

# MERRY CHRISTMAS!



## A LOOK INSIDE:

- ★ Greetings from our Executive Director
- ★ An Update from our New Mental Health Program
- ★ Stories from our Adoption Program
- ★ Diapers, diapers, diapers!  
CSSM's Baby Boutique Ministry
- ★ A Year in Review at CSSM
- ★ How you can Partner with us



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

## 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.

**LET HEAVEN  
AND NATURE  
SING!**



# *Merry Christmas and happy holidays!*

As we move towards Christmas, I'm constantly reminded of the example of adoption shown to us by the holy family and how honored we are at CSSM to continue the building of families through this practice. As you read through our yearly update, I hope you find joy from the stories of our families and programs. It was an incredible year, with our adoption program continuing to build families, our new mental health program serving clients from nearly 30 communities in Montana, and our Baby Boutique ministry distributing over 86,000 diapers to families in need. This work is only able to be achieved thanks to the generosity of your time, prayers, and donations. Thank you for walking with us on our journey to serve others. God Bless you and your family.



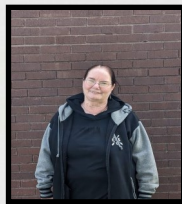
Scott Held, Executive Director

## OUR TEAM



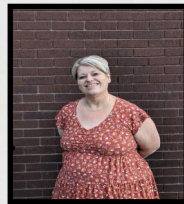
**SCOTT  
HELD**

**Executive  
Director**



**JANN  
PETEK**

**Social  
Worker**



**MICHELLE  
PERLICK**

**Director of  
Adoptions &  
Social  
Worker**



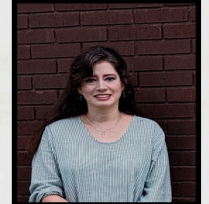
**PHIL  
QUINN**

**Mental Health  
Counselor**



**SENJA  
LINJANEN**

**Program  
Coordinator  
Adoption**



**JEANNETTE  
BOWER**

**Program  
Coordinator  
Mental Health**

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Most Rev. Austin Vetter

Diocese of Helena

### Most Rev. Jeffrey Fleming

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

### Rev. Ryan Erlenbush

Great Falls

### Sarah Phipps

Helena

### Coreen Glen

Billings

### Rev. Craig Hanley

Butte

### Roy Brown

Billings

### Jackie Barille

Great Falls

### Laure Pengelly Drake

Missoula

### Very Rev. Msgr. Dan Wathen

Havre (ex-officio)

### Dan Hallsten

Knights of Columbus Rep

Hamilton

### Jim Carney

Helena (ex-officio)





# Mental Health



**Merry Christmas to all!** It's been an exciting and fast paced year for the mental health Program. Since our program began a year ago:

- ★ We have served over 80 clients in 29 different communities across Montana, both in-person and through telehealth.
- ★ As of November 15th, we have held a total of 643 counseling sessions.
- ★ Our clients have ranged in age from 9 to 80 years old with the average age being 46.
- ★ We have seen clients for a wide range of issues, including anxiety, grief, depression, PTSD, trauma, and much more.

## A Story of Growth and Acceptance

We were able to support a gentleman dealing with career, family, medical anxieties, and depression. Through increased connection and practicing mercy and forgiveness for old hurts, he was able to engage more fully in all areas of his life and move forward independently. He learned to accept, face, and overcome some of his discomforts; others he let go. As a result, he began seeing the light and goodness of the world again. –*Phil Quinn, LCPC*

With the soon-to-come celebration of the birth of our Lord, may the words of the Apostle guide us: *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15)*

## Our Program Offers:

- ★ Counseling Sessions
- ★ Mental Health Education Sessions
- ★ Mental Health First Aid Sessions

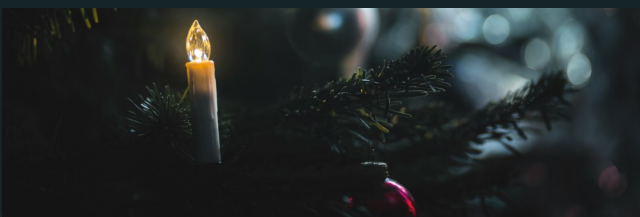
### Counseling Sessions

CSSM offers both in-person AND telehealth Sessions. The first session is free, with private pay and insurance accepted after. You can call 406-442-4130, option 2, to schedule.

We are here for everyone. Our counselors have decades of experience serving people from all different backgrounds. They would be honored to walk with you on your life journey.

### Mental Health First Aid and Education

In 2024, CSSM hosted 3 sessions across Montana that aimed to educate and empower participants to help those experiencing a mental health crisis. These sessions vary in length and are offered to first responders, teachers, church leaders, and anyone else wanting to help their community. The sessions will continue to be offered in 2025.





