

Volume 12.2 Summer 2009

Good NEWS

A Publication of THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA



Growing to Inspire

*Using Sports to Inspire Deeper Spirituality
and Enhance Character Development*

Also in this issue:

- Seniors Serving Others
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

Commitment Statement

We recommit ourselves to “rebuilding the Church” by living the passion of the Gospel in the discerning spirit of our Franciscan charism and tradition.

We are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.

We desire to reflect this commitment in our dialogue with the entire Church, in our own governing structures, and in our relationship with one another as sister.

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, choose to live the Gospel in the prophetic spirit of Francis of Assisi and our Foundress Mother Francis Bachmann. With Jesus Christ as Brother, we live as sister with one another, with the entire human family and with all creation. Calling ourselves and one another to continuous conversion of heart, we commit ourselves to a life of contemplation, poverty and humility.

As vowed women of the Church, we respond with diverse gifts in a spirit of collaboration and of mutual service to the needs of others, especially the economically poor, the marginal and the oppressed. Seeking to participate in the Spirit’s action in the world, we direct our personal and corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Filled with trust in the goodness of God, we move forward.

POINT OF VIEW

Faith Alive

Ridley Creek State Park is one of my favorite walking spots. As I walk, I am aware of the intergenerational group of people who move through the park engaging in a variety of activities.

Numerous studies highlight the benefits of intergenerational relationships. They cite that adults who are involved in intergenerational activities feel happier than other older adults. Some suggest that such activities may help improve health for an older population and advance the educational development and learning of children and young adults.

The neighboring campuses of the Sisters of St. Francis and Neumann University provide numerous opportunities for the development of intergenerational relationships. Young



**Sister Esther Anderson, OSF
Congregational Minister**

children from the Child Development Center visit and perform for senior sisters. College students are eager to share prayer, liturgy, and meals with sisters. While some of the sisters serve at Neumann University, many others cheer teams to victory and delight in the students’ performing arts capabilities. All involved attest to the reality that life is about becoming more than we are and being all that we can be.

In this issue of Good News, we catch a glimpse of a sister sports chaplain, Sister Marie Therese Carr. She offers prayer and spiritual guidance to student athletes while having fun. Sports chaplains assist students in leading a spirituality-centered and balanced life. Through their example, students are encouraged to have a living faith that reaches out to others in community service.

Sister Robert Marie Green exhibits living faith in her parish ministry. While she connects and brings the senior members of the parish together for relationship and recreation, she enlivens the parish as a whole. Through prayer and dialogue, these parishioners have expanded their horizons and have involved themselves in service activities across generations in nursing homes and inns for those who are homeless. They raise funds in a variety of creative ways for persons in need.

This issue portrays the blessing of the golden years. We can live life fully and, with a living faith, change our part of the world for the better.

Sister Esther Anderson, OSF



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The purpose of *Good News* is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia by sharing the good news of the congregation with our friends, family, companions, and sisters. Through this publication, we hope to share the charisma of our congregation and invite others to become involved in our mission.

Good News is published three times a year (spring, summer, winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at address above.

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On the cover: The Neumann University men's basketball team huddles together to perform a chant to pump up their energy before a game as team chaplain Ed Hastings looks on from the sidelines.



Team chaplains Sister Pat Smith and Sister Pat Hutchison flank women's basketball coach Frank Farnese during a pre-game prayer



“IT’S RECREATION AND GOD IS IN OUR PLAY AND IN OUR RECREATION. THE MORE PEOPLE REALIZE THAT AND PLAY WITH THE REALIZATION THAT GOD IS IN THEIR MIDST, THE BETTER WE’LL ALL BE.”

Growing to Inspire

Using Sports to Inspire Deeper Spirituality and Enhance Character Development

Tall, agile volleyball players run through their warm-up drills while a petite 72-year-old woman gathers up the loose volleyballs bouncing around the gym.

The woman shagging volleyballs is not a coach; she’s Franciscan Sister Marie Therese Carr, chaplain of Neumann University’s women’s volleyball team. For the past 12 years, she has kept pace with the players, attending practices and games and traveling by bus to tournaments. Sister Marie Therese’s passion for being chaplain of the volleyball team is evident. “I go to all the games,” she said. “We pray before the games. If I don’t get there, one of the girls takes over and prays. If they want to talk about anything, I’m there for them.”

“She’s been our biggest fan the past four years,” said Rachel Sokolovich, a senior volleyball player and psychology major at Neumann. “Some chaplains don’t travel but she’s traveled all over with us.”

Sister Marie Therese was recruited to be a chaplain shortly after she started working in the university archives. Dr. Sandy Slabik, a



Chaplain of the women’s volleyball team at Neumann for 12 years, Sister Marie Therese Carr shares a laugh with senior player Rachael Sokolovich.

professor in the sport management department and founder of the chaplain program, and Sister Judith O’Neill, a former chaplain, appeared at her office door. “We know you’re a sports fan,” they said. “We need a chaplain for the volleyball team. Would you be interested?” Sandy added, “Now, think it over, and let us know when you decide. We would like a chaplain for this sport.” Shortly after they left, Sister Marie Therese received a call from Kaitlin O’Brien, a former student from Padua

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The Commissioning Mass for each sport is celebrated in the chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis's motherhouse which is adjacent to the Neumann University campus. At the beginning of volleyball season, Sister Marie Therese, far left, joins the players in the pews before joining them on the court to kick off each game with a prayer.



Sister Marguerite O'Beirne, Vice President of Mission and Ministry at Neumann, offers a blessing to a student during the Commissioning Mass.

