



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

SPRING | 2023

## RESIDENTS PREPARE FOR FARMER'S MARKET

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) often face challenges when it comes to finding meaningful work and opportunities for community engagement. However, a new initiative that involves making homemade items to sell at a local farmer's market is helping to change that.

The program, developed by Haylie Moran and the St. Louis Center Day Program staff, provides individuals with I/DD the opportunity to learn new skills, earn an income, and connect with their community. Participants work together to make and package homemade campfire starters using shredded paper.

They will also be baking homemade dog treats.

Not only does this initiative provide goods and services to those in the community, but it also helps people with I/DD become an integral part of it. By showcasing



Brad Crosier helps David make dog biscuits during product development for their Farmers Market booth.

the talents and abilities of individuals with I/DD, the program promotes a more inclusive and diverse community.

Furthermore, the program provides a sense of purpose and fulfillment to participants, helping to boost their self-esteem and confidence. By being part of a meaningful project, they can feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work.

The market initiative is a win-win for everyone involved. It provides a valuable service to the community, helps to break down stereotypes, and provides individuals

with I/DD the opportunity to learn new skills and connect with their community in a meaningful way.



## MOTHERS AND CAREGIVERS: CULTIVATING LOVE

**Help us fill the lobby with flowers in honor or memory of mothers and caregivers.**

A **Caregiver** is called to nurture, keep hope alive, and cultivate an attitude of optimism.

**Caregivers** always look at each person as precious and meaningful, capable of reaching great potential.

Who are the special **caregivers** in your life who

have made an impact? Help us honor them by "planting a garden" on the wall in the lobby at St. Louis Center.

Honor your cherished **caregiver** by filling the "garden" at St. Louis Center with flowers and butterflies representing the ones you love.

Scan the code to plant your flower with a minimum donation of \$5.

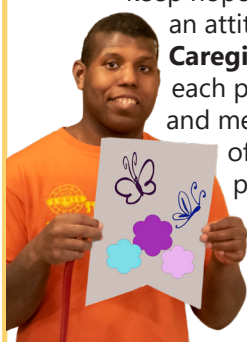
Send a butterfly with a minimum donation of \$50.



You may also fill out the form found on page 6 and send it in with your check.

Watch the "garden" grow on:

 [facebook.com/stlouiscenter](https://facebook.com/stlouiscenter)



## FROM FR. ENZO



Dear Friends,  
The remodeling of St. Joseph Hall is progressing on schedule. Soon we will be able to slate a re-dedication date. For this occasion, we will invite all of you to see the growth of St. Louis Center and the innovations enabling

the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to shine in all their splendor as 'precious people' in the sight of God. Stay up-to-date on our website.



This transforms St. Louis Center into a 'lighthouse of hope' for families and society. The care for people with I/DD reveals the level of civility we have in our relationships and society.



Spring is a busy time for us: we have to plan the activities and services we will be able to provide during the 2023-24 fiscal year. You are an integral part of this dream! I want to thank you for your support and love.

At present, we are also working on renovation plans for the kitchen. It was built in 1960 and has done its services. Food preparation is very different now than in those days. With the aging of the people we serve, the meals need to be individualized and their preparation requires more work space.

Soon a group of residents will be selling handcrafted goods at the Chelsea Farmer's Market. Consider visiting their booth at the Wednesday Market.

Planning for the summer fund-raising events is under way. We are always looking for new volunteers to help. Give us a call!

*Fr. Enzo Ambrosini*



# WIN AN ALASKAN CRUISE & LAND TOUR

7-DAY INSIDE PASSAGE CRUISE PLUS 3-DAY LAND TOUR FOR 2 PEOPLE\*

## St. Louis Center

invites you to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through this raffle.



Drawing to be held

**JUNE 26, 2023**

at the

**GOLF & GLORY  
OUTING**

(need not be present to win)



Discover the beauty and grandeur of Alaska. Enjoy Alaska's **Glacier Bay National Park** on your cruise and **Denali National Park** on your land tour.

**RAFFLE TICKETS ARE \$25  
EACH OR 5/\$100**

Scan Code  
to purchase  
yours today!



