

# St. Louis Spirit



Fall 2021

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

## In this Issue

Summer of fun



New level of learning



Help from friends



Events to attend



Peek at Progress



A saint for a decade



Matthew was excited for Direct Care supervisors Mellinda Wilson and Carlie Hartwick to try some of the spooky treats created by the residents for the Day Program Bake-Off.

## Resilience: Meet Matthias

*Navigating life since Covid has proven that life doesn't always get easier, we get stronger and more resilient. SLC residents have especially felt the strain over the past nearly two years as life changed before their eyes. School, work, social time, and visits from those outside the Center stopped. The SLC residents not only rose to the occasion, but they also showed exactly how resilient and strong they are!*

Matthias has been living at SLC since 2012 and brings happiness to everyone he meets. Greeting everyone with a smile or wave, he always faces the day with renewed joy and excitement. One of the greatest joys Matthias shares with those around him is his love for football, especially Michigan football and the Detroit Lions. Born in Brazil, Matthias and his family moved to the United States in 1989. Although he is non-verbal, he possesses enviable communication skills. Fluent in Brazilian and American Sign Language and spoken Brazilian Portuguese and English, Matthias has learned ways to communicate with the world around him.

While enrolled at Huron High School in Ann Arbor, he worked in the cafeteria filling ketchup and mustard bottles, salt and pepper shakers and wiping tables. These activities, plus learning work skills at Community Health



Services (CHS), gave him the base to get a job at Polly's Country Market in Chelsea as a bagger. He eagerly learned his job, despite setbacks. Bagging groceries is a skill that one must learn. With the help of his job coaches, Matthias quickly overcame the obstacles and worked even harder to make his job work for him. "Matthias is so proud of being employed, taking the bus with one of his close friends from SLC, and getting a paycheck. His enthusiasm is contagious, and his satisfaction is immense. He takes care of his shirt with Polly's logo and his ID card" his parents stated.

Typically, Matthias does not deal well with change, such as returning to SLC after a weekend home. However, as soon as he is reminded of his job and responsibility, he gets ready for the trip. SLC is his "home away from home". SLC residents overcome the obstacles laid in front of them; their resilience is astounding.

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## Happy Fall!

In the last issue of the St. Louis Spirit newsletter I mentioned that we were moving forward. Since then the former children's houses have been licensed as Adult Foster Care (AFC). They are fully functional and offer opportunities for more independent living arrangements. Some of the residents, after shopping, cook their own meals, and, under the supervision of the direct care professionals, clean their house.



SLC is still committed to offering benevolent care to those individuals who don't have the financial resources for their stay at the Center due to family financial constraints or who don't qualify for public assistance. The Center is able to provide benevolent care because of your generosity in helping us carry out the daily activities and services needed to proclaim the dignity of the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

I want to thank some specific groups and individuals who have recently gone the extra mile in raising funds for the Center; Mike Chirco, Sam Cottone and Joe Maniaci for organizing the Lad and Dad Golf Outing; Nino and Sonny Randazzo of Randazzo Fresh Market, the Fall Harvest Fest committee; the KofC State Council for contributing funds to offset the cost of a new well; the many donors who pledged their support for the security cameras; also some politicians who were able to facilitate substantial financial support from the State government for SLC.

After months of on-going work to prepare the proper documentation, agreements and marketing, on November 1, 2021 the first occupant of a family home in St. Louis Guanella Village will be moving in. This event brings the vision of an integrated village which we had planned some time ago to fruition; people with I/DD and those without living next to each other.

Still moving forward in up-grading the infrastructure of the Center, we are planning to upgrade St. Joseph Hall, which was built in 1984 and is showing signs of aging. Also, the original kitchen built in 1960 needs to be brought up to today's standards. Please follow us for more news in this regard in the future.

May God's blessing be upon all of you.

