

Serving the Dear Neighbor



NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
1515 WEST OGDEN AVENUE, LA GRANGE PARK

Love of Neighbor Brings Many Together for Day of Service



Hundreds of sisters, associates, friends, and supporters of the Congregation of St. Joseph gathered on April 29 in churches, ministries, and other organizations (some founded by our sisters), as well as in other locations across the United States for our congregation-wide service day. Here are just a few photos of the faces and places where we served in or near our center in La Grange Park and also in Chicago and surrounding areas.

A big **THANK YOU** to all who joined us in service to the *dear neighbor!* ●



^ From left, Sister Pat Bergen, Associate Kate Marshall and Ted Zayner helped clean sisters' plots at Queen of Heaven Cemetery.



^ Sisters Dorothy Randall (left, standing) and Marie Basile (right, standing), and two other volunteers, made cards for Ronald McDonald House.



^ Three generations worked together to help clean up yards in the Fairmont neighborhood.



^ Many hands helped to prune and clean up the Wolf Road natural prairie.



< Sister Rita Stalzer, CSJ, and Associate Barbara Boyd wrote letters to legislators.



Mission Haiti

Update on Collaborative Education Effort

^ Sponsored Haitian school girls pose with Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck, CSJ (at left standing), Sister Sue Torgersen, CSJ (at left kneeling), and Sisters Jeanette Bussen, CSJ, from Baden, PA. (at right kneeling), and Sister Mary Ellen O'Connell, CSJ, from Boston (at right standing).

Off the southern tip of Florida, situated between Cuba and the Dominican Republic, lies the tiny country of Haiti. The Congregation of St. Joseph has had a relationship with this struggling country for many years through a U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph initiative called Mission Haiti, Inc. This year, from March 12 – 20, 2017, Sisters Mary Ellen Gondeck, CSJ, and Sue Torgersen, CSJ, and associates Judy Iantosca and Brooke Whitten and her three daughters, traveled to Haiti to see the program, which sponsors 10 girls from elementary through secondary school and beyond, in action. They were joined by sisters and associates from several different St. Joseph communities, and Shelley Butler, a Mission Haiti board member from the Twin Cities.

The focus of the trip was to check in on the sponsored girls and the Companions of Jesus, the Haitian congregation who sponsor Annunciation School where the 10 girls are being educated. Six of the girls are in 5th grade, four are in the 4th grade.

The group visited Annunciation School (grades 1-6) and College Coeur de Marie (grades 7-13), both in Leogane, Haiti, a town badly damaged by the disastrous 2010 earthquake. Mission Haiti also supports several students on the college level at Notre Dame University in Port-au-Prince.

“College Coeur de Marie, the secondary school that we visited, has risen from the rubble of the 2010 earthquake largely due to the generosity of our congregation’s Generous Promise Grant Fund, the U.S. and Canadian Federations of Sisters of St. Joseph, Caritas Germany and of course Mission Haiti,” said Sister Sue Torgersen, CSJ. “We continue to work together with these great partners to address critical situations in our world – a great example of how we demonstrate our mission of unity!”

The group spent an afternoon with the students on the playground dancing, blowing soap bubbles,

taking pictures, and just enjoying being together. “It was delightful to have some of the women from the Village of Jesus, which is on the same property as the school, join us,” said Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck. “It was especially fun to see the girls interact with the other young women who traveled with us as they were closer to their age.”

At College Coeur de Marie, the group spent time with the students who were eager to greet them and talk about what they were learning. “While they spoke about learning algebra, science, history and more, we wanted to learn of their hopes for the future,” said Sister Sue. “Hearing their dreams for their futures – teaching, accounting, nursing, and doctoring – was hopeful, but it was also painfully clear that while an education will benefit them in many ways, choices and opportunities in Haiti are limited.” At present, only 2% of Haitian students go on to a university.

At the University of Notre Dame in Port-au-Prince, the group got a chance to network a bit on behalf of the Mission Haiti program. They met Sister Alta, President of the Companions of Jesus, and the executive secretary for Monsignor Andre who is President of the University – good contacts both as the program tries to move on to the university level.