## SLC COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Vickie Walrath  
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(MI State Deputy, KofC)



# CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN

## THE BLAISE ROONEY STORY

Blaise Rooney has epilepsy, a brain injury, and cerebral palsy. He was baptized as an infant and as he grew up, his father Brian could tell that he had a true love for the Mass. There were always indications that Blaise knew what was going on, even if he was unable to articulate the details. Brian and Tiffany, his wife, wondered if he would be able to receive the Eucharist.

Because of Blaise's disabilities, Brian knew that he would be unable to go to Confession, but Blaise is truly incapable of grave sin.

Brian and Tiffany still knew that as the most important advocates for their son, they would need to continue searching for the proper spiritual care he needed. As devout Catholics themselves, they wanted their child to experience the fullness of the faith during holy Mass. They knew that this sacrament, the Eucharist, is the source and summit of the Christian life and that their son would benefit greatly in receiving it.

St. Louis Guanella, founder of the Servants of Charity who oversee St. Louis Center, said, "The Father waits only for a fraternal gesture of love in order to supply through His own means what is needed by whomever He is helping." Brian could see that fraternal gesture on the face of his son during the

consecration at Mass and often at that moment Blaise says, "He did it." After speaking with Fr. Enzo Addari, SdC at a recent event, Brian and Tiffany decided to seek the sacrament for their son.

After meeting with their parish priest, Blaise joyfully awaited the day of his First Holy Communion, March 11, 2023. "It has given us such great joy to see Blaise receiving Communion. It has

added to his life and ours."

If you are grappling with a similar situation, Brian encourages you, in the words of St. John Paul the Great, to "Be not afraid." Pope Francis, in his message for

the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on November 20, 2021, said, "As the true vine, He wants every branch, in union with Him, to bear fruit. Yes, Jesus wants us to attain 'the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints...'"

(Gaudete et Exsultate, 1).



**Brian Rooney** helps his son **Blaise** during his First Holy Communion.



**Blaise Rooney** with the deacon and priest from his parish on the day of his First Holy Communion.

### What does the Church say?

The celebration of the sacraments is an essential aspect of the Catholic faith. The sacraments are the means by which the faithful encounter the saving presence of Christ, and through them, they receive the grace necessary for their journey of faith.

In 1995, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued "Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities" which provides direction to the Church regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the sacramental life of the Church. According to the Guidelines, "Baptism is to be made available to all who freely ask for it, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving it. ... Disability, of itself is never a reason for deferring Baptism."(11)

Pope Francis stated in "The Joy of the Gospel" that, "the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them His friendship, His blessing, His word, the celebration of the sacraments." (200) The Pope has also said that the bias should always be toward giving the sacrament.



**Fr. Enzo** distributing Communion to St. Louis Center residents during a Mass held in the Center's gymnasium.

# SUMMER GOLF SUPPORTS CENTER

## *Golf and Glory* A PREMIERE GOLFING EVENT



**When:** Monday, June 26th

**Time:** 8:30am registration, 10:00 am shotgun start

**Where:** University of Michigan Golf Course, Ann Arbor MI

Tee up for St. Louis Center's Golf & Glory Outing! Join us **Monday, June 26th** at University of Michigan Golf Course in Ann Arbor. You'll enjoy a day of golf on one of the country's best university courses, designed in the late 1920s by Alister MacKenzie, one of golf's all-time great architects.

Shotgun Start will begin at 10:00 am, with registration opening at 8:30.

Lunch will be provided at the turn, with dinner and program following the event.

View sponsorship levels online by scanning the code.

Join your friends and colleagues for a day of golf all while helping provide the residents who call St. Louis Center home with loving care in a community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**If you would like to volunteer for this event or need more information, please contact Michelle at 734-475-8430 or [mmikolajczyk@stlouiscenter.org](mailto:mmikolajczyk@stlouiscenter.org).**

**Registration and Sponsorships** can be purchased online, scan here →



## 2023 MEMORIAL GOLF HONORS ELIZABETH HOLLO



If you go to one golf outing this year, make it this one!