## STORIES FROM OUR ADOPTION PROGRAM



### EMMETT



As you can tell from his picture, Emmett is a joyful and rambunctious boy! He came from family who loved him to pieces but also understood that he deserved more than they could give him. By working with CSSM, his birth mother was able to receive the support she needed to get to a healthy place, out of a difficult relationship, and to make an adoption plan. Emmett is a joy to his adoptive family and loves being a beloved child and playful little brother. In turn, they are giving him everything he needs to flourish!



### BENJAMIN



Benjamin was born to an amazing young woman who was working hard and attending college. When she was growing up, she had been in a household with parents who were not prepared to be parents, which led her to realize that she wanted her expectant child to have a family with a present mom and dad, who were 100% emotionally and financially ready for a child. Her wish was fulfilled! Benjamin has loving parents who were ready and waiting just for him. As a bonus, he also received an adorable infant brother shortly after being adopted. Benjamin and his brother will certainly be keeping their parents busy for years to come!



### ABIGAIL



Adoption can often be a long journey which people think ends the moment the infant is placed with the adoptive family. However, Abi's birth mother needed a lot of time and support to be ready to make an adoption plan. As a result, Abi was 17 months old before her adoption was ready to be finalized. Her adoptive family loved her through the journey and also offered love and acceptance to her birth mother as she navigated her journey. As challenging as the process was at times, they did it with grace, love, and prayer. In the end, Abi's mother and father are overjoyed by her, her addition to their beautiful family, and Abi's birth mother, who chose to make an adoption plan out of love for Abi.





# CSSM BABY BOUTIQUE MINISTRY



We're pleased to share our two Baby Boutiques are successfully meeting the needs of families and continue to be dedicated to providing essential supplies to them. Our Boutiques aim to provide relief and dignity for those who need it most, offering them a helping hand. The Boutiques are staffed primarily by volunteers, who give their time to serve their community. If you live in one of the communities below, we'd love your help! Just give us a call!

## Our two locations:

### Helena-Little Essentials Baby Boutique

**Location:** The Cathedral Center, Room 108

530 N Ewing

Helena MT 59601

**Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 1:00

### Billings-Billings Baby Boutique

**Location:** Riverstone Health

123 S 27th St

Billings MT 59101

**Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 1:00

## What supplies do our Boutiques offer?

We offer diapers, wipes, rash cream, children's clothing, blankets, toys, and more. It is offered completely free-of-charge to families in need.

## How do we get our supplies?

CSSM has been the beneficiary of several grants, diaper drives, and the generosity of parishioners and anyone who would like to help!

## Curious how you can help?

We gratefully accept diapers, pull-ups, wipes and new or gently used children's clothing up to size 5T all throughout the year. Donations in Helena can be dropped off at the Cathedral Center. Donations in Billings can be dropped off at the Boutique during its open hours.



Little Essentials Baby Boutique,  
located inside the Cathedral Center

## Our 2024 Distributions

### Diapers

★ Helena: 68,000

★ Billings: 19,000

### Packages of Wipes

★ Helena: 1,604

★ Billings: 445

### Items of Clothing

★ Helena: 8,672

★ Billings: 1,503

### Other Items (such as blankets, toys, diaper rash cream etc)

★ Helena: 2,162

★ Billings: 485





## 2024 - A YEAR IN REVIEW AT CSSM

### January 2024

CSSM attended the Montana State March for Life at the Capitol! -20 degree weather may have cancelled the march outside, but CSSM was there to show respect and support for life.

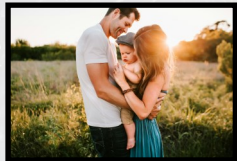


### May 2024

The CSSM crew gathered together for a fun and creative team-building afternoon of sculpting clay pinch pots!



Also in May, CSSM finalized an Adoption. Hooray!



### February 2024

CSSM placed two infants with adoptive families this month, beginning the long process towards adoption finalization!

### June 2024

CSSM placed an infant with an adoptive family!

CSSM finalized **TWO** adoptions this month!



### March 2024

CSSM was awarded a grant from the Helena Area Community Foundation and Lewis and Clark County to support the Helena Baby Boutique!

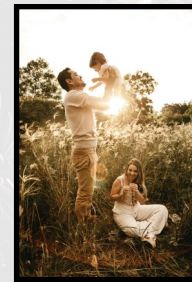


The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians blessed the Helena Baby Boutique with many donations.

### April 2024

CSSM received an amazing amount of donations to the Helena Baby Boutique from Our Lady of the Valley Parish's annual Lent to Life Campaign.

St. Mary Catholic Community Bingo Group also gave generously to the Helena Baby Boutique.



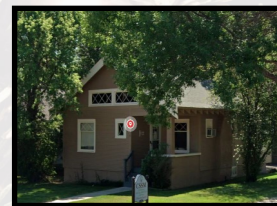
Fishing for Families, the first-ever statewide fishing tournament, a fundraiser for CSSM, took place!