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Academy. Kaitlin explained that she would be attending Neumann the following year and planned to play volleyball. The response was immediate: "Wonderful, Kaitlin! I think I'm going to be your chaplain."

For Sister Marie Therese, being chaplain gives her the opportunity to interact with students, something she'd missed after retiring from teaching. She also found that sports offer a way to connect with God through a recreational activity. "Sometimes people don't think of sports as being anything more than recreation or a way to make money, but it's playing," she explained. "It's recreation and God is in our play and in our recreation. The more people realize that and play with the realization that God is in their midst, the better we'll all be."

Leading The Way

Neumann University is unique in its commitment to the importance of spirituality in the context of sports. The Institute for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development has gained international recognition for its efforts to incorporate sports and spirituality and provide guidance for grade schools, high schools, colleges, and Catholic Youth Organizations to do the same.

Ed Hastings, director of the institute since 1999, has a doctorate in spirituality from Duquesne University and teaches undergraduate and graduate theology classes in sport and spirituality. He sees sports as the "hook" to get student-athletes to focus on God as a part of their experiences on the field, court, or rink. "I think young people are really thirsting for a deeper connection with God," said Ed, who also serves as chaplain of the men's basketball team. "Sports is the hook and then I can get them thinking about spirituality and exploring their relationship with God in a nonthreatening way."



Ed Hastings, director of the Institute for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development at Neumann University, teaches a sport and spirituality course that he said gives students the opportunity to "explore their relationship with God in a non threatening way."

Ed sees sports as a way to build character but admitted that news reports show a lot of problems in sports. "Sports don't always build character but they can," he added. "So we look more deeply at that and help the students to understand that, through their experience of sports, they can connect with God in a deeper way."

Benefits Of Team Chaplains

Another unique part of athletics at Neumann is that each of the 17 varsity teams has a chaplain. A major advantage of having a team chaplain is that the student-athletes have an objective person they can go to for guidance.

"It gives them someone they can talk to away from the rink, the court, or the field," said Matt Kennedy, coach of the women's ice hockey team. "The chaplain is the one

“SPORTS DON’T ALWAYS BUILD CHARACTER BUT THEY CAN, SO WE LOOK MORE DEEPLY AT THAT AND HELP THE STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND THAT, THROUGH THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SPORTS, THEY CAN CONNECT WITH GOD IN A DEEPER WAY.”

they can go to with a personal issue or family issue. I think it’s also good to have somebody who understands the commitment it takes to be a student-athlete.”

Matt said Dr. Patti Fallest-Strobl, chaplain of the hockey team and biology professor, attends home games but when the team travels, she sends along a bag of snacks to keep their stomachs full on the bus. “She always writes a motivational line or motivational prayer on the side of the brown bag,” he said. “It’s usually not very long so the kids can read it in passing. I always found that very unique—and very good for us.”

A Win-Win For Students

Student-athletes also have the opportunity to connect with God through the evening of reflection held during each team’s playing season. These evenings have a different theme each year, according to Stephanie Taylor, program coordinator at the institute and chaplain for women’s lacrosse and women’s tennis. “This year the school’s theme is beauty,” she explained. “So we look at how St. Francis of Assisi viewed beauty and then give the student-athletes a chance to reflect on how they see beauty in their sport and in one another. This chance to share ideas proves really meaningful because the team can publicly praise and challenge one another.”

Stephanie said the evenings of reflection, which are held at the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis, help the athletes to see sports in the context of their lives as college students. “It also gives them a chance to reflect, a chance to pause and be quiet,” she added. “We talk to them a lot about that—the busyness of college student-athletes. Even if it’s just a few hours to be in a quiet place with

some time to journal, we hope that they can see the benefit and can work that into their lives when they are not with us and not at an evening of reflection.”

The evenings of reflection have yielded positive results. Franciscan Sister Linda De Cero, Director of Pastoral Services for Resident Students and chaplain of the men’s baseball team, works with Stephanie to plan and coordinate them. According to Sister Linda, “the evenings of reflection create a ‘sacred space’ where student-athletes have an experience of being ‘at home’ with one another, the sisters at the motherhouse, God, and themselves. These evenings provide athletes an opportunity to share what really moves their heart to a deeper appreciation of God’s presence in the experiences of their daily lives.”

Commissioning Mass For Athletes

Three times a year, prior to each sporting season, athletes, coaches, and chaplains gather with the larger Neumann community in the motherhouse chapel for a Mass of Commissioning. “This celebration is a unique opportunity to form community in a sacred space that speaks to the transcendent,” said Sister Marguerite O’Beirne, Vice President of Mission and Ministry. “It helps the student-athletes to recognize that prayer is an important aspect of all that we do at Neumann and it shapes a culture which gives them permission to gather for prayer before games and other significant events throughout the academic year.”

“The Commissioning Mass is a key moment for our athletic department,” agreed Chuck

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▼ *Team spirit and school pride is evident throughout all the 17 varsity teams at Neumann University. Spirituality is an integral part of the athletic programs with team chaplains bringing students closer to God through recreational activity.*



“WE ARE BEING VERY UPFRONT IN SAYING THAT WHEN YOU WALK INTO THIS CENTER, THERE IS SOMETHING WITHIN IT THAT IS GOING TO TRANSLATE THAT HUMAN MOMENT INTO ONE THAT IS SACRED.”



Ed Hastings chats with Sister Marie Therese Carr outside the new Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development. Scheduled to be completed this fall, the 72,000 square foot facility is part of Neumann’s “Grow to Inspire” capital campaign.

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Sack, Director of Athletics. “It affords us the opportunity to truly unify each varsity athletic team within our Christian tradition and to remind them of the Franciscan values we hold high and aspire to achieve in our daily interactions.”

