

# Voices of Charity

Spring 2012



*Heart of the Matter*  
Behind the scenes at the  
Mother House and Ross Hall  
pages 3-9

*Re-Markings*  
Seton Center—  
small but mighty  
pages 22-23



A publication of the  
SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF LEAVENWORTH



## SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

### **Mission Statement**

Impelled by the love of Christ,  
we, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth,  
offer every loving service in our power  
to meet the critical needs  
of God's people.

### **Vision Statement**

As Sisters of Charity we commit ourselves here and now  
to embrace anew the charism given us by Vincent, Louise,  
Mother Xavier:  
to love the poor,  
to love one another,  
to live simply,  
and to unite the whole of our lives  
in the poor and loving Christ.

COVER PHOTO: In the main hallway of the Mother House  
with "tools of their trades" (left to right): Rebecca Wolters,  
Mike Vornholt and Julie West.



# in this issue



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## From the Community Director

Sister Maureen Hall ..... 2

## Heart of the Matter

- Behind the scenes and on their jobs at the Mother House and Ross Hall ..... 3
- Fostering mission and spirit ..... 4
- Mike Vornholt – Employee with longest tenure ..... 5
- Inside and outside the Mother House ... 6
- Rebecca Wolters – One happy housekeeper ..... 7
- Health and wellness role important ..... 8
- Julie West, RN – Once a student of SCLs, now their nurse ..... 9

## Leavenwords

Mother to Mother Ministry prompted long-lasting friendship ..... 10

## Vocation Voices

- A parent’s role in vocations ..... 11
- Sister, sister ..... 12

## SCL Associates

- One act of charity leads to another and another ..... 13
- Associates have a role in church-based shelter program ..... 14

## Re-markings

New program invites young women to serve as ‘Heartland Charity Volunteers’ .. 15

- First-grade experience points to art as career ..... 16
- P.S. Another SCL influences editor ..... 16
- Of Special Note ..... 17
- Highlighting special honors and ‘in the news’ items

- Three SCLs attend Giving Voice gathering ..... 17
- Honors for Sister Roberta Furey—42 years and counting ..... 17
- Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Jubilarians 2012 ..... 18
- Hall of Fame recognition for Sister Frances Marie Grady ..... 18
- Summer means Leadership Camp ... 18
- Poetic musings take shape in a book ... 19
- Humor and good information spice up Weight Watchers classes ..... 20

## Beyond All Borders

- Anti-death penalty resolve remains in spite of tragic, personal loss ..... 21
- Small but mighty, Seton Center exemplifies Vincentian spirit ..... 22
- On the Immigration Front ..... 24
- Keystone XL Pipeline ..... 26
- Inspirational workshop to examine making a choice to care for the Earth... 28

## Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

Poetic musings continued ..... 29



# Community Director

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Sister Maureen Hall

At this year's Spring Regional Meetings with Sisters and Associates, we continued to explore the meaning of transformation in our lives, our ministries and our Community.

Transformation is not a new concept. The Gospels call us to be transformed into the person of Jesus. In his letters, St. Paul writes about becoming a new creation. Louise de Marillac says if you want to be transformed, always make your choices with the poor in your heart and be about compassion and justice.

Transformation is about conversion and radical change. It's about being Easter people who have journeyed through darkness to find new light. With our roots sunk deep in our faith and heritage, and with a deep heart of charity, we can spread our wings in this dynamic and soar to new opportunities to serve and minister.

People will ask—and we may sometimes wonder ourselves—“How can you do this? You are an aging community. What energies will sustain your passion?”

My response to these questions is one of hope and commitment to our mission as SCLs and Associates—“Impelled by the love of Christ, we...offer every loving service in our power to meet the critical needs of God's people.”

This mission has propelled us throughout our history and will continue to challenge and invigorate us as we partner with others who share our charism. We stand on the strong shoulders of those who have gone before us. We stand with those in need and those with like values. And we stand for the love of Christ who is the energizing and sustaining source of our ongoing transformation.

May your lives be transformed and blessed during this Easter season of renewal and may you experience the love of Christ in your hearts and homes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Maureen Hall".

Sister Maureen Hall  
*SCL Community Director*

## Heart of the Matter

Behind the scenes and on their jobs at the

# Mother House & Ross Hall

The Mother House and Ross Hall are home to approximately 115 Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLs)—many of whom are retired but still active; others, in need of long-term care. Meeting the varied needs of these Sisters and keeping the facilities and property in good order for all SCLs, guests and visitors are the responsibilities of different parts of the organizational structure that supports the Mother House and Ross Hall.

Articles in this “Heart of the Matter” section feature representative people behind the scenes, in the hallways and on the job who keep things running smoothly, minister to SCLs, and provide nursing support and wellness opportunities. There’s another whole dimension of Community-wide support available through Cantwell Hall, its staff and offices at the Mother House that *Voices of Charity* will feature at a future date.



# Fostering mission and spirit

*“No matter her age or ability, every Sister is a contributing member of our Community and a valued source of wisdom and experience,” Sister Lucy Walter said, describing the philosophy that permeates programs available to SCLs who live at the Mother House (MH) and Ross Hall (RH). As MH/RH coordinator, Sister Lucy collaborates with Sisters Mary Barbara Wieseler and Mary Patricia Murry to put this philosophy into action across different dimensions of Sisters’ lives.*

## Communications important

Sister Lucy facilitates ongoing communication with everyone involved with overall care and concern for Sisters at the Mother House and Ross Hall; among them, health and wellness managers, the Community Council and a leadership group that meets to review Sisters’ health issues and life transitions. She also liaisons with family members on behalf of Sisters who are experiencing failing health and keeps SCL leadership informed about deaths in Sisters’ families.

“It’s a privilege for me to be part of these Sisters’ lives,” Sister Lucy said. “It’s been a real grace in my life to minister to these great women who are supportive, humble, simple in their ways and so very grateful.”

Guests and hospitality at the Mother House are her other responsibilities along with coordination of outside talks and presentations for Sisters. Plus, Sisters Lucy and Barbara work with five group leaders from the Mother House who host group discussions, serve on the Jubilee Committee and assist in other ways.

## Pastoral care, other services

As assistant coordinator, Sister Barbara’s role encompasses pastoral care. This includes preparing vigils with the Sisters; consulting with them regarding end-of-life preferences; orienting Sisters new to the campus; collaborating in making spiritual life resources available;



Sisters Mary Pat Murry, Barbara Wieseler and Lucy Walter during mid-day Wednesday prayer.

coordinating non-university volunteers; and co-facilitating the “Sister to Sister” program with Sister Mary Pat in which SCLs in the Midwest companion and connect with Sisters in Ross Hall or assisted living.

“My core belief for any kind of community development is good communication and collaboration,” Sister Barbara said. “That’s what we try to do well. My goal is to support each person’s individuality, but to invite working together, as it takes a community to make community work. Offering ways to enrich one’s spiritual life is another key goal of

mine. I am very privileged to work with our Sisters.”

Sister Barbara initiated a bi-monthly “Tea with the Team” in which she, Sisters Lucy and Mary Pat meet in small groups with Ross Hall SCLs to hear their concerns and share their thanks. A quarterly “house meeting” is also held where Ross Hall residents receive updates and ask questions of health supervisors, the SCL Council liaison and the three RH coordinating staff.

In addition at the Mother House, Sister Barbara facilitates special

interest groups; collaborates with assigning “house tasks” to Sisters; and coordinates Sister volunteers for “on call” weekend and evening emergency transportation or assistance.

### Personal care needs

“We try to be sensitive to the needs of the Sisters, appreciative of the staff and of service,” sums up Sister Mary Pat, who tends to the personal care needs of the Ross Hall SCLs. Her duties range from seeing to clothing needs of the Sisters, shopping for them and for snack items that are needed, responding to requests for money, subscriptions or money orders, and being alert to other needs such as the mail, birthdays or whatever is brought to her attention. She is the treasurer for Ross Hall and prepares the yearly budget and monthly financial reports. Sister Mary Pat participates in Ross Hall meetings and takes her turn preparing the Wednesday mid-day prayer services.

“It’s been a privilege to be of service and to learn more of who the Sisters are and what their contributions have been to promoting the reign of God,” Sister Mary Pat said.

### Mother House Mission Statement

As the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, our mission is to be a welcoming home where we witness and proclaim God’s love for all.

