Sisters of Charity continue their presence at St. Vincent Martyr School, Madison NJ...

The Mission Continues!
Dear Friends,

The Mission of the Sisters of Charity is to make God's love known in the world. We do this through prayer, community life and ministry through which we serve the spiritual, social, physical, emotional and educational needs of people near and far. This issue of NEW Dimensions focuses on a few of our ministries; some which began at the founding of the Congregation, others which are finding new ways to respond to present day needs.

St. Vincent Martyr Elementary School and the Academy of Saint Elizabeth, both vibrant centers for academic excellence and spiritual and social development, are early ministries of the Congregation. More than 150 years ago in Madison, the newly founded Sisters of Charity joined the women of St. Vincent Martyr Parish to educate young children. At Convent, Mother Mary Xavier established the Academy for young women in response to the request of Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, nephew of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. Both St. Vincent Martyr and the Academy carry on their mission with vigor and enthusiasm, meeting the complex education and growth needs of young people today.

Present day needs carry the Sisters of Charity and Seton Associates in widely varying directions. In Suchitoto, El Salvador, Sister Peggy O'Neill operates the Centro Arte para la Paz where children growing up in the wake of a devastating civil war find peace and strength in music and the arts. Sisters and college age volunteers join members of the Sister of Charity Federation to help restore homes in still-recovering New Orleans while experiencing community life and prayer together. Sisters in various ministries are using gardening skills to meet the need for fresh produce and nutrition education, and also to develop awareness of the need to maintain the sustainability of Earth's resources.

The Seton Associates and growing numbers of young Toward Boundless Charity members chart new paths in the development of lay spirituality by carrying the Mission of Charity into the world through their daily lives. And, in this issue, we remember those whom we honor for carrying out the Mission, our donors and our 2015 Jubilarians.

The Mission of Charity is alive, vibrant and growing. We are most blessed to share this with you.

Many blessings,

Sister Rosemary Moynihan - General Superior

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Welcome

On the cover:
Fourth graders at St. Vincent Martyr School in Madison, NJ, work with (l to r) Sisters Mary Elizabeth Davies, Ann Carmela Olive, Noreen Holly and Mary Culhane on a classroom project during Catholic Schools Week.

Inside this Issue
St. Vincent Martyr School..........................2-3
Update from El Salvador.............................6-7
2015 Jubilarians .........................................10-11
Creation of Gardens .................................12-13
Meet Our Sisters .......................................14
Development Office Updates .......................17-19
The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are displayed prominently in the foyer of Saint Vincent Martyr School in Madison, N.J. But they are not merely words on a bulletin board in this school of 485 children. And, if mercy is a virtue that influences one’s will to have compassion for and, as far as possible, alleviate another’s misfortune, then those works of mercy are embodied by the entire school community throughout the year.

The oldest school in the Diocese of Paterson, SVMS was established in 1848 and conducted by lay teachers until 1860, when the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth moved their motherhouse from Newark to Madison. Each day the Sisters traveled the three miles from the Motherhouse in a carriage called the “Black Maria.” Except for a relatively brief interval the Sisters of Charity have taught the children of Saint Vincent during the subsequent 116 years. Four Sisters continue this ministry today. In addition to Sister Noreen Holly, principal, Sister Ann Carmela Olive is a religion teacher in the fourth through seventh grades, Sister Mary Elizabeth Davies works with kindergarteners and primary grade students in the enrichment room and Sister Mary Culhane teaches art in the fourth and fifth grades. Rev. Msgr. George F. Hundt, the pastor of the parish and a new member of the Seton Associates, teaches religion to the eighth grade students.

The first Monday of February is the beginning of Catholic Schools Week and the halls are alive with energy as all participate in the annual Day of Service. “Empathy can be taught” is the theme for this year and Sister Noreen Holly notes that empathy and service are an integral part of the children’s education. “These girls and boys are the CEOs and CFOs of the future,” she notes. “We want them to be able to recognize the presence of poor people in society so that they will help to meet their needs.”