A New Home For The Institute

Neumann University is in the midst of its “Grow to Inspire” capital campaign, which includes a new 72,000 square foot athletic facility called the Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development. The center is set to open this fall.

“It’s much more than just building an athletic facility,” said Lee DelleMonache, strategic planner for the institute. “A big part of what we are involved with is the development of exhibits that will be housed in the building. We have selected quotes from Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi, St. John Neumann, Mother Francis Bachmann, and Pope John Paul II that connect the sports world with our Catholic Franciscan heritage.”

The main lobby will house five pillars, each focused on a theme: Play, Beauty, Respect, Balance, and Reflection. “These themes intersect sports, spirituality, and our Franciscan mission and charism. They bring it all together,” Lee said. “We’re developing different stories, highlighting things in sports history that are wonderful teaching



Volleyball players take their turn participating in the special Eucharistic liturgy at the start of their season.

moments.” A storytelling exhibit, including a variety of personal stories from players, coaches, trainers, officials, parents, and fans, will communicate a lesson learned or an experience where a person can feel God’s presence.

“We’re really hoping that the storytelling exhibit is going to have the most impact on anyone who comes in,” Lee said. “It will be interactive. Visitors can read through summaries and pull up the story that they want to spend some time with.”

In addition to a 1,200-seat gymnasium, the Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development will provide office space for staff members of the institute and the athletic department. The center will also include a state-of-the-art fitness center; a training facility; and space for dance, cheerleading, martial arts, and exercise classes.



HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- The Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development is a 72,000+ square foot facility that will serve as the centerpiece of campus life at Neumann University. Be a part of this exciting new venue by making a donation to Neumann's *Grow to Inspire* capital campaign.
- Volunteer to coach a local Catholic Youth Organization team in your area.
- Support Neumann University or your local college/university athletes by attending games held on campus.
- Submit a story about sports and spirituality for the storytelling exhibit in the new center. The stories should be no longer than 500 words and submitted to Ed Hastings at hastings@neumann.edu or Lee DelleMonache at Dellemonl@neumann.edu

Share with us the good news of what you did! Call or email us with the action(s) you took: (610) 558-7726, goodnews@osfphila.org.

Connecting Values With Sports

The new building will not only provide needed space for athletic activities. It will also communicate the connection between Neumann's Franciscan values and sports.

"When you think of the values that flow out of the Franciscan intellectual tradition—values related to respect for each person, to the notion of joy and balance, beauty, play—they are values and concepts that flow from the life and work of Francis and Clare of Assisi," said Dr. Rosalie Mirenda, president of Neumann University. "These

are values that we can now look at and realize that they align with an activity that's related to sports." The importance of those values starts with the name of the center. "We didn't delete the word spirituality from it," Dr. Mirenda said. "We are being very upfront in saying that when you walk into this center, there is something within it that is going to translate that human moment into one that is sacred. We're inspired to do that and we hope that doing so inspires others to grow in their relationship with one another and with their God."

"It would be remiss of us not to use sports, which are so important to our youth, as one

venue of bringing them closer to God, closer to developing their own spirituality," Dr. Mirenda added. "We are a university that calls itself Catholic and Franciscan. If we don't do it, who in this world will?" ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

On the sidelines women's hockey coach Matt Kennedy talks strategy with team captains Carly Fitzsimmons (left) and Jenelle Marier.



Who are the 'Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia'?

Through this section we hope to share a glimpse of our congregation and the individuals who make real its mission.



(L-R) Juniors Paige Lauenstein and Katelyn Ensminger are two of the TCHS "pioneers" enrolled in the STEM program.

CALIFORNIA

Sister Catherine Louise Ginther still works with the people in the Tenderloin, giving fully clothed, seated chair massages. However, she has added a new dimension to her ministry. Last summer she graduated from the multi-level Healing Touch Program and was certified in October. Sister Catherine now ministers with women and children in transition at Elizabeth House; at Friendly Place, a women's day drop-in center; and at St. Mary's Center, a full-service senior center. She also ministers at the Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Clinic, doing Swedish massage for women who are poor and who are ill with cancer.



MARYLAND

The Catholic High School of Baltimore continues to move into the future with its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program (STEM). In conjunction with The Infinity Project™, eligible sophomores take the introduction to engineering course, "Engineering: Our Digital Future," which provides the opportunity to use math, science, and technology skills to create, design, and test an array of high-tech digital devices. They also take Honors Geometry, Honors Chemistry, and eventually move on to Honors Physics, AP Calculus AB/BC, AP Biology, and advanced technology courses. Math teacher Mauro Pasquini planned and redesigned the STEM classroom and the family of TCHS graduate Joanne Liberatore Kramer donated \$50,000 in her memory to purchase the technology. The program is a first, not only

for TCHS but also for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. "It makes us unique in that regard," said Dr. Barbara Nazelrod, president of TCHS. The program is also significant because of Catholic High's status as a school for young women. Dr. Nazelrod believes that Catholic High's STEM program is one more step in "breaking stereotypes and is an unprecedented educational opportunity for young women who qualify for the program."

WASHINGTON

Sisters Carmel Gregg, Jude Connelly, and Donna Fread joined sisters from other congregations at a press conference in Seattle. At the gathering the sisters unveiled their bus advertisement campaign to raise awareness about the reality of human trafficking in the Pacific Northwest. Their "Stop the Demand" ads began appearing on King County Metro buses the week of March 8, the U.N. Day for Women's Rights. Seattle, a port city, is a transit point for trafficking victims from Asia, Latin America, and eastern Europe. Although it was unplanned, those gathered for the press conference thought it very appropriate when a city bus rode by carrying one of their ads.



