check Enclosed

☐ Charge My Card

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Send form and checks made payable to: **St. Louis Center** | 16195 Old US Hwy. 12 | Chelsea MI 48118



## 2020 St. Louis Center Graduates

**Danny Avery** has lived at SLC since March 2002. Danny's mother Dorothy said, "Since he has been at SLC, he has developed in ways I never thought were possible." He started his school career at Logan Elementary, went on to Slauson Middle School and this year, upon reaching the age of 26, graduated from High Point. While at High Point, Danny learned how to follow directions and to express himself when he needs something, according to Dorothy. "He can't communicate like we do, but he is very intelligent," she said. He always enjoyed working the coffee cart at High Point which was surprising to his mom and SLC social services staff because he loves coffee so much, they thought he'd drink it all himself.

Danny maintains a strong bond with his parents and siblings. He hopes to join his friends in one of the work programs for persons with I/DD soon.



**Kayla Canfield** graduated from Chelsea High School this spring. She was a good friend to her classmates and enjoyed helping them when her work was done. Reading is a much-loved pastime and one of Kayla's favorite books is Cinderella. She has also been very active in Special Olympics, competing in floor hockey, bocce ball snowshoeing along with her favorite - basketball.

In the near future Kayla is hoping to transition into an independent living situation. A lover of the outdoors, Kayla hopes to work for the Department of Natural Resources in one of the area parks. She also plans to continue participating in Special Olympics. In the meantime she keeps herself busy playing Minecraft.

Kayla was the first teen girl to move into St. Louis Center in 2018 and we will miss her when she leaves. She says she will miss the SLC staff most.



**Ray Black** enjoyed a surprise graduation ceremony put together by his teachers from Washtenaw Intermediate School District's Chelsea Young Adult Program on Friday, May 29th. Several teachers arrived at St. Louis Center with a sign, gifts and even a trombone serenade of *Pomp and Circumstance*. Ray was overcome with emotion and was speechless. He greatly wanted to get close to the teachers. But they remained socially distanced and promised him a proper ceremony and celebration in the fall. It will be exciting to see what Ray will do with his future after all of his hard work in school.



**Matthew Lamerson** On Friday, June 5th staff of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District visited SLC to celebrate the graduation of Matthew Lamerson from their special education program. Michigan's special ed program provides instructional programs for people with special needs up to the age of 26, and Matthew was acknowledged for completing his program this year.



On his special day, a group of eight vehicles lined up to drive around the St. Louis Center parking lot to wish him well and to deliver a special sign, gifts and cards. Once the parade started, each well-wisher rolled slowly by with their windows open and expressed their love for Matthew. Several adult residents from Fr. Guanella Hall also came out to clap and cheer for Matt as the vehicles drove by. Matthew was grateful for the attention everyone paid to him that day. SLC is grateful to the WISD staff for the time spent with Matthew through the years to help him reach this special moment in life.

# Upcoming Events

## Dad and Lad Golf Outing

August 19, 2020  
Twin Lakes Golf Club - Oakland MI

## Paesano Dinner

September 13, 2020  
Ann Arbor MI

## Golf & Glory Outing

September 14, 2020  
UofM Golf Course - Ann Arbor MI

## Randazzo Men's Social

September 24, 2020  
Macomb Twp. MI

For more information,  
please visit our website:

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

## St. Louis Center Community Advisory Council

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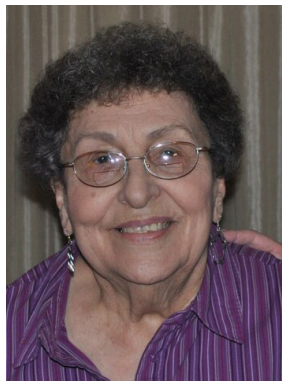


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# In Memory of Our Friends

**Julia Lussier** was a beautiful woman of faith who went to our Lord on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at the age of 92. Born in the province of Abruzzi, Italy, she immigrated with her parents to the U.S. in 1929, and grew-up on the north side of Detroit. She married her husband Roger in 1947, and they had five children, including Rena McLynn, who worked as a nurse at SLC for many years. The rest of the family included daughter Michele, sons Christopher (Carolyn) and Anthony (Catherine), and daughter Denise (Gary) Yezbick.



She is also survived by 23 grandchildren and 58 great-grandchildren. Julia loved to cook, and parlayed that love of cooking into opening two Antonio's pizzerias; one in Battle Creek, and another in Ann Arbor after they moved to the Chelsea area. Julia also worked at SLC as a cook for a short time in the early 1990s. Julia and Roger were both strong in their Catholic faith, and helped to establish the Cursillo Movement at St. Mary Parish and St. Louis Center during the mid-1990s.

James Conlin  
Almerinda DeLuca  
Donald "Butch" Laier

Julia Lussier  
Fred Powers  
Antonio Ruggirello

David Stitt  
Ann Tavalacci  
Joseph Anthony Vitale\*

\*Joseph was a former resident of St. Louis Center.

## Community Supports SLC

(Continued from p. 5)

### Protective Face Masks –

After receiving a donation of 1,000 protective face masks from Fiat Chrysler Automotive in early May, members of the Sylvan Twp. Board decided to donate 200 masks to SLC to assist in our efforts to keep our environment COVID free. PR Director Yekulis met with Twp. Treasurer Kathleen Kennedy on May 18th and gratefully received the masks for distribution at SLC; keeping everyone protected for another month with a fresh supply.

We are grateful to everyone who has assisted us in any way in our time of need!

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St. Louis Center

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