We commit ourselves:

- To love and care for each other and for all those who enter our doors.
- To respect the dignity of all of creation.
- To create an atmosphere of prayerfulness and joy.

## Mike Vornholt

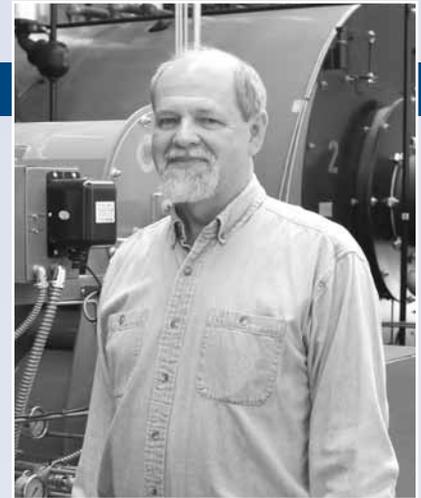
### Employee with longest tenure

It may have been luck that landed Mike Vornholt his job in the power plant at the SCL Mother House, but he’s certain it’s been the great environment and constant opportunities to learn that have kept him working for the SCLs the past 38 years—the longest tenured employee.

As a young man, Mike was laid off from his heating and cooling job. His Father, who was foreman of power plant operations at Fort Leavenworth’s Munson Army Hospital, was talking with a friend who did heating and cooling at the Mother House. Mike’s Father mentioned in passing that his son was unemployed and looking for a job. That comment led to Mike’s employment interview with Sister Ann Perpetua Swiderski in November 1974. Sister called a few days later with a job offer.

Mike’s been on the job ever since making sure that heating and cooling—“anything that blows air”—are in great working order. At first, he rotated through all three shifts. In January 1979, when his boss retired, Mike was named manager of the power plant.

“This is a great place to work,” Mike said. “There’s a variety of equipment—old and new. It’s been an excellent place to learn; there’s no way I could have learned everything I have anywhere else. I’ve seen new equipment installed, then run its course to be replaced by the next generation of equipment.”



The power plant has been Mike Vornholt’s home away from home for 38 years of employment at the Mother House.

Mike explained that the entire plant—Mother House, Ross Hall and University of Saint Mary—uses steam for heat. “It’s an economical way to reach all of the buildings,” he added.

With 24/7 coverage, Mike’s team of five full-time staff keeps the equipment running, fields calls and maintains the plant. This involves the computerized energy management system that his crew pretty much installed. Then there are the three new large boilers installed between 2006 and January 2012 that have computerized diagnostic capabilities. Computerization is right up Mike’s alley. In his spare time, he rebuilds and repairs computers.

Because his job keeps Mike and his team behind the scenes—in the tunnels that house the infrastructure for all utilities and in the power plant at the edge of the campus—they may not know many Sisters by name. But the power plant team has the Sisters’ comfort at heart as they work around-the-clock to ensure well-functioning heating and cooling systems.

# Inside and outside the Mother House

*While they describe their jobs as tending to things rather than people, Sisters Margaret Finch and Ann McGuire are very much focused on making the Mother House comfortable for SCLs who live there. And they are very quick to credit the department managers and employees for doing a superb job and for living the Mother House mission. Fifty-one employees are in departments that report to Sisters Margaret and Ann.*



During a recognition program last November, Sister Margaret Finch congratulated six employees who had worked at the Mother House for 25 to 37 years. Left to right, Marvin Cox, Faye Cleavinger, Tim Cune, Mike Vornholt, Donna McCulley, and Kenny Becker.

## Sister Margaret oversees

- The Bell Room (reception desk).
- Annunciation Chapel.
- Maintenance.
- Housekeeping.
- Transportation.
- Coordination with Aramark for management of food service.

## Sister Ann oversees

- The grounds.
- The power plant.
- Laundry services.
- Security.
- Maintenance and grounds of other SCL houses in Leavenworth and Lansing.
- Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Sisters Ann and Margaret cover for one another, as needed, and work as a team, and they trust the department managers to supervise employees and accomplish the required work. “They generally only come to us if there are issues they can’t resolve,” Sister Ann said. “It works very well.”

“Our employees care very much about the Sisters,” said Sister Margaret. “And in turn, the Sisters respect the employees and treat them as equals.”

Continuing that thought, Sister Ann called the employees “our partners” and said, “We would be unable to do the work without them. Plus, many have personal friendships with the Sisters. Often, once a person comes to work here, he/she stays.”

Sister Margaret said eight individuals have worked at the Mother House for 25 to 38 years. These long-term employees were honored during an employee recognition program last November. There are also several who have family members working in other departments. “The SCLs offer very fair benefits and salaries,” Sister Ann observed. “It’s a very peaceful, healthy work environment.”

Sisters Ann and Margaret meet with department managers as needed and four times a year as a group. They also meet with Sisters Noreen Walter, Lucy Walter and Mary Barbara Wieseler, and Beverly Armstrong periodically to keep lines of communication open across all dimensions of life at the Mother House, Ross Hall and Marillac Center.



Managing operations that encompass the entire Mother House campus are (front row, left to right) Melanie Roberts, laundry; Ray Krueger, maintenance; Sister Margaret Finch, administration; (middle row) Kristina Rastorfer, human resources; Desra Balock, housekeeping; Del Watkins, transportation; (back row) Mike Vornholt, power plant; Beverly Armstrong, health and wellness; and Sister Ann McGuire, administration. Ken Davidson, grounds, was unavailable for the photograph.

“A wide variety of projects keep us busy throughout the day, and you’re not bored doing the same thing over and over.

One of my favorite projects was the big shadow box with the stained glass at the south end of first floor of the Mother House.

It was great that the Sisters had confidence in me to do that.

I enjoy working with all my co-workers, and the Sisters seem to appreciate all that you do for them.”

— Ray Krueger  
*Manager, Maintenance*  
 20-year SCL employee

## Rebecca Wolters

### One happy housekeeper



Sister Mary Francine Stubbs enjoyed a visit with Rebecca Wolters.

The Sisters make working at the Mother House special for Rebecca Wolters. And then there are her co-workers and the fact that she likes to clean. Add it all up, and Rebecca is one happy housekeeper with a smile for everyone she meets.

“This is like a second home to me,” Rebecca said. “The Sisters and my co-workers are my second family.”

Rebecca’s worked at the Mother House for eight years and fills in periodically as needed at Ross Hall. She learned about the job opening from Janet Seber, Cantwell Hall employee.

While she’s worked on every floor of the Mother House, Rebecca is currently assigned to the fourth floor residence. She reports for duty at 7 a.m., and based on the schedule, she completes weekly and/or daily duties. She especially enjoys group jobs where several housekeepers work together cleaning family rooms, dining rooms and chapels.

Her Grandmother worked at the Mother House many years ago. When Rebecca first started her job, her Grandmother told her about a Sister who checked her work with a white glove.

The “white glove approach” wouldn’t bother Rebecca, who’s proud of her neat and tidy housekeeper’s cart and who takes great pride in keeping the Mother House clean and spotless. It all relates to the family environment she’s experienced.

“The way the Sisters talk to me, I’m not just their housekeeper,” Rebecca said. “The Sisters care about me. I think they feel about me like I feel about them—that they are special and among my friends.”

# Health and wellness role important

*There are several things that Beverly Armstrong, RN, BSN, MSG, director of health and wellness, likes about working at the Mother House and Ross Hall. First and foremost, it's the Sisters.*

“They value quality of life over quantity,” Beverly explained. “Our goal in health and wellness is to keep them as independent as possible for as long as possible and to help them experience the best quality of life they can.”

Beverly also values the excellent staff that provide 24/7 coverage for Ross Hall and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. coverage of the wellness office at the Mother House. The 60 health and wellness employees include RNs, LPNs, nurse aides, the activities director, the physical therapist, physical therapy assistant and physical therapy aide. Plus, there are consultants with whom Beverly works to round out physical care services—a pharmacist, dietitian and medical director.

The second floor of the Mother House offers assisted living arrangements for SCLs; Ross Hall provides long-term care. If Sisters living on other floors have medical needs, staff of the wellness office are available to help. In addition, this office coordinates the employee health program, and flu shots and TB testing for Sisters and staff.