MARYLAND

Sister Joyce Helfrich was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), one of the earliest discipline-specific honor societies. Based on its mission to "sustain an honored community of diverse educators by promoting excellence and advancing scholarship, leadership, and service," KDP membership is by invitation only. Her background evidences the qualities needed for KDP membership. She holds a Masters in Special Education and Reading from Loyola University as well as a certificate in Administration and Supervision. During her years in education, she was particularly drawn to children who "learn differently." She opened resource centers in schools where she taught and addressed the issue of special education at an NCEA conference. Today she continues her work as a psychoeducator at Villa Maria, a residential and day treatment facility in Timonium, Maryland.



WASHINGTON

Sister Margaret O'Reilly is kept busy assisting third graders and building relationships. As part of a Foster Grandparent Program, Sister Margaret has volunteered at Tacoma's Jefferson School for the past two and a half years. She helps the children with reading, makes booklets for every new story, and provides special attention to students who need extra help with science, math, or spelling. As



◀ For the students at St. John the Beloved School, “Crazy Tag Day” meant a day without uniforms but for many of our retired sisters, the donation that resulted from the day of fun was an affirmation of their many years of devotion to Catholic education.

little “extras,” she gifts both students and staff with calendars, bookmarks, and a supply of pens and pencils and, at one point, donated her poinsettia plant to decorate the faculty lunchroom.



ALABAMA

The American Meteorological Society (AMS) once again recognized Sister Shirley Ann Boucher and the students of Pure Heart of Mary School in Mobile for their continued dedication to the world-wide weather and environmental GLOBE program and the Surface Ozone Protocol developed by NASA. In 2000 Sister Shirley and her students built a weather station to chart daily minimum and maximum temperatures, precipitation, and cloud types. Responding to a request from Dr. Irene Ladd of NASA in 2002, she and her students now gather ozone data for NASA to measure the effects of harmful waste products on surface ozone in the Mobile area. Although 87 schools in the United States participated in NASA’s Surface Ozone Protocol, Heart of Mary was the only American school cited by the AMS for its noteworthy contribution to the project. AMS also recognized Sister Shirley for her dedication in raising students’ awareness of the effects of human activity on surface ozone.

▶ Sister Jo Ann McPolin received a special award from the Mill Creek Fire House in Wilmington, Delaware, commending her for her 20 years of continued commitment in promoting fire safety. Her efforts stemmed from her work with the students of St. John the Beloved School—encouraging and assisting student involvement in the Delaware Volunteer Fire Association’s Annual Fire Safety Poster and Essay Contest.

DELAWARE

The student council at St. John the Beloved School organized a “Crazy Tag Day” when students and faculty each paid a dollar to wear mismatched clothing. The activity netted \$500 which the student council contributed to the Sisters of St. Francis’ retirement fund. In her letter, student council faculty adviser, Mena O’Brien-Roache explained the students’ reason for choosing the retirement fund as the recipient of the donation. “Nothing could ever repay the Sisters of St. Francis for their dedication to our school these past fifty-one years. You were our founders,” she wrote. “It was you who celebrated and passed along the Franciscan philosophy and traditions that to this day we strive to emulate. We want to say thank you to a wonderful band of devoted women who, over half a century, worked tirelessly to make St. John the Beloved School the place that it is today.”



MARYLAND

Sister Margaret Xavier Romans received an “Award for Teaching Excellence” from the Archdiocese of Baltimore for her work at TCHS. As director of the school’s Archangel Program, she oversees ninth-grade students who enter the school with lower than average grades or test scores. Under her leadership these students develop confidence in their verbal, reading, and math abilities—confidence that results in success when they enter college. In recognition for her achievements with the Catholic High students, the school’s administrative team also nominated her to apply for the National Teacher Hall of Fame.



WASHINGTON

Sisters Pat Millen, Jude Connelly, Christine Still, and Donna Fread were among those gathered in Olympia for the annual Catholic Advocacy Day. This year’s theme was “Justice and Charity: Seeking the Common Good.” In their meetings with representatives and senators, the sisters focused on several specific issues including General Assistance Unemployable, a safety net for some of the most needy Washington residents, and Volunteer Chore Services, a program committed to helping elders and adults with disabilities remain independent in their own homes.

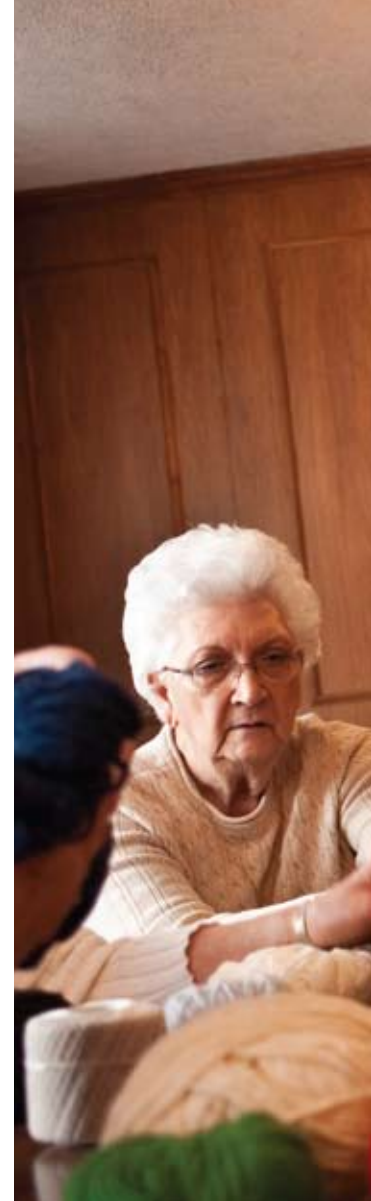
Sister Robert Marie Green brings Communion to Myrtle McCoy, a homebound member of Corpus Christi Parish in Willingboro, New Jersey.