The group then traveled to Santa Chiara where they visited a home started by Gerry Straub, a Secular Franciscan, former network television producer, author, teacher, lecturer and documentary filmmaker. Gerry has spent time in some of the poorest countries in the world, and he and his wife have opened their hearts and a home to those most in need around them in Haiti. The home is a refuge to 48 young children



^ Two students at Annunciation School in Haiti.



whose parents often have no choice but to take them along to work in a crowded market, or lend or rent them out to a family where they work an entire day for a bowl of rice in return. “Seeing the faces of the children in this home, who range in age from 6 months to about 11-12 was a delight,” said Sister Mary Ellen. “Gerry and his wife not only provide food and shelter for the children, but also offer hope and a place for them just to be kids.” ●

For more information on Mission Haiti and how you can help, visit MissionHaitiInc.org.

< Students in their classroom show off their work.

CSJ Grant Helps Promote Peace through non-violence in inner-city schools

Thanks in part to our Generous Promises Grant Fund, the Congregation of St. Joseph has partnered with Marquette University's Center for Peacemaking. The Center for Peacemaking fosters research and action for the promotion of social justice, human dignity and peace. It has created the Peace Works program for inner-city Catholic and public schools that seeks to curtail violence and promote gospel non-violence by focusing on conflict resolution, peer mediation, peace-building, social-emotional learning and cognitive restructuring.

The center hosted a dinner on May 31, 2017, to thank donors and report on the impact their contributions are making in promoting peacemaking and non-violence. Generous Promises Grant Fund screening committee members, Sister Grace Sbrissa, CSJ, and Jim Boyd, CSJ associate, and Mary Jo Hazard, CSJ associate and advocate for the grant, all attended the event.

"It was such a stimulating and inspiring evening to hear the center's Executive Director Patrick Kennelly share his vision and describe how our CSJ funds are helping to reduce violence, transform youth, and provide long-term



From left, Pam Stahler, Peace Works Coordinator; Andrea Regalbuto, 2017 graduate with degree in Peace Studies, and Sherri Walker, Center for Peacemaking Program Coordinator, at the May 31 event.



From left, Mary Jo Hazard, CSJ associate and advocate for the grant from the CSJ Generous Promises Grant Fund, and Jim Boyd, CSJ associate, and Sister Grace Sbrissa, CSJ, both Generous Promises Grant Fund screening committee members.

educational programs to sustain the change in attitudes and behaviors," said Mary Jo. "We were also pleased to learn that our grant has been leveraged by the Center for Peacemaking to gain additional funding for the Peace Works program, which will help them to expand to three new schools next year!"

Andrea Regalbuto, a student and recent graduate, enthusiastically shared her story of how she and others were impacted by the Peace Works program. "Peace Works is a program I personally believe in," she said. "We work to teach kids tangible tools to approach everyday situations of conflict non-violently. Throughout my time working for Peace Works, I have had kids tell me that they used some of the things we taught them with family members and friends, such as grounding techniques and I-statements."

"We at the Marquette University Center for Peacemaking are continually grateful for your support," said Executive Director, Patrick Kennelly. "It is helping make a positive impact on our youth, who in turn will be empowered, inspired, and committed to returning these same Generous Promises to the world for the peace and enrichment of our global family." ●

To learn more about the Center for Peacemaking and the Peace Works program, visit online at Marquette.edu/Peacemaking.

School and Tutors On Wheels Event

highlights unity and program's impact

The mission of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph is, in a word, unity. We live and work that all may be one - one with God, each other and all creation. One of our sponsored ministries, School and Tutors on Wheels (STOW) integrated that mission recently into their annual benefit held on June 28, 2017.

“That All May Be One: A Celebration of Cultural Unity” was an evening filled with food, song and dance from cultures as diverse as Lithuania, China, and Mexico. Entertainment included Sutnikis, a lively Lithuania folk dance troupe, a choir made up of STOW students from China, and the haunting sounds of the erhu, a Chinese stringed instrument.