*Fr. Enzo Ahlbari*

## Summer Interns Depart

SLC was blessed again this summer to have two Notre Dame students as interns, thanks to the Notre Dame Alumni Club of Jackson for sponsoring their 8 week stays. Lauren and Sebastian took on shifts, learned many new things and made some friends along the way. It is a sad day when it is time for the students to depart, but a small celebration, which usually includes cake, makes it a day to congratulate each student for the good work they completed.



*Lauren enjoyed assisting the residents.*

## Out at the Ball Game

On Friday, August 13th, 27 residents and staff members boarded a bus to go to a minor league baseball game. Each year the Diocese of Lansing and the Knights of Columbus sponsor a 'vocations night' at one of the Lansing Lugnuts ball games. It is an opportunity for families to come out and mingle with priests and religious in the fun atmosphere of one of America's favorite pastimes. The Knights provide the bus transportation, tickets to the game and dinner from the concession stand at the ball park. The residents enjoyed the game and seeing some old friends who were also at the game.



*Lisa had a great time at the ball park with her friends.*

## Residents Attend the Fair



*Residents of St. Joseph Hall had a great time watching the Demolition Derby.*

Several of the St. Louis Center residents went to the Chelsea Fair with staff members on Wednesday, August 18th. They purchased dinner from the fair concession stands and ate under the pavillion. They were also able to enjoy the Demolition Derby.

## Surprise for Linda

Last year as the pandemic was spreading around the world, it shut down businesses, churches, schools and universities. This impacted so many people including residents at St. Louis Center. One of those residents is Linda Alber who had worked for over 20 years at the University of Michigan. Her most recent assignment was as a dishwasher at Mary Markley Hall, a residence dormitory.

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Because of mandates and restrictions, Linda was not allowed to continue going to work. So to fill the gap in Linda's life, she began a part time dishwashing position on campus at SLC. But she really misses her friends at the University, so Sr. Sarah, reached out to her supervisor Martin and he invited Linda to come to work to get her personal belongings from her locker. On August 23rd she went to get her things and the Mary Markley staff surprised her with a party. They miss her tremendously and really enjoyed spending time with her again.



*Martin presents Linda with a plaque to thank her for her service.*

## Staff Pizza Party

The pandemic has been difficult for everyone on many levels including the staff and residents of St. Louis Center. Throughout these grueling months the SLC staff has worked many extra hours, picked up shifts and persevered through quarantines. As a small token of gratitude Tom



*Rick Visel and Matt Kotarski were able to spend some leisurely time together at the pizza party.*

Arbanas, SLC HR director, hosted a staff pizza party. This was indeed a welcome break even for kitchen staff since the pizza was prepared by Thompson's Pizzeria, a local favorite. Staff members from all shifts had some time to socialize and enjoy the food.

## A Glimpse at Gardening

The residents of Fr. Guanella Hall were challenged to grow some bean seeds in plastic bags indoors. Since they have raised beds behind their home, they decided to take their sprouts outside and plant them in the boxes to see if they would grow. All of the residents look forward to tending the gardens and growing more plants there in the future.



*Sarah enjoyed working in the raised garden bed.*

## Gaining Independence

August 3rd was the kick off of a new and exciting program at SLC called Independence College (IC). IC was named by the founding team of residents with support from the team leader, Sheryl Mohr. The team felt strongly about this decision because they are here to grow in independence and learn how to live the least restrictive lifestyle possible.



*Nancy, Lisa and Stanley are always eager to learn new skills during IC.*

## Update on Covid-19 Mitigation at St. Louis Center

All individuals who received the Pfizer, Moderna or J&J vaccines are eligible for a booster injection now, if it has been at least 6 months since their second injection. People who have underlying health conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, are over 65 or work in an environment which has a high risk of exposure are encouraged to seek out a booster at their local health department or pharmacy.