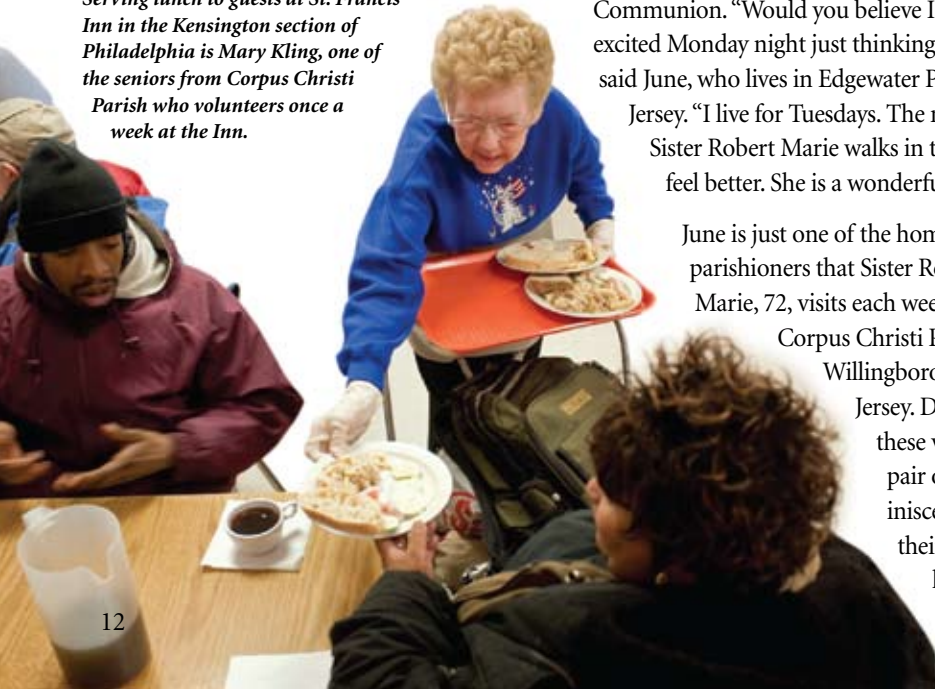
“WE’RE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO SERVE THE POOR.”

Seniors Serving Others

Building Relationships With a Common Bond



Serving lunch to guests at St. Francis Inn in the Kensington section of Philadelphia is Mary Kling, one of the seniors from Corpus Christi Parish who volunteers once a week at the Inn.



June Jacoby never forgets her weekly appointments, especially the regular one she has on Tuesdays. That’s the day Sister Robert Marie Green brings her Holy Communion. “Would you believe I get very excited Monday night just thinking about it?” said June, who lives in Edgewater Park, New Jersey. “I live for Tuesdays. The minute Sister Robert Marie walks in the door, I feel better. She is a wonderful person.”

June is just one of the homebound parishioners that Sister Robert Marie, 72, visits each week in Corpus Christi Parish in Willingboro, New Jersey. During these visits, the pair often reminisce about their childhood days

growing up in Allentown. “We talk about the old times,” June said. “It’s a lot of fun when somebody shares with you like that.”

Sister Robert has also helped June cope with the loss of her husband Joseph who died three years ago. “I don’t think I would have ever pulled through if it hadn’t been for her,” June said. “She has that very special way about her. We talk about him to this day, the different things that happened when he was here. He loved her visits. You can’t say enough about her, believe me.”

Myrtle McCoy is another homebound parishioner who looks forward to the visits. “She’s so sweet to visit,” said Sister Robert. “We have a group here that makes soup for shut-ins. I bring her soup and she just loves that.”

Enjoyment of the one-on-one interactions is mutual. “I get a lot from them just by interacting with them and witnessing their strong



The crochet group at the parish sort bundles of yarn with Sister Robert Marie Green who said that the group raised \$1,800 for St. Francis Inn last year. "These ladies just do it because they want to help the Inn," she said

faith and the way they try to accept whatever problems they have," Sister Robert said. "I like the idea that I can build rapport with them every week and it helps them feel connected with the Church."

Ministering To Seniors

As parish minister at Corpus Christi, Sister Robert Marie also coordinates the parish seniors group and is involved in the bereavement ministry. "With the senior community, her ministry has made a tremendous impact," said Father Daniel J. Ryan, pastor of Corpus Christi. "She averages about 65-70 people at her monthly meetings. The meetings provide an opportunity for the seniors to come together with other seniors, whether it's for a social meeting or one that has impact on some of their concerns."

After serving as principal of Corpus Christi School for 15 years, Sister Robert was looking

for a new challenge. "I enjoyed teaching and I enjoyed being a principal but I always wanted to work with the elderly," she said. "Before I got too old, I wanted to try something else. I talked to the pastor here, said I'd like to go into parish work—and I would like to do it here."

When she began parish ministry 12 years ago, there was no senior citizens group. "We started that from scratch," she said. "I didn't know how any of this would evolve when I went into this kind of work." What has evolved is an active seniors group with about 125 members. The group, which meets monthly at the parish, is also involved in service activities such as visiting local nursing homes, volunteering at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, and hosting fundraisers for the Inn.