Physical and mental health assessments of Sisters under the care of health and wellness staff help identify needs for services, such as wound care, physical therapy, or activities and socialization. Sisters may move back and forth between the Mother House and Ross Hall if recuperating from an illness or in need of different levels of care.



Outside the wellness office on second floor at the Mother House, Sister Agnes Eileen Dunn (center) with Julie Butler, RN, assisted living supervisor (left), and Beverly Armstrong, RN, BSN, MSG, director of health and wellness.

While Ross Hall is not a licensed facility, it's on a par and exceeds many licensure and quality requirements. “We look at costs, staffing, admission criteria and health complications,” Beverly explained. “We compare ourselves with studies done by the state. For the most recent year, we had no bed

sores, and our falls and infections were less than licensed facilities.

“The Sisters are blessed to have very good staff caring for them,” Beverly concluded, “and we are blessed with a great work environment and tremendous support from SCL leaders who care so deeply about the Sisters.”

## Julie West, RN

### Once a student of SCLs, now their nurse

Julie West, RN, was taught by SCLs during her grade school and high school education in Leavenworth, Kan. Because of this, when she first came to work at Ross Hall, it took her awhile to get used to the idea that she needed to be firm with elderly Sisters who might not want to take their medications.

After all, several of her patients were Julie's former teachers. She recalls Sister Pam Hinkle, then the Ross Hall administrator, telling her, "Julie, I know we taught you for years, but you're the nurse, and now the Sisters need to listen to you."

Almost 20 years later, Julie considers herself privileged to be an SCL employee. "It's wonderful to work for and care for the Sisters," Julie said. "The staff is great. We all work well together."

Julie likes that the size of Ross Hall allows her plenty of one-on-one time with the Sisters. She appreciates that SCLs value a holistic approach to health services, something that's important to Julie. She also believes that staff members try to live the mission statement of the Mother House.

Julie first earned her LPN degree and worked in hospitals, doctors' offices and nursing facilities. Looking back, Julie said, "Landing in the geriatric field was a good fit for me." She completed her associate degree in nursing after a few years of working at Ross Hall.

Julie and her husband live in the country where she enjoys gardening and planting flowers. The couple also likes to shop for antiques. They are members of Sacred Heart-St. Casimir Parish, Leavenworth.



Sister Virginia Flanick gets her medications and a smile from Julie West, RN.

"The Sisters take a unique interest in our lives, more than other bosses do. I can remember doing yard work at 100 Olive, and Sister Mary Janet McGilley [former president of University of Saint Mary] would make coffee and cinnamon rolls and invite us in. My experience is that no other people treat you like the Sisters do."

— Ken Davidson  
 Manager, Grounds  
 19-year employee

# Mother to Mother Ministry prompted long-lasting friendship

A friendship that began some 23 years ago through the Mother to Mother Ministry in Leavenworth, Kan., continues to bring Sister Ann Louise Eble and Bridgette Sutton together to share great memories sprinkled with lots of laughter.

“There she was, this little lady in the car with four little kids,” Bridgette recalled. “She was feisty and ready to go.”

And go they did. To the library, to programs and plays at Fort Leavenworth, to picnics, to Christmas at the Mother House and to Kansas City for other adventures. Sister Ann Louise, a “partner mother,” taught the kids to swim; she helped with reading and learning skills.

“The kids thought of her as a surrogate grandma,” Bridgette said.

While Bridgette, a single mom, had an excellent support system with her aunt and uncle with whom she lived at the time, she valued Sister Ann Louise. She said Sister listened without judging, helped her see the positive side of life and reinforced her—all things Mother to Mother Ministry hopes to accomplish by pairing women for support and understanding.

The experience was an adventure and education for Sister Ann Louise. Although she had been an elementary teacher and principal for many years, she said she wasn’t quite prepared for the energy of

young children in the car asking, “Where are we going? What are we doing?”

“It was a whole education for me,” Sister Ann Louise said, “and I really did enjoy it.”

Bridgette said it was good for her family to know that there was someone else out there interested in them. Plus, she and her kids learned about a different culture and the Catholic perspective. The kids did things they might not have been able to do on a single working mom’s salary. And they were exposed to people they might never have met—like other Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

The kids are grown now—ages 20 to 25. Two live in other states. William, the oldest who was 4 or 5 when Sister Ann Louise first met him, has stopped by to visit her when he’s in town. Bayzell, the youngest, also connects with Sister periodically. And so does Bridgette who still lives in Leavenworth and works in a lab in a doctor’s office in Lansing.

Before she died, Bridgette’s aunt told her that Sister Ann Louise would be her best friend. More than that Bridgette says, “I have a Sister. My very own Sister! She’s been a bundle of happiness for us. She’s like one of the family.”



Bridgette Sutton (left) and Sister Ann Louise Eble caught up on life during a recent visit at the Mother House.

## Vocation Voices

*In the past year, it has become abundantly clear to me that parents of discerning women have as many questions as the women themselves.*

### A parent's role in vocations

by Sister Vicki Lichtenauer  
*SCL vocation director*



I have been asked everything from “Won’t my daughter be lonely?” to “How can my daughter use her college education as a Sister?” Just as pressing as young women seeking more insights into their own personal spiritual journeys, their parents are seeking raw data and specific answers.

Spending time with parents of children from grade school age to college revealed a huge gap, perhaps spanning one to two generations, when people did not receive a great amount of knowledge about contemporary religious life.

Having grown up post Vatican II myself, I am very aware that there is a gap of “Church knowledge.” When my peers and I were growing up

there were so many changes going on, that our exposure to Church teachings and introduction to religious women and men were non-existent or sporadic at best.

I came across a pamphlet from the National Religious Formation Conference called “10 questions parents ask about Church vocations.” It seems to do a good job of answering the most pressing questions. I have ordered these pamphlets and would be glad to send you one upon request. Let me know at [vickil@scls.org](mailto:vickil@scls.org).

Along with this pamphlet, I encourage those of you journeying with people discerning their vocational call to continue to educate yourselves. As Sisters of Charity, we

love to provide hospitality. Arranging time for a chat, sharing a meal in our home, coming to speak to your family or parish group, or arranging a tour of our beautiful Mother House are all things we would be happy to do for you. Spending time with us can help provide people with a clearer realization of how we joyfully balance our lives of ministry, prayer and community as Sisters of Charity in 2012.

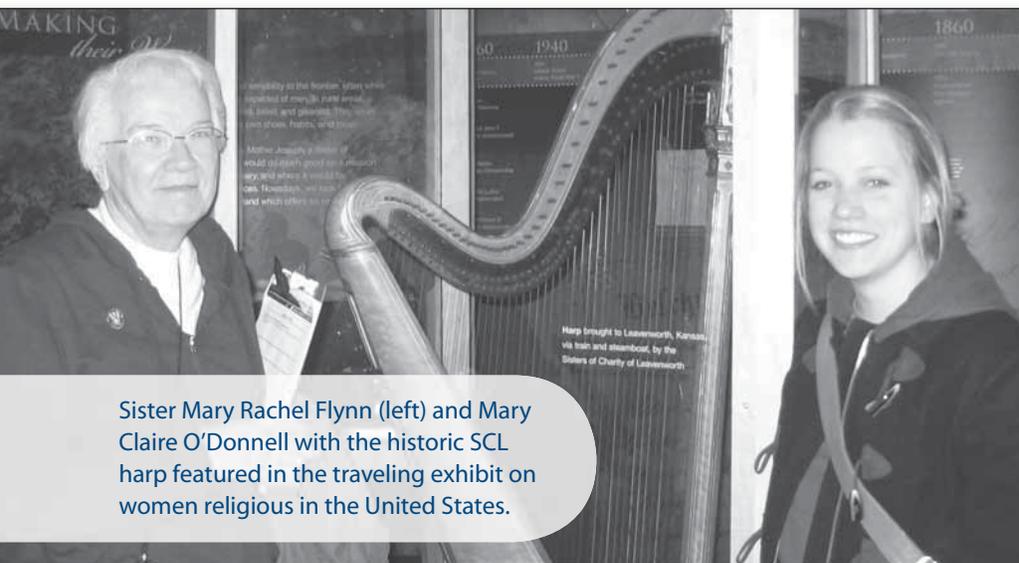
We ask each of you to include vocation discernment in your daily prayers. If you know persons you think might be interested in learning more about consecrated religious life, please encourage them to pursue more information prayerfully with an open heart.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at  
816-716-2660 or visit our website at [www.scls.org](http://www.scls.org).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article first ran in the Nov. 1, 2011 edition of *The Observer*, the daily publication serving the University of Notre Dame where Mary Claire O'Donnell is a student. Xavier House is designed to offer a community-living experience for women who are interested in deepening their spiritual lives, and social and global awareness.

