



ST. LOUIS SPIRIT

WINTER
2025

St. Louis Center serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an intentional, faith-based community. It was opened in 1960 by the Servants of Charity, an order of Catholic priests and brothers founded by Fr. Louis Guanella of Italy in 1908. Fr. Guanella was a pioneer of work with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and St. Louis Center was named for him.

AN AUCTION TO REMEMBER

St. Louis Center hosted its 37th Annual Fall Dinner Auction at St. Mary Church in Chelsea on November 9th, drawing over 200 guests. The event featured more than 100 auction items, including a Costa Rica getaway, a diamond necklace, luxury vacation homes, and a "Wheelbarrow of Cheer" donated by the Family Association.



Marco Silveri, Andy and Lisa Shmina did their part to help ensure the bids went high.

Guests enjoyed a delicious dinner from Movable Feast, with Peg Bravo as MC and David Helmer as auctioneer. St. Louis Center honored Ken and Ellie Unterbrink for their longtime support, and Fred Ashline from the Sean Brian Ashline Foundation presented proceeds from

their 2024 golf outing. Cathy Bilinski also presented proceeds from the St. Louis Center Dream Tour III.

This year, the Fall Dinner Auction Committee introduced an online

feature, allowing remote participation. While there was a learning curve, the response was positive, and guests appreciated the card payment option for faster checkout. Despite the new technology, the auction raised nearly 30% more than last year, thanks to the generosity of supporters.

The success of the event was due to the efforts of volunteers, staff, and Fall Dinner Auction Committee members, particularly Co-Chairs Barb Lewis and Eileen Augustine.

St. Louis Center is deeply grateful for the ongoing support of all who made the event a record-breaking success.

GENEROSITY ABOUNDS

Thank you to the many individuals and groups who, year-after-year, take time during the very busy Christmas season to bring cheer to the residents and staff of St. Louis Center.

For the past 20 years, Al and Mary Chirco and friends from across Macomb County have done just this. Organized by Al and Mary, the group includes many members of several Italian-American cultural societies and churches.

On **Saturday, December 7th**, Al, Mary, and their friends, including multiple generations of families, arrived at the Center at 9am for Mass. (The group's Salvatore Basilico, lead chef of their annual molto delizioso spaghetti

with sausage dinner, headed straight for the newly renovated kitchen.) After Mass, the entire group went to work preparing the lunch and readying the gym for the arrival of the residents and staff.



Al Chirco, event coordinator, shares smiles and laughter with his longtime friend, **Stanley**.

Prior to the event, the group had asked each resident what they would like from Santa, and Mary once again ensured that each received a specially curated and wrapped gift. Santa and his elves (Tony Randazzo and his grandchildren) personally delivered each resident his or her gift during the

celebration. Numerous other members of the group not in attendance also donated gifts, food for the meal, and funds to the Center.

The group has recently named itself the Good Shepherd Group, and we look forward to welcoming its members for the 21st year in 2025!

YEAR END SUCCESS

Supporters like **YOU** are the backbone of St. Louis Center! Thank you for your generosity this Christmas Season. We surpassed the \$100,000 year-end Challenge offered by an anonymous donor and raised over **\$175,000** in match-designated funds! *More on page 6.*



FROM FR. SATHEESH

Rays of Hope

Dear Friends of St. Louis Center,
Greetings in the name of the Lord!

As we conclude 2024 and begin 2025, a Jubilee year of Hope, we thank each one of you for supporting our mission and keeping our hopes alive.



We remain thankful for the many expected and unexpected blessings in 2024.

One author characterized hope as "light;" this is certainly true in our Faith, one in which Jesus is the "light of the world." The Word of God gives us a confident expectation of good things to come, based on our faith in God. All of our residents, verbal or non-verbal, manifest with confidence the expectation of good things to come every single day. Our residents move and act with this sense of hope and confidence whenever they interact with our staff. We are moving in a positive and hope-filled direction, one in which they find hope and promise in their growth; it is a commitment to giving the "Fullness of Life" to our residents.

We appeal to you to continue to provide a foundation of hope, as you have done so generously in the past. This will permit us to continue God's work of invigorating the lives of our residents and proclaiming their dignity. We are grateful for the blessing of consistent staffing at St. Louis Center, which gives us hope and inspires us to improve the lives of our residents.