The event's program honored Dr. Robert Rodriguez (left), an internationally recognized expert on diversity and inclusion. While his professional accomplishments are many, Dr. Rodriguez was being honored for his compelling story of the power of overcoming

cultural differences through equal opportunities and education. His journey from the son of seasonal farm workers from Mexico, to a well-respected consultant to Fortune 100 companies, inspired all in attendance.

After honoring Dr. Rodriguez, STOW Executive Director Constantine Bitsas talked about the lasting impact on the lives of its students and their families. Later, a video of several students discussing how STOW's tutors have been much more than teachers to them was shown. Many of the students commented that their instructors have also been friends and mentors to them, helping them to learn how to succeed in a new culture.

After hearing from the students, their words inspired generosity as people raised their paddles to contribute to instruction, tutor training, and educational materials. The evening ended with a rousing game of “Heads and Tails” led by Sisters Jackie Schmitz, CSJ, (at right, pointing), and Marlene Schemmel, CSJ.



The focus of the event was cultural unity, a theme that reflects the Congregation of St. Joseph mission, but it is also the motto at the very foundation of our nation: “E Pluribus Unum,” or “out of many, one.” For immigrants who are trying to integrate into their communities in order to make better lives for themselves and their families, this message could never be more poignant or timely.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the many volunteers who assisted in planning and coordinating this event, and to all who came out to support this very worthy ministry. ●

For more information on this ministry and how you can volunteer or support it, visit SchoolandTutorsOnWheels.org.

Sisters Celebrate St. Joseph Day with students at Nazareth Academy

In celebration of the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19), sisters and associates from our center in La Grange Park were welcomed by our *dear neighbor* next door, Nazareth Academy, as guest lecturers in a variety of classrooms on March 20 & 21, 2017. Sisters visited and taught in not only religion classes, but also English, fine arts, and world language classes.

The sisters' talks focused on how these subjects dovetail with the mission and charism of the Congregation of St. Joseph, the founders and primary sponsors of Nazareth Academy. Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ, welcomes these days as, "a way to celebrate our partnership, to raise awareness of our shared mission, and to learn more about each other."

"The opportunity for our students to interact directly with the Sisters enhances their experience and serves to underscore where we come from and who we are," said Nazareth principal, Deborah Tracy. "It is critical for our students to understand our CSJ roots, sponsorship and partnership. Faculty, staff and students alike are blessed in the presence of our Sisters and in the knowledge that they continue to make a strong and positive impact on us, our school, our community and our world."

Sisters and associates who participated and the subjects they spoke in are as follows: Sisters Pat Bergen (vocation), Celeste Cotter (CSJ spirituality), Marianne Race (restorative justice), Grace Sbrissa (the art of Zentangles),



^ Sister Grace Sbrissa, who also serves on the Academy Board of Trustees, shows fine art students the art of Zentangle.



^ CSJ Leadership Team member Sister Rita Ann Teichman discusses human trafficking with a class.



^ Sister Terry Middendorf, CSJ, who serves as Academic Dean, is recognized by students.

Joellen Sbrissa (socially responsible investments), Frankie Dutil (art), Rita Ann Teichman (human trafficking), and Leyla Cerda (immigration); CSJ Candidate Cami Taylor (restorative justice); and Associate Anna Mayer (Director of Taller de José, a sponsored ministry in Chicago who spoke about their program).

Nazareth Academy thanks all our sisters and associates who participated in this wonderful collaboration of our family of Joseph! ●

Ministry of the Arts Calendar Ministry brings beauty; inspires hope in prison inmates

In 2012, Ministry of the Arts in La Grange Park donated approximately 200 extra copies of their annual calendar to prison inmates. Through the years, that number has continued to expand with the 2017 edition being given to 22,187 prison inmates in 52 prisons across the country!

