



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
OF MONTEREY BAY
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION



Greetings!

What a summer full of good news for the Christ Child Society of Monterey Bay! Baby bundles are up to 20 per month and back on

track at Natividad; a new Salinas preschool is in on our literacy program; and we have a fantastic event to cap off the summer . . .

Pictured above is Bundle Chair Rita Scott with our **new liaison April Rich at Natividad Hospital**, where we **dropped off 20 bundles** in mid-July. At this meeting, Natividad confirmed that it would very much value 20 bundles every other month, which means that with our mini-bundles to Catholic Charities and ongoing support of Siena House, we will be on track to deliver 250 bundles over the next year. ***More detail on these relationships and our future plans in the September newsletter!***

On the literacy front, we have a significant breakthrough, by expanding our preschool program to the Little Bear Creek Preschool in Salinas. ***Read the article below by Kathy Gibbs*** about our new partner, and our plans for this fall and the 2021-22 school year!

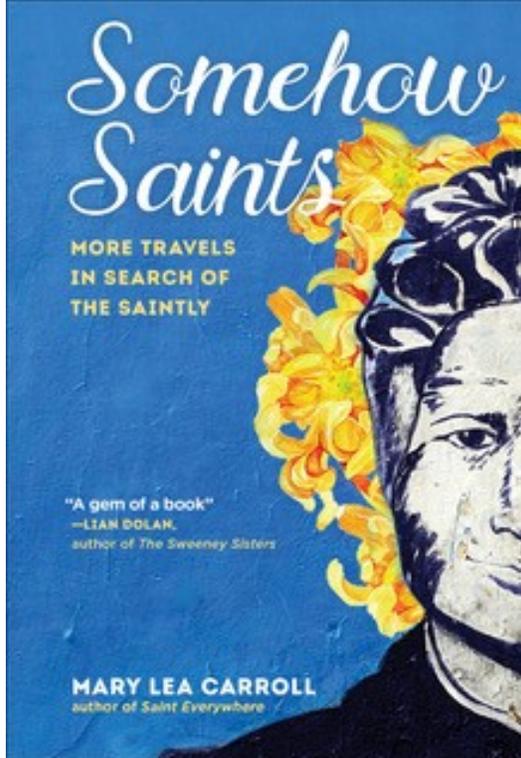
Perhaps most exciting, our event **Sipping with the Saints** is only four weeks away. It promises to be our best event ever, and we encourage you to take this opportunity to bring your spouse and friends to enjoy fantastic experience. **Sign up by August 17** and **let Gretchen Mueller Burke know** if you would like her to **send invitations to your friends**. But even if you can't come, you can **support our first ever raffle** of a luxurious night for and dinner for two at Stonepine Estate Resort--***check it out below and on our website!***

Finally, as promised, ***read about Mary Nikksarian***, our new Treasurer and newest board member ***below***. Mary brings great experience and a wonderful perspective to the Christ Child Society. We are so lucky to have her.

Of course, we are lucky to have all of you, who have done so much this not-so-sleepy summer to help the children in our community who need us most. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and stay safe and well!

Blessings,

Anne Kelley, President



**Sipping with the Saints
at Stonepine Estate, Carmel Valley
August 28, 2021 4:00-7:00 p.m.
[SIGN UP HERE](#)**



**NEW: RAFFLE for One Night's Stay and
Dinner for Two at Stonepine!!!!**

The Henschels, owners of Stonepine, have generously offered to the Christ Child Society of Monterey a lovely night and dinner for two away from home on the Estate, valued at \$1,500. *We will conduct the raffle at the event but you don't have to be present to win . . .*

California law does not permit the sale of raffle tickets online, so if you are interested in purchasing raffle tickets (\$50 each), [LET US KNOW HERE](#).

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity--both for a chance at a wonderful experience and a sure bet to help us serve local children!

And whether you can attend the event or not, if you can help sell raffle tickets at your parish or prepare for or set-up the event, [let us know](#).

Literacy Update from Kathy Gibbs



As our Literacy Chairman, Kathy Gibbs has been leading an amazing and energetic group of Christ Child volunteers to establish and expand preschool literacy programs and book donations for three years. With the 5th anniversary of our existence as a local non-profit on the horizon, we've asked Kathy to provide her perspectives on where we've been, where we're going, and who we are:

"It was two and a half years ago that a great group of literacy volunteers worked to put together and delivered a pilot preschool program at St. Angela's preschool in Pacific Grove. Our pilot included providing books to each student, in-classroom presentations by Christ Child volunteers of the book and related multi-sensory activities and crafts--as well as a themed snack--centered around such classic books as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Green Eggs & Ham*.

The very positive feedback from students and faculty and the solid program we had built enabled us to engage with the Pacific Grove State Funded Preschool in the 2019-20 school year--where the need is great. We began in the classroom, but revised the program to be delivered virtually during the pandemic and through the 2022-21 school year.