I commend to you our supporters who have passed on whose names are noted on page 8, and others we might not yet be aware of. We are thankful to all of them for the hope that they brought to the lives of others through their contribution to our mission. I am confident in God's recompense for their efforts to uplift the lives of our residents.

The power of hope is anchored in God's Providence; this was the foundation upon which St. Louis Guanella built his life. He knew he could move forward because of a complete trust that God will always provide for the needs of His "least ones." As Servants of Charity, we understand that every challenge, every difficulty, is simply an opportunity for God to display his gracious work in all of us. Certainly, this is what God has worked to achieve through your sacrifices, and we are truly grateful for that. Together, through complete trust in the infinite hope that God showers upon us, we move forward with joyful hearts in serving those in need.

May God bless you all.

Fr. Satheesh



SANTA BRINGS SMILES



Santa and his helper **Kristi Haywood** brought joy to everyone who came for breakfast.

For the second year in a row, the community was invited to have breakfast with Santa at St. Louis Center. On **Saturday, December 14th**, volunteers from Knights of Columbus Bishop Zaleski Council #6687 prepared and served breakfast for the residents, staff, and guests. When Santa arrived, everyone was excited to greet him and share their hopes for Christmas. Families from the community enjoyed breakfast, made crafts, and had their photos taken with Santa. This beloved event is a gift from St. Louis Center's Development & Communications Department to the residents and the wider community of children and adults with I/DD. It is an opportunity for families and individuals of all ages and abilities to enjoy communal Christmas cheer. A special thank you to Dan Hooven who starred as Santa this year. His clear commitment to spreading joy was infectious, and everyone loved him.



The Federazione Abruzzese del Michigan (FADM) held its 25th Jubilee Charity Gala on **October 20th** at the Italian American Cultural Center. During the event, FADM President **Pietro Fuciarelli** (center) presented **Fr. Enzo Addari** (left) with a donation to St. Louis Center.

SLC COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Joseph Munie, Chair
Glenn Johnson, Vice-Chair
Donna Hrozencik, MD, Secretary
Mark Umlauf, Treasurer

James Kennedy
Kenneth Klovski
William Lamb, JD
George Mallison
Kathi Neuman
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Jerry Ruggirello
Andrew A. Shmina
Rosalie Tocco-Bradley
Don Walker
George Walrath
Vickie Walrath
Barry Borsenik,
(MI State Deputy, KofC)

PROFILES OF GUANELLIAN STAFF

GUANELLIAN STAFF IS CALLED TO TAKE CARE OF THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AND TO KEEP THEIR HOPE ALIVE.

- WITH FAITH, LOVE, AND COMPETENCE 54

The Social Services Department is staffed by a team of qualified Social Services Specialists and Licensed Social Workers who are involved with the residents in many areas of their lives, from admission to the achievement of daily goals.

As a team, the Department encourages residents to strive for independence to the best of their ability and promotes choice. These team members also act as liaisons between families and agencies.



Family | Community

Guanellian workers live their roles and carry out their tasks in an attitude of confidence and optimism. They seek love and joy present in every person. (From the book inspired by the writings of St. Louis Guanella: *With Faith, Love, and Competence: Profile of the Guanellian Staff, paragraph 54.*)

Please visit the website to view current staff openings.

Volunteers are Family, too

Committed volunteers help provide "Fullness of Life" for the residents. Explore volunteer opportunities at: stlouiscenter.org/have-fun-here/volunteer/

Volunteer Spotlight

The Klovski Family got involved with St. Louis Center in 2010 as part of the Legacy Campaign. For the last few years, the scope of their efforts has included event committees, technology projects, maintenance projects, and running errands for the kitchen. **Ken** (below with SLC resident **Tony**), his wife **Stacey**, and son **Jack** are invaluable members of the team of volunteers that supports the Center.



Kendall Herron

Kendall attended Siena Heights University. After graduating, she worked as a youth specialist at the Juvenile Detention Facility in Adrian where she was able to be a positive role model for teens. Kendall has enjoyed her time at St. Louis Center so far and hopes to continue to help the residents succeed.

Jenifer Morris

Jen earned a BS in Management Studies from the University of Maryland and an MS in Psychology from the University of Phoenix. Jen says, "The best part of my day is talking with residents who tell me how grateful they are for their SLC team." She also works with parents and guardians and schedules and attends appointments.

Alanah McDaniel

Alanah graduated from Adrian College with a BS in Social Work. Before starting at St. Louis Center, she worked with unhoused individuals as a case manager. Alanah is excited to learn more about Chelsea and looks forward to continuing her work at the Center.