# Sister, sister

by Mary Claire O'Donnell



Sister Mary Rachel Flynn (left) and Mary Claire O'Donnell with the historic SCL harp featured in the traveling exhibit on women religious in the United States.

When I arrived at Xavier House, a convent of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, I was greeted with open arms and wide smiles. I wasn't entering a stone dungeon, but rather a converted preschool. Sure, my room was small, but I've lived in smaller, and it was all I really needed.

Over the course of the summer, Sisters Vicki, Mary Rachel, Mary Geraldine, and Kate and Denise treated me as part of their family. I worked with them. I learned to cook and grill with them. I prayed with them. I painted with them. I roadtripped with them. I celebrated birthdays and jubilees with them. I laughed with them—harder sometimes than I ever have in my life.

If you had told me in May that I would have left Xavier House with such a heavy heart, I would have laughed at you. But leaving that house, knowing that I would not be able to watch "Glee" with Sister Vicki on Tuesdays, knit with Kate or do countless other daily activities with all the other Sisters I lived and worked with, was one of the saddest good-byes I have ever experienced. Pulling away from that house for the last time on July 15 brought tears to my eyes.

I was terrified to spend my summer in Kansas City. But working at Cristo Rey was one of the most fulfilling jobs I have ever had, and I will never forget the summer I lived in a convent.

I spent the summer before my senior year of college living in a convent. In Kansas City, Kan., 1,500 miles away from home. And it was one of the best summers of my life.

No, I am not on my way to becoming a Sister or entering religious life. Faith is an important part of my life, but I want to live and share my faith in different ways. The experiences I had this past summer, the stories I brought back with me and the women I met, however, will forever be a part of my life and brought a new perspective to it.

Over the summer, I participated in the Summer Service Learning Program through the Center for Social Concerns at the University of

Notre Dame. My site was Cristo Rey Kansas City High School, where I worked all over the school, helping out in classrooms and with different administrators, but mostly in the Corporate Work Study Program office.

I won't lie—I was a little nervous about my decision to head to Kansas City for eight weeks of my summer, and my apprehension only grew when I learned I would not be living with an alumni family there, but instead in a convent with a group of Sisters. Succumbing to stereotypes, I pictured myself living in a tiny room with a bunch of stern women who were always in their habits and never smiled. I was terrified.

I could not have been more wrong about my time in Kansas City.

# One act of charity leads to another and another

*Their love story began when Ruth Schukman and Dan Dakotas met after a weekday morning Mass at Good Shepherd Parish, Shawnee, Kan.*

**B**efore that and coincidentally, their lives of charity were deeply influenced by Capuchin priests they had each known in their home parishes in New York (Dan) and Hays, Kan. (Ruth), and by family members who instilled the value of helping persons in need.

The Dakotas have encountered the SCLs in many different settings over the years. The couple has volunteered 30 years at Shalom House, a shelter in Kansas City, Kan., for men who are homeless, and where SCLs also have volunteered. Their paths also crossed with SCLs at Shantivanam (now called Christ's Peace House of Prayer) in Easton, Kan.

And their SCL ties introduced them to other ministry opportunities and eventually the invitation to become Associates. Dan was a big brother to youth at the former Mount St. Vincent Home, an SCL ministry in Topeka, Kan. Both are active in the Bethany prison ministry in Lansing, Kan., where Dan had already been teaching a mixed media arts exploration course. Dan also teaches an art elective once a year at Cristo Rey High School, Kansas City, Mo., an SCL-sponsored ministry.

"The Sisters' values resonate with our own," Dan said. So much so, that Dan encouraged Ruth's cousin to consider joining the SCLs as she



Shawn Brea (left) behind the counter of Anna's Oven Restaurant with Ruth Schukman, SCLA, and Dan Dakotas, SCLA, investors in the business partnership.

discerned her vocation, and Sister Ann Schumacher did!

## International reach

Through the Bethany ministry, the Dakotas met Father Anthony Kiplagat from Kenya who was attending the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, Kan. When Father Anthony expressed his dreams for the girls' school he had started in his home village, Ruth and Dan went beyond listening. With acquaintances, they started Friends of St. Anne's Girls School. Proceeds from fund-raising efforts—including an annual gala at Genghis Khan Mongolian Grill, Kansas City, Mo.—have built a library, a science lab and a new dorm; brought electricity to the school; and helped with tuition.

Last year, the owner of Genghis Khan Mongolian Grill invited the Dakotas and other investors into a business partnership with a charitable bent. That led to the development of Anna's Oven

Restaurant, near the grill and from which 50 percent of profits go toward education of youth in need in this country and abroad. The restaurant bears the name of Ruth's grandmother, and the menu carries favorite recipes from the Schukman and Dakotas families.

## Careers and vocations

After 28 years at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Ruth now works full-time for a consulting company and serves as radiation safety officer for the University of Kansas Hospital. After 36 years teaching art for the Shawnee Mission School District, Dan says he's "re-wired, not retired." He periodically conducts art workshops for school districts, but otherwise he volunteers much of his time with charitable causes.

As to what motivates him, Dan says, "We're supposed to live the Gospel."

"We've been given so much, we need to share," Ruth adds.

# Associates have a role in church-based shelter program

When Donna Mae Donahue, SCLA, convenor of the Grand Junction area Associates, put out the word for assistance at the end of last year, the group responded generously. Early the morning of Jan. 3, Associates arrived at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish to drop off breakfast casseroles, fresh fruit, muffins and pumpkin bread. Some remained to serve the hearty meal to overnight guests. Participating in this year's service project were Terry and Ed Armstrong, Debra Beeson, Carol and Tom Tadvick, Katherine Kilbourne, Leslie and Mike McBride, and Donna Mae. Their efforts help support the Emergency Shelter Program (ESP) in Grand Junction.

The program began when the Grand Valley Peace and Justice Way Home Committee learned that HomewardBound Homeless Shelter was forced to turn young single men away due to the increase of families and women seeking shelter. Eighteen churches and two organizations now offer overnight sleeping accommodations on a rotating basis for a two-week period for up to 35 men. The city of Grand Junction, police and fire

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Think of it as the Beatitudes  
in action or the Vincentian  
charism at work. Either way,  
the community of  
Grand Junction, Colo.,  
has rallied to help persons  
who are homeless  
with overnight shelter  
offered by churches  
and other organizations.  
SCL Associates have been  
among local volunteers  
providing hot breakfasts  
for these guests.

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departments, and civic organizations are among other collaborators in this initiative that began in December 2007.

HomewardBound takes responsibility for expanded housing in churches and organizations. Homeless men are screened, fed and offered showers at the shelter and then driven to the churches between 7 to 8 p.m.

The churches have trained volunteers on site who welcome guests. The men read, play games or go to bed early. A minimum of two volunteers remain with the group throughout the night. By 8 a.m. after breakfast, the van transports the men to work, the shelter, the day center or town. They return by van to the church location later in the evening.

Donna Mae said Associates had previously prepared and served three dinners annually at the homeless shelter. The growing number of persons at the shelter (up to 170 at times) proved challenging for the Associates, so they turned to providing breakfast annually through the ESP program as a service project to continue to live the Vincentian charism.

## Re-markings

# New program invites young women to serve as ‘Heartland Charity Volunteers’



Young women, ages 21 to 35, interested in ministering among and with people who are poor, are invited to apply to Heartland Charity Volunteers, a new SCL program.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to serve in educational, social service and health ministries sponsored and/or staffed by SCLs in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

**Applications are being accepted now through June** and can be requested by contacting the co-directors, Sisters Irene Skeehan, Therese Steiner and Vickie Perkins, at [HeartlandCharityVolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:HeartlandCharityVolunteers@gmail.com) or by calling **913-912-1038**.

“Our goal is to offer volunteers the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul and to share community, prayer and service with persons who are poor,” Sister Irene said. “We will make every effort to use their talents and gifts while meeting needs of the agencies and organizations that have agreed to accept volunteers.”

