

Social Concerns Committee Minutes

Prayer Room, Tuesday, January 7, 2024, 1:00 pm

Attendees: Mary Ann Jurak, Jane Berkeley, Mary Haggard, Colleen McKenna, Jeanette Nappier

- Opening prayer
- Christmas GIFT Program: Jane, Colleen, Rita, Maggie, Julie, Sharon
 - Thank you notes from West Side Catholic Center, House of Champions and Edna House were shared; some notes will be included in the Belltower Beacon article
 - Very successful program; 847 tags taken this year vs. 792 tags taken last year
 - Sign out front brought people to parish office asking how to donate
 - Sorting went very smoothly with 10 adult and about 17 teen volunteers
 - Huge thanks to Jane for leading the 2024 program and welcome to Mary Ann who will lead the 2025 program.
 - Detailed task list/report follows minutes
- Creation Care: Jeanette
 - Equal Exchange
 - Sale planned, possibly at the Soup Supper, for programs in Philippines
 - Sale in May with cookies under consideration
 - Philippines environmental dangers, including most threatened by climate change, because of geography
 - Ring of Fire
 - Pacific Typhoon Belt
 - Lament: possible dates March 30 or April 6
- Soup Supper Basket Raffle: Maggie
 - One basket will be made
 - SCC will offer help, such as with ticket sales, but not plan Soup Supper event
- Parish Council Feedback: Jeanette
 - The SCC pillar projects (do not include planning Soup Supper)
 - Christmas in July
 - Thanksgiving Food Collection
 - Christmas GIFT Program
 - Creation Care: Lament, Litter Pilgrimage, Equal Exchange sales, Creation Care Challenge
 - Soup Supper support including Basket Raffle and ticket sales
 - Advocacy?
 - Discussion will continue
- Closing Prayer
- Next meeting February 4, 2025, at 12:00 noon

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Nappier

January 13, 2025

Social Concerns Committee Summary 2024 Christmas Giving In Faith Together Program

SEPTEMBER

At the monthly meeting, establish a committee of 3 or 4 people and delegate jobs.

This year's committee was Jane Berkeley (chair), Julie Mallett (communications), Maggie McIntyre (set-up) and Rita Kerfona (agency contact).

We established the Pick-up date and time (Fr. John requested a move to 12:00 pm), Set-up date for tags, Article due dates and confirmed that the same 15 agencies as 2023 would be contacted for 2024. Next year, this meeting would be a good time for the SCSCC to suggest and evaluate any new agencies—or decide to keep the same 15. Jane met with the long-time, outgoing chair (RoseMary Zverina) for any information she could provide on the program. She had no digital files, but gave me hard copy information from the 2023 program;

*Pick-up- Day schedule and agency contacts sheet; for Rita/Jane's Agencies' reference

*1 set of folded, color tags and 1 set of black/white unfolded tags: these would be used to

create basic digital files for each agency

*Tally of Tags Offered vs Tags Left for each agency; this would be used to plan numbers of tags offered and colors for each agency in 2024

Jane contacted each of the parish staff who contribute to the program for any additional information: Colleen McKenna (new to the program; creates and updates all digital files, spreadsheets, Facebook posts), Dawn Bloom (posts Bulletin articles, Constant Contact, collects/stores all gift cards and checks), Gayle Cilimburg (determines number/colors of Tags offered for 2024, coordinates printing), John Yakim (provides set-up materials, collects/stores donations received each weekend.) Sharon Armstrong (provides teen volunteers for Pick-Up Day.)

Because last year's digital files were not available, Colleen would create all new digital files. It was decided to offer to add website information/QR Codes for donations, and a preference for gift wrap—all new to the program

OCTOBER

Rita and Jane began to contact each agency. This should be completed by October 31.

Following normal procedure, Rita (who has been doing this for 30 years) called 10 agencies; Jane called RoseMary's 5 agencies. Note: Melissa diFini, as the parish liaison to St. Colman's, made the initial call for us. As in the past, all initial contact was done by phone. Each agency was informed of the Pick-up Date and time. (11 agencies committed to Sunday Dec 15 from 12:00-2:00; 4 agencies chose Monday Dec 16 at 10 am). We asked if there were any changes to their Wish List or contact information. We also asked each agency's preference on including a website and/or QR code for donations and a preference for Gift Wrap or No Gift Wrap. Most were grateful for the option and chose No Gift Wrap. Rita kept Jane updated on each agency she called via phone or text.