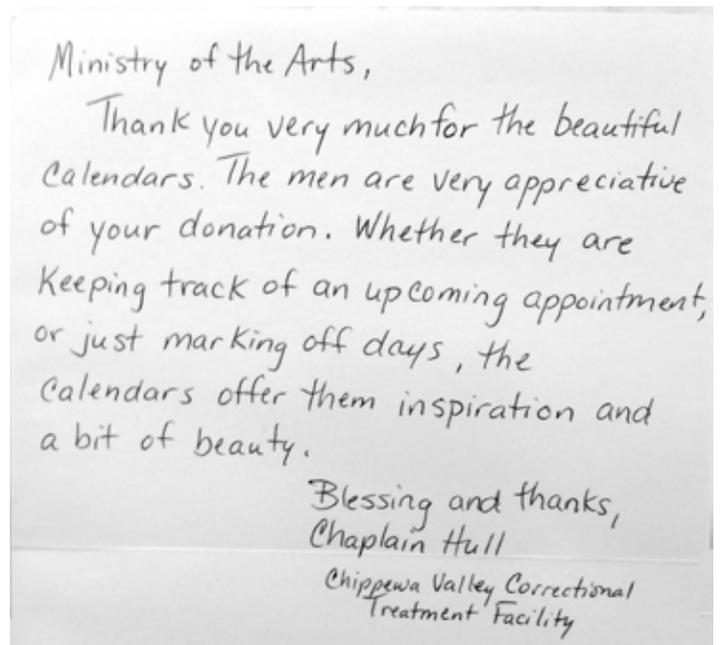
Flo Christiano, Creative Director of Ministry of the Arts, said they continue to be touched by the letters and cards being received from both inmates and prison chaplains in response to the calendars. "Because the calendar is published annually, the inmates quite naturally have come to look forward to and some even request the next edition," she said. "We are aware that for many of them, our calendar on their cell wall is the only beauty they may see."

She went on to explain how the project has necessitated good communication with prison chaplains, as they are the ones distributing the calendar to inmates. "Some even use it within their prayer/study groups," said Flo.

In order to continue this ministry and expand to even more prisons, Ministry of the Arts depends on financial contributions from its customers. "In the spirit of collaboration, we have designated those who donate to this project 'Prison Ministry Partners,'" said Flo. "As of this year, 8,346 generous supporters have earned this title. We ask that in addition to their financial support, they include the inmates and their families, along with victims' families, in their prayers.

The cost to ship the calendars to the prisons is actually the greatest expense for the project, so Ministry of the Arts is seeking corporate donors to help fund this portion of the project. "Currently, the UPS Foundation is a corporate partner, and we are also supported by the CSJ Gift Committee," said Flo. "But we welcome anyone who would like to learn more or is interested in supporting us." ●

For more information on this ministry and how you can support it, visit MinistryOfTheArts.org.



^ One of the many thank you notes Ministry of the Arts receives from prison chaplains.

v Calendars being shipped to prisons.



SISTERS AND MINISTRY IN ACTION

Justice and Peace Coordinators Gather for Convocation >

Several of our sisters joined with women religious from various communities, as well as others, to participate in the National Convocation of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Convocation, held March 5-7, 2017, in Chicago. The theme, "Which Roots Will We Water? Systemic Change and JPIC Ministry," challenged participants to explore the root causes of violence and injustice that plague society today.



< Sisters Share Regional Challenges at Global Conference

Sisters Mary Jo Curtsinger, CSJ, (left) and Barb McCartney, CSJ, (right), represented the Congregation of St. Joseph at a conference hosted by the Latin American sisters in Itu, Sao Paulo, Brazil. The week-long conference (Jan. 25-Feb.1) was attended by 95 Sisters of St. Joseph from Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Haiti. Barb and Mary Jo were the only two U.S. sisters present. Sisters from each national group were asked to present something about both the difficulties and hopes of their cultural contexts. Barb highlighted the problems around mountaintop removal and water pollution in West Virginia, and Mary Jo presented on the issues of racial inequity, homelessness, and violence in Chicago. Both were very grateful for the opportunity to learn and share cross-culturally with our sisters in the global South.