From August through June, volunteers will share community and participate in meal preparation, prayer and social activities together. “In a spirit of charity, they will practice values of community, simplicity, prayer and ministry,” Sister Irene added.

She explained that room and board, medical insurance and a stipend will be provided. The Sisters will arrange simple housing for the volunteers. During the year, there will be retreat experiences and training for participants.



Like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/heartlandcharityvolunteers](http://www.facebook.com/heartlandcharityvolunteers)

“Haas House” in Kansas City, Kan., is home and office for the co-directors of Heartland Charity Volunteers, left to right, Sisters Vickie Perkins, Irene Skeehan and Therese Steiner.

### In addition to age requirements, other qualifications for Heartland Charity Volunteers include:

- College degree or equivalent work experience.
- Commitment to work with those who are poor.
- Good physical and mental health.
- Agreement to undergo a background check for placements requiring one.
- Completion of application with references and a successful interview.

## First-grade experience points to art as career



*When Rosie Holderby, graphic designer for Voices of Charity, worked on the last edition of the magazine that featured SCLs in Montana, a face and a name struck her as familiar.*

She wondered if Sister Paula Marie Tweet was the same Sister Paula Marie who had taught her in the mid-1960s when Rosie Cole was a first-grader at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Kansas City, Mo.

A check of Community records verified this was Sister's mission at the time. And Rosie was happy to share how Sister Paula Marie influenced her decision to become an artist.

Rosie recalled that her "big turning point" came when she started to enhance phonics papers Sister gave the class. In addition to doing her phonics assignment, Rosie colored the pig pink and surrounded it with brown mud. Her paper came back with a "nice job" comment from Sister Paula Marie.

Impressionable as a first grader, Rosie remembered, "I thought I was so special. Sister's words made me feel so good. From then on, I would always enhance the pictures. I thought, 'I'm going to be an artist.'"

And that's exactly the direction Rosie's life took. She graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia with a bachelor of fine arts degree. She worked for a graphics company for five years and began to do freelance jobs. Wanting to expand her creative opportunities and with husband Tim's encouragement, Rosie started her own company, Cole Design & Production in 1987. She's been living out her first-grade decision ever since as a graphic designer with many satisfied clients including the SCLs and readers of *Voices of Charity* who appreciate the magazine's design and fresh style.

To this day, Rosie can remember specific art projects that Sister Paula Marie did with students: a penguin and igloo with spray-painted snow; the classic turkey from each child's hand traced on construction paper.

What Rosie remembers most from her experience of Sister Paula Marie is that, "She made such a difference in my life. It makes me realize that you never know how you might influence someone with what you might say or do."



### P.S. ANOTHER SCL INFLUENCES EDITOR

Without a doubt, Therese Horvat, SCLA, editor of *Voices of Charity*, attributes her love of writing to Sister Mary Corita Conlan. Sister Mary Corita was principal of the former St. Rose of Lima School, Kansas City, Kan., and was Therese's eighth-grade teacher.

"I can remember the writing exercises Sister gave the class," Therese said. "She challenged us to be imaginative and to use different forms of writing—poetry and prose. She also taught us to critique one another's work in constructive ways. Those were invaluable lessons that have stayed with me through the years, and for which I'm forever grateful. Sister Mary Corita was a mentor, and she remains a special friend."

## OF SPECIAL NOTE

In this section, *Voices of Charity* highlights Sisters, Associates and friends who have earned special honors or been in the news.

### Three SCLs attend Giving Voice gathering



Sister Melissa  
Camardo



Sister Rejane  
Cytacki



Sister Jennifer  
Gordon

Sisters in their 20s and 30s from across the country gathered for a peer-led retreat in January at Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery in Phoenix, Ariz. **Sisters Melissa Camardo, Rejane Cytacki** and **Jennifer Gordon** were SCLs in attendance.

Sisters joined in contemplative prayer, conversation and celebration. For the past 13 years, Giving Voice has created spaces for younger women religious to

give voice to their hopes, dreams and challenges in religious life.

Of the experience, Sister Jennifer said, "It's fun, energizing, life-giving to be with peers. We talk about challenges and frustrations, and are open and honest about our concerns. But the gathering is very hopeful, and we come away with a sense of renewed energy just knowing there are other women out there who choose religious life."



### Honors for Sister Roberta Furey— *42 years and counting*

**Sister Roberta Furey** received special recognition at last year's Silver Bell Ball for her 42 years of service to children at Mount St. Vincent Home, Denver, Colo. Among those acknowledging her contributions were the governor of Colorado and Denver's mayor, both of whom issued proclamations recognizing Silver Bell honorees.

In her remarks at the event, Sister Amy Willcott, executive director, said, "We honor Sister Roberta tonight for 42 years of dedicated, feisty and loving service to the children of Mount St. Vincent. Throughout her many roles as teacher, child care worker, house mother, sacristan, kitchen or office worker, and now volunteer in the clinical department, Sister Roberta has retained her love and devotion to the children."

## Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Jubilarians 2012

Congratulations to the following SCLs who are celebrating landmark anniversaries in their ministries as Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Blessings and thanksgiving in abundance!

### 70 years

Sister Regina DeCoursey

### 60 years

Sister Mary Ann Bartolac

Sister Madonna Fink

Sister Mark Friday

Sister Letitia Lenherr

Sister Mary Lou Mendel

Sister Regina Ann Green

Sister Jean Lind

Sister Maureen Craig

Sister Rose Anthony Perko

Sister Mary Erwin Baker

### 50 years

Sister Michael Delores Allegri

Sister Ann Lucia Apodaca

Sister Virginia Bartolac

Sister Karen Guth

Sister Elizabeth Skalicky

## Hall of Fame recognition for Sister Frances Marie Grady

**Sister Frances Marie Grady** was inducted into the Bishop Ward High School Hall of Fame on April 15 in Kansas City. At the special program, she was presented with the Bishop Ward High School Fine Arts Achievement Award. Sister Frances Marie taught at the Kansas City, Kan., high school from 1965 to 1975. She currently serves as director of Living Waters Catholic Reflection Center, Maggie Valley, N.C.



*Sister Frances Marie Grady*

## Summer means Leadership Camp

The annual Leadership Camp for sixth- through eighth-grade girls is scheduled June 27-29 on the campus of the Benedictine Sisters, Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kan. The camp is co-hosted annually by the Benedictine Sisters and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth at alternating locations.

The purpose of the camp is to enhance leadership skills of participants; enrich their spiritual lives; and give participants the opportunity to learn more about their faith and how Catholic Christian values and leadership go together. Early registration is requested by May 25.

Registration fee is \$145 and includes room and board, meals and camp activities.

For registration materials, email Sister Vicki Lichtenauer at [vickil@scls.org](mailto:vickil@scls.org) or call 913-758-6522.

If we've overlooked an item of importance,  
please email ([thorvat@scls.org](mailto:thorvat@scls.org)) or mail information to

Communications, Cantwell Hall  
4200 South Fourth Street  
Leavenworth, KS 66048-5054.

# Poetic musings take shape in a book

Monte Lin L. Ho (right) designed and illustrated *Cats have kittens. Gloves have mittens*, a book of poetry by Sister Maureen Craig (below).



*The summer she turned 5, Sister Maureen Craig found a glove stashed among mittens in her family home. At a young age, she applied the power of deduction to conclude, “Cats have kittens. Gloves have mittens.”*

Flash forward a few years to plans for Christmas 2011 when that fanciful wisdom became the name of a book of poetry published by Sister Maureen. From a “lifetime of poems” written on scraps of paper over the past 35 years, Sister Maureen organized favorites under themes of Christmas, Saint John’s, religion, community, family and jottings.

Design and illustration for the book were the creative expression of Monte Lin L. Ho, 14-year-old daughter of Kok Hui Ho and Lucretia Higdon, executive coordinator to the CEO of Saint John’s Health Center, Santa Monica, Calif., where Sister Maureen ministers. Sister Maureen said Monte has incredible talent in the arts and that without her and her family, “the book would never have come into being.”

Like Monte who’s been creative since her early years, Sister Maureen was encouraged to write and has always written. “I’ve used poetry as an expression of what’s going on in my life and within me, and as prayer,” she said.

This past year, she used poetry to express gratitude to donors, friends, board members and staff of Saint John’s Health Center and its foundation. The book is for sale in the hospital gift shop. Sister Maureen’s happy that her poetic musings are in book form, and she may compile a second book of other poems she’s written.