Here at SLC, we have established which of our residents are in need of a 3rd dose. Now that the Moderna vaccine is approved for booster doses, we will be reaching out to families to seek out their approval for the booster dose. We will not be able to have large clinics here like we ran before, so we are in the process of setting up a way to provide the boosters.

People should talk to their healthcare provider about their medical condition, and whether getting an additional dose or a booster is appropriate for them.



*Ken practiced both writing and signing his name as part of the weekly IC program.*

Independence can be seen as a continuum, with total dependence at one end and complete independence at the other extreme. No one is completely independent in all

areas, which also goes for people with I/DD. However, one can aim at guiding people with I/DD toward the most optimal level of independence that is attainable for an individual. To create a better understanding of how to promote independence in people with I/DD, perspectives need to be obtained from those whom it concerns the most, which are people with I/DD and those who support them. This is exactly what Mohr set out to do. She met with a core group of residents at SLC and talked with them about their ambitions, hopes, dreams and desires.

She then set up a program based on what they felt they needed.

The happiness and the knowledge that this young group of people has developed has empowered them to seek and grow in ways that they never knew was possible.

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# Community Supports St. Louis Center



*Mike Chirco (center) is surrounded by outing volunteers Dawn Rippy-Ivey, MJC Salesperson; Margie Mocer, MJC Assistant of Sales & Marketing; Mary Chirco, his wife; Kim Deloose, MJC Bookkeeper, Teresa Griffith, MJC Salesperson and Barbara Gates.*

## Lads and Dads Golf for Charity

The 24th Annual Dad and Lad Golf Outing to benefit SLC was held on Wednesday August 4th at Twin Lakes Golf Course in Rochester Hills, MI. This outing was originally organized as a way for fathers to teach their young sons the importance of giving back to people less fortunate. The principle organizers have been Mike Chirco of MJC Companies, Joe Maniaci of Troy Tube, and Sam Cottone of Twin Lakes Golf Course. Lake Michigan Credit Union was the Corporate Sponsor of this event, they also gave the St. Louis Center an additional \$5,000 due to the shortages last year. The Shapiro Family not only sponsored this event and donated \$10,000. They also gave SLC an additional \$100,000 due to the shortages last year.

## Alhambra Prepare BBQ

The St. Louis Guanella Alhambra Caravan from Jackson MI came to St. Louis Center to prepare a BBQ dinner for the residents. Thirteen members were on hand to cook and serve the food. Cliff Farr from Knights of Columbus Council #11694 of Lansing brought his Kona Ice truck so that the residents could enjoy a frozen treat. Residents made memories with their new friends this August evening.



## Fitness with Friends

Members of the Michigan Community Scholars Program from the University of Michigan came to St. Louis Center on September 13th to challenge the residents to a friendly



*The weather was so spectacular the first evening the MCSP students came to play that they used the court on the Special Needs Playground behind the main building.*

basketball game. The weather was beautiful, so they decided to play on the outdoor basketball court. The MCSP uses these volunteer opportunities to help foster leadership skills amongst the underclassmen of the group. This volunteer group will be coming bi-weekly to participate with the residents. If you would like to volunteer please visit the SLC website and sign up today.

## Volunteers Lend a Hand

Once a year Keybank closes branches across 18 states to participate in their annual 'Neighbors Make a Difference Day.' It's a wonderful way for the bank to give back to their local communities. Four men and women from the local bank office came to St. Louis Center September 14th to help pull weeds in some of the flower beds in order to spruce things up and get ready for fall.



## Men's Event Offers Support

Sonny Randazzo and his family hosted a fundraiser for gentlemen at their Fresh Food Market in suburban Detroit on Thursday, September 22nd. More than 200 men attended to share fellowship, food and fun to benefit St. Louis Center.

## Fall Harvest Fest

The 25th annual Fall Harvest Fest fundraising event was held at the Italian American Banquet Hall of Livonia on September 26, 2021. Fr. Enzo Addari officiated Mass held



# Upcoming Events



on the beautiful grounds of The Italian American of Livonia Banquet and Conference Center. After Mass, guests enjoyed a lunch reception consisting of Italian-inspired

food in the grand ballroom. This fundraising event, chaired by Georgia Scappaticci, is always a huge success.

SLC residents look forward to this wonderful event each year. The residents can enjoy lunch and help the Fall Harvest Festival committee during the live auction. Nearly 150 people enjoyed food, fellowship, and available gift auctions. To read more about the festival and to stay updated on this and other events, visit our website.

## Oktoberfest Celebration

On October 5th a group of 18 volunteers from the Michigan Center division of H.B. Fuller hosted an Oktoberfest for all of the residents of SLC. Residents participated in activities that were put together by the volunteer group. Residents were able to choose from playing a game of corn hole, practicing their



*Jason enjoyed making crafts with volunteers from H.B. Fuller.*

target skills with spooky tossing games, and stretching their artistic muscles with pumpkin and ornament painting. Each resident left the event with smiles on their faces and a take-a-



way bag of goodies from their adventures.

Volunteering at SLC is easy and fun. There are always a variety of volunteer experiences to choose from.

Scan this code to read more.

If you, or your group, would like to volunteer there are easy steps to take. Simply fill out the Volunteer form at <https://stlouiscenr.org/have-fun-here/volunteer/> or call Michelle at (734)475-8430.

## 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 do not share your information with anyone else. Email us at [slcdev@stlouiscenr.org](mailto:slcdev@stlouiscenr.org)



## Annual Fall Auction at New Venue

On Saturday, November 13, 2021, SLC will hold their annual Fall Dinner Auction to benefit the residents who call the Center home. An evening of great food, fellowship, and fundraising is planned when SLC's Fall Auction takes place at **St. Mary Catholic Church** in Chelsea, MI.

Dinner will be prepared by A Moveable Feast catering services and both a silent and live auction are planned. Joseph Merkel of Merkel's Auction Specialists, Inc. will provide his services for the live auction. Auction items include baskets with goodies from local business, art, and larger items including trips to Mexico, a fishing trip to Canada and a stay in the Irish Hills, Brooklyn MI. Scan code for details. →



## A Unique Italian Escape



*LaCapella could be your home for one week.*

Krystn and Robert Stephens are offering their 300-year old home (called La Cappella), in Italy for a week, April through October. Located in the region of

Liguria, 20 minutes from the Mediterranean Sea and very close to 'Cinque Terre', this 2 bedroom, 1 bath family home accommodates up to 4 people and is a magnificent place to experience Italy. This one-of-a-kind experience can be yours for a donation of \$2000 to SLC. Learn more at the Fall Dinner Auction. However, before you make a donation, please contact Michelle at SLC. She will put you in touch with the Stephenses who will provide you with more details and verify that your dates and plans can be accommodated.

## Christmas at SLC

The SLC staff has a tradition of helping the residents prepare songs and sketches on holiday themes that are presented at the annual Christmas Program. The event will take place this year in the SLC gym on Sunday, December 12th at 5:30pm. A time of food and fellowship will follow the program.



*In 2019 family and friends enjoyed the songs of choirs of angels.*

## Pasta Dinner with the Priests

Tradition returns with this chance to have dinner with the priests at SLC on February 17, 2022. Donors will be treated to a tour of the Village, fellowship with the residents and an Italian meal. Tickets will be available at the Fall Auction.

## Donors took a 'Peek at the Progress'

St. Louis Center is happy to have visitors back on campus, and they were welcomed back in a big way. Donors were able to take a "peek at the progress" that has occurred since social distancing has limited visitation to the SLC campus. Thursday, October 7th, a group of 45 donors was able to visit, tour around the village, and see what has changed in the past almost 18 months. Refreshments were enjoyed in the main lobby while waiting for the tours to begin. SLC transportation vans were loaded and donors were taken to two of the resident homes and one of the duplex homes, which is available for rent.