Joined as prayer partners, students in different grades come together to serve their neighbors. The following are just a few of the activities on this Day of Service.

- Fourth grade students have collected toys and games for the students of the PG Chambers School in Cedar Knolls who are affected by learning, physical, communication, and sensory disorders. Aided by the staff of the Chambers School, the Saint Vincent students experienced the difficulty of doing simple tasks with a sensory disorder.
- The second and seventh grade students participated in a program hosted by the Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown before presenting their donation to feed those in need.
- Eighth graders teamed up with kindergarten students to pack toiletries for the residents of Covenant House in Newark.
- Having collected blankets, gloves and scarves, children learned about the causes of homelessness and explored the temporary rooms in which the clients of Family Promise of Morris County sleep during the four weeks each year that they are housed in the school gym when school is not in session.
- Other students – who had contributed dog food, beds and toys to the Seeing Eye of Morristown – were captivated by a volunteer who, using a fully trained German Shepherd and a puppy in training, demonstrated how he taught the dogs to guide blind people.
Sister Noreen notes that many efforts to serve those in need are initiated by the students themselves. “Last fall one of our boys was visiting New York with his family when he realized that some of the homeless men he saw weren’t wearing socks. He brought this awareness to the student council who initiated Socktoberfest when the children brought in socks and underwear to give to homeless people. And our monthly tag days, when children make a donation to a charity to wear their own clothes to school, are a big favorite. Recently they donated money to Project Night Night that provides blankets, books and teddy bears to homeless children.”

Led by Michele Baggett and Heather Powers, presidents of the Home School Association, and teacher Anne Marie Gisoldi, Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration for the community, in which many of the parents and grandparents participate. One mother notes that her son is in the sixth grade and that her husband, her husband’s mother, grandmother and great-grandmother (Class of ’27) all graduated from Saint Vincent Martyr School. The school is literally bursting at the seams which explains the 6,000 square-foot addition under construction. Sister Noreen said that the new area “will help curriculum and programs and give a 21st century feel to what we’re offering. It will allow for expansion of the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) initiative, provide space for a 3-D printer, a research room and the Engineering Club.”

And yet, for all that technology, it is the fundamentals of Catholic education that draw the families. When Abby, an eighth grade student, was asked why she likes her school, she cites its family aspect and her ability to grow spiritually, as well as educationally. “Father George is our religion teacher and we’re learning about relationships. We help other people, too. We hold tag days to raise money for autistic kids and play three-on-three basketball in Hoops for Hope for breast cancer research. In the past we’ve gone to Sacred Heart School in Jersey City, where we read to the little kids and gave them books for their school library. This is a special school.” A veteran staff member echoes Abby: “This is a special school and the Catholic aspect of the school is stronger now than it ever has been.”

Many happy memories come to mind when I reflect on 15 happy years of ministry at St. Vincent Parish. There are just too many to enumerate, so I will mention only a few: the St. Dominic Savio Classroom Club, participation in the Annual Diocesan Elementary School, Choral Festivals, the Ecumenical Song Festival, the Annual Christmas Concerts at St. Anne Villa, Pine Acres Nursing Home, Livingston Mall, and the Annual Madison Christmas Tree Lighting. I cherish my experiences as leader of song/cantor, part-time organist, member of the parish Liturgy Committee, and many ecumenical programs.


I joined the Sisters of Charity in September, 1946, and in October found myself standing in front of the third grade in St. Vincent’s being introduced as “Sister Mary.” (I had not yet received my religious name and I couldn’t use my “worldly” one.) Fortunately for me the students at St. Vincent’s were studious and well-behaved. The sisters with whom I worked overlooked my youthful follies and encouraged me. One whose kindness I will always remember is Sister Joan Anne Gallagher.