Fridays At St. Francis Inn

Although the main goal of the seniors group is to have fun, Sister Robert initiated a vol-

unteer outreach activity on Fridays at St. Francis Inn. The Inn, a Franciscan Eucharistic community, is administered by the Order of Friars Minor and serves those who are poor and homeless in Philadelphia by providing food, clothing, and shelter. "It's been a great connection between the parish and St. Francis Inn and a real eye-opener for the seniors," she said. "They'll say to me when we get back in the car, 'I wish my grandchildren could see this.' You see young children there, which is heartbreaking, and you see a lot of senior citizens. It's like another world that we here in Willingboro are not connected with."

Roberta Anderson, a longtime member of the seniors group, volunteers regularly at St. Francis Inn which is near her childhood home. She waits on tables or helps serve the meal of the day along with two other senior volunteers. "It makes me feel like I'm giving back a little bit to the community that I once

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HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- There are millions of elderly people in the United States, many of whom are frail and homebound. You can make a difference in the lives of the elderly in your parish or community by visiting them, driving them to doctor's appointments, or running errands.
- Make a donation of food, time, or money to the St. Francis Inn or a similar facility in your local area.
- Contact your local elected representatives to let them know you support legislation that helps those who are homeless.

Share with us the good news of what you did!

Call or email us with the action(s) you took: (610) 558-7726, goodnews@osfphila.org.

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lived in as a child," she said. "Many of us have not been exposed to it and the people there need our help. You should reach out to people who are needier than you."

In addition to her services at the Inn, Roberta enjoys the travel time to and from Philadelphia. "Sister Robert Marie takes three of us down and provides the transportation," she explained. Like June Jacoby, Roberta finds the trip a time to share conversation and stories, a time to reminisce, a time to build relationships. She shares her knowledge of the churches in the neighborhood near the Inn, providing what she laughingly calls "the two-cent tour" of the area where she was raised.

The seniors have been helping at the Inn for the past 12 years. "I think it's good for them to be able to do that," Sister Robert said. "So many of them will say, 'I really feel good after I do this.' Now some of them can't carry trays anymore but they can still dish out food. I usually end up being the maitre d' because I'm there every week."



Waiting in line for a hot lunch, Dennis Cook is one of the many served at St. Francis Inn by parish seniors who travel from Willingboro to Philadelphia on a weekly basis.

► Guests place bids on chance auction items at a recent fundraiser organized by the seniors group at Corpus Christi Parish who are committed to helping the homeless. Proceeds from the auction were donated to St. Francis Inn.

▼ Volunteer opportunities with the seniors group at Corpus Christi Parish are laid out by Sister Robert Marie for the consideration of an interested senior parishioner.



Something For Everyone

Those seniors who are unable to feed the homeless in person have the opportunity to do so in other ways—giving their time and talent to raise money for St. Francis Inn. A group of about eight women come once a month and make afghans, hats, and scarves.”



Before the guests arrive for lunch, it is a common practice at the Inn for staff and volunteers to pause for prayer; among the group gathered here are Sister Robert Marie, center, and senior volunteers Mary Kling and Marie Smith.



Sister Robert Marie chats with Sister Leslie Birks, center, who works full-time at St. Francis Inn, and a student volunteer.

They sell them at seniors’ meetings and after Mass. This past year, that small group made \$1,800 for the soup kitchen.

Another annual fundraiser is a chance auction, which features a variety of gift baskets filled with donated items that are sold at the senior group’s February meeting. “We have a group of about 10 ladies who go through all donations, try to pick out a theme, and fill the baskets,” Sister Robert Marie said. “That group raised about \$1,000 for the soup kitchen. There are so many people who can’t go down to the Inn to help but by doing these fundraisers, I feel we are providing opportunities for them to help somebody else. And it’s painless.”

Positive Impact On The Parish

This involvement with the seniors, the homebound, and the bereavement ministry continues to have a positive influence on the parish. “Sister Robert has made a tremendous impact on me,” said Roberta Anderson. “I always felt that when we went to church, we never knew the other parishioners but since she founded the seniors group, the seniors feel more of a relationship with one another.”

Roberta admires the compassion shown for the seniors at Corpus Christi. “Sister Robert is sensitive to the needs of seniors and if she can get help for them, she is right there trying her very best to see that they get the help they need,” she said.

June Jacoby also experiences Sister Robert Marie’s compassion during her weekly visits. “With her encouragement, I have really come a long way,” she said. “I tell her all the time that I love her and I truly mean that. She is a wonderful person.”

That affirmation was especially evident this past year. “The outpouring of love, support, and congratulations for Sister Robert Marie on her golden jubilee was just tremendous,” added Father Ryan. “This shows that in her 27 years here, both as principal of our parish school and now working with the senior community, she continues to have a tremendous impact and is very much appreciated by the people she has served.”

Her ministry of bringing Christ to the seniors at Corpus Christi continues to be an important part of Sister Robert Marie’s life of service. “With the seniors I think it’s been good because from day one our goal is to have a good time. But not only that—we’re providing opportunities for people to serve the poor,” she said. “I just feel like I’m carrying out my vocation the way it should be carried out at this point in my life.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.
—Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at www.osfphila.org

2008 Annual Report

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

(Formerly Franciscan Ministries Foundation)

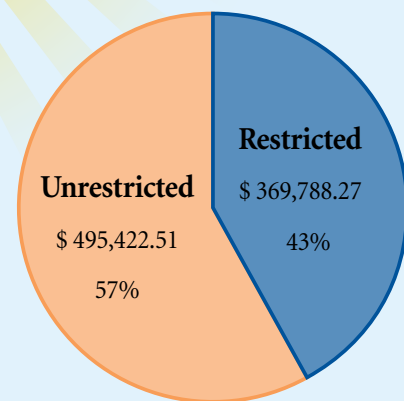
For more than 150 years, the Sisters of St. Francis, trusting in the providence of God, have ministered to the needs of God's people. In 1994, the Franciscan Ministries Foundation was founded with the goal of seeking financial support for sisters' ministries, for retirement, and for other current needs. In early 2009, the Franciscan Ministries Foundation legally changed their name to Sisters of St. Francis Foundation. With hearts full of gratitude, we acknowledge the many blessings that come to us through the goodness and generosity of our donors. In the tradition of "Sharing the Good News," we share with you the 2008 Annual Report from the foundation to show how you enable us to make a difference—to touch the lives of others—and ensure that our ministries will continue into the future.

*With Hearts Filled with Gratitude
The Sisters of St. Francis*

Thank You!



▲ Funds restricted to the Retirement Fund help support our sisters in the later years of their lives like those who reside at Assisi House in Aston, Pennsylvania, and at St. Ann's in Tacoma, Washington.



Total Donations: \$ 865,210.78

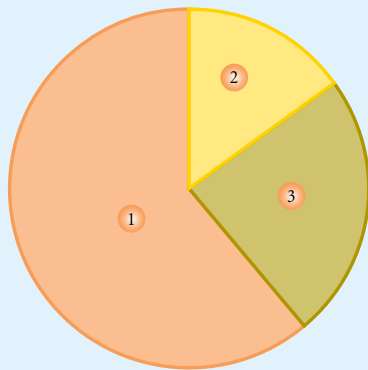
Sources of Donations: Raffle, Golf Outing, Direct Mail Appeals, *Good News*, Memorial Gifts, Memorial Cards, and Estates and Inheritances.



The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia assume operational costs of the foundation; therefore, every dollar that our donors give is used solely for the ministries and retirement. All funds that are received in a fiscal year are disbursed at the end of that fiscal year. Each year congregational leadership determines where the disbursement of unrestricted funds are most needed.

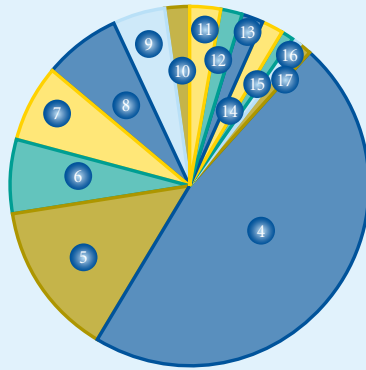
▲ For students like those at Drexel Neumann Academy, your generous donations to our education ministries go toward helping secure quality education from elementary school through college.

Distribution of Ministry: Unrestricted



- 1 **St. Ann Convent** \$ 300,516 (61%)
- 2 **St. Joseph Family Center** \$ 75,000 (15%)
- 3 **As needed** \$ 119,906.51 (24%)

Distribution of Ministry: Restricted



- 4 **Retirement Fund** \$ 182,213.49 (48%)
Retirement 63%, Assisi House 33%, St. Ann Home 4%
- 5 **Education** \$ 50,843.01 (14%)
- 6 **Foreign Ministries** \$ 25,419 (7%)
- 7 **Health Care** \$ 25,106 (7%)
- 8 **St. Ann Chapel** \$ 24,391.27 (7%)
- 9 **AH Equipment** \$ 19,405 (5%)
- 10 **Shelter & Social Ministries** \$ 7,690 (2%)
- 11 **Other** \$ 9,541 (3%)
- 12 **Parish Ministries** \$ 7,630 (2%)
- 13 **Camp 05 Pledge Payments** \$ 5,700 (2%)
- 14 **Memorial Garden** \$ 5,631 (2%)
- 15 **Red Hill Farm** \$ 3,738.50 (1%)
- 16 **OLA and OLA Chapel** \$ 1,720 (0%)
- 17 **Spiritual Centers** \$ 760 (0%)



EXPLANATION OF RESTRICTED CATEGORIES **Retirement Fund:** Distribution to retirement residences on the East (Assisi House, Aston, PA) and the West Coast (St. Ann Convent, Tacoma, WA) and to the general retirement fund ♦ **Spiritual Centers:** Franciscan Spiritual Center Aston, PA; Franciscan Spiritual Center, Milwaukee, OR ♦ **Memorial Garden:** Trees, Benches, Bricks, and Pergola entries ♦ **Camp 05 Pledge Payments:** Heritage, Hermitages, and OLA Chapel ♦ **Parish Ministries:** Emmitsburg; San Antonio, Pala; St. Andrew Mission, Pendleton ♦ **Other:** Capuchin Friars, companions, individual recipients in need ♦ **Shelters & Social Ministries:** Anna's Place, Beacon of Light, CRS, Corpus Christi Food Pantry, Water Project, Phoenixville Shelter, Benedict House, Puyallup, New Orleans, Foster Care ♦ **Healthcare:** Saint Joseph Medical Center Chapel, MBMC, SFH ♦ **Foreign Ministries:** St. Lucy School & AIDS Orphanage, Kenya, Africa ♦ **Education:** Drexel Neumann Academy, Chester, PA; The Catholic High School of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD; Neumann College, Aston, PA; Mother Seton Academy, Baltimore, MD.



In Memoriam

- Sister Marie Matilda Cipriano
1/24/09
- Sister Anna McLaughlin
(Sister Josefa)
2/1/09
- Sister Emma Mary Steckel
2/8/09
- Sister Helena Kelly
(Sister Marie Columbkil)
2/18/09
- Sister Bernadette Desmond
2/18/09
- Sister Pauline Marie Kirchner
2/27/09
- Sister Francis Damian Recker
3/3/09
- Sister Gertrude Marie Lawrence
3/7/09
- Sister Beatrice Diamond
4/30/09
- Sister Marcella Francis Milhouse
5/09/09
- Sister Helen Regina Vanick
5/26/09

FoCUS

DOROTHY CHARBONNEAU

“IT IS HERE THAT I HAVE FOUND MY HEART. IT IS HERE THAT I HAVE COME HOME.”

