



**CSSM**  
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES  
*of Montana*

# MERRY CHRISTMAS!



## A Look Inside:

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## Our Mission:

Based on our commitment to Catholic social teaching, Catholic Social Services of Montana provides for works of advocacy, compassion, pastoral outreach, education, and social justice.

Dear Friend,

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! I hope you have experienced many blessings in your life in the past year. No doubt, 2022 has had its low points, but as we prepare to celebrate the welcoming of our Savior to the world as a child, it is hard to not to be grateful that every year ends with such a joyful occasion!

I was appointed Executive Director of Catholic Social Services of Montana (CSSM) on May 2nd, 2022, replacing Twila Costigan. If you know Twila, make sure to tell her congratulations and thank you! It sounds like she is enjoying retirement. I am incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to lead an organization where faith and Catholic Social Teaching are rooted deeply and that does so much to help others and build families in our beautiful state. It has been a fast and furious first 6 months full of accomplishments for CSSM. To briefly name just a few: we helped build families by facilitating the adoptions of multiple children; we received \$60,000 in grants and restricted donations to help support the disaster relief efforts from the flooding in southcentral Montana; and we received a grant to support the expansion of goods at our Baby Boutique that are offered to families in-need.

Prior to CSSM, I spent nearly 6 years at Special Olympics of Montana, where I helped grow and enhance the programs and opportunities offered to those with intellectual disabilities. With that in mind and under the direction of our Board of Directors, I have had two main things on my mind. How can CSSM enhance the excellent work already being done through our adoption ministry? -and- How else can CSSM serve the people of Montana? For an organization that already has such a wonderful ministry, these are daunting questions to ask. Yet, in our world that has so much need, important questions. I have spent extensive time traveling across Montana these past few months, presenting and listening to folks from every corner of the state, hoping to find answers to those questions. I am excited to say these efforts were successful!

First, it must be understood that CSSM is a vehemently pro-life organization, not just limited to the common social concept and label. Specifically, through our commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, we seek to serve those in-need from the point of conception to natural death, i.e. ANYONE in-need. That said, our adoption ministry will continue to be our cornerstone, just as it has been since 1953. We will continue to build Montana families. In the next couple paragraphs, I will highlight our goals for the future expansion of CSSM. Please note, all of these areas of expansion are *very early* in the planning process and could be changed or altered. Other areas could be added, as well.

We hope to add Baby Boutique locations in any community that desires to help families in-need and is willing to support the Boutique's operation. Our current Boutique in Helena provides many necessities families require to support themselves and their child(ren), including clothing, diapers, toiletries, strollers/car seats, formula, and a myriad of other items, all free of charge. It is frequented by over a dozen families on a weekly basis in Helena, and we hope to help families in other locations.

Immigration is a hot-button topic. Regardless of personal political beliefs, it is evident it will

present continuous complications in the future. One of those complications is, “How do we help?” Our aim is to aid those undocumented noncitizens across Montana through the process of obtaining a permanent legalized status. We want to ensure all peoples have the opportunity to build lives and homes and feel empowered to be active participants in their communities.

Mental health is the number one area we hope to address. It is a broad topic with extreme need, but we seek to take it head on. We want to support those that need this help, providing them with the stepping stones they need to live a better life. What does this look like? We don’t yet know, but stay tuned!

As you can see, an exciting future of continued and expanded service awaits CSSM. As a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is not encapsulated under the umbrella of any other organization, we will need your continued support through the gifts of your financial support, time, word-of-mouth, and prayers as we take on this new calling. On the back page of this newsletter, you will find a description of the ways to support us financially. THANK YOU for all of your past support of CSSM; together, we hope to build a brighter future for our communities and all those we serve.