Jane did exchange files via email with any agencies that had issues to discuss. Jane compiled the final information and detailed all changes or additions in emails to

Colleen McKenna.

It was important to forward this information as soon as each agency contact was finalized to allow time for the Tags to be created, printed, and folded before the Set-up Day.

Colleen and Jane also met in person several times to work out logistics and edit when there was too much information to fit on the Tag itself.

Next year, we suggest that callers have a copy of the 2024 Tag (digital or folded) in front of them when calling, and preferably a spreadsheet for updating. Asking "Should we run the same Tag as last year?" should cut down considerably on the amount of back and forth time in this process. Any changes requested should be easily handled by Colleen in the new digital files.

Colleen created a digital copy, then updated these files with the new date and any changes/additions requested by an agency. These were emailed to Jane for proofreading.

Jane responded with suggestions or approval. Colleen forwarded the information to Gayle who picked new colors and new numbers of Tags Offered (based on last year's Tally). Offerings ranged from 30 Tags (Hispanic Senior Center) to 120 Tags (Birthright and West Side Catholic Center.) Gayle coordinated paper supplies and printing.

Also in October, Maggie arranged with John Yakim a date (Nov 22) to set up the display of Tags and delivery of materials stored in the Parish Center (table, tablecover, 15 baskets and 3 Wreaths for tags, and a decorative wreath.) Colleen and Jane created a flyer for each display highlighting the due date for donations (Dec. 15 at 11:30) and a notice to bring "gift cards and checks to the Parish Office." Jane provided Colleen a list of Agencies and their primary missions. Colleen created a sign to display in the Gathering Area so that parishioners could choose the type of agency they wished to support. (This was new to the program.)

Also in October, Julie began writing the articles to appear in the Church Bulletin. She provided one basic article, to appear four weeks in a row (starting 11/17 thru 12/15) with a subheading to change each week. These were due to Dawn Bloom by October 25.

NOVEMBER

At the November meeting, Jane asked for volunteers to help on Delivery Day from the SCSCC. She estimated an additional 5-6 volunteers might be needed.

Jane contacted 4 people who signed up at the Meet and Greet to help with the Gift program. Three responded (Kathy Rohn and Katie and Mary Rose) and agreed to help carry and sort donations on Pick-up Day. Thank you!

Jane and Colleen continued to trouble shoot last-minute changes and adjustments, including verifying website information.

When all 1030 Tags were printed, Rita came in and picked up the tags from Gayle to take home where she and her daughter folded all the tags. Amazing job! Rita then delivered the Tags to Jane in time for the Set-up date of Nov 22. The tags' first appeared the weekend of Nov 23/24 to be displayed until Pick-up Day, Dec 15.

Jane, Julie and Maggie met on November 22 to set up the displays.

At Gayle's request, we used one long table (easily moved into the Gathering Area when the space was needed for funerals), and the purple table cloths. Each of the 15 baskets held one agency's folded Tags. Each of the 3 wreaths has 7-9 pockets; each pocket can accommodate up to 6 tags. These are placed on tables at the three entrances to the church (Detroit Rd; Main Parking side entrance; and Entrance near the Rectory. Each wreath was stocked with an assortment of tags—usually including at least a few of the top five agencies. (Birthright, West Side Catholic Center, Providence House, Edna House, and St. Colman) Julie was even drafted to host a video presentation during the set-up about the St. Chris outreach initiatives, including the Thanksgiving Food Collection, and the GIFT program.

Throughout the months of November and December, members of the committee checked

and restocked each of the wreaths as needed. The best days to do this are Mondays and Fridays, usually around the 11:00 Mass, as the church is locked after that service.

We organized roles for committee members for Pick-Up Day. Julie and Maggie served as greeters. Jane was a "floater" monitoring all activities. Other volunteers would help with the carry and sort; bringing donations in from the Gathering Area and storage areas.

