



# *Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller*

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## **CLEVELAND COMMANDERY - JUNE, 2020 NEWSLETTER**

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### **COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**

Dear Knights and Dames,

In times of difficulty, we are reminded of the importance of family and friends – so this seems like a perfect opportunity to say how grateful I am for all of the members of SOSJ's Cleveland Commandery. With a common faith and a common mission of service, our relationships with each other transform from acquaintances to deep and sustaining friendships. We know that we have others in our corner who will pick us up when we fall – and that is, no doubt, a blessing.

Not everyone has a network of supportive family and friends, however. This year, as our Commandery makes its contributions to help with the crisis situations created by the Covid 19 pandemic, I ask you to pray for all those who feel overwhelmed and alone. May our financial donations, along with our heartfelt prayers, strengthen them and provide them with hope to sustain their journeys.

I pray that you, your families, and your friends are safe and healthy. We will survive these challenging times – and we will be stronger together.

Sincerely,

*Commander Claire Rosacco*

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### **HITCHCOCK CENTER FOR WOMEN**

In November, many from the Cleveland Commandery, including some of our newest members, served dinner at the Hitchcock Center for Women where women work hard to improve their lives for themselves and for their children. One of the best parts of the evening is that SOSJ members have the opportunity to join the women for dinner, meet the children in attendance, and enjoy each other's company. Conversation is often about journey: the present reality of hard work and necessary change - but also the wonderful possibility of something new, something more, on the horizon.





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The women unfailingly express their appreciation for the dinner and for the kindness of our members. It seems fitting that this event is traditionally held in November because the gratitude reflected in the Thanksgiving season and the hope reflected in the Christmas season are both embodied in these very special women who ultimately provide us with more gift than we provide to them.



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## MARION STERLING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The guests of honor at the Marion Sterling Holiday Party and Dinner were the Marion Sterling students and their families. The evening was a fun event for everyone who attended, not just the children! With the help of the members of the Cleveland Commandery, students and their families made ornaments and holiday cards. Additionally, books donated by the Kids Book Bank were available for the children to take home, and representatives from Coats for Kids were on hand to give away winter coats. The Marion Sterling School also held a resource fair in the lobby, so the families were busy throughout the evening. And, of course, one of the highlights of the evening for SOSJ members is serving a holiday dinner with all the trimmings. Two hundred meals were served that evening – and additional food was packed and sent home.





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One mother told an SOSJ member that her whole family looks forward to this annual event and that her son loves it so much that shortly after school started in the fall, he asked, “So when is our dinner?” Another young girl said that this year’s tree at her home was already decorated with the ornament she made last year – and that she was looking forward to making another ornament this year. It is a privilege, no doubt, to coordinate activities that foster joy, produce excited anticipation, and create memories that can soothe and empower.

Thank you to all of the members of the Cleveland Commandery who attended that evening – and thank you to Alex Machaskee and his wife, Carol, for once again treating our members to dinner and fellowship afterward. Our members are strengthened in the love that is exchanged throughout this wonderful evening.



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## PHILANTHROPY PROJECTS FOR 2019

In addition to the philanthropic work outlined above, in 2019 the Cleveland Commandery donated \$29,352.66 to the following three charities:

### **Connecting for Kids (\$5,000)**

The mission of this organization is to provide education and support to families in Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties who have concerns about their child’s development. They serve all areas of child development for children who are 12 years of age or younger – whether the child has been formally diagnosed with a disorder or whether the child is simply described as shy, anxious, impulsive, or quick to anger.

SOSJ’s donation of \$5,000 will be used to provide 2,500 Sensory Awareness Kits to preschools, educate families about sensory awareness, hold free Sensory Consults, and use fliers to invite families to attend and be screened by pediatric occupational therapists.



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### **St. Herman's House - FOCUS Cleveland (\$14,000)**

St. Herman's House was founded in 1977 as an Orthodox Christian monastery with a mission of serving the homeless and poor. In 2013, St. Herman's became part of FOCUS North America, a national Orthodox Christian 501(c)(3). Although St. Herman's is no longer a monastery, its original purpose remains intact: as an expression of Christ's love, FOCUS North America serves the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned by providing food, occupation, clothing, understanding, and shelter. Their emergency shelter houses 28 men while their traditional home accommodates 12. Additionally, they serve three meals a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, to anyone in need.

St. Herman's House needed a new vertical platform lift to enable individuals with physical disabilities and/or limited mobility to access its services. \$5,000 of the project cost was raised through other donations; SOSJ's \$14,000 donation completed the necessary funding for a new lift - and removal of the old one.