God Bless,



Scott Held, Executive Director



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## Our Board of Directors

**Most Reverend Michael Warfel**

*Bishop, Diocese Great Falls-Billings  
Great Falls*

**Most Revered Austin Vetter**

*Bishop, Diocese of Helena  
Helena*

**Deacon Charles Harball**

*President  
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**Monica Gallegos-Laeupple**

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**Reverend Craig Hanley**

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**Reverend Cory Sticha**

*Cascade*

**Sarah Phipps**

*Helena*

**Dan Hallsten (Knights of Columbus Rep)**

*Bozeman*

**Roy Brown**

*Billings*

**Coreen Glen**

*Billings*

**Jim Carney (ex-officio)**

*Helena*

**Most Reverend Jeffrey Fleming (ex-officio)**

*Great Falls*

# MEET OUR TEAM!

**TIME AT CSSM?** Seven and a half years.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** I oversee the adoption program; educating, screening, and supporting families seeking to adopt. Overseeing the program includes ensuring it meets the requirements of the state of Montana, as well as the requirements of the Catholic Church. I also work as an adoption social worker, supporting expectant mothers with pregnancy counseling and matching/facilitating placement.

**FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB:** Seeing how loved the children I work with are, by both their adoptive families and their birth families.

**HOBBIES:** Spending time with my wonderful Miniature Dachshunds, decorating my planner, camping, and nurturing my rose garden!

**FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIES?** Elf, and It's a Wonderful Life



**MICHELLE**

Director of Adoption  
Services and Social  
Worker for Eastern  
Montana



**JANN**

Social Worker for  
Western Montana

**TIME AT CSSM?** I've worked for CSSM for four years.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** My primary responsibilities are licensing and re-licensing families for foster care, conducting home studies for direct placements/specialized/international/infant pool adoptive families, counseling with birth mothers and court paperwork.

**FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?** Helping birth mothers and adoptive parents come together to form a family and hearing people's stories of how they came to be where they are in life.

**HOBBIES:** I like to do Sudoku, puzzles, read books and play with my dog.

**FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIES?** My favorite Christmas movies are the Grinch Who Stole Christmas-all versions, Charlie Brown Christmas and The Santa Clause-all of them.



## SCOTT

Executive Director

**TIME AT CSSM?** I started May 2, 2022. Looking forward to my first anniversary!

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** Put simply, I oversee all of the ministries and operations of CSSM.

**FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?** Seeing the results of CSSM's work of building families and helping others through our ministries.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?** My number one hobby is fishing. Other than that, spending time with family, hunting, walking and gardening.

**FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIE?** Christmas with the Kranks is a must watch on my list every year. Never ceases to gain some laughs from me!

**TIME AT CSSM?** I've worked for CSSM for five years.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** I manage the My Adoption Portal software, facilitate client background checks and all the home study tasks, gather client information for portfolios, update the CSSM website and Facebook and help out at the Baby Boutique.

**FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?** My favorite part of my job is helping families in need.

**HOBBIES:** I enjoy photography, hunting, camping and road trips.

**FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIES?** My favorite Christmas movies are The Nightmare Before Christmas, and Babes in Toyland.



## SENJA

Program  
Coordinator



## JEANNETTE

Program Assistant

**TIME AT CSSM?** I've worked for CSSM for one year.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** I process donations and client payments, manage donor software and other databases, print and mail thank you's, do bank deposits, type up meeting minutes, apply for SSN's and insurance, do invoicing and help out at the Baby Boutique.

**FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?** I like doing the bank deposits, month end bank account reconciliation, special projects like newsletters and designing thank you cards.