MEET ST. LOUIS CENTER'S LATEST STAFF HIRES!



Michael Franklin

Michael joined the Development & Communications Department in December. He is passionate about computers and is currently enrolled in a software engineering program. He's excited to work with SLC's team, ensuring top-notch data collection, reporting, and donor stewardship.



Jerry Pollard

Jerry was raised in Grass Lake, and now resides in Brooklyn with his wife Nancy. They have 5 children. Jerry has a wealth of experience in food and guest services and is excited to elevate the food service program to an elite level for our residents as Food Services Supervisor.

TRUNK OR TREAT



Stanley and Tom Arbanas, St. Louis Center HR Director, enjoyed the costumes, candy, and haunted house.

This year's Trunk or Treat at St. Louis Center was a spooky success! On **October 23rd**, the Center opened its doors to families in the community for a night full of treats, tricks, and memorable moments. Nearly 400 attendees wandered through creatively decorated trunks, each with its own unique theme. Dinner was served and families gathered to enjoy chili, cornbread, and dirt cake. The treat portion of the evening was certainly sweet.

The real thrills, however, came from the highly anticipated haunted house. Staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to create a spooky atmosphere, complete with a few heart-pounding jump scares. Those brave enough to venture through raved about how terrifying the experience was and praised the performance of the resident and volunteer actors. This year marked the first time residents acted in the haunted house, and they absolutely nailed it. It was an unforgettable night that truly captured the Halloween spirit!

We want to thank all our sponsors who made this event possible, particularly Kia of Lansing and Jackson. We also could not have done it without all the amazing support from local volunteers who came out and brought their creatively decorated trunks! It is due to your support that this community event brings so much joy to all.

LEADERS TAKING AKTION

On October 11-12th, nine St. Louis Center residents attended the Michigan Aktion Club Conference at Camp Storer in Jackson, MI.

Aktion Club is a service club sponsored by Kiwanis for individuals with disabilities.

At this conference, the residents gave a presentation about their favorite project this year: their annual Christmas Card Fundraiser. They also heard about the service projects other clubs from around the state completed, inspiring new ideas for future projects for the SLC Aktion Club.

Jacqui and Lisa tied for 1st place in the poster competition! They beautifully illustrated their favorite service projects and the charities to which they have donated.

Club members also attended



Kyle (left) and **Sarah** sharpened their leadership skills.

leadership training, elected a new governor of the Michigan Aktion Club, and made care packages for first responders. There were many fun activities for participants to engage in and opportunities to socialize with new friends.

Congratulations to St. Louis Center's Aktion Club leaders and thank you Kiwanis!



Nine St. Louis Center residents took advantage of the opportunity for fellowship and fun with other Aktion Clubs.



Direct Care Worker **Brad Crosier** (left) led the initiative to decorate a tree as part of Adrian's Comstock Christmas Riverwalk. Each resident and department at the Center had the opportunity to make ornaments. **Joe, Brian, Mike** and Direct Care worker **Janet Smith** (front, right) helped Brad decorate the tree.

A FRIENDLY DAY AT THE THEATER

On Thursday, December 12th, a large group of residents, accompanied by several dedicated staff, made their way to The Encore Theatre in Dexter.

Upon arrival, they were welcomed with gift bags to fill with snacks and fidget toys to help create a comfortable and sensory-friendly experience. The cozy and inviting atmosphere was further enhanced by the presence of Lucy, a Golden Retriever service dog, and several vendor tables. The performance was dynamic and engaging,



Jacqui met the man who played Oliver Warbucks.

captivating the audience for the full two-and-a-half hours. The songs brought laughter and joy, while the characters' emotional depth

drew empathy from all who watched. *Annie* is a timeless story of hope, resilience, and the power of optimism. It was a truly special experience for the residents.

The night culminated in a meet-and-greet in the lobby, where residents had a chance to interact with the cast.

UPCOMING EVENTS



1000 FLOWERS COULD BLOOM
Wednesday, February 26th



PASTA DINNER WITH THE PRIESTS
Thursday, February 27th

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

St. Louis Center's Resident Christmas Program is a highly anticipated event each year, where residents, loved ones, and staff come together for a memorable celebration. This year, residents showcased their talents through dance, singing, poetry, and music. The staff, led by **Carlie Hartwick** Assistant Program Director, helped with selecting and preparing acts, ensuring everything was ready for the performance.