The scramble format and inviting course layout at Pierce Lake Golf Course in Chelsea, MI make this an event to enjoy. St. Louis Center is blessed to have so many supporters. Since 1987,

the Memorial Golf Outing has been held to honor special benefactors who have passed. This year the Outing will be honoring Liz Hollo for her many contributions to the Center.

There is still time to join the planning committee or become a volunteer.

**Please contact Michelle at 734-475-8430 or [mmikolajczyk@stlouiscenter.org](mailto:mmikolajczyk@stlouiscenter.org).**

**When:** Saturday, July 15th

**Where:** Pierce Lake Golf Course, Chelsea MI

**Cost:** \$100/golfer

Sponsorships are also available. Scan code to learn more →



**Liz Hollo** enjoyed volunteering at St. Louis Center events.

## —OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS—

### Paesano Dinner

This year honoring

Howdy Holmes

June 25th

details



27TH ANNUAL

### Fall Harvest Fest

TO BENEFIT ST. LOUIS CENTER

**Sunday, September 24, 2023**



**Italian American Banquet and Conference Center**

39200 Five Mile Rd. · Livonia MI 48154 (734)953-1137

### Fall Dinner Auction

Mark your calendars for the 36th Annual Fall Dinner Auction. The event will be **Saturday, October 28, 2023**. Formal invitations will be mailed in late spring or early summer.

Scan the QR Code to



read about all of our upcoming events.



**THE OBJECTIVE  
OF THE CENTER  
IS THE INTEGRAL  
PROMOTION OF  
PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY  
THOSE IN NEED AND  
HARDSHIP.**

- WITH FAITH, LOVE AND COMPETENCE 186



### Family | Community

St. Louis Center is intended to be structured like a family home. The lifestyle and interpersonal relationships offered in this community should be similar to those of a family so that all members can experience authentic values relative to individuals and society.

### Join the Family

To submit your application visit [stlouiscenter.org/work-here/](http://stlouiscenter.org/work-here/) or scan the code above.



## PROFILES OF GUANELLIAN STAFF



**Summer Reed**, Social Services Assistant, helped the ladies get ready for Night to Shine by doing their makeup. **Laura Rayer**, Activities Coordinator, painted nails.

### Cedric Santana



Cedric Santana recently joined St. Louis Center as a Social Services Specialist. Growing up in the Jackson Area, Cedric always knew that he wanted to help people. After graduating from Michigan Center in 2016, he pursued his higher education at Western Michigan University majoring in Social Work. While in college, he discovered his passion for the arts of photography and videography. He loves to give back to others. His art is another way he is able to help others.

Another hobby that Cedric enjoys is music. He loves to attend concerts where he takes photos and enjoys his surroundings. In his spare time, he has helped other artists with songwriting and other aspects of their art. The Social Work team is excited to have Cedric join them in serving the residents of the Center, who have welcomed him with open arms. Cedric is a dynamic individual who is extremely caring and compassionate. He is a great asset to the Center, and we are excited to welcome him.



## RESIDENTS TAKE THE STAGE

Open Spot Theatre has been proudly teaching music & movement therapy to people of ALL abilities since 2012. Theatre classes are designed for everyone, from students with developmental disabilities to seniors.



**Stanley and Jackie** showed off their dancing skills.

Classes are led by trained instructors who are professionals in theatre, sign language, and/or special education. Seeing the benefits of music and dance in her daughter's life, Amy L. spearheaded the fundraising to bring Open Spot back to St. Louis Center. Amy's daughter was a participant with Open Spot before moving to St. Louis Center. Amy worked diligently to raise the funds to make the program a reality for the Center's residents, knowing the importance that this class has played in her daughter's life.

**March 13th**, residents took the stage and welcomed the crowd with a touching performance of "This is

Me" from "the Greatest Showman." They sang and signed the words along with the music. Each resident anxiously awaited their time to perform, while cheering on their fellow performers. David started the individual performances with a sing-a-long to his favorite songs from Barney, the purple dinosaur. Other performances included Jerome playing the classic "Moon River" on the keyboard, Sarah playing her recorder, and many others singing and dancing. Open Spot theatre did an amazing job working with the residents and the performances really showed their dedication and hard work. It was a fantastic performance!