(Poems on this page and the inside back cover are from Sister Maureen’s book.)

## In Praise of Clutter

Neatness has never been a prize  
In these shanty Okie eyes.  
A clean desk, a shiny desk,  
Can make a rather dull view.  
But here among the clutter  
I find a trace of you.  
That half-finished letter,  
An old snapshot of the dead,  
A bunch of Magic Markers  
Blue, black, and red.  
I just don’t find life tidy;  
Perhaps I should, it’s true,  
But look at all the treasures  
I find while searching for you.

## Education

When I was young I found it hard  
To see why Momma called it “The Sad Award”  
And would say, with sorrow in her eye,  
How could any mother want her child to try  
For perfect attendance all year in school,  
As if there were some glorious rule  
That proved that school was always best,  
And never considered all the rest  
A day run amuck might bring to a child—  
A winter’s hike, a springtime mile—  
Hours so special, times so right,  
That they would make the nighttime bright.  
A day as Momma’s dearest pet  
When school time terrors one could forget.  
The nuns, of course, did not agree  
With Momma’s marvelous philosophy.  
And, yes, I am wretched dealing with math.  
Who cares? I remember a woodland path,  
And my mother beside me reciting verse,  
And of the two philosophies,  
Momma’s was not the worse.

1994

# Humor and good information spice up Weight Watchers classes

*She's been a teacher, a presenter and a workshop facilitator. She loves to talk. She injects wit and humor into whatever she does.*

Because of this, Sister Noreen Walter is a natural when it comes to being a leader in the Leavenworth/Lansing area Weight Watchers program in Kansas. She made lifetime member status in the weight control program in 2004—meaning that she met her weight loss goal at the time. In spring 2011, she applied for and completed training to be a leader. And now she's facilitating one of three weekly Weight Watchers groups in Leavenworth.

"I really, really enjoy it," Sister Noreen said. "I tease the group that I became a leader to keep my weight control goal. But I believe in the program's service philosophy."

In fact, Sister Noreen, director of Marillac Center, considers being a Weight Watchers leader a ministry. "It's not a diet. It's a lifestyle change that takes in the whole person," she said. "I'm teaching and coaching people to make simple meals with real food and to eat more healthily."

For example, earlier this year, Sister Noreen sparked her Thursday morning group with Super Bowl trivia. Then she discussed healthy snacks for Super Bowl parties and welcomed suggestions from participants who shared recipes and food substitution ideas.



Sister Noreen Walter finds the resources provided by Weight Watchers very helpful and practical.

Sister Noreen credits Weight Watchers with teaching her how to cook. She cooked before, but she didn't enjoy it. Now, she'll volunteer to cook in a minute in the convent where she lives in Leavenworth. She makes a mean Salisbury steak with rice and vegetables. And there's the tasty—and healthy—tilapia with a cherry almond topping.

A lifelong educator and learner, Sister Noreen values the resources available to her as a Weight Watchers leader and to program participants. Following weekly weigh-ins, she gives a "lesson" geared to adult learners. "People leave the meeting with information that will motivate

them and help them succeed," Sister Noreen said.

They have access to recipes and fitness advice. They learn about fruit and vegetables as power foods. They receive a weekly publication. "I always ask myself, 'What are they going to learn that will be helpful to them?'" Sister Noreen said. "As part of a group, the participants are well-informed, and they feel cared about."

Sister Noreen recognizes that weight maintenance is the hardest part. She's been there, done that, lost and gained weight herself over the years. She believes if people reach maintenance and commit to a lifestyle change, the program works for them.

# Anti-death penalty resolve remains in spite of tragic, personal loss

“What seeds do we sow, and who reaps the harvest?” are questions Carolyn Zimmerman, SCLA, poses as she staunchly advocates against the death penalty. She also points out that people believe survivors of murder victims support the death penalty.

Carolyn is living proof and witness that this is not always the case.

In January 1969, her 54-year-old Father was brutally murdered in Warrensburg, Mo. He spoke his last words to his wife and family from the accounting and tax office that he had recently opened and where he was working late on a wintry evening. His message to his wife that she didn't need to pick him up, and that he would take a taxi home may have prevented her from his fate.

Carolyn's Father never came home. The safe in his office was empty. He was missing for three weeks when a farmer found his body in a field. He had been stabbed multiple times. Evidence pointed to more than one perpetrator, but no suspects were ever found.

Carolyn was a young adult living with her husband and two children in Robbinsdale, Minn., but her three younger siblings, ages 10 to 20, were



Carolyn Zimmerman, SCLA, with Ben Jeffries, Kansas Coalition against the Death Penalty.

still living at home. Looking back, she said, “Life changed for our whole family with my Dad's death.”

What didn't change was Carolyn's resolve that the death penalty should be abolished. While she's very empathetic for the pain families experience and astonished at how they manage to survive their losses, she observed, “Hatred and the desire for revenge cannot restore justice and are unlikely to bring either comfort or peace.” She believes “there are better seeds to sow that can help make our world a better place.”

In a presentation sponsored earlier this year at the Leavenworth library by the Kansas Coalition against the Death Penalty, Carolyn catalogued many good reasons to abolish the death penalty. Among them, she listed:

- The staggering cost to taxpayers and dollars that could be diverted to help families of victims.
- Proof that capital punishment does not deter crime.
- Wrongful executions.
- The role that race, poverty and politics play in deciding who lives and dies.
- Religious beliefs against capital punishment.

“With views favoring capital punishment, the United States is in the company of countries we consider abusers of human rights,” Carolyn said.

### TAKE ACTION

**If you are in favor of abolishing the death penalty and live in one of the 34 states where capital punishment remains the law, take action by:**

- Writing your state legislators to let them know what you think.
- Making abolition of the death penalty a pertinent issue in your community.
- Joining your voice with a local or statewide effort, e.g., in Kansas, Kansas Coalition against the Death Penalty, [www.ksabolition.org](http://www.ksabolition.org).

# Small but mighty, Seton Center exemplifies Vincentian spirit

*There was the young woman who walked 22 blocks in the winter to attend classes at Seton High School. "It's my family," she said because she wanted to be there to learn.*

• • •

*There's the story of the woman who wouldn't get married until she could smile at her wedding. Seton Center's Dental Services helped her do this by fitting her with dentures that replaced decaying and missing teeth.*

• • •

*Then there were the five grandchildren overheard by dental staff as they asked their grandmother at 4 p.m., "Will we get food today?" And they did through Seton Center's Food Pantry.*

## Responding to diverse needs

From a small building on a corner just east of downtown Kansas City, Mo., hope beams daily as Seton Center serves "neighbors in need" through diverse programs.

"You can't work in a place like this without wanting to help people and knowing how much they are a blessing to us," said Sister Loretto Marie Colwell, executive director.

Now in its 43rd year, Seton Center was originally established as a partnership of the Daughters of Charity and the Ladies of Charity of Metropolitan Kansas City to serve senior adults. Over time, different needs evolved.

Today, Seton Center still offers programs for seniors, but it has expanded to include dental services, a thrift store, the food pantry and the school. In 2006, the Daughters of Charity withdrew from Kansas City and returned to St. Louis for mission assignments, and not long after, Sister Loretto Marie assumed the leadership role. Sister Marie Madeleine Shonka joined the staff in 2009 and oversees the food pantry—ordering, purchasing, stocking and distributing food weekdays with the help of volunteers.

## Vincentian spirit abounds

Much as neighbors in need are a

blessing to Seton Center, volunteers and benefactors bless the service center in abundance. The Daughters of Charity continue to provide substantial financial support for operations. The Ladies of Charity operate the thrift store Tuesdays through Fridays. On Mondays, they sort clothing that they have collected or that has been donated. Some of the Ladies of Charity have volunteered in the thrift store for 20 to 30 years. Others help staff the food pantry.

Church of the Nativity Parish, Leawood, Kan., hosts clothing drives for Seton Center twice annually. St. Thomas More Parish, Kansas City, Mo., has collected food for the pantry monthly for 27 years and also provides financial support. Other churches help throughout the year with special projects or funds.

There's an attorney who has been coming monthly for 14 years to offer free legal advice on Saturdays. When he couldn't come once recently, he agreed to meet people at his office. His parents had volunteered at Seton Center before him.