Ten acts were presented, including a dance-off between **Lee** as Santa Claus and **Lanard** as Michael Jackson, and a poem written by **Lisa** for her father. The night also featured "The Birth of Jesus," with



Music Therapist **Renae Murphy, Kevin, and Kristin** sang Christmas carols during the program.

all residents participating. The event was held in a beautifully decorated gymnasium, complete with a Nativity scene and festive evergreens. After the performances, the Family Association presented staff members with gifts, and Fr. Satheesh shared a few words. The celebration concluded with refreshments and fellowship in the main atrium. St. Louis Center expresses gratitude to everyone who made the event possible and to those who supported the residents during their exceptional performances.



GOLF & GLORY OUTING

Monday, June 23rd

Buy **Alaskan Cruise Raffle** tickets now!

Visit the website to find out how:

<https://stlouiscenter.org/event/2025-golf-glory/>



38TH FALL DINNER AUCTION

Saturday, November 8th

For more information about these or other events, visit the website:
stlouiscenter.org/have-fun-here/events/



YEAR-END CHALLENGE MATCH GOAL EXCEEDED

This Christmas Season, over 350 supporters from across 13 U.S. states made donations to St. Louis Center! We are overwhelmed and inspired by your generosity. St. Louis Center raised over \$175,000 in funding designated toward the Year-End Challenge Match of \$100,000. Additionally, over \$17,000 in in-kind donations poured into the Center.



Stephen Lee, Margaret Kelly, and Rob Mida (right) shared a cheerful moment at Ugly Dog Distillery during the Clause for a Cause event. Rob is the manager of Ugly Dog and coordinates Ugly Dog's annual gift drive.

gifts that we can facilitate "fullness of life" for the residents.

With your continued philanthropic support, the Center is meeting the daily needs of residents, developing new programs, and planning major building renovations to proclaim the dignity and worth of each and every individual. Residents and their families benefit from the spirit of philanthropy - "love of humanity" - that has allowed St. Louis Center to serve individuals with I/DD for over 65 years.

Each and every one of our supporters matters. You are all part of the St. Louis Center team, and we could not succeed without you. It is through your annual



The St. Louis Center Skill Building program is in need of some supplies. If you would like to help, please scan the QR code at right or visit: <https://a.co/2dqG6e7> to have items shipped directly to the Center.



St. Louis Center is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Your gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

For more information about supporting St. Louis Center or to set-up a tour, please contact Peggy Cole, Development & Communications Director, at mcole@stlouiscenter.org or 734.475.8430, ext. 431.

There are multiple ways to support St. Louis Center:

- Become a Monthly Sustainer
- Make a Tribute Gift in memory or honor of someone special
- Make an Annual Gift or gifts in response to our Spring and Year-End appeals, or at any time during the year
- Attend a Fundraising Event
- Make a Donation of Securities, including appreciated stocks, mutual funds, or bonds
- Inquire about your company's Matching Gift Program.
- Host a 'Third Party' Event
- Make a gift through your Donor Advised Fund or IRA
- Make an In-Kind Gift of Goods or Services
- Include St. Louis Center in your Estate Planning



Endowment Gifts Matched

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT As residents of St. Louis Center age and require more specialized care, having a robust endowment will be critical to providing for their needs. Right now, all gifts to St. Louis Center's endowment fund will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, by an anonymous donor up to a total of \$50,000. An additional \$15,000 is needed to meet the match! For more info, please contact Peggy Cole.

Make a Gift Today

- One-Time Gift:** \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____
- \$357** - Help cover one resident's benevolent care costs for one day.
- Recurring Donation** - Make a monthly gift and automatically become a **SUSTAINER!**
- Monthly Gift:** \$5 \$15 \$25 Other \$ _____

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

Donate Online by scanning the code below or at: stlouiscenter.org/about/news/newsletter/st-louis-spirit/#donate

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



CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

THE BENEFITS OF RECREATIONAL THERAPY

According to the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation (NCTRC), recreational therapy is a systematic process that utilizes recreation (leisure) and other activities as interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery, and well-being.

Laura Rayer, BS, CTRS always knew she wanted to help others. When she embarked on her college journey, her degree path was special education. As she continued her studies and student teaching, she realized that her talents were better suited to the emerging field of Recreational Therapy.

Laura graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree and quickly earned her certification as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS).

