



The Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare Society

By Patrick Custardo | Photography by Infant Welfare Society

On Christmas Eve, residents of Clarendon Hills light their luminara candles and "Light Up the Night!" This wonderful tradition is associated with the Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare Society (CHIW). In this edition of Clarendon Hills Living, we wanted to highlight this charitable organization and give you a sense of the good work they are doing within the community.

After sitting down with the CHIW President, Michelle Speziale, and Vice Presidents, Jenny Pace and Audrey Less, we learned there is so much more to this organization than the Luminara tradition. CHIW is comprised of 50 volunteers who are dedicated to fundraising and supporting the Angel Harvey Family Health Clinic in Chicago. The Angel Harvey Family Health Center of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago offers an innovative healthcare model that integrates primary medical care, dentistry, optometry, child development, and behavioral health services in a single central location. This "one-stop-shop" ensures barrier-free access to services and provides a multi-service healthcare home to children and their families.

The Clarendon Hills Chapter of the Infant Welfare Society's mission is to provide fundraising efforts, which include the "Light Up the Night" Benefit, Luminaria, and the Witches Ride. The main fundraising event is the annual "Light Up the Night" Benefit, which is typically held in January. "This year's Benefit was record breaking. Danielle McNally and Jessica Christensen were the Benefit Chairs and absolutely knocked it out of the park. I can't wait to see what next year holds," said Jenny.

The Witch's Ride was a new addition to CHIW's fundraising efforts. "This year's Witches Ride was a great incremental fundraising opportunity. Thank you to Jeannie Sullivan, a CHIW member, for being such a fantastic partner in these efforts! As usual, the community really stepped up," said Michelle. The organization is currently wrapping up their 2022-2023 year of fundraising.

Michelle, Jenny and Audrey are looking forward to next year and also surpassing their planned goals. "This truly is a special and amazing organization. It is easy to get isolated in a bubble here in Clarendon Hills, and being part of this group has allowed me to pause to help those in need right here in our backyard," Michelle said. "I have become so close with many of the members that I otherwise would not have known. I am inspired by these women and their creativity and desire to drive change," said Audrey.

There is also a CHIW Junior Board that meets monthly. "The Junior Board is very engaged in the mission and is coming up with new opportunities and ideas to raise money. We are fortunate to have them as an extension of our organization," said Michelle. It sounds like CHIW has another busy year ahead, and Clarendon Hills Living will be sure to keep you the community updated.

If you are interested in learning more about CHIW, please email them at chinfantwelfare@gmail.com. You can also follow them on Instagram [@ch_infantwelfare](https://www.instagram.com/ch_infantwelfare) and Facebook at [ClarendonHillsInfantWelfare](https://www.facebook.com/ClarendonHillsInfantWelfare).