The Well Hosts Annual Summer Institute Program >

Over 90 people – young and old, men and women, black and white – gathered at The Well Spirituality Center for their annual Summer Institute. The theme this year was "Mystics and Prophets of a New Narrative," and included speakers, input, and small group, intergenerational dialogue. Topics for discussion were chosen and facilitated by the young adults in attendance, and included violence, access to education, food security and sustainability, racism, climate change, ecojustice, the feminine voice, gender and sexuality. The discussion focused on creating a hopeful future and ended with the creation of a group mural that expressed that hope (see right). We thank all who participated and helped bring forth a spirit of love and inclusivity.



In Memoriam...



Sister Beth Stoffel, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on April 25, 2017, after 68 years of religious life.



Sister Margaret Ann White, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 25, 2016, after 66 years of religious life.



Sister Joan Gardner, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on February 23, 2017, after 68 years of religious life.



Sister Thomas Agnes King, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 19, 2016, after 76 years of religious life.



Sister Mary Alice Giese, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on January 14, 2017, after 75 years of religious life.



Sister Agnes Zaroski, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on September 15, 2016, after 64 years of religious life.



*We Celebrate
the lives of all our
sisters who passed
away this year.*

JUBILEE 2017



Sister Henrietta Hibbs, CSJ
75 Years

"I am blessed and grateful for all of my years teaching both here in the Chicago area and in Mississippi, and for these many years of religious life."

Sister Roseann Eck, CSJ
70 Years

"There have been so many wonderful people I have met and been blessed to minister with over these many years."



Sister Lucia Marie Gibbons, CSJ
70 Years

"I thank God for all the happy memories shared with so many wonderful people."

Sister Mary Peter McGinty, CSJ
70 Years

"Every day and in every place I live more deeply the call to spread gentleness, peace and joy to this world as a Sister of St. Joseph. With these memories I rejoice in my God who leads me on."



Sister Grace Sbrissa, CSJ
60 Years

"The call to be a consecrated woman as a Sister of St. Joseph is one of my greatest blessings in life."



Spotlight: Sister Marie Basile

Like many Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister Marie Basile, CSJ, was a teacher for many years in the Chicago area. After leaving teaching, she began helping local seniors through a La Grange Park organization called Helping Hands, where she assisted by driving seniors to doctor appointments, staying with the sick, and by providing companionship, support and assistance. She later worked at Plymouth Place Senior Living, a facility just a mile from the La Grange Park center which has multiple levels of elder care, including short-term rehab.

Since retiring from working with the elderly and ill, Sister Marie has been part of the team taking care of our beautiful chapel, a job she began long before her official retirement. For daily and Sunday Mass, she sets the altar, makes sure the readings are marked and ready, and checks the sanctuary lamps to make sure they are working and lit. She also makes sure the linens are washed, candles ordered and changed, and supplies such as hosts are inventoried and on hand.

Sister Marie learned this role when she worked as the assistant to Sister Freddie Molitor, who was what many parishes call sacristan. When Sister Freddie died in 2010, Sister Marie took the lead role and now works with volunteers, like Bob and Maureen Avina who live in the area. "I've enjoyed every minute of my time volunteering," says Sister Marie. "I've been privileged to have served our community in this way." ●

Message from Leadership

Dear friends,

As part of our Congregation of St. Joseph family, you are an integral part of our efforts to bring the message of God's love to the world in ways that inspire action on behalf of others. Since August 2007, when seven founding communities of St. Joseph came together to be one as the Congregation of St. Joseph, we have experienced the abundance of God's great love through our relationships with each of you.

As we celebrate our 10th year, we celebrate the generosity by which you and others in our communities across the country have embraced us and have continued to support our mission, our ministries, our lives and needs. Your support has enabled us to take risks to broaden our lives, to expand our ministries, and to live our promises in an active and inclusive way. This includes our commitment to care for our sisters and, at the same time, to more fully respond to the emerging needs of our neighbors and our world. New initiatives, ministries, and partnerships, new uses for some of our buildings and land along with new ways and places for our sisters to live in community in some of our locations are all a part of our efforts today. They reflect our vibrancy and compassion and our commitment to stay attentive to the needs of a world in desperate need of our care.