We received very positive survey results from parents about this year's virtual lessons this spring. My favorite comment was "**My daughter loves books now**", which is our end game for these preschoolers. But the best feedback of all was from the students when I delivered our summer book and activity buckets to the classroom. Teacher Diane Barrone introduced me to the children and

they erupted in thanks and excitement about the new buckets and the lessons we have provided all year. I wish you all could have been there!

One good thing leads to another, and it was actually Diane Barrone who helped to connect us with Preschool Coordinator Elia Garcia, pictured below, at the **Little Bear Creek Preschool in Salinas** (also a state-funded preschool for under-resourced children). Last month we were able to present our program to them and they are delighted to have us **support some 30 students at this preschool during the 2021-22 school year**, virtually at first—and in the classroom when safe. What this means is we will be helping 50 students at two preschools this year to build personal libraries and experience 4-5 wonderful books each in fun and interesting ways!

From the beginning, I have been so excited to do this work with other amazing volunteers. So many have helped to create the rubrics, deliver the program, prepare the crafts and activities and purchase the books for this program as well as books we have provided to Carmel Unified school children last summer. This has included hand-offs at the Target parking lot, and all sorts of adjustments during COVID 19. **Heartfelt thanks** to all for their efforts and flexibility, and special thanks to the volunteers who just took over the lessons in PG as my mother was dying. It means so much to be part of an organization where **we are not only here for the children we serve, but here for each other. . .** To more great work coming up this fall, starting with the “Craftorama” on August 23; all are welcome!”

Kathy Gibbs



Profile: Treasurer Mary Nikksarian

Mary joined the Christ Child board this June as our new treasurer, replacing LeeAnn Stewart. We've asked Mary to introduce herself to our members:

"I joined Christ Child and its board for one simple reason: our commitment to living out the teachings of Christ on earth thought the Christ Child Society's mission: using each of our own talents to do unto others as God calls us to, and in that way lifting up the most vulnerable, infants and children and their young mothers.

As for my own talents and experience, I am currently the Vice President and CFO of Nikssarian Insurance Services, Inc., a family owned and operated business established in 2003 together with my amazing husband David of 41 years. My educational background is in psychology, with a history of entrepreneurship in establishing three separate businesses, including a private practice in professional career services, as well as a concierge business in procuring and selling heirloom quality treasures from around the world.

I am the mother of three grown children, Alexander, Isaac, and Benjamin, all born and raised here on the Peninsula, and now a devoted grandmother to Gabriel--

with a bag packed and ready to travel at a moment's notice. A "people person", I am fascinated by learning about the lives of others and their God-given talents, especially through hearing a story and sharing one in return--which makes the anticipation of meeting other people with a similar mission so exciting. And, I love taking a concept, brainstorming it with creativity, and bringing it to fruition so it is genuinely impactful to its intended audience. Which is why it seems to be a great time to join the Christ Child board, as we are going from a beginning organization to an organization which is expanding its volunteer opportunities and footprint in our beautiful Monterey peninsula.

I can't wait to meet you all, as we come together in the coming weeks . . ."

Mary Nikssarian

Literacy Craftorama: Volunteers Needed Aug 23!



We'll meet at Kathy Gibbs' home to prepare our September/October lessons at 5 pm Monday August 23

Let Kathy know if you can join us and for more details!

In Need of Sewn Flannel Receiving Blankets

Our bundle inventory is down in general, and we will be needing more of everything (which we



have budgeted for). Right now, we've only limited numbers of our handmade receiving blankets.

Let Rita know if you can sew some. Flannel is available to you, so there should be no costs to you but thread and your love and time!



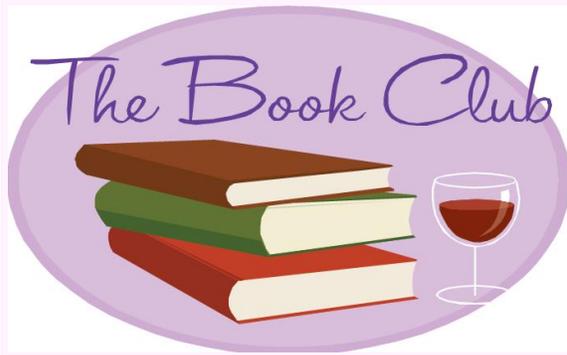
**Yarns & Stitches Meets Wednesdays
August 11 and August 25
at 10:30 a.m.**



As usual, we'll meet at the St. Angela Library in PG!

Let Joan know if you have any questions!

**Christ Child Book Club Taking a Break
in August**



We plan on meeting in September--and in the interim will be evaluating whether we should do so in Zoom or in person in light of the pandemic . . .

More next month and online!

Walking Group Taking the Month Off! Back in September . . .



The **Christ Child Walking Group** has had a great summer so far, with jaunts to Big Sur and the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge, as well as last month's walk at Carmel River Beach. We're opting out in August to let the tourists take over, and will be back in September with a great walk which will surely be very healthy and a lot of fun.

More in the September Newsletter and on the website . . .



**Solange Bitol Hansen,
Founder (8/15)**

Insuk Mullins (8/28)



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