# HELP US BUILD A LIGHTHOUSE OF HOPE

## BECOME A MONTHLY SUSTAINER



**\$5/  
month**

*\$5/month provides residents like Lisa fuel to get to work for a week.*



**\$25/  
month**

*\$25/month provides residents like Jackie one month of internet access to communicate with family and friends.*

Residents of St. Louis Center need your help!

The Center's mission is to make sure that residents are always provided with a secure and loving home, and your help can take this mission even further. Our new monthly sustainer program is your opportunity to extend the impact of your gift to be felt for years to come. With each recurring donation, our team is able to provide care, activities, and community opportunities to the residents.

You can support St. Louis Center with a recurring gift of any amount. Spread out your giving into monthly payments and ensure that the residents at the Center have the continued support and care they need each day!



## WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

A planned gift will continue to proclaim the great dignity of the human person and follows guiding principles of St. Louis Center.

There are many different types of planned gifts, and each offers unique advantages. Some planned gifts are revocable — a gift in your will or living trust, for example — so you can change your mind at any time. Or, they can be irrevocable — just as outright gifts are — so that you benefit from an income tax deduction if you itemize.

Your gift may be designated to support a specific program at the Center or given in support of the greatest areas of need. Through careful planning, you can both ensure the future of the Center and maximize the impact of your assets.

Already included St. Louis Center in your will/estate plans? Let us know so that we may thank you.

To learn more visit <https://stlouiscenter.org/give-here/planned-giving/>

The Development team at the Center is ready to help you.



## Special Mother's Day Gift

Place in the St. Louis Center "garden" on my behalf a:

☐ Spring Flower (Minimum donation \$5)

☐ Metallic Butterfly (Minimum donation \$50)

I would like to make my gift:

☐ In Honor of ☐ In Memory of



## Other Gifts

☐ **Recurring Donation** Make a monthly gift and automatically become a **SUSTAINER!**

**Monthly Gift:** ☐ \$5 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **One-Time Gift:** ☐ \$200 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **\$304** - Help cover #benevolentcare costs for one day for a resident.

## Payment Information

Payment Type: Credit Card Cash Check

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

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

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

## Contact Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Donate Online** at: <http://bit.ly/slcSpiritDonate> or by scanning the code at right.

**Note:** We value your privacy as much as you do. We will never share or sell your information with any third party.





## A VIBRANT, ACTIVE COMMUNITY



**Dave Gilbert**, (center) of the Chelsea Rotary Club, leads a small group discussion during the MLK event.

### HONORING DR. KING

Members of the Chelsea Rotary Club and the Chelsea High School Key Club presented a program about Martin Luther King Jr. to the residents of St. Louis Center on **Thursday, January 19th**. St. Louis Center welcomed Chelsea and the surrounding communities to learn about Dr. King and discuss discrimination, inequality and injustice. Residents reflected on things they do daily to help others, including holding doors for friends, participating in the Meals on Wheels program, and being a volunteer for local events. Everyone walked away learning something new about Martin Luther King Jr., and with ideas on how they can strive to be better community members.

### RESIDENTS SHINE

Twenty-three St. Louis Center residents were excited to attend Night to Shine on **Friday, February 10th**, at 2|42 Community Church Ann Arbor campus. Rose Lawrence of In-Chelsea Hair Design volunteered her time and products to style each lady's hair and Rose's daughter-in-law Samantha came along to help paint nails. As everyone arrived at the church, they were adorned with a corsage or boutonniere, and a tiara or crown. The pastor welcomed everyone and blessed



It was **Lanard's** birthday so the entire crowd sang 'Happy Birthday'.

the event, and then dinner was served. After dinner, the DJs kept everyone on the dance floor. Even the Center staff was on the dance floor making sure that the residents were having a great time.

### HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

It's always important to recognize and appreciate the hard work of employees, and Valentine's Day is



**Chris, Pat and Janet** devoted the entire day to thanking the Center staff.

the perfect occasion to do so. This year, the Family Association decided to show their gratitude by making cookies for all the employees at St. Louis Center. On

**Valentine's Day**, three association members set up a distribution table for the cookies in the gym. The employees were delighted and touched by the gesture, and the family association was thrilled to be able to express their appreciation in such a sweet way.