Jeanette asked to have the priests announce the GIFT drive during Mass. Because the Thanksgiving Food Collection coincided with the first weekend of GIFT tags, the announcement came a little later in the program than usual.

DECEMBER

We verified volunteer needs at the SCSCCC meeting, asking Jeanette to handle the "orphan" donations that came in without tags.

Julie sent Dawn and Colleen ideas for Facebook and Constant Contact.

We continued to restock the wreaths and check on the baskets of tags. We did not print any additional tags, even though some ran very low.

Starting Dec. 9, Jane and Rita called all agencies to verify the Pick-up dates and times, and describe the logistics of picking up (drive up to the Parish Center, get in line: you

will be greeted by a Social Concern representative, our teen volunteers will bring out carts filled with your donations, and load your car..)

Early in December, Jane met with Sheila (the parish receptionist on Fridays) to arrange a time to pick up the gift cards and checks on Friday December 13. These had been collected by Dawn and Sheila and locked in the Parish Office. (Note the office closes at 4) Jane took them home and made a manila folder for each agency to hold the cards until

Sunday. Two agencies (Hispanic Senior Centre and Metro Catholic Schools) requested only gift cards. These envelopes were the only things to be brought out to their cars.

Pick-Up Day, Dec 15

Because the Christmas Pageants occur on the same day as our Pick-Up Day, we could not

begin to carry/sort until the performances and “reception” were done. Committee members planned to meet at 11:15; volunteers to come to the Parish Center at 11:45. Volunteers included the committee members as well as Mary Haggard, Jeanette Napier, Mary Ann Jurak, Kathy Rohn, Cheryl Selak, Mary Rose, Katie Rose, and Anna.

Jane brought a sign for each agency. Maggie posted them (in alphabetical order) on the back wall, leaving extra space for agencies with many tags. Volunteers began to carry in the gifts from the Gathering Area (check all entrances, just in case some left donations there.) and two storage areas in the Parish Center. John was not there, but Colleen found

the second area! Yay! Donations were sorted and placed under their respective signs, and checked to make sure the tags were all the same.

Jane provided copies of a list to Jeanette that showed the major items requested for each

agency. She and her team of several volunteers found appropriate homes for donations without tags (our orphans) The team also had black and white copies of each full tag for reference on specific items (diapers size 4, eg.)

Jane collected the leftover tags from the baskets and wreaths. Later she tallied how many were left for each agency. While this does not tell us the actual number of donations returned, we can see how well each agency did. This number will be given to Gayle for the 2025 program to adjust the number of Tags to print.

One agency arrived early (11:15) but we were ready. As each agency pulled up to the Parish Center, Maggie met them at the car, explained the procedure, notified the teen volunteers as to who was next. Jane kept all the envelopes of gift cards (including some late entries brought in by Fr. John from the office that morning) and gave them to Maggie

as each agency arrived. (Not all agencies received gift cards.) The teens loaded carts with that agency’s gifts, rolled them out to the correct car, and loaded the car. They brought the carts back, ready for the next agency that arrived. Maggie also kept track on a

sheet as each agency departed.

We were done by 1:30 but Metro Catholic did not arrive on Sunday as scheduled. Attempts to contact them were sent to the agency voice mail.

On Monday, Dec 16, Jane contacted Metro Catholic who agreed to pick up that morning at 10 am when the other 4 agencies were scheduled to arrive. She took the remaining gift

card envelopes over to the Parish Office for John Y who would supervise the pick-ups that day.

The next week:

Julie provided an article for the Church Bulletin thanking all for their donations. Her article (with pictures by Colleen M) for the Belltower Beacon is due before the end of January.

Jeanette sent an email to the priests thanking them for their support.

Jane wrote thank you notes to the parish staff involved/

Final Tally

2024 vs 2023

Tags offered 1030 875

Tags left 183 83

Tags Taken 847 792

It was a very successful program! With the retirement of RoseMary from the program and the missing digital files, we had to start over and recreate many of the procedures. Whoever takes over next year, should have a much more streamlined program. We highly recommend a chairperson with good technical and organizational skills. There are probably additional opportunities to streamline this process in the future.