"Generation after generation come here to help," said Sister Loretto Marie, who has recruited



Sister Marie Madeleine Shonka (right) and Iva Hamilton prepare a bag of food for distribution at Seton Center.



Sister Loretto Marie Colwell in the Seton Center Thrift Store, well stocked and well organized by the Ladies of Charity volunteers.

## Capital campaign

Seton Center has launched a capital campaign to almost double its size and modernize electrical and plumbing systems that date to 1954. William H. Dunn, Sr., chairman emeritus, J.E. Dunn Construction Company, is honorary chair.

“Everyone feels the mission very strongly at Seton Center,” said Julie Cogley, director of development. This includes staff, volunteers, benefactors and many good friends who are becoming involved with the capital campaign.

“Everyone recognizes we’re on sacred ground,” Sister Loretto Marie Colwell, executive director, added.

When the parking lot is replaced by additional building space, that sacred ground is going to expand into the new Seton Center, continuing its strong Vincentian tradition of helping people in need.



Seton Center makes learning how to care for teeth fun for children.

high school classmates and her relatives as new volunteers.

### Needs aplenty

There’s always plenty to do and many needs to meet as Seton Center helps residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

The food pantry serves 25 to 30 families a day providing them with one to two weeks of food. Food comes monthly from Harvesters and from St. Thomas More Parish, but Sister Marie Madeleine still spends an average of \$1,500 every 10 days to keep the shelves, refrigerators and freezers stocked. Seton Center also distributes hygiene kits with items like toothpaste and deodorant that can’t be purchased with food stamps.

“The Lord keeps supplying the resources to do this,” Sister Loretto Marie said. “If you take care of people in need, the donations and help will come.”

This is apparent when Seton Center hosts its Back to School Giveaway providing supplies and clothing along with dental and health screenings for 300 children, and its large Christmas Sharing Program that distributed clothing, gifts and food to 1,600 persons last year. Donations and volunteers support both programs.

Twenty people receive financial assistance monthly for utilities and rent. Grant funds for this are supplemented by Seton Center’s budget.

### Signature programs

High-risk students from the public school system attend Seton High School. Sixty are currently enrolled—some live in cars and are homeless; 33 are already parents; many come from challenging family situations. Classes are offered in the morning with tutoring in the afternoon. Last year, the school had 22 graduates, eight of whom went on to college, and others to vo-tech training.

Senior adults benefit from three programs:

- Wellness services including health screenings and exercise opportunities.
- The Senior Buddies group where 35 persons meet twice weekly to pray, eat, play bingo and socialize.
- Senior Companions, a federal program that offers outreach for the elderly who need assistance to be able to remain in their homes. Seniors on Social Security provide the assistance and earn a small income in the process.

Seton Center’s Dental Services draw persons from a broader regional area with over 7,000 visits a year and care provided by one full-time dentist, three part-time University of Missouri at Kansas City Dental School residents, hygienists, dental assistants and support staff. In addition, dental services staff members offer screenings at five schools, including Cristo Rey Kansas City. They teach students dental care, and those with problems are referred to the center. Their parents are required to attend a program on helping their children care for their teeth.

Dental services primarily benefit children, persons with disabilities and older adults. Seton Center’s denture program is linked with a Catholic Charities grant.

“We know we change people’s lives with dental work,” Sister Loretto Marie observed. “It builds their self-esteem.”

ON THE

# Immigration



Sister Therese Bangert



Sister Janet Cashman



Sister Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer



Sister Mary Pat Lenahan



Sister Linda Roth



Sister Frances Russell



Terri Butel

*SCLs and Associates continue to be a voice for immigrants and advocates for immigration reform with new voices being raised in hearings and testimony.*

Earlier this year in Topeka, Kan., Sisters Therese Bangert, Mary Pat Lenahan, Linda Roth, Frances Russell; Cynthia Smith, SCLHS lobbyist; and Terri Butel, SCLA, met with U.S. Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins who represents the district in which the Mother House is located.

Sister Linda, volunteer and alumni coordinator, Cristo Rey High School, Kansas City, shared stories of students and alumni who experienced the devastation of breakup of their families due to deportation of a parent. One young woman became the “mother” in the family when her mother was deported; another chose to return to Mexico to be with her mother.

“When family breakup occurs, so many systems are affected—family, education and neighborhood,” Sister Linda said. “If there are teens in the family, hopelessness caused by absence of a family member can lead to drugs or gang membership. Comprehensive immigration reform is critical for

immigrant families to flourish.”

While Sister Linda has not testified so publicly before, she said, “I’m working on my courage because I think this issue is going to demand some more voices.”

Likewise, while she has consistently written letters and emails and made telephone calls to elected officials, this was a first for Sister Mary Pat. She spoke on behalf of undocumented college-level students who are ineligible for grants, strapped with loans and have experienced separation from family members due to deportation. Sister Mary Pat is a professor in the University of Saint Mary education department.

“Many of these students have been here all their lives,” she said. “They came to the U.S. with

## Working together,

# Front

their parents in search of a better life. They have the capacity and the ability to dream to be professionals, but they do not have the financial assistance to make this a reality. Theirs are sad stories of broken dreams with few opportunities. Even if they achieve degrees in education, they would be unable to get teaching licenses because they are undocumented.”

Sister Frances spoke about the continued focus on comprehensive immigration reform at the SCL Mother House through study, discussions and prayer.

“I came away from this with the sense that this is important work that needs to be done,” Terri observed. “Relationship-building with congressional leaders is valuable. The more people write, talk and let our senators and representatives know their concerns, the easier immigration reform will be for them to defend. It’s an unpopular and complex issue with no easy fix. But voices need to be heard.”

## Ongoing advocacy

In February, Sister Therese testified in the Kansas Senate and



House of Representatives in hearings about the Immigrant Worker Bill. Supporting her testimony were Sisters Frances, Linda, Dolores Erman, Donna Jean Henson, Judith Jackson and Regina Mary Link, and Terri. Terri also attended Missouri’s Legislative Day on Immigration Policy.

Sisters Frances and Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer invited SCLs and University of Saint Mary (USM) students to join in a special inter-faith day of prayer and action on March 6. Organized by Immigration

Justice and Advocacy Ministry (IJAM) of Kansas City, the observance urged members of all faiths to pray and take action that day to move elected officials to enact just immigration legislation. All three Masses on the USM campus were offered for that intention.

From New Mexico, Sister Janet Cashman reported that collaborative efforts defeated the governor’s bill to eliminate the issuance of driver’s licenses to the undocumented in the state. “But we know the bill will be back again next year,” she said.

For more information about immigration reform,  
contact Sister Therese at [treetop20@juno.com](mailto:treetop20@juno.com).

# we can make a difference!

# Keystone XL Pipeline

## What is it and why is it such an environmental lightning rod?

*From The Perryman Group  
economic impact analysis  
www.transcanada.com*

TransCanada Keystone Pipeline LP Ltd., proposed the Keystone Pipeline in February 2005, a \$5.2 billion project to connect reliable oil supply regions in Canada with key U.S. refining and distribution centers. In July 2008, TransCanada announced Keystone XL, an approximately \$7 billion pipeline project that complements the original Keystone Pipeline and nearly doubles the size and capacity of the Keystone Pipeline System with an expansion to the U.S. Gulf Coast. With Keystone XL, the Keystone Pipeline System will have the capacity to deliver approximately 1.1 million barrels per day of Canadian crude oil to U.S. markets each day...In addition to the sizable economic stimulus generated by the construction and development of the pipeline, the more stable supply of oil will lead to other positive outcomes.

*From The Kansas City Star,  
Feb. 28, 2012; news source: Bloomberg*

As originally envisioned, Keystone XL would have carried as much as 830,000 barrels of oil a day from Alberta, and the Bakken Shale formation in North Dakota and Montana along a 1,661-mile path to Texas refineries. The full pipeline needed a permit from the State Department because it crossed the U.S.-Canada border.

President Obama rejected Keystone XL in January due to

concerns it might pollute drinking water resources in Nebraska. Because it is a stand-alone project, the Cushing [Oklahoma] segment will not require approval from the State Department. President Obama's administration supports the plan to build the Oklahoma-to-Texas segment separately because it will modernize infrastructure, create jobs and encourage American energy production. The pipeline will help relieve oversupplies that have accumulated in the U.S. Midwest because of lack of pipeline capacity to carry the oil to refineries on the coast.