Although my time at St. Vincent’s was short (one year) it provided a solid and happy foundation for a very long teaching career.

Sister Kathleen Koerner (1946-1947)
The Feast of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Mass and Celebration of Seton Associate Commitments and Toward Boundless Charity Blessing Ceremony were held Jan. 2 in Holy Family Chapel. It was a joyful gathering of the Congregation, its lay affiliates, and many guests.


General Superior Sister Rosemary Moynihan welcomed 10 new Seton Associates: Nichole Ayala, Alicia Clark-Barnes, William Cowan, Joanne Hugues, Rev. George Hundt, Joyce McManus, Theresa Nolan, Heather Joy Porcelli, Vincent Papke, and Annice Reape. Racquel Lelian Nuñez was unable to attend and will make her commitment at a later time. Seton Associate Annette Health made her Lifetime Commitment.

The acclaimed Seton Ensemble of Mother Seton Regional High School performed liturgical music under the direction of Christine Danelson, who also performed a solo “Ave Maria.”

Sister Rosemary also presided over the Blessing Ceremony of members of Toward Boundless Charity from Mother Seton Regional High School and the Academy of Saint Elizabeth. The young women stood in front of the altar and held lighted candles as they read their Toward Boundless Charity Prayer. Toward Boundless Charity is a way of living in the charism for high school students who seek deeper spirituality and service to others now and encourages them to continue as lay adults.

Before the end of Mass, Sister Rosemary blessed with holy water everyone in the sanctuary and in the chapel – a meaningful and inspirational sacramental.

To learn more about the Seton Associates and the Toward Boundless Charity Program, visit www.SCNJ.org or contact Rosemary Carroll at rcarroll@scnj.
Let the Healing Continue

by Sister Margaret O’Neill

This March, we Sisters of Charity have been living and loving in the tiny fragile country of El Salvador for 30 years! They have been years of war and losses, victories and courage. They have also been years filled with hope and community actions for justice and peace. They have been years dealing with the fruits of war: trauma and the long re-construction: materially, spiritually, and psychologically.

Ten years ago, we opened the Centro Arte para la Paz, (CAP) a healing space where we could invite youth to touch their memories of war with tenderness and invite them to build a culture of peace both personal and societal, using the arts as the vehicle.

Gang violence, one of the many fruits of the war, now plagues us. Over the years, we have confronted the disintegration of the family, no meaningful employment and the continued lack of quality education. We have been living under the constant fear of gang violence and the fleeing or the killing of our youth. Last year ended with 6,558 murders, which averages to about 20 killings per day in a country the size of the state of Massachusetts.

In many ways, the violence we experience at this moment is harder to manage than the war years because then one knew the enemy. Gang violence is so hidden and comes with threats from neighbors and/or their children. It was clear here at CAP we needed to provide methods to help us manage our fear and not let it paralyze us. We knew we needed to set up courses with the help of professionals to face our fears and give youth some methods to resist the temptation of gangs. So we turned to the Sisters of Charity Ministry Fund to provide us with a grant to use the professional skills of psychologists, artists and dancers to help us deal with the fear that pervades not only our pueblo but the whole country. With the help of these professionals, we developed a course: Language and Emotions: How to Recover the Joy of Living.

We offered the course to 20 teachers and 25 youth at separate times. They met on Saturdays for 10 sessions lasting three hours each. The participants pledged to share elements of the course with their schools and communities.

Specific objectives of the course were:

• To discover the power of language, art and thought in transforming judgment and daily actions
• To heal present and past wounds and pain by re-interpreting them through different languages: bodily, musical, artistic, and literary
• To practice behavior modifying techniques to educate with love, discipline, and equality

Some themes:

• Spoken, written, and graphic languages and their relationship to emotions
• Narration of life through poetry, prose, short story and plastic arts
• Emotions in the body: Where is my fear stored? My Joy? Anger? Sadness? HOW do I mobilize them?
Techniques used (some in combination):

- