



ST. LOUIS CENTER ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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

CONTENTS

- 4 EDUCATION DURING COVID—19
- 5 SHERYL MOHR CARING FOR SLC RESIDENTS
- 6 NURSING DEPARTMENT TRANSFORMED
- 8 GRANTS SUPPORT ST. LOUIS CENTER
- 9 CHELSEA KNIGHTS COATS FOR KIDS
- 9 ST. LOUIS CENTER BY THE NUMBERS
- 10 JEROME FONTENOT FROM THE BEGINNING
- 11 KEAVAN FOSS LEARNING TO SUCCEED
- 12 60 YEARS ST. LOUIS CENTER
- 15 JASON & KELLI CRAWFORD BOUND TOGETHER
FROM CHILDHOOD
- 16 SAM COTTONE HELPING IN HIS OWN WAY
- 17 JOSEPH MANIACI WARM HEART—STRONG
SUPPORT
- 18 GEORGE MALLISON COMMITTED TO CHARITY
- 19 JOE AND TINA MERKEL A LIFE LEGACY
- 20 2020 AUDITED FINANCIALS
- 20 LEGACY UPDATE
- 22 FUNDRAISERS RE-IMAGINED
- 23 ALHAMBRA BROUGHT THE BALL GAME HOME

Cover image: Lee and some of the other residents had the opportunity to do a few basketball drills in the SLC gym during filming for the SLC 60th Anniversary Virtual celebration.



Julian's smile could light up a room. Everyone loved him because he was such a "gentle soul."

DEAR FRIENDS!

2020 will be a year we will remember for a long time because of the challenges we had to face, but nevertheless, it has still been a year of graces.

COVID-19 has left a very deep mark on everyone. Some of our friends are no longer with us because of it, others were indirectly affected by the pandemic.

Here at St. Louis Center all the residents have been healthy and well protected during 2020. The measures implemented at the beginning of the pandemic have worked out and no one got sick.

The residents celebrated religious and civic events holding group parades in the Village; even Santa got a key to deliver Christmas gifts in the houses!

We had to increase the number of staff since community programs were cancelled or significantly reduced, creating the need of hiring additional staff. Through a grant we purchased Chromebooks for their educational needs and training. We provided staff with premium/hazard pay as well.

All of you have listened to our cry for help once our finances started to show the shortfall of money needed for the operation of the Center and answered to it generously; the outpouring of your generosity has been marvelous. May God reward all of you for such generosity and love!



We had to cancel many of the fundraising events or hold them in a lower scale, virtual format. The 60th anniversary was celebrated virtually as well.

The Community Advisory Council and other committees held their meetings virtually.

In 2019 we started the construction of additional buildings in St. Louis Guanella Village and the renovation of part of the old building in order to provide the social services department new offices and to upgrade the heating system of the lobby and the gym. Because of the pandemic everything was suspended for some time; then following the State guidelines for

safety, work resumed and was completed before the end of 2020.

In 2014 we remodeled Fr. Guanella Hall for Assisted Living; it is giving its fruits, the residents who are aging feel at peace and are happy. Just before the pandemic, the Good Lord called to Himself Julian Early, one of the senior residents of St. Louis Center.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Fr. Enzo Addari'.

Fr. Enzo Addari, SdC
CEO, St. Louis Center

EDUCATION DURING COVID—19

St. Louis Center was challenged in March of 2020—how to continue to educate the 24 school age residents without exposing them to the COVID—19 virus. The schools shut down, and these students, who thrive on schedules and routines—suddenly had neither. Staff had to adapt to not only providing care and assistance to the youth, but also helping them continue with their education.

The first thing that needed to be done was to calm down the anxiety that this change caused in many of the residents. A call went out on Facebook for weighted blankets as part of a calming plan, and our donors stepped up—donating enough weighted blankets for every resident to have one. Craft supplies and kits followed, as we struggled for ways to provide stimulation for the residents.

Work within the school system continued, and many of the residents switched to online learning. Some of the residents were not able to tolerate sitting in front of a screen for any period of time, and the schools sent home work packets for them. The social services department has been working hard to provide all the “Zoom” sessions requested.



Weighted blankets were quick to arrive thanks to generous donors.

We then ran into a problem with the supply of electronic devices, and other school supplies needed to provide online learning for all 24 residents. This problem was solved when we received a grant from James R. and Anita Horne Jenkins Family Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to support the Education Program.

We certainly hope that the residents will be able to return to school soon, as nothing replaces the classroom education that they receive. Until it is safe to do so, we will continue to provide education to the residents to ensure they flourish in all areas of their lives.



Activity kits were assembled for students using grant funds.

“Even in the midst of a pandemic, these residents were able to graduate from school. We are so proud of them.”

-Deana Fisher, SLC COO



Ray



Kayla



Matthew



Danny

SHERYL MOHR CARING FOR SLC RESIDENTS

Sheryl Mohr says she felt led to her job as St. Louis Center's Social Services Supervisor in July of 2019. "I have a son with Down syndrome and 10 adopted kids with special needs," said Sheryl. With a bachelor's degree in social work and an MBA in health administration, and, "Because life in general has given me a lot of experience with this population, I felt called to SLC."

Sheryl and her six-person team, in close collaboration with direct care supervisors and the nursing department, are responsible for managing much of the care for the Center's 70 residents. They schedule appointments, arrange for transportation and accompany residents on doctor and dentist visits, as well as whatever other appointments they might need in between. In addition, they must meet strict state mandates with detailed quarterly and annual reports on each resident. But paperwork and documentation are only part of the picture.



Because SLC is truly home for its residents, Sheryl and her staff provide much of the personal support that helps the residents know they are loved and cared for. "We're here when someone has had a bad day and just needs to talk," said Sheryl. "Or, they may have a little spending money and want to go shopping. We're the ones who take them." Her department also manages new admissions. "New residents, particularly younger ones, need extra support to help them with the transition to their new home," said Sheryl. "So on a resident's first day, I'll

stay with them until they go to sleep to make sure they feel comfortable and secure." She also spends a lot of time taking care of other needs, as well.

"We will sit with a resident who needs psychiatric care and wait for a doctor," Sheryl said. "We advocate for medications when someone is struggling and they don't have what they need. We recognize when a resident is walking funny and needs to see a podiatrist. For the residents who are in school, we are in contact with their teachers weekly. During COVID, we made sure the residents had their Chromebooks to use each day and were doing their lessons. We'll help residents who have jobs with their taxes or take them to the social security office to straighten out problems. When residents are bored and need something to do, we come up with ideas for a project and get them the supplies they need." The list is endless, but so are the rewards.

"I most enjoy seeing the residents smile and get excited when a situation that they couldn't process on their own is resolved," she commented.



"I love it when they just stop by to ask how I'm doing. The bond with them and the camaraderie is really special. I believe they are equal to us, regardless of their need. Meeting them on their level and seeing their growth is so rewarding."

-Sheryl Mohr

"The new medication system has completely changed our nursing department and allowed us to focus on all aspects of nursing."

Emily Wild, SLC Staff LPN



Emily Wild, LPN, trains new direct care staff members how to use the new Med Pass system.

NURSING DEPARTMENT TRANSFORMED

One of the most valuable support teams at SLC is the Nursing Department, where the health of residents is dependent upon the abilities of four very skilled people; Fr. David Stawasz, SdC, RN, Emily Wild, LPN, Debbie Markiewicz, RN, and Heidi Divert, LPN.

While Fr. Dave has been at St. Louis Center for many years practicing the skills he learned before becoming a priest, Emily, Debbie and Heidi are relatively new to St. Louis Center.

Emily Wild, who has worked at SLC for 2.5 years now, is happy to be a practicing nurse to help people get better when they're ill. "I enjoy helping someone to be their eyes, ears and nose when they need extra help," said Emily. "And providing them with a quality of life that maybe they couldn't get anywhere else is important. This is a lot like home care to me, and that was my passion. This is their home, and I travel from one house to another and really enjoy my work."

As part of its continuous improvement program, SLC introduced a new medication packing process which makes the process much less labor intensive. This change allows the Nursing staff to spend more time monitoring the health and wellness of the residents. Communicating with medical professionals, school staff, parents, and direct care staff is also a big part of the job,

and can now be given more of the time it deserves.

According to Emily, "This change has given us the ability to improve nursing care to the residents," and she is happy about these improvements. "I feel like I'm able to give patients more quality time. Medication is just one part of the treatment. It's really improved our nursing department."

Deb Markiewicz, came to St. Louis Center at the end of 2018, and shared similar thoughts about the new med packaging program. "It's easier now to pack meds for school, home and work, and it's nice for the parents too, because they can see the dates that are on them now when they go home."

The St. Louis Center nursing staff believes that the new medication

packing system has had a positive effect on the health care of the residents of St. Louis Center by freeing them up to perform more pro-active nursing skills like taking vital signs, observing behaviors, and measuring the impacts of their treatment plans while also being more responsive in the event of illness or injury. Perhaps providentially, all just in time for a global pandemic.





Emily Wild, Heidi Divert, Fr. David Stawasz, SdC, and Debbie Markiewicz conduct weekly COVID-19 testing of staff and residents.

Nursing Staff Assists the Residents by:

- Providing Therapeutic Communication with Doctors and the Pharmacy
- Communicating with families and work/school
- Taking Blood Pressure
- Tracking Residents Heart Rate
- Observing Residents with Diabetes

- Measuring Height and Weight
- Charting Temperatures
- Assessing Residents for Illness or Injury
- Managing Medications
- Assisting Direct Care Staff with Resident Care

GRANTS SUPPORT ST. LOUIS CENTER

SLC receives grants from a number of organizations each year to support programs, operations and the Legacy project. These generous donors made grants in 2020.

Foundation/Organization	Project Funded	Grant Amount
Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation - Anna Botsford Bach Fund	Covid-19 Emergency Relief Funding	\$7,473
Anonymous Foundation	Covid Challenge Matching Funds	\$125,000
Anonymous Foundation	Operations and Legacy	\$250,000
Anonymous Foundation	General Operations	\$50,000
Anonymous Foundation	HVAC System for gym and lobby	\$162,500
Buhr Foundation	Legacy	\$5,000
Carls Foundation	Trauma Informed Care	\$20,000
Catholic Foundation of Michigan	General Operating Support	\$1,000
Chelsea Community Foundation	Covid-19 Emergency Relief Funding	\$15,000
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan	Education Program	\$65,000
Edward F. Redies Foundation	Legacy	\$5,000
FCA Foundation	Operations	\$10,000
Galens Medical Society	Musical instruments for residents	\$900
James R. and Anita Horne Jenkins Family Foundation	Education Program	\$10,018
Knights of Columbus	Legacy	\$25,000
The Helen McCalla Trust	Legacy	\$12,968
Michigan Health Endowment Fund	Montessori Inspired Lifestyles	\$87,725
Michigan Nonprofit Association	Technology Upgrades	\$4,000
United Way of Chelsea	Transportation	\$2,000
United Way of Washtenaw County	Covid-19 Emergency Relief Funding	\$15,000
		\$873,584



Throughout the quarantine staff continued to employ Montessori principles to engage the residents.



Keavan uses a Chromebook to 'Zoom' into school from the comfort of home.



A new pole barn was built with support of the Helen McCalla Trust.



David Wesner shows off one of the coats donated to the SLC residents.

CHELSEA KNIGHTS COATS FOR KIDS

St. Louis Guanella Council #3092 in Chelsea and St. Mary Parish Chelsea have a special relationship with St. Louis Center.

During fall 2020, a fund drive was held at St. Mary Church to raise money for the annual Coats for Kids program to provide warm winter coats to local families who might be struggling to provide for their children in the local community. St. Mary parishioners responded enthusiastically, and when the fundraising was done, \$1,500 was left over for the council to purchase additional coats. At the urging of one longtime member, the Council supported purchasing new coats for residents of the Center.

According to Program Chair and Knight, Dave Wesner, "The success of the KofC Coats for Kids Campaign is directly tied to the incredible generosity of St. Mary Parishioners and the steadfast commitment to charity by Council #3092. This spirit of generosity has resulted in the donation of 235 coats this fall, including 65 coats for the residents of St. Louis Center. Thanks so much to everyone who supported our efforts this year to give so generously to the residents of SLC and the Chelsea Community."

ST. LOUIS CENTER BY THE NUMBERS

2020 Resident Demographics



Counties of Origin

Cass	1
Eaton	2
Ingham	3
Jackson	3
Kent	1
Lenawee	1
Livingston	1
Macomb	2
Newaygo	1
Oakland	3
Ottawa	1
Saginaw	1
Van Buren	1
Washtenaw	22
Wayne	18
Out of State	1



49 Men

- 3 Men age 66-79**
- 12 Men age 41-65**
- 24 Men age 18-40**
- 8 Teens age 11-17**
- 2 Youth age 5-10**



13 Women

- 10 Women age 41-65**
- 2 Teens age 11-17**
- 1 Youth age 5-10**

4

Admissions



6

Discharges

JEROME FONTENOT FROM THE BEGINNING

As we celebrate SLC's 60th Anniversary, we also celebrate one of the most distinguished seniors at St. Louis Center; Jerome Fontenot, one of St. Louis School's first residents in the early 1960s.



Jerome arrived at SLC at the age of 12.

He was enrolled from January 1962 through June 1965, and can still be found in the class photo hanging in the main entrance.

In 1965, his parents Clifford and Josephine, took Jerome back to their home in Romeo, MI, where he worked with his father on the chicken farm.

By August 1996, both of Jerome's parents had passed away and Michelle and Norbert Rapp took over his guardianship. The Rapps were friends of the Fontenots, and Mrs. Rapp took care of Jerome for the next 17 years in her home until she passed away in 2013. Next to care for Jerome was daughter-in-law Denise Rapp, who is now Jerome's legal guardian.

"I promised Michelle that I would take care of Jerome. So Norbert Jr. and I tried to find him another place

to live because I couldn't care for him anymore. Then God somehow sent me to SLC. Jerome kept telling me that they had 'Closed the joint up.' Then one night at 2 am, I woke up and started Googling. I found SLC and learned that they were still doing residential care."

According to Rapp, Jerome was very talented and was involved in his local parish in Romeo. "He belonged to the choir at the local Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus, and he even played the organ. He's amazing."

When Denise Rapp returned Jerome to SLC in 2015, she looked on the wall, saw his class picture from 1962 and said, "Jerome look at this." Jerome was in the picture on the wall, and she knew he was home again. "SLC has been a great fit for Jerome. Everyone has been so wonderful to him! He was taken in with open arms, and it gives me a sense of peace knowing that he's being taken care of so well there."

Jerome represents the continuum of life for SLC during the past 60 years. He was here as a child, and through Divine Providence, he is back again enjoying the remaining years of his life.

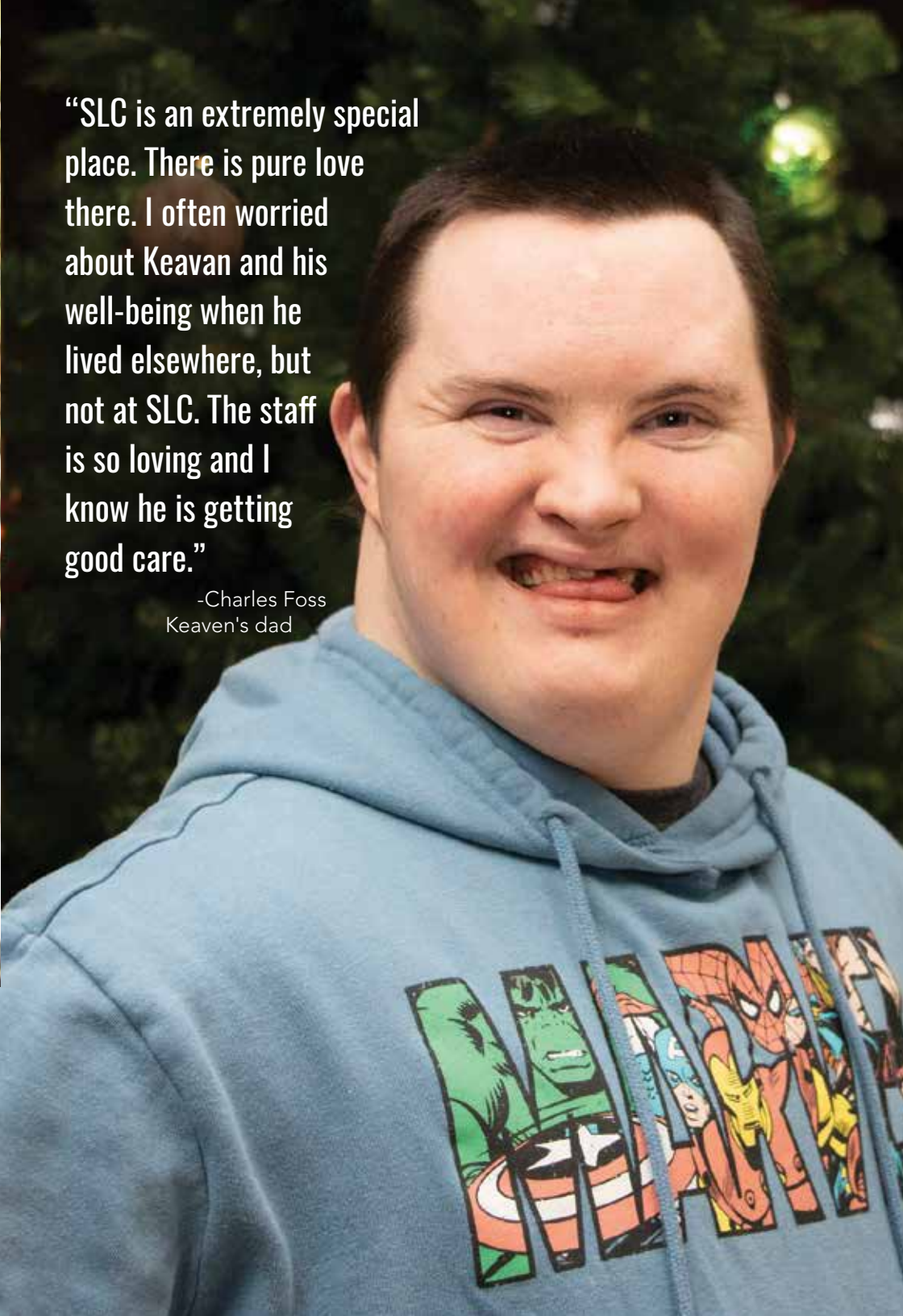


"He was taken in with open arms, and it gives me a sense of peace knowing that he's being taken care of so well there. We are so blessed."

-Denise Rapp

“SLC is an extremely special place. There is pure love there. I often worried about Keavan and his well-being when he lived elsewhere, but not at SLC. The staff is so loving and I know he is getting good care.”

-Charles Foss
Keavan's dad



KEAVAN FOSS LEARNING TO SUCCEED

Keavan Foss was born with Down Syndrome. When he was about 15 years old, he was having difficulty managing his feelings and his dad, Charles, was struggling to find the right programs that could really help him succeed.

Throughout this period Charles scoured the internet looking for residential facilities that could provide the extra care that Keavan needed. He was very excited because SLC looked like it could be the perfect fit. Due to funding challenges, however, Keavan had to wait almost a year before moving into SLC in October 2018.

Just like starting anything new, it took a little time for Keavan to get used to his new home. “When he first came here, Keavan needed a lot of additional support. He has become very vocal and a huge support to his household. He loves doing the dishes,” Sheryl Mohr, SLC Social Services supervisor said.

Charles said, “Whenever I go to pick him up or have meetings, the staff speaks highly of Keavan and they praise his accomplishments. I am so proud of how well Keavan is doing.”

Chris, a direct care professional, concurs, “He is an independent person and also very helpful. Keavan will try to help anyone. His peers seek him out especially at lunchtime if they need help opening packages. He really helps get stuff done and gets along well with others.”

Sheryl also noted that Keavan is participating daily in school online. Before Christmas he was using one of the grant-funded Chromebooks to engage in the educational process. For Christmas his dad got him his own Chromebook. He has become proficient in logging into his school programs and he knows that every Wednesday he will ‘Zoom’ with his dad on the Chromebook.

Sheryl continued, “His dad also got him a TV and DVD player for Christmas. He has learned how to operate those independently, making him really feel like a grown-up, which he is. He’s doing a lot of things that he wasn’t able to do when he first came to SLC.”

Charles said, “St. Louis Center is truly a gift to our family.”

60 YEARS ST. LOUIS CENTER

St. Louis School for Exceptional Boys was established in 1960, and was named after Fr. Louis Guanella, (1842 – 1915), the humble priest who founded the Servants of Charity in Italy in 1908. He became St. Louis Guanella after his canonization in 2011.



Unique for its time, St. Louis School was created for 60 boys. The majority came from the Archdiocese of Detroit. It served as a boarding school for boys with I/DD since state-funded special education was not yet available. Staff consisted of four priests from Italy, four Holy Family sisters, one cook and five special education teachers.



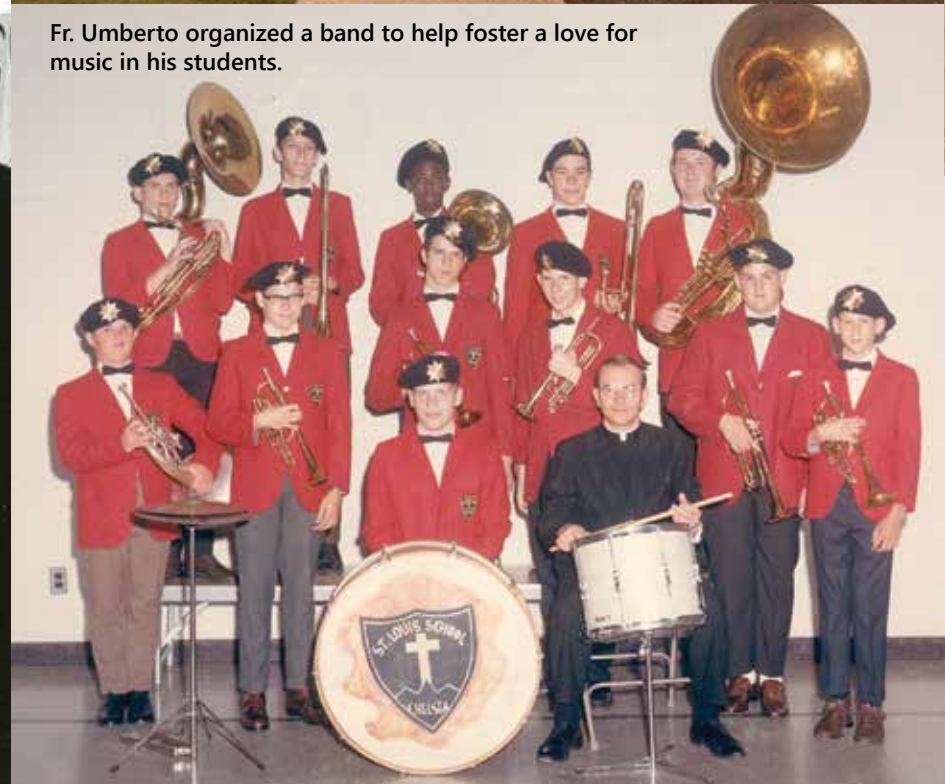
Fr. Germano Pagararo, SdC (left) and Fr. Louis Frangi, SdC, (right) work with the boys at SLC in the 1960s.

As the 60s rolled into the 70s, more space was needed for the programs. Knights of Columbus Hall and Alhambra Hall were added to the east end of the building along with a new Chapel. When the IDEA Act was passed in 1975, the boys were able to enroll in area public schools for their education, and the name was changed to St. Louis Center.



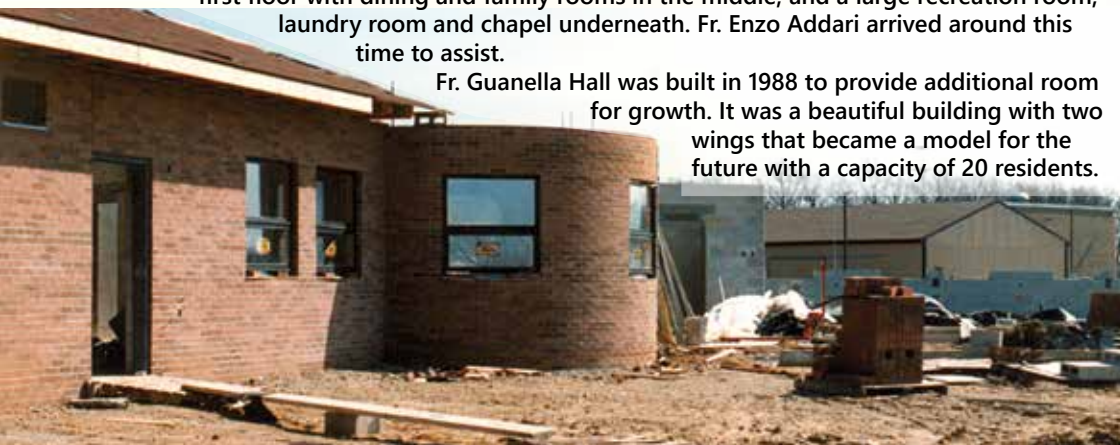
Fr. Fortunato Turati became the administrator from 1977-80.

Fr. Umberto organized a band to help foster a love for music in his students.





The challenge of the 80s came from the boys aging out of the program. St. Joseph Hall was built in 1984 for 20 young men to continue to grow at SLC. St. Joseph Hall contained living quarters on the first floor with dining and family rooms in the middle, and a large recreation room, laundry room and chapel underneath. Fr. Enzo Addari arrived around this time to assist.



Fr. Guanella Hall was built in 1988 to provide additional room for growth. It was a beautiful building with two wings that became a model for the future with a capacity of 20 residents.

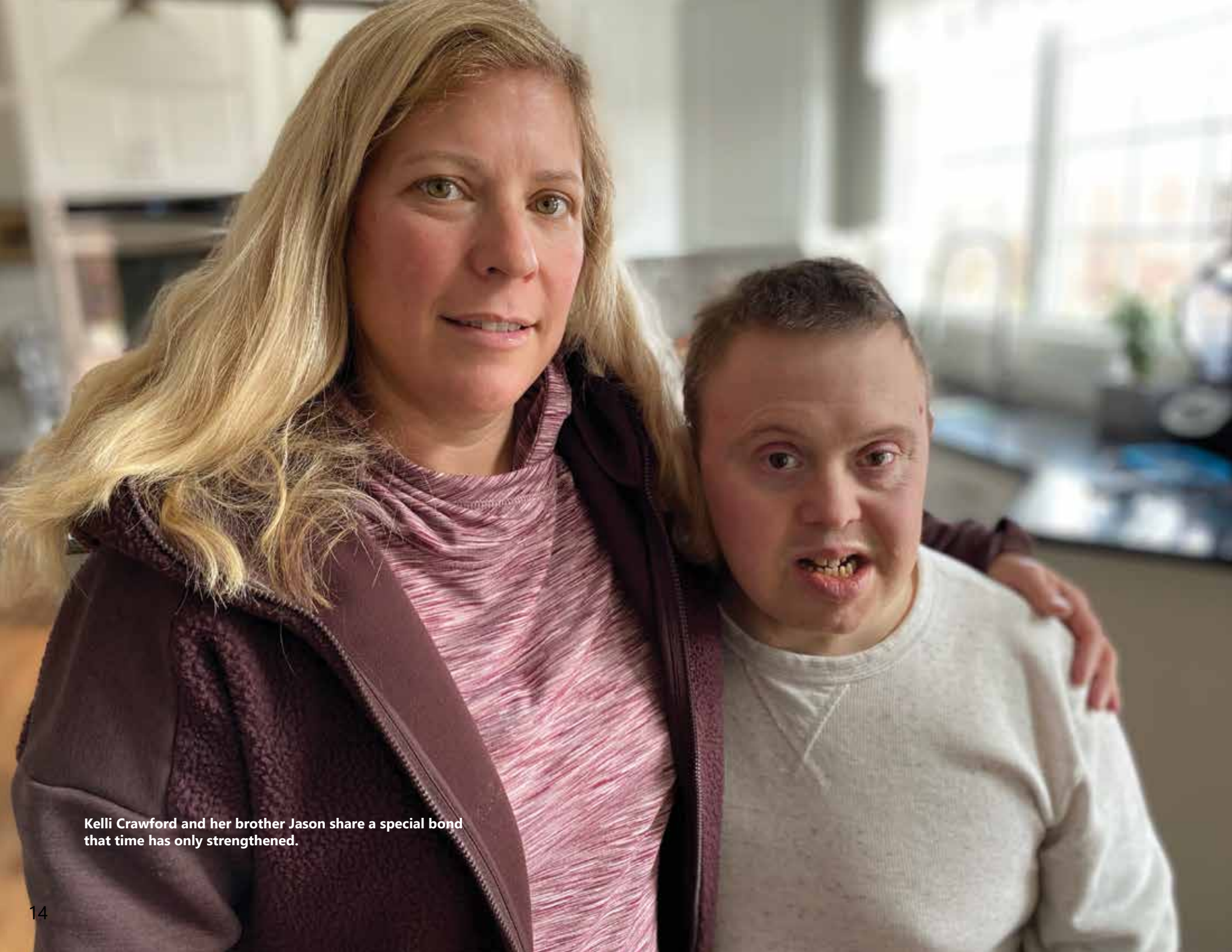


In the 1990s, SLC began more community outreach to raise funds to support the needs of the residents. This was the start of the Golf and Glory Outing, the IACL Dinners, the Dad & Lad Golf Outing along with many civic and religious groups holding summer BBQs and Christmas parties for the residents.

In 2000, the care facility run by the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence Sisters in Northville, MI, closed. Ten residents from that facility became the first occupants of Fr. Guanella Hall, Our Lady of Providence wing. Many of those residents still live there today.



In 2010, SLC celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and decided to expand facilities once again. A new Development Director was hired, and the Legacy Campaign Committee was formed. A ribbon cutting was held in 2011 for the new Family Welcome and Orientation Center at the main entrance.



Kelli Crawford and her brother Jason share a special bond that time has only strengthened.

JASON & KELLI CRAWFORD BOUND TOGETHER FROM CHILDHOOD

Although, Jason Crawford has been a part of the St. Louis Center family since he was seven years old, the bond with his sister, Kelli, has always been strong.

Jason and Kelli Crawford grew up in Dearborn, MI, and Kelli is now a mom herself with twins, Justin and Katie. Her husband's name is also Jason, which can lead to a lot of confusion in her home. But she loves her brother Jason, and fondly remembers life growing up with him.

"We've always been really close and he's just been my little buddy," said Kelli. "We did everything together growing up; even when he went away to school. He would come home every other weekend. He's been at SLC since he was seven, so it's been 40 years. Part of my life was going out to SLC every week and picking him up or dropping him off. When I was there recently for his COVID vaccination, I hadn't been in the gym since he was in a Christmas show on the stage. And oh my, I remember how little he was. I couldn't believe how fast time has gone by. We always did everything together as a family, taking vacations and going to my soccer games. Even now, I pick him up, he comes to my house and I take him to dinner. We have a nice relationship. He's been staying at



my house recently, and he's right at home as part of the family."

Kelli has seen many changes at SLC. "It's amazing, and it's just so nice to see how the Center has grown. I was always concerned about what was going to happen to him as he ages. Originally there was just SLC, then he went up on the hill to St. Joseph Hall, then after that, where would he go? So it was perfect that SLC kept looking towards the future. He's been in Fr. Guanella Hall since it was remodeled. These past couple of years he's really aged and slowed down a lot. But now he's getting one-on-one care, and there's no barriers for the bathrooms and rails in the hallways. It's quiet, it's perfect, and he loves it. He has his own room, and he loves all the staff."

Kelli continued, "My parents went on both Dream Cruise trips organized by the Center. SLC's been really great for our family."

"Jason loves living at SLC. He has his own space, his own room, and it's quiet. He's like the mayor when he's walking through the halls, and everybody knows him and waves at him. He's a celebrity around there. "

-Kelli Crawford



SAM COTTONE HELPING IN HIS OWN WAY

Salvatore "Sam" Cottone is a successful businessman and developer in Oakland County, who owns Twin Lakes Golf Course in Oakland Twp. with his son, Matthew, and RESCO, Inc. with his wife Michelle, supporting the home building industry.

Sam Cottone's father came to America from Cinisi, Sicily, and his mother grew up in Detroit. Sam spent his childhood in Wyandotte, and after high school attended Walsh College, where he received a degree in Public Accounting and became a CPA.

"I went to work for a mechanical contractor in Farmington who was bought out by John Carlo, Inc., and from there we started developing residential

real estate together with the two Carlo brothers. In 1988, I went off on my own and continued to develop property with several partners, including Mike Chirco, Mickey Shapiro and Dominic Mocerì."

"So I bought the land [to develop] Twin Lakes in 1985, because I figured, 'how hard could it be?' Then I found out how hard it could be! We opened in November of 1996, then four years later added the clubhouse and swim club."

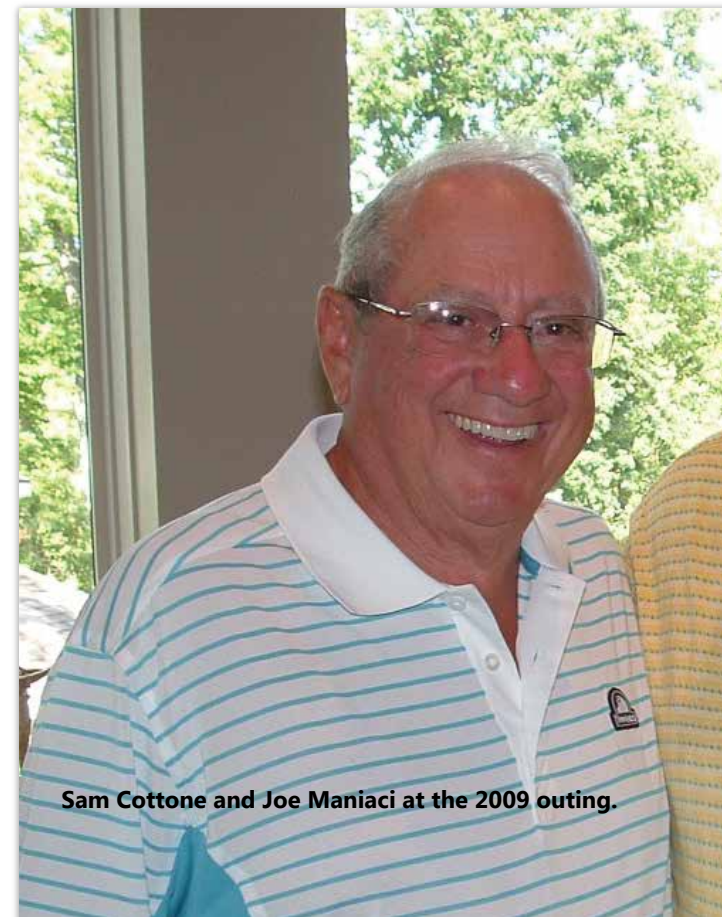
According to Sam, "My brother was a foster parent, who took in children who were victims of abuse and neglect, along with some that had developmental disabilities. When he lost his job at McLouth Steel, he moved to Alabama and adopted the five kids that he still had. They're all a real success story, and that's what inspired me to get involved with St. Louis Center."

"Mike Chico visited SLC with Jack Tocco, Sr. and they got me involved. One day after we had just opened up the golf course, we started planning the first outing. We had some sandwiches and a few beers, and Mike said, 'I'll pick up the tab for the food, and we'll donate the money to St. Louis Center.' We raised about \$3,000 at the time, and we all thought that was great in our first year.

Then we started meeting and planning the outing, and it got bigger and bigger. Being in the business, I could see how other people were doing their fundraisers. So I said, "Let's get some sponsors." And that's worked out very well for us. It's very rewarding, and we've raised over \$1 million so far. We've also had great support from Mickey Shapiro, along with his father Asa and Mickey's brothers. Of

course Mike Chirco and Joe Maniaci are always very generous with this event."

"So my motivation [in helping SLC] has been seeing how much my brother...has suffered...in caring for his family. I talked to Joe and Mike about it, and since we can't physically go out and help these kids, we can be here to financially help them."



Sam Cottone and Joe Maniaci at the 2009 outing.

JOSEPH MANIACI WARM HEART—STRONG SUPPORT

The warmth of Joe Maniaci draws you in as soon as you meet him. The strong handshake, the cheerful smile and the twinkling eyes tell the story of a man who has lived a full life and is happy to be able to give back to others. Fortunately for St. Louis Center, Joe Maniaci is a man who has "given back" a great deal.

"I support St. Louis Center with my heart and soul, and we are happy to do what we can to help."

—Joe Maniaci



Joe Maniaci was born on March 21, 1946 in Terrasini, Sicily and came to the United States when he was eight years old. From there, he tells the story of growing up on the east side of Detroit.

"I started grade school at Guyton Elementary, and graduated from St. Martin's in 1965. That's where I met my lovely wife, Mary Jane, and we were the campus couple. We graduated together, and then I went into the service. I was a Military Policeman in the Army in Fairbanks, AK, where we had two months of summer, and the rest was pretty cold. Thankfully, she waited for me and I got out when I was 22. Mary Jane and I were married on September 7, 1968, and we've been married now for 52 years."

Together they had three children. Their oldest daughter is Lisa, followed by their son John, and daughter Kari. They now have eight grandchildren.

Joe learned the tube bending trade in high school while working at A&B Tube Benders. After returning from the service, he went to work for Warren Tube where he became the General Manager. In 1978, he decided to open his own business, called Troy Tube and Mfg. Co. "I've been doing it now for 42 years and it's still going strong to this day" said Joe. "I had a medical procedure done in 2018, and then a couple of setbacks, so I finally had to give it up full-time. But I still go in once in a while for a couple of hours and check on the place to make sure things are running properly." Joe's three children work there, along with both sons-in-law and his daughter-in-law. His nieces, nephews, and several grandchildren also work there, so it is truly a family business.

Joe tells how he became involved with SLC and the Dad and Lad Golf Outing. "Jack Tocco, Sr. put me on a bus one day and said, 'Come with me, I want to show you SLC.' So of course, I went and I fell in love with the place. After that, we felt we needed to do something. Along with Mike Chirco and Sam Cottone, we started the Dad and Lad Golf Outing and it's been going great now for 24 years, raising funds to help the residents at the Center."



“I was always impressed with the Servants of Charity and the work they do at SLC, 24/7. I felt I was in the presence of living saints. ”

-George Mallison

George Mallison grew up in Lansing and attended Catholic schools, graduating from Lansing Everett High School.

After high school, George served our country from 1961-65 as a member of the US Air Force during the Vietnam War, then served in the US Missile Command in Turkey, returned to Ft. Bragg, NC, as a member of the Compositor Strike Force, and then finally, spent a year in the jungles of Thailand. Upon his return, he began a 36 year career at General Motors.

“At GM, I started work in the engineering/automotive area, then transferred to facility engineering for most of my career. I worked my way up from Jr. Engineer to Sr. Engineer, then Asst. Superintendent and finally Superintendent. By 2002, I had spent 36 years at GM.”

George was recruited to become a member of the SLC Community Advisory Council in 2004, and knows first-hand what it's like to care for a family member with a disability. “Our daughter, Melodie, has multiple sclerosis,” said George. “She has very little strength in her arms and legs, is confined to a wheelchair and unable to walk. But with the help of a care giver,

GEORGE MALLISON COMMITTED TO CHARITY

George and Jan Mallison have been married for 43 years, and live their lives in the quiet city of DeWitt; just outside of Lansing. But George's life hasn't always been quiet, as he's made many contributions to his church, his nation and his career. George Mallison is a man who leads from the front, and is willing to be firm and decisive when he needs to be.

Melodie is able to have some independence in her own home. When we saw what was going on at St. Louis Center, we realized that these were some of God's neediest people, and that's how I got involved.”

George has been very involved with the Michigan Knights of Columbus and the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher. “I have been a member of the Knights for 41 years, and eventually became the Vice Supreme Master of the 4th Degree. The Knights of the Holy Sepulcher is an organization committed to supporting Christians in the Holy Land.”

After 16 years as a member of the St. Louis Center Community Advisory Council, George thinks back to the beginning. “Back then there were a lot of issues with the facility that needed to be addressed, and I helped get things squared away with the maintenance department in 2004. By understanding the

facility and the physical plant, I was able to help quite a bit with the construction of the new Administration building in 2011.”

George says that his faith is a large part of why he supports SLC. “I've seen how society didn't accept people with I/DD, so that turned us on to supporting them. We hope SLC continues to thrive, and that we can find benefactors who will help us to do all the things we need to do.”



JOE AND TINA MERKEL A LIFE LEGACY

For some, like Joe and Tina Merkel (right), volunteering at St. Louis Center is a family tradition. Involvement with the Center started with Joe's great grandfather, Joseph Thomas Merkel, and has continued with each first son, all named Joe.

Joe's father, Joseph Martin Merkel owned The Wolverine Food & Spirits, known affectionately as The Wolverine, for 46 years. Whenever they had leftover food, they brought it to SLC. "When I was eight or nine years old," said Joe, "I remember delivering big bowls of potato salad or plates of roast beef. Dad would drive and I'd take the food in to the kitchen."

Those with disabilities have always been a part of Joe's life. Not only did he attend school with residents from the Center, but he also has a family member with autism. "My parents and grandparents educated me that these were people who just need our help," he remembers.

When Tina came into Joe's life in 2009, he told her about SLC, and she immediately decided to get involved in the auction. Joe had been contributing his services as a professional auctioneer

for years, so Tina joined the planning committee and helped at the event. That fueled a desire to do more, particularly with residents.

After she left her corporate job and took a position at the Chelsea Wellness Center, she continued to work with residents who went there for fitness classes. She also volunteered at the Center in a program to help get residents up and moving and joined the Golf and Glory committee.

Of her many memories working with residents, one of Tina's favorites is when she partnered with Stephon in the Run for the Rolls race. "I told Stephon not to go out too fast, otherwise, he might get tired before we finished. But he was a good athlete and it was all I could do to keep up with him! When we crossed the finish line together, I gave him a high-five and a hug."

Tina's perseverance also paid off when it came to the 2020 auction. With the pandemic in full swing and people unable to gather, it appeared that the auction would be canceled. Tina brainstormed with Joe who was experienced at online auctions, made a few phone calls, and the auction was back on. The committee contacted local

"What you do makes a difference, specifically to the residents. It's important to help them know that they are part of the community. Everything I do for the Center enhances my life, too."

-Tina Merkel



businesses, artists and individuals for donations and in an outpouring of generosity, collected enough items for 16 live auction packages, raising more than \$36,000.

"It feels good to help those who can't help themselves," said Joe. "I consistently donate my time to the SLC auction because it's a place where the monies raised go directly to help the people."

ST. LOUIS CENTER BY THE NUMBERS

2020 AUDITED FINANCIALS*

St. Louis Center's financial statements
for the fiscal year July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Support & Revenue	2020
Program Service Revenue	\$4,482,685
Fundraising & Grants	\$1,495,827
Other	\$271,307
Total Support & Revenue	\$6,249,819
 Expenses	 2020
Program Services	\$5,162,729
Management & General	\$917,952
Fundraising Projects	\$437,559
Total Expenses	\$6,518,240
 Depreciation	 \$403,126
Grand Total Expenses	\$6,921,366
 Benevolent Care Provided	 \$2,167,374

*Figures are based on audited financial statements and do not include Legacy donations or expenses.

** St. Louis Center was awarded a Payroll Protection Program loan in April 2020 to help cover extraordinary pandemic expenses.

RENOVATIONS

Martin Hall, located in the Center's 60 year-old main building, was transformed from what had once been housing for some of the Center's residents to a new home for the social work department. Work began in early March and construction was nearly complete by the end of the year. Interior walls, plumbing and ceilings were removed and the space cleared and renovated to create a welcoming and integrated social work space.

A large conference room will provide space for larger meetings with families and teams involved in resident care, as well as provide the technology needed for video conference calls when in-person meetings aren't possible. Special visitation rooms, equipped with colorful artwork, games, coloring books and toys, will provide a supported and safe space for parents and siblings to interact with their family member during visits. Offices for staff, supervisors and interns will facilitate the continuous flow of communication necessary to coordinate the many details of resident care. The most important result of this renovation, however, isn't in rooms or offices. It will be in the strengthening of relationships, the solving of problems and the building of trust and care with the residents of SLC each day.

LEGACY UPDATE



The renovation of Martin Hall begins.



A hallway and offices emerge.



Social Services staff gather for a meeting in the new conference room.



Phase II - January 2020



Interior of one of the family homes.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Although the pandemic changed much at St. Louis Center in 2020, construction continued on the new buildings that had begun in September 2019. The new buildings included six- and four-bedroom resident cottages, an administration building, a duplex and single family home. With construction crews wearing personal protective equipment and following health and safety guidelines, the buildings took shape over the course of the year. By December, all that remained was obtaining occupancy permits before everyone could move in.

The buildings represent the next phase of St. Louis Guanella Village and the Center's quest to better serve the growing needs of persons with I/DD. The resident cottages provide new, updated homes for 10 of the Center's current adult male residents and meet the latest state and federal housing requirements. The administration building offers staff and supervisors with space in closer proximity to the residents living in the growing Village. Among the most innovative components of the new construction are the single family and duplex homes available for lease to families with a member who has I/DD, or to anyone interested in living in an integrated, supported community.



Phase II - October 2020

FUNDRAISERS RE-IMAGINED

The pandemic changed many things in 2020, including St. Louis Center's many fundraisers. But with a little ingenuity and a lot of learning—plus flexibility and a sense of humor on the part of our loyal supporters and volunteers—we continued on in a new way.

MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING



Stanley enjoyed golfing on a putt putt course created for SLC residents.

July 18, 2020 – Instead of playing at Chelsea's Pierce Lake Golf Course, participants played at the course of their choice or walked a mile. Some also participated in the Crazy Pants contest, sending photos of themselves in their most colorful get-ups. Held on Facebook Live, the event paid tribute to longtime St. Louis Center friend Jerry D'Adamo. Through the generosity of those who sponsored and participated, we raised more than \$20,000.



George Blaha joined Christina Ferris, Fr. Enzo and Joe Yekulis to greet the golfers.

GOLF & GLORY

September 14, 2020 – Golf & Glory Golf, held at U of M Golf Course in Ann Arbor, was the only in-person event of the year. Moved from its usual June date to September, it featured tee times instead of the usual shotgun start and the dinner and auction afterward were canceled. Still, with the generous support of sponsors and golfers, the event raised more than \$52,000.

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Lisa and Todd had a great time shooting around in the gym during filming for the event.

October 22, 2020 – This virtual celebration was held on Facebook and Youtube and featured a look back at the history of St. Louis Center.



Volunteers Eileen Augustine and Tina Merkel helped Christina Ferris and Kristine Collins take online bids during the virtual event.

FALL AUCTION

November 9, 2020 – In spite of not being able to gather in person, the Auction Committee forged ahead to create a fun virtual gathering. Led by Auctioneer Joe Merkel, and with generous community support, the event raised more than \$36,000.

Although these events raised more than \$100,000, that amount was far below the \$500,000 typically generated by the Center and third party organizations who were forced to cancel their fundraisers in 2020.



ALHAMBRA BROUGHT THE BALL GAME HOME

Every year SLC receives 40 tickets from the Detroit Tigers for the residents to attend a baseball game. This year, with no fans in the stands, we were left with no opportunities to attend a game - until the Alhambra Manresa Caravan came to the rescue.

On September 19th, the Alhambra Manresa Caravan visited SLC to bring a new type of Tigers game experience. They grilled hamburgers, hotdogs, served corn on the cob and passed out Tigers baseball caps to all of the residents. During dinner, a magician entertained the residents with a magic show. Afterward, they watched a live-streamed Tigers game in the gym. This fun experience helped relieve the disappointment of not seeing the Tigers in person. Thank you so very much to all those from the Manresa Caravan who helped make this evening so memorable.





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