### **The Music Settlement (\$10,352.66)**

The Music Settlement provides music therapy to clients of all ages – with or without special needs and/or medical issues – and works hard to ensure that clients receive all possible financial aid assistance. Their music therapists, in either private or group settings, use music-based interventions in a clinical setting to help people accomplish specific individualized goals. Music therapy supports learning and the transfer of skills, improves quality of life, offers hope to those enduring challenging times, and also benefits people being served by hospice or who are working hard toward rehabilitation.

SOSJ's donation of \$10,352.66 provides the funding necessary to install a PAR16 Ramp and Swing Doors to improve accessibility for therapy clients.

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## **PHILANTHROPY PROJECTS FOR 2020**

### **Greater Cleveland Food Bank - \$5,000**

At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, with so many families impacted and in great need, the Cleveland Commandery immediately donated \$5,000 to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, the largest hunger relief organization in Northeast Ohio and one that served more than 350,000 people in 2019.

Subsequent to that donation and in order to provide more immediate help with crisis situations caused by the pandemic, the Commandery accelerated the process for determining its 2020 philanthropic recipients. It was decided that funds should be awarded to organizations that provide the most critical services and are most



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in need of financial support. The process resulted in an additional \$55,000 being distributed to the following organizations:

**Hunger Network - \$10,000**

This organization saw an increased need for food, baby formula, and hygiene products which are distributed to seventy-two hunger centers throughout Cuyahoga County.

**St. Herman's House - FOCUS Cleveland - \$15,000**

The needs of St. Herman's House included additional supplies to better protect residents and staff and additional resources to provide emergency and transitional housing assistance to unsheltered men in Cleveland.

**Project Hope - \$10,000**

Project Hope is Lake County's only emergency homeless shelter – and it provides shelter to adults and families. The funds will be used to expand its hours and its staffing.

**East End Neighborhood House - \$20,000**

This organization serves the senior community by delivering hot meals and providing transportation to necessary appointments. It also provides childcare services as a Temporary Pandemic Center to Cleveland's Buckeye neighborhood.



Meeting needs of children, families, and those with disabilities, improving quality of life, feeding, sheltering, and offering hope are what our 2019 and 2020 philanthropic donations have helped to do. Necessary at all times, they are absolutely necessary during times of crisis. We salute all of our recipient organizations for the work they do to make our world a better place.



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## RETIREMENT

On October 1, 2019, Dame Carmella Calta retired after 55 years in the working world. For 45 of those years, she was an entrepreneur launching and growing several businesses involving recruitment, training, and technology. In the last twenty years Carmella focused on Staffing Solutions Enterprises and StaffMatrix where her work involved helping individuals achieve their employment objectives through counseling, training, and placement.



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She has heeded the advice of other retirees to take time to discern her path forward. In the meantime, she has enjoyed traveling: in the United States during the fall and to Iceland over the New Year holiday. Although she could not achieve her dream of seeing the Northern Lights in Iceland because of weather conditions, she learned about them, and at the Perlan Museum located in Reykjavik she became a believer that we all can take part in positively impacting the environment. She was moved by the fact that Iceland held a mock funeral in July 2019 for its first glacier to be lost to climate change. A plaque was mounted on a bare rock commemorating the day with the inscription: “A Letter to the Future, In the next 200 years all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path. This monument is to acknowledge that we know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it.”

Carmella continues to make an annual silent retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House in Gloucester, Massachusetts, an experience which she finds to be “beautifully life affirming,” and an experience she highly recommends to others. Fueled by the love of God, she also continues to give back to her community – not only through SOSJ but also by volunteering at St. Dominic Church.

Congratulations, Carmella, on your retirement. We thank you for all you do for the Cleveland Commandery, especially for your current work as chair of the Philanthropy Committee. Wishing you all the best on your journey forward, we know that your beautiful heart will lead you to all things good!

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## **DINNER AND MEETING AT THE SMITHS IN FEBRUARY**

Our February meeting took place at the home of Dame Susan Ferraro Smith and Chevalier Robert Smith. The evening began with dinner where we rekindled friendships and got better acquainted with some of our newest members. Community is central to who we are as a people and who we are as an organization, and community was central to our gathering that evening.

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## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

As a member of the Governor’s Board of Economic Advisors, Chevalier Bob Smith is an advisor to Ohio’s Governor, Mike DeWine. The Board was initially created to provide guidance to the Governor about re-opening the economy after the pandemic shut-down, but it has also helped in vetting some of Jobs Ohio’s new initiatives and has provided input regarding ways that the business community can address social injustice issues.