Uncle Mike's House, where some of the ladies live, was the first stop. These wonderful ladies attend Independence College and are learning the skills

needed to live with minimal supervision. Excitement filled the air as the residents greeted their guests. Of course, they had to show off their new bedrooms and tell stories to

their new friends about living at SLC and how happy they are to live in the new house. Modified diets are common throughout SLC due to different constraints on residents food consumption, so the ladies served a special appetizer that would be something you would see on a modified diet. Chilled cucumber soup was portioned out into little cups and was surprisingly delicious!

Traveling to the next house was a little wet as the rain began to come down, but it did not melt the spirits of the residents in D'Adamo House. The bright young men who will soon be living there have been attending Independence College also, getting ready for their big move. Stories were swapped with the guests as the men showed everyone around the new home. Guests snacked on gluten-free pretzels and enjoyed listening to and interacting with the vibrant men.

The last stop on the tour was the duplex home. SLC is excited to become an integrated community, where people of all abilities live in one area. The duplex home,



*Jackie serves chilled cucumber soup to Christine and Vince Lindemann, siblings of Todd.*



*Barry M. Borsenik, State Treasurer, and Charles E. McCuen, III, State Advocate, of the Michigan Knights of Columbus State Council enjoyed visiting D'Adamo House with Fr. Franklin.*

along with a single-family home, is available to lease. The first tenants will be moving in soon. All of the family homes will be occupied by the end of the year. If you or someone you know would be interested in living in the St. Louis Guanella Village, please contact Lisa at (734)475-8430 to be added to the waiting list.

A special highlight for this event included a dedication of a bench in memory of Tony and Franca Rosa Argiero. Sam Argiero, son of Tony and Franca Rosa, along with his siblings Carmin and Amelia, were on sight to make this special occasion. Tony and Franca Rosa were always kind and



*The Argiero Family bench outside of Fr. Guanella Hall for Assisted Living.*

generous to the Center and it is an honor to forever have their memory present. SLC kitchen staff prepared a wonderful meal for dinner. Prayer was said by International Order of Alhambra Supreme Chaplain Martin J. Gillespie, who was visiting from Biloxi, MS. Donor guests enjoyed dinner and fellowship.

Other dignitaries in attendance included Barry M. Borsenik, State Treasurer, and Charles E. McCuen, III, State Advocate, of the Michigan Knights of Columbus State Council, and George A. Walrath, Supreme Director of Region VI of the Alhambra.

You are always welcome to come take a "peek at our progress". Fill out the "Visit Us" form on our website to schedule your personal tour.

Scan this code to read the whole story and to see more photos.



***The event, though basic in event terms, was one of the best SLC events I've attended. Direct engagement with residents in a small setting; [it was] show and tell vs just sit and listen. Nice work!***

***-Stephanie Doll***



## The Legacy of a Saint

Fr. Guanella's vision extended beyond his time to movements that are of concern to Catholics even today – social action, education, youth movements and the lay apostolate.

The dignity of the human person was a priority in all of Fr. Guanella's works. In particular, he wanted to maintain this dignity for those who were considered society's outcasts.

Often the old, incurable and the physically and mentally handicapped were left in pitiable condition by relatives who had no desire or knowledge of how to give them this human dignity. Eventually, he established homes for their care and founded the Servants of Charity and the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence to staff them.

