



## **SPECIAL EDITION THANKSGIVING BLOG FOR ALL CHRIST CHILD MEMBERS**

**By: Carol Pickle**

**National Christ Child Society, President**

It's that time of year when we take the opportunity to reflect on our lives and focus on our many blessings. Of course, our families are foremost in our thoughts as they tend to give us the greatest joy. After our families, we look at our friends, work and organizations that we join and support. As a member of Christ Child, I am first and foremost thankful for our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick. Her dedication to the Christ Child and to needy children in her community, laid the foundation for the organization that we know and love today.

According to her history on our website "Mary Virginia Merrick as early as age of 12 wanted to devote herself to serving children in need, inspired by her love of the Christ Child. Even when paralyzed and unable to sit without support as a result of a fall in her teens, Mary never faltered in her determination to serve the poor. She started her mission of service at just 16, with a gift of handmade clothing to an infant expected to a needy family at Christmas 1884. When Mary was 18, her parents died within a short time of each other, leaving her with the responsibility of caring for her six siblings. Despite her responsibilities, her pain and her physical limitations, Mary was fueled by her vision of seeing the Christ Child in every child-and treating each child accordingly. She gathered her friends to help meet the significant needs of children in the Washington area, formally establishing the Christ Child Society in 1887. She dedicated the next 68 years-until her death on January 10, 1955 at the age of 88-to the leadership and expansion of the society." I never grow tired of hearing Miss Mary's story and each time; I am reminded of what one person's love can accomplish. I am forever grateful for those two women who invited me to join the Pasadena chapter. I hope that however you came to be part of Christ Child, you continue to be thankful and proud that you are part of such a wonderful organization.



On the National level, I want to thank the other 11 Board members that said yes to serving on the board. It's hard to describe how 12 people can become so close by having only 2 face to face meetings a year and all other meetings and communications via phone or email. Maybe it's the fact that we are working toward a common vision or that we feel a responsibility to the legacy of Mary Virginia Merrick. I am thankful for each member's unique contributions and points of view and I am proud to call them friends (not just coworkers). Thank you, Anne Kelley, for thinking of me...I will always be beholden to you for this great experience. And to those who think they may want to take their Christ Child service to the next level...you do not have to wait to be asked. Please think about submitting your own name. You will not be disappointed!

I also want to convey my appreciation for our office staff. They are the consistent face of NCCS. Day after day, Moira, Trudy and Kristin work with the Board and chapter members. They do so with an enthusiasm and caring that Mary Virginia Merrick would admire.

And now to the 5,500 members of Christ Child who are the real angels of our society. Each member brings something special to their chapter as well as the organization as a whole. I thank those members who step up to a leadership position even though they may not have the time or exact expertise. I thank those members who are not able to give of their time due to work or home commitments but support the chapter with their treasure. To those who have worked hard for their chapter but are now a bit tired and happy to lend their sage advice, thank you.

Every year, members of your chapters stand out and, of course, it's not the same members each year...Just a couple of shout outs from some of our chapters this year:



From **Tucson**... "This weekend our Tucson member Shirley Bailey has displayed her embroidery work at her Sunflower Community Craft Fair. She has been embroidering onesies, and diaper covers, to bring Christ Child awareness to her community and make some money for layettes. Customers had the option to buy the onesies or make a donation and give it back to be put in one of our layettes. She has spent countless hours of work, with the love in her heart and smile on her face for all those in need moms and infants we serve. She is truly an Angel to our Chapter."

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From **South Bend**... "One of our clients struggled to move her overflowing bags to the last stop at the center - books. We suggested she sit down on a pew and we would complete her order. You see, this mother of four is expecting her fifth child within five days. The book volunteers asked the ages and sex of the four children. One volunteer said, 'Let's build you a library for you to take home.' And so, each of the volunteers selected age appropriate books for each of the four children. One volunteer asked the mom if she enjoyed reading and she replied she did. That same volunteer asked the mom what types of books she enjoyed, and the mom replied, 'chapter books.' And so, with smiles on our faces and love in our hearts, this mom received some books of her own."



From **Toledo...** Kudos to our "champion for children ", our 2019 Red Wagon Award recipient; Dee Dillon. We were honored to recognize Dee for her tireless work with children in our community. A special "thanks " to the Dillon family for their invaluable input into our presentation!! We were happy to have some of Dee and Tom's family join us, as we honored a very special lady. Thanks Dee, for all that you continue to share with CCS of Toledo."



From **Pasadena** "For the past 2 years, past Presidents have gotten together to chair the National Day of Service. It's such a great opportunity to reunite with some good friends while serving the chapter.



From **Washington DC...** Thanks to Jill Casasola, Rudy Casasola, Peggy Still, Stephanie Farrell, Eileen Mayer, Patty Myler and Mimi Dormentall who volunteered at the Merrick Center Garden Clean in honor of Mary Virginia Merrick. They worked to continue to live out the legacy of our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, on her 153rd birthday."



Of course, those are just a few stories of our dedicated volunteers who day after day go above and beyond just to make sure that one child's life is a bit better. We are blessed to have members at all stages of life. We learn from those who came before and hope to leave a stronger chapter to those who come after. All members play a vital role as we all carry on the mission of Mary Virginia Merrick. So, during this season of counting our blessings, I count 5,500 blessings across our great nation. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

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