**HOBBIES:** I enjoy playing piano, cooking/baking, puzzles, drawing, doing craft projects, reading and gardening.

**FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIES?** Elf, and It's A Wonderful Life

# An Adoption Journey

*A Story from our Infant Adoption Program*



Dear CSSM families,



Our story started with a mid-day phone call from Jann on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 telling Kaci and I there was a baby girl in Great Falls. We were ecstatic, scared, and ready. Kaci was on lunch break, and I was in meetings when the call came in. We both dropped everything we were doing, ran home to gather our stuff (as well as the baby clothes, car seat, etc!) and headed out. We arrived and within a few minutes were escorted back to where Paizley was. We walked in and the sweet nursing staff handed Paizley to Kaci, and we marveled in that moment at the graciousness of God and how He was writing our story. We stayed at the hospital over the next few nights to monitor her, but she did great and the team at Benefis was incredibly helpful, teaching us how to become new parents. Little did we know, our journey to finalization was just beginning. Paizley's birth-mom left the hospital before we could meet her and disappeared. She hasn't made contact with us or the agency since January 2021. However, in November of 2021, parental rights were terminated in court and in March of 2022, we finalized! It was a longer process than we anticipated, but we were so thankful for the CSSM staff and how they walked with us through this journey to make Paizley our little girl. It was all worth the waiting, Paizley has been a blessing to us, and we are so thankful God gave us such a precious gift. – *Jeremy and Kaci*

# The Best Call Ever Received

## *A Story from our Infant Adoption Program*

We were so excited to get the call that we had been chosen by a birthmother. After a month of preparation, we left for Kalispell to be present at the birth of her son. Even though her life is complicated, we have formed a bond over our shared love of our son. Jacob is now a happy and fun toddler and it has been such a joy to watch him grow into his sweet personality. We are forever thankful to Jacob's birthmother for making us a family. – *Jon and Kristina*



**Did you know our infant adoption program is only one of the many things we do to support Montana families? Check out some of the others below, as well as the numbers for the last year's period.**

**Birth Parent  
Inquiries and Counseling**

**13**

**Home Studies  
Completed and In Progress**

**19**

**Foster Care  
Family Re-licensing**

**10**

**Confidential  
Intermediary Inquiries**

**11**

**Dozens of diapers  
distributed to families in-need**

**1,266**

**Couples who attended the  
adoptive parents workshop**

**7**

## *A Holiday Prayer Request From Our Social Workers*

Infant adoption is a process fraught with stress and anxiety for all involved. This is never truer than when a baby is born with complications. These complications can include premature birth, birth defects, or effects from substance exposure in utero. These babies often need the specialized care of a NICU. Occasionally, if their birth hospital cannot provide the level of care needed, the child may need transportation to a facility in a larger city out-of-state. These situations make things all the harder for birth families that are struggling with their decision, guilt, and worry, and adoptive families are forced to assess whether they can handle, accept, and navigate the emotional, time, and financial commitment of a pumpkin that needs additional care. Imagine the one thing you have dreamed of for so long, being so close, but being so tenuous. Through these challenges our team is there to provide guidance, support, and lots of prayers for all involved. CSSM walks with parents through these difficult moments, not only helping them navigate the adoption process, but with travel and lodging for extended periods, leave from work, and finding support for the special needs these pumpkins might have. The emotional strain is immense, but care is provided with pure love for these children from their birth and adoptive families. During this holiday season we ask you to say a few extra prayers for the babies that were born in 2022 that are still working through this journey and all the children that CSSM has supported the last 70 years. – *CSSM Social Workers*

2022



GOLF TOURNAMENT

Benefiting Catholic Social Services of Montana

Our 23rd Annual Charity Golf Tournament was held on July 7th at Bill Robert's Golf Course. We were blessed with a (mostly) bright and beautiful day for the event and had 16 teams participate, with the final team finishing just minutes before we received a drenching downfall of rain!

Some of our prizes included:

- ★ Our grand prize– 7 nights paid resort accommodations, won by Josh Frydenlund
- ★ Bill Robert's Pro Shop gift cards
- ★ Free spa days or rounds of golf anywhere in the US
- ★ 2023 Golf and Go Summer Passes
- ★ Gift cards to Woody's Car Wash
- ★ CSSM Mugs

Congratulations to all our winners!

Please save the date for our 2023 Golf Tournament! We hope to have it in early 2023.

To view a list of our sponsors, please visit [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org).





*Bishops Warfel and Fleming joined in the fun at Dueling Pianos 2022!*



*Audience participation encouraged! Attendees of 2022's Dueling Pianos event were getting into the spirit at this high-energy event!*

It was an exciting, fun filled evening on Friday, October 7th, when we held our Dueling Pianos Benefit at the Big Horn Resort in Billings to support our ministries. The talented musicians of The Fun Pianos Show led the audience through an unforgettable evening of singing and dancing.