**Lisa** Enjoyed her Shamrock Shake.

### GOING GREEN!

The entire world becomes Irish for a day on **March 17th**! At St. Louis Center, the residents get into the spirit by wearing green, enjoying an Irish feast, and the new tradition of Shamrock Shakes in the afternoon. Day program staff gets out the blenders, mint ice cream, and milk so that they can make shakes for everyone on campus even people with dairy allergies.

Read more St. Louis Center stories by scanning this code. →



## A KNIGHT TO DANCE



**Center residents** enjoyed dining and dancing at Our Lady of Fatima church.

*Jackson area 4th Degree Knights welcomed guests to a dance on March 18th at Our Lady of Fatima in Michigan Center.*

The Knights saluted guests as they walked through the floral entry arch.

Vicki Walrath, Ben Dandrow, Faithful Navigator, and his wife Sandy planned the evening. All Jackson area people with I/DD were invited to the event which included dinner and dancing.

Joe DeBoe of Ghost Rider DJ Services provided the entertainment for the evening. He enjoyed watching the fun on the dance floor and has already volunteered for next year.

Fr. Amal and Direct Care Worker Alexis Smith accompanied 15 St. Louis Center residents throughout the evening.

Vicki said that the Knights have hosted this event for the past 12 years.



**Kirk Horodeczny and Fr. Amal** enjoyed visiting during the February 9th Pasta Dinner at St. Louis Center.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Knights on Campus

April 30, 2023  
St. Louis Center - Chelsea

### Golf & Glory Outing

June 26, 2023  
University of Michigan Golf course -  
Ann Arbor MI

### Paesano Dinner

June 25, 2023  
Paesano - Ann Arbor MI

### Memorial Golf Outing

July 15, 2023  
Pierce Lake Golf Course - Chelsea MI

### Fall Harvest Dinner

September 24, 2023  
Italian American Banquet Center -  
Livonia

### Fall Dinner Auction

October 28, 2023  
St. Mary Parish Hall - Chelsea

For more information,  
please visit our website:

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



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## WHAT'S INSIDE



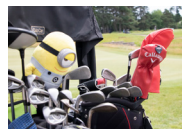
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Tee off for summer  
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Theater program  
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Plant a Flower in  
the Garden at St.  
Louis Center.



### PAGE 7

Read about St.  
Louis Center's  
busy winter.

## REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDS

### George Merkel

died Thursday,  
February 23,  
2023, at Chelsea  
Retirement  
Community.  
George was  
born on June 6,  
1929, to Joseph  
and Florence

(Latreille Doll) Merkel in  
a farmhouse across from  
the present-day Chrysler  
Proving Grounds. In  
1948, he married Nancy  
Ellen Clark, a union that  
lasted for 62 years, until  
death separated George  
from the love of his life.  
Together, they raised  
seven children.

George began life as  
a farm boy, but tried  
his hand at many  
occupations over the  
years. George hauled



milk, drove a  
semi, owned a  
service station,  
owned a bar,  
and eventually  
returned  
to farming,  
which he  
enthusiastically  
continued

until a stroke forced him  
into retirement at the  
age of 88. Years after  
his stroke, although he  
was completely bed-  
bound, he spent his  
time dreaming of the  
crops he'd plant "next  
spring". He was proud  
to be named as the  
Farmer of the Year at  
the Washtenaw County  
Agriculture Banquet in  
2018. The same year, he  
received a Recognition  
Award from St. Louis  
Center.

**Anthony Basso**  
**Helen Marie Boyea**  
**Brenda Buss**  
**Maryann "Myron"**  
**Czubko Jr.**  
**Irene D'Orazio**  
**Dante Di Gaetano**  
**Marilyn Sally Fett**  
**Fr. Ray Goehring**  
**Sr. Helen Hankerd**  
**Cheryl Houk**  
**Joseph "Joe" Joseph**  
**Nadine Koch**  
**Luigi LaMarra**  
**Marliyn Mast**  
**George Merkel**  
**Robert "Bob" Munie**  
**Virginio Persiconi**  
**Susan Reetz**  
**Dianna Thomasian**