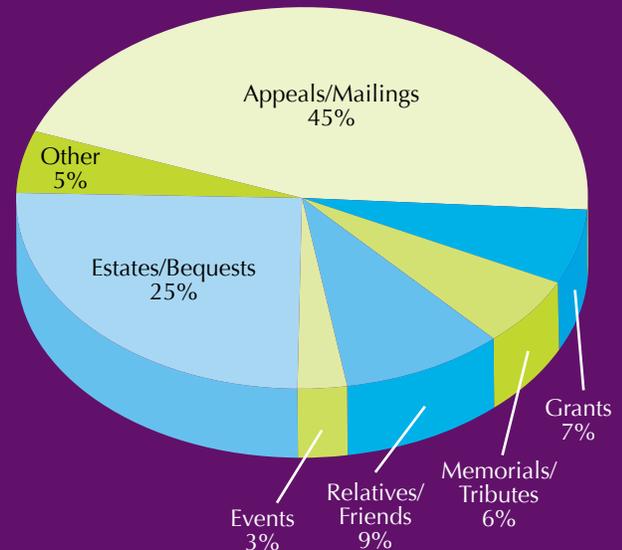
Thank you for helping bring God's message of unifying love to our communities. With your support and prayers, we are moving forward filled with gratitude and hope!

With profound gratitude,

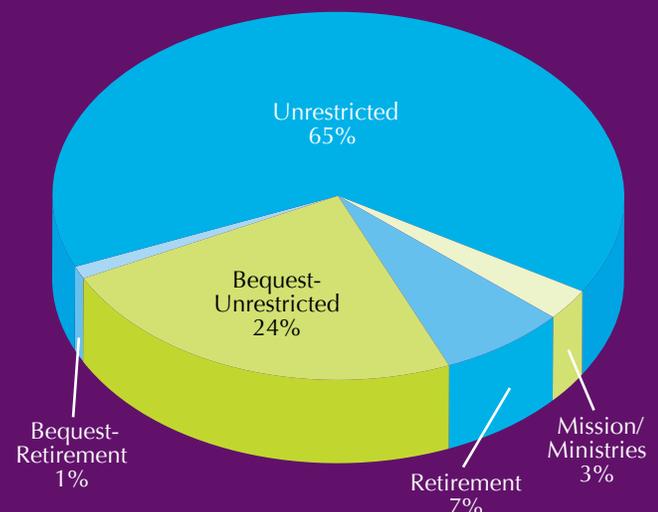
The Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team

Annual Giving Report

Revenue Sources



Donor Designated Uses



*This reporting documents the sources and designated uses of the charitable donations received by the Congregation in 2016. This includes the gifts received by the Congregation that are designated to some of our sponsored ministries while gifts sent directly to our ministries are not included here. We rely on the generous support of our benefactors and openly share how gifts received on behalf of the Sisters of St. Joseph are used.

The legacy of caring and mission of our congregation begun by our first six Sisters in LePuy, France more than 360 years ago continues today because of the support provided by donors and friends. There are many ways you can help including through your prayers, direct annual gifts, membership in our Circle of Friends monthly sustaining donor circle, and through your will and estate plans.

To learn more please contact Karen Herman DeMuro at khermandemuro@csjoseph.org, or 708.482.5037.



1515 West Ogden Avenue
La Grange Park, Ill. 60526

 This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Spotlight Photo



Sister Barbara Jean (BeeJay) Ciszek dedicated her life to education, so in her honor, a Chicago street was dedicated to her legacy. The street sign, which can be found at the corner of Paulina and Diversey in Chicago, pays tribute to Sister BeeJay, as well as her life of good works.

Stay Connected...

There are many ways to stay connected to the sisters, associates, and ministries of the Congregation of St. Joseph:



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Sign up to receive our sister-written blog, Beyond the Habit



Sign up to receive our biannual magazine *imagineONE*. Go to www.csjoseph.org, click on "Connect With Us"



For information on upcoming workshops, retreats, featured programs, spiritual direction, healing services, yoga and more, we invite you to visit us online at **CSJtheWell.org**, or call **708.482.5028**.

The Well Spirituality Center, a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph, is committed to strengthening, healing, and calling forth the inherent wholeness of Earth, our human community and all creation.