With hazel eyes sparkling and a radiant smile lighting her face, Dorothy Charbonneau easily launches into a treatise on the joy of being a companion of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. “It is here that I have found my heart,” she explains. “It is here that I have come home.”

Dorothy’s discovery of her Franciscan heart began in the fall of 2003 when she began spiritual direction with Sister Mary Jo Chaves at the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Portland, Oregon. Her heart and spirit warmed and opened to life in a new way. “I found new meaning in my life,” she says. A year later, she joined the companions.

Dorothy gathers with other companions and some of the sisters once a month to study about Franciscan life, share faith experiences, and socialize. These sessions provide nourishment for their spirits and ground them in their growth as Franciscans. Companions take turns delving into chapters of study texts and preparing a presentation for the others. They also prepare a reflection question that helps the group further explore the material and apply it to their own lives. “We all learn from one another,” says Dorothy. “It is a cooperative walk in faith.”

The true delight of Dorothy’s heart, however, is participating in Franciscan hermitage retreats. She understands the power they hold for developing one’s relationship with God and grounding one’s spirit. The rhythm of spending the day in silent listening and then a part of the evening in sharing with other retreatants around what was heard helps to develop the habit of a listening heart. Dorothy has experienced these retreats to be invaluable in her growth as a Franciscan. She was

thrilled when Sister Mary Jo invited her to join the hermitage retreat facilitation team.

Dorothy plans to reduce her teaching hours next year and to give more time to helping out at the Franciscan Spiritual Center. “I will always be involved with the Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia,” she says. It is in their Franciscan presence that she has discovered her true heart and home.

◀ *Organizing boxes of materials used for the hermitage retreats has been one of Dorothy’s special projects at the Franciscan Spiritual Center.*



▶ *Sister Mary Jo Chaves and Dorothy Charbonneau reminisce over photos of hermitage retreat experiences.*



▲ *Dorothy raises Clare’s poverty bowl as she presents it to retreatants, honoring each as a gift from God.*



LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

Let's Hear From You!

- ___ Please add my name to the mailing list for *Good News*. (This is a secure list to which no other mail will be sent, unless you request to receive information.)
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 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Select areas of interest to receive information about the congregation.

- Companion Program Franciscan Spiritual Centers (select one): Aston, PA Ringwood, NJ Milwaukie, OR
- Community Supported Agriculture: *Red Hill Farm, Aston PA* Sisters of St. Francis Foundation Vocations
(Formerly Franciscan Ministries Foundation)

What do you think of our new look? We are interested in your thoughts/comments:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Honor and Remember your Loved Ones

Each of the items below would be placed in the Canticle Garden—Our Lady of Angels Convent.
 Call: (610) 558-7714 for a brochure or visit our website, www.osfphila.org



Plant a TREE

A plaque will be placed beneath the tree listing the name of the tree and the name of the person to be honored.



Purchase a BENCH

A plaque with the person's name to be remembered will be placed on the bench.



Engrave a BRICK...

with the person's name you are honoring to be placed on a Prayer Path.

Honorarium or Memorial Gifts for Family, Friends, and Sisters

- Memorial Cards (Please send me a sample starter packet.)
- Contact me about making a donation for ministries/retirement.
- Send me information about memorial gifts in the Canticle Gardens (Aston, PA).
 Benches—\$600, \$1100, \$1600 Bricks—\$100
 Pergola Plaques—\$500, \$1000 Trees—\$100 to \$250

Invitation

- I would like to arrange a visit to the motherhouse and Canticle Garden(s) in Aston, PA.
- I would appreciate a visit from a Sister of St. Francis to discuss including the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in my will.

Please tear out this page and mail completed to:
 GOOD NEWS, Communications Office, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014-1207

Visit us online at www.osfphila.org or call us at (610) 558-7726

Get into the Swing!



The Sisters of St. Francis 15th Annual Golf Tournament

Monday, September 28, 2009

Concord Country Club

West Chester, Pennsylvania

◀ *Golfers enjoy a day of fun and recreation while helping to support the Sisters of St. Francis' ministries.*

For more information or to register, please contact the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation at (610) 558-5352 or golf@osfphila.org.

▶ *The Sisters of St. Francis have always made it their mission to help others promote their own self-worth and share their talents. Building relationships with the seniors in the community allows us to grow our ministries as well as spread our Franciscan charism. Much like Sr. Robert Marie Green and the seniors featured on page 12, the seniors pictured here are enjoying their time together at Morris Hall in 1955 in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.*



Change is Good News!

You probably have noticed that this issue of the *Good News* which you hold in your hand is different. After ten years of printing in the old style—larger format, two color version—we have decided it was time for a change. Of course, the economic crisis currently affecting our country has also affected us. This was one of the deciding factors leading us to this change but recently we had more complaints regarding the cumbersomeness of the size, which told us we might want to re-evaluate the publication. Although we have decided to go with full-color, don't be fooled. The printing of this piece still costs significantly less than what it had been previously because we have opted to go for a more standard size. As stated in our Mission Statement, we are called to be "sister with all of creation," which is why we take great strides to preserve our environment. With this in mind, we proudly state that we are still using FSC certified recycled paper. We are also constantly revising our mailing list, but now we also offer an option to receive the publication via email. Please use the form on the inside back cover to tell us your thoughts or make a change to the way you receive your copy. We hope you enjoy it.

Good
NEWS

The Sisters of St. Francis
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