He believed that each human life has value because it is a gift from God, and that it cannot be measured by its achievements. When he died, he left the residents of his

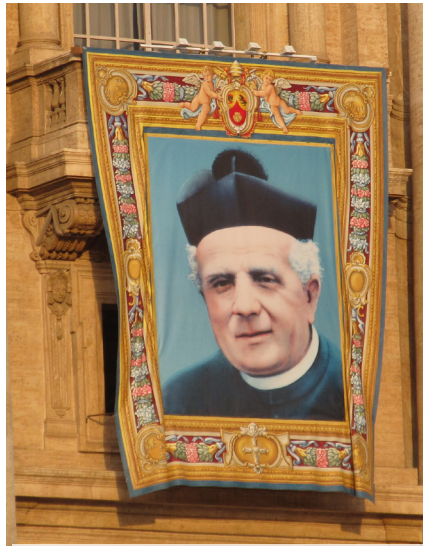
homes, "good children," to his priests and sisters as most precious gifts, his treasures.

"His life was a continuous journey of love for God and humanity, by giving himself in a special way to the most in

need of this world, to pass on to them the fatherly love of Our Father who is in heaven.

The public recognition of his holiness by the Church is particularly meaningful to show the world that it is possible to establish the kingdom of God among men, even among the least in our present society." (Fr. Umberto Brugnoli, Superior General of the Servants of Charity, October 18, 2021)

On October 23rd this year, we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Canonization of St. Louis Guanella for whom the St. Louis Center is named. May his legacy continue to inspire all who take part in this mission of mercy as residents, staff, families, friends or donors.



*St. Louis Guanella's banner hung on St. Peter's Basilica the day of his canonization in Rome, October 23, 2011.*

## Year End Contributions

There is still time to make a tax-deductible donation to St. Louis Center. We know that you have many options when it comes to your end-of-year giving thank you for thinking of us. We can use small and large gifts to help fund benevolent care here at the Center. Many of the residents could not remain at SLC without your support. This year, consider giving the gift of Benevolent Care that will help provide dignified care to God's special children.

SLC is a 501(c)3 organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



☐ **Recurring Donation** Make a monthly gift and automatically become a member of the **BOSATTA SOCIETY!**

My monthly gift amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive a copy of Blessed Clare's biography and a prayer card? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to be recognized on the St. Louis Center website? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ **I prefer to make a One Time Gift**

☐ \$30 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mail** this page to: Development Dept., St. Louis Center, 16195 W. Old U.S. Hwy 12, Chelsea, MI 48118 or  
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## Upcoming Events

### Fall Dinner Auction

November 13, 2021  
St. Mary Parish - Chelsea MI

### Culinary and Cars

January 23, 2022  
Laurel Manor - Livonia MI

### Pasta Dinner with the Priests

February 17, 2022  
St. Louis Center - Chelsea MI

For more information,  
please visit our website:

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



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## In Memory of Our Friends

**Mary Palmer** was a devoted IACL club member and active volunteer with the St. Louis Center, Cultural and Membership committees.

She was also active with Plymouth Christian Academy of Fine Arts and a published author of "Papa Tom's Toast".



**Tilde Elsa "Margherita" Mucci** was called home to Our Lord, the morning of Sunday, October 10th at the age of 83, embraced in the love of her family surrounding her.

She was the youngest of four children, born on August 20, 1938, in Montelongo (Molise), Italy. Margherita came to America in 1957 at age 18.

Margherita was an extraordinary woman. Her strength and perseverance were beyond measure and her love was



William Bagnasco  
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Mary Palmer  
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Michael Slane  
Jim Zenz

penetrating. She was a loving wife to her husband, Pietro, and together they created a home rooted in Italian heritage.

Through her faith, dedication to tradition, and love of food, she raised her three tenacious sons. From this tradition, Mama Mucci's Pasta was born in 1989 by her sons, Vincenzo and Francesco, based off the recipes and techniques learned from her mother. The success of Mama Mucci's Pasta is endowed to the hard work of her sons, the irresistibility of her pasta and Mama herself. SLC is a grateful recipient of the Mucci family's generosity.

Margherita was preceded in death by her husband Pietro "Pete" Mucci. Those left to cherish her memory include her children Anthony (Patricia), Vincenzo (Amy) and Francesco (Jennifer Price) and her precious granddaughters, Gabriella and Julia Mucci.