*Director of Adoption Services Michelle was joined by one of CSSM's past adoptive families to announce the winner of a raffle for an overnight stay at a vacation rental!*

- ★ We were honored to have Bishop Michael Warfel and Bishop Jeff Fleming join us for this memorable event!
- ★ The evening also included food, a silent auction, and a huge variety of music from many different genres!
- ★ Stay tuned for the date for Dueling Pianos 2023!
- ★ To view a list of our sponsors, please visit [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org).

*One of the many amazing silent auction items available at Dueling Pianos 2022.*



# OTHER 2022 EVENTS AT CSSM



**January**— CSSM finished moving into our new main office building at 630 N Last Chance Gulch, Ste 2200, Helena, MT 59601.



**March 15th**— We gathered at Bert and Ernie's Restaurant in Helena to celebrate Twila's retirement.



**May 2nd**— CSSM welcomed Scott Held, our new Executive Director.



**June 24th**— CSSM received a \$10,000 grant from Catholic Charities USA to support disaster relief efforts for the flooding in southcentral Montana.



**August 22nd**— CSSM received \$50,000 restricted donation to support disaster relief efforts for the flooding in southcentral Montana.



**September 16th**— CSSM received a \$2,000 donation from the Foundation for the Diocese of Helena to enhance the Baby Boutique's offerings.



**September 22-23rd**— CSSM welcomed 7 adoptive couples to an Adoption Workshop in Helena.

# CSSM BABY BOUTIQUE

**WHAT WE DO:** We provide diapers, wipes, pull-ups, clothing and more to families in-need. No appointment needed or religious affiliation required.

**LOCATION:** Brondel Center at the Cathedral of St. Helena

**CURRENT HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am – 1:00pm



## **IN 2022 WE GAVE AWAY:**

1,266 dozen diapers

413 packs of wipes

1,104 items of clothing



## **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022...**

**APRIL:** We were humbled and overwhelmed by the incredible generosity of Our Lady of the Valley Parish's (Helena) Lent to Life Campaign. CSSM received diapers, wipes, clothing, car seats, blankets and so much more!

**DECEMBER:** Annually, CSSM receives MANY generous gifts and donations from the St. Mary Catholic Community (Helena) Giving Tree.

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP:** We gratefully accept diapers size newborn to 6, pullups sizes 2T-3T or 4T-5T, formula, and new or gently-used children's clothing sizes infant through 5T. You can drop off donations at the Boutique during its hours, at the Cathedral of St. Helena Parish Center Mondays-Thursdays from 9:00-2:00, or at our office at 630 N Last Chance Gulch, Ste 2200, during our hours of Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00.



NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
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[www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org)

## HOW TO SUPPORT OUR MINISTRIES

- ★ **Mail us a donation** using the envelope in this newsletter. Please make out checks to CSSM. Your donation will directly support our ministries.
- ★ **Donate online** by visiting [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org) and clicking on the **DONATE** button in the upper right corner. There, you can choose to complete a one time donation or support with an ongoing monthly donation. Your donation(s) will directly support our ministries.
- ★ **Donate to one of our endowments.** CSSM has an endowment with The Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana and The Foundation for the Diocese of Helena. To donate to one of our endowments, visit [www.catholicfoundationmt.org](http://www.catholicfoundationmt.org) or [www.fдох.org](http://www.fдох.org) and follow their instructions to make a gift. Make sure to choose the CSSM endowment! Donating to one of our endowments ensures your gift will benefit us in perpetuity.
- ★ **Remember CSSM** in your will with a bequest. CSSM was a beneficiary of a bequest this year, and it is a great way to create a bright future for CSSM in your memory.
- ★ **Follow us** on our website AND Facebook to keep up with all our latest news!

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!

*CSSM is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and contributions are tax deductible. Consult with your tax professional.*

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