### July 2024

CSSM held its 25th annual Charity Golf Tournament at Bill Roberts Golf course.



CSSM held a two-day Adoption Workshop for prospective adoptive couples.



In addition to her work in the adoption program, Michelle Perlick, SWLC, began offering counseling and therapy sessions for clients out of our Billings office.



It was a hot, sunny day on Friday, July 12 when 18 teams met at Bill Robert's Golf Course for **CSSM's 25th Annual Charity Golf Tournament!** In addition to the round of golf and lunch, teams experienced camaraderie by participating in a variety of fun games, including a marshmallow long drive, traditional long drive, shortest drive, long putt, yard-size Yahtzee, and cornhole competition. Prizes included gift certificates, paid rounds of golf, rangefinders and, of course, Bishop Vetter's very own Golden Austin Ale!

Please visit [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org) for a complete list of all our sponsors.





## 2024 - A YEAR IN REVIEW AT CSSM, CONTINUED...

### July 2024

CSSM placed an infant with an adoptive family!

The Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana awarded CSSM's mental health program a grant.



The Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana also awarded CSSM a grant to support the Billings Baby Boutique.



### August 2024

CSSM was awarded a grant by the Foundation for the Diocese of Helena to support the Helena Baby Boutique.

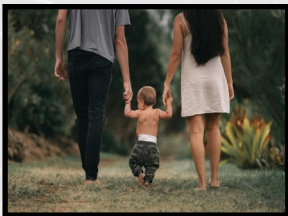
The Foundation for the Diocese of Helena also awarded CSSM's mental health program a grant to support our work across Montana.



### September 2024

CSSM placed an infant with an adoptive family!

CSSM received a generous endowment distribution gift to support the Billings Baby Boutique!



### October 2024

Due to the demand for counseling services, CSSM decided to EXPAND its mental health program by opening a position for a new, licensed counselor!

CSSM received a large amount of diapers and wipes from the Cathedral of St. Helena's diaper drive!



### November 2024

CSSM celebrated National Adoption Awareness Month by recognizing the difficult, loving decisions made by birth parents, the families united through adoption, and the joy that children bring to the world!



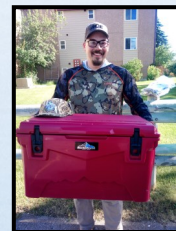
### December 2024

CSSM will receive many generous and greatly appreciated donations for our birth mothers and Baby Boutiques from Saint Mary Catholic Community's Giving Tree.

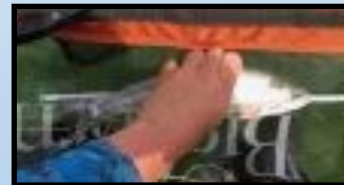


On June 1st, CSSM kicked off **Fishing for Families**, Montana's FIRST-EVER statewide fishing tournament! The event ran through June 9th with individuals and teams from across Montana competing. Fishing for 5 species of fish was permitted in 17 different lakes. Fishermen caught walleye, rainbow trout, yellow perch, kokanee salmon and bass. Challenges included Small Fish Pot, Big Fish Pot and Beat the Staff!

Please visit [www.cssmt.org](http://www.cssmt.org) for a complete list of all our sponsors.



Congrats to Taylor, who took 1st place!





Catholic Social Services of Montana

PO Box 907

Helena, MT 59624

406-442-4130

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

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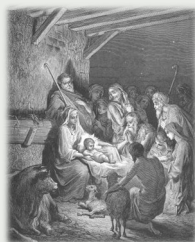
## How You Can Partner With Us In Our Mission

- ★ **Mail us a donation** using the envelope in this newsletter. Please make checks out to CSSM.
- ★ **Donate online** by visiting our website and clicking on the DONATE button in the upper right corner. There, you can select a one time donation or an ongoing monthly donation.
- ★ **Contribute to one of our endowments.** CSSM has endowments with The Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana and The Foundation for the Diocese of Helena. To donate to one of these, visit their websites and follow their instructions. Make sure to choose the CSSM endowment. Endowment donations ensure your gift will benefit us in perpetuity.
- ★ **Donate distributions from your IRA.** Donating distributions from your IRA, including required minimum distributions, may allow you to avoid paying taxes on those distributions.
- ★ **Remember CSSM** in your will with a **bequest**. This is a great way to create a bright future for CSSM in your memory.
- ★ **Give the gift** of diapers, wipes, or other essentials to our Baby Boutiques. If you live in Helena or Billings, **give** of your time by volunteering to help.
- ★ **Follow us** on our website AND Facebook to keep up with all our latest news.
- ★ **Pray for us.** We are grateful for your thoughts and prayers that accompany us in our work.

*Thank you for your generosity to our mission and ministries.*

### **BILLINGS**

1048 North 30th St.  
Billings, MT 59101



### **HELENA**

PO Box 907  
Helena MT 59624