St. Louis Center hired Laura as Activities Coordinator in August 2020 to build a program to provide therapeutic interventions for the well-being of the residents in the wake of COVID-19 lockdowns. Laura visited every house on campus to offer and

provide group and individual activities based on resident's interests and abilities.

Since August 2020, Laura has developed a routine activity schedule for the residents which they look forward to each week. From her Montessori-inspired training, Laura



Laura Rayer, St. Louis Center Activities Coordinator, and **David** enjoy coloring and playing cards together.

continues to offer the residents choices and opportunities to increase their levels of functioning and help them achieve their personal goals.

Through a variety of arts, crafts, cooking, games, music, and larger "all-campus" activities in the gym, or outdoors as weather permits, Laura helps to maintain the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the residents.

Thank you, Laura!



Recreational Therapy Activities

Certified recreational therapy includes a variety of activities that are tailored to a person's interests and needs such as:

1. Music
2. Art and Crafts
3. Games
4. Gardening
5. Cooking
6. Bowling and Adaptive Sports

Benefits of Recreational Therapy

1. Reduces stress, depression, and anxiety
2. Recovers gross and fine motor function
3. Builds confidence
4. Improves physical, cognitive, emotional, social and leisure functioning
5. Improves reasoning abilities
6. Improves social skills

Who can benefit?

1. Persons with developmental disabilities
2. Persons with mental health conditions
3. Older adults with age-related decline
4. Persons with chronic illness or physical disabilities

ST. LOUIS CENTER MERCH

Get your St. Louis Center gear! Check out the latest selection and place your orders online with the option to have items sent to your home or pick-up in Chelsea.

To see the full catalog scan this code or visit:

stlouiscenter.org/merch/



KENNETH MERRIMAN



Ken passed away **November 15, 2024.**

He was born on August 5, 1964 to William Merriman and Joyce (Wright) Merriman. Ken was a happy-go-lucky guy. He brought a lot of joy to his housemates and friends. He especially liked when he lived at St. Louis Center in Chelsea and Allegra Nursing Home in Jackson.

Ken always thought of his caregivers and other residents as family, and they felt the same way. He found enjoyment in

listening and joining in singing with those who brought music to his home. Ken had a strong faith and had many priest friends, among his other numerous friendships.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1000 Flowers could Bloom Clay Workshop

February 26, 2025
St. Louis Center - Chelsea

Pasta Dinner with the Priests

February 27, 2025
St. Louis Center - Chelsea

Golf & Glory Outing

June 23, 2025
University of Michigan Golf Course -
Ann Arbor

Fall Dinner Auction

November 8, 2025
St. Mary - Chelsea

Learn more on our website:

stlouiscenter.org/have-fun-here/events/

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Doing your 2024 taxes?

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious and make your donation go further, we ask that you please contact us if you would like a summary of your 2024 giving for tax purposes. This will allow St. Louis Center to allocate more resources directly to its mission.

Please contact Michael at mfranklin@stlouiscenter.org or 734-475-8430.

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REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDS

Monica Horodeczny, 70, from Manchester, passed away on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at Mission Point of Jackson from her battle with Parkinson's disease.

She was born on March 10, 1954, in Ann Arbor, MI, to Leonard "Chick" and Florence (Schneider) Kirk. She graduated from Manchester High School in 1972. Monica earned a doctorate degree. She married the love of her life, Walter Horodeczny, on November 14, 1975 at St. Mary's in Manchester, MI. Her main two jobs were being a mother to her six children and being a business partner with her husband. Monica

was a member of St. Mary's, where she taught catechism and sang in the choir. She loved to volunteer at St. Louis



Center and participated in prayer chains. Monica loved to spend autumn at Lake Michigan and to travel, especially to Europe, Florida and Texas. In her spare time, she enjoyed photography, reading, movies and music. She will be remembered as a loving wife, mother and grandmother, and will truly be missed by all who knew her including

her husband, Walter, her six children, ten grandchildren, and all her family and friends. She is preceded in death by her parents, her brother, Norman Lee, and her sister, Susan Periat.

ALSO REMEMBERING:

Luigi "Lou" Broccardo
Ruggiero "Roger" DeLuca

Raymond Faitel, Jr.
Joy Franklin

Monica Horodeczny
Jean Jennings

Thomas Marcero
Kenneth Merriman
Michelle Ruggero

Dorothy Thompson
Paul Unterbrink