Environmental groups remain opposed to all sections of the pipeline because of the potential environmental impact of tar-like bitumen known as oil-sands crude.

### **From the perspective of environmental groups, climate scientists**

*From Tar Sands Action,  
www.tarsandsaction.org*

A rupture in the Keystone XL pipeline could cause a BP style oil spill in America's heartland, over the source of fresh drinking water for 2 million people.

- The U.S. Pipeline Safety Administration has not yet conducted an in depth analysis of the safety of diluted bitumen (raw tar sands) pipeline, despite unique safety concerns posed by its more corrosive properties.
- Keystone XL will cross through America's agricultural heartland,

the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers, the Ogallala Aquifer and wildlife habitats.

*From Endangered Earth, Fall 2011,  
Center for Biological Diversity*

Any way you look at it, the proposed Keystone XL pipeline is bad news: bad for the climate, endangered species, clean air, clean water and the list goes on...it would cut across Nebraska's legendary Sand Hills, hundreds of rivers and streams, and directly over the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides drinking water for millions of people...the pipeline would not only be transporting oil from Canada's environmentally destructive tar sands projects, but also...would only serve to deepen the global climate crisis by relying on fossil fuels and the greenhouse pollution they produce.

*From Climate Central blog post,  
Feb. 13, 2012, www.climatecentral.org*

In a letter to House and Senate leadership (Feb. 13), 15 leading climate scientists expressed their opposition to the pipeline project on the grounds that it would cause further harm to the climate system. The scientists wrote:

"The tar sands are a huge pool of carbon, one that it does not make sense to exploit. It takes a lot of energy and water to extract and refine this resource into usable fuel, and the mining is environmentally destructive. Adding this on top of conventional fossil fuels will leave our children and grandchildren a

climate system with consequences that are out of their control. It makes no sense to build a pipeline that would dramatically increase exploitation of this resource. ...

“We can say categorically that this pipeline is not in the nation’s, or the planet’s best interest.”

### From the perspective of SCLs and SCLAs

Coming from a family of farmers, Sister Bernadette Helfert, Ashland, Mont., said “Taking care of the land is important to me. If this pipeline ever broke, it could seriously affect water resources. The farming community is very concerned about their land, water, livestock and what would possibly happen if the oil leaked.”

Leaks from refineries have happened, Sister Bernadette said, pointing to two that she’s aware of in Montana—one affecting Cutback Creek where a kayaker began to see oil on the creek, and a month later a farmer found it on his crops and in ravines of his land; the other, last July, when a 12-inch supply pipe feeding into a refinery broke and 40,000 gallons of oil flowed into the Yellowstone River. “Some ecologists say the eco-system may never recover,” Sister Bernadette added.

Sister Mary O’Rourke, who teaches chemistry at the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, shares concerns about spills/leaks from the pipeline that could seriously damage water supplies for humans, crops and livestock. The other key issue for her is the global impact due to the release of a massive reserve of carbon as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere. She explained that the tar sands are a peanut butter consistency and that it takes heat and energy to refine them into usable fuel. “CO<sub>2</sub> is the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming,



Carol Schmidt, SCLA (left), and Sister Mary O’Rourke have been friends for years and worked together teaching teachers about the environment. Today, they are of like mind regarding the Keystone XL Pipeline.

and its production is partially under our control,” she explained.

Retired physical science teacher, Carol Schmidt, SCLA, sees this as part of a larger picture. “We all need clean water, clean air. We need to be able to trust reliable agriculture. We share the climate with the world, and we’re all at risk,” she said. “We need to get over our fascination with and dependency on oil. As long as we use old methods and don’t develop solar and wind energy options, we’re poisoning the planet.”

Sister Mary joined Len and Kitty Bronec, both Associates, in a recent (Feb. 17-18) public awareness event and protest in Wichita, Kan., that

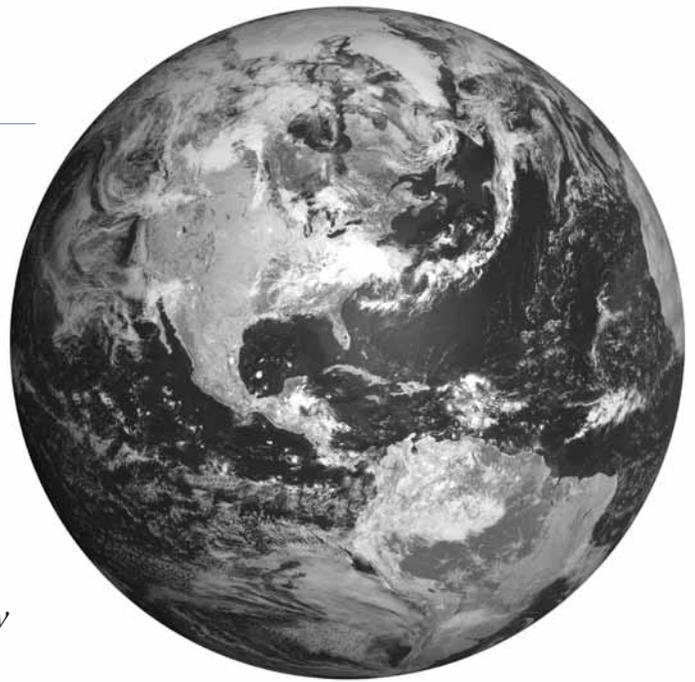
focused on Koch Industries and the Keystone Pipeline, which they described as “symbolic of energy, environmental and political issues.”

Len wrote, “There were about 150 people in the march carrying signs. We were impressed by the number of young people, many ordinary people like us, and all peaceful. It was a joy to be part of the public awareness event. And it was sobering to hear the seriousness of the issues which are many pertaining to our Earth, environment, corporate influence on government, etc. We came home Saturday evening with a deepened awareness and commitment to ‘Care of Creation.’”

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Become educated about the pipelines. Google “Keystone Pipeline” to get general information. For matters relevant to environmental concerns, visit: [www.350.org](http://www.350.org), [www.tarsandsaction.org](http://www.tarsandsaction.org), [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).
- Link your voice with environmentally conscious organizations.
- Write your U.S. senators and representatives.
- **Pray for blessings on all: enlightenment for financiers; courage for politicians; sensitive concern for ourselves; sustainability for humankind.**

# Inspirational workshop to examine making a choice to care for the Earth



*The SCLs are sponsoring a unique opportunity to examine the bold vision of bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just human presence on Earth by hosting the*

## “Awakening The Dreamer, Changing The World” Symposium

**Saturday, April 28  
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

O’Shea Conference Center, SCL Mother House, Leavenworth, Kan.

Awakening The Dreamer is a program of The Pachamama Alliance whose mission is to empower indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest to preserve their lands and culture and, using insights gained from that work, to educate and inspire individuals everywhere to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable world. Many of the symposium’s video segments offer education and information, providing an overview of current social injustices and environmental degradation. Group interaction, exercises and guided personal reflection give participants tools to move past anxiety or anguish, and into the empowering realization that people working individually and collectively are capable of creating a better world for all. ([www.pachamama.org](http://www.pachamama.org))

The symposium will ask and allow participants to answer two questions: Where on Earth are we going? And what can we do about it? The symposium is described as a dynamic multimedia presentation from respected social and scientific experts, interwoven with wisdom and inspiration from indigenous partners.

**Lunch** will be provided.

**A \$10 donation** for the program can be paid at the door.

**To register**, email [schase@scls.org](mailto:schase@scls.org);  
call 913-680-2342;  
or register online at [www.awakeningthedreamer.org](http://www.awakeningthedreamer.org).

Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

# Poetic musings continued

*Every year at Christmas time, Sister Maureen Craig writes a holiday poem.  
Her greeting for 2004 has meaning that's a good gift-giving thought year-round.*

## Gift Exchange

I tried.  
God knows I tried,  
Took yard upon yard of paper,  
Wrapped myself in it—  
It tore.  
Took rolls of tape,  
Stuck it all over,  
It curled up.  
Slung ribbon all around,  
Made bows all over—  
They snapped.

So, here I am,  
Your unwrapped year-round me.  
Slightly worn,  
Hardly brand-new,  
But still the best gift  
I can give.

Just as you are to me.  
My lovely gift,  
My funny gift,  
My wise gift,  
My no-pretense gift.  
My friend.

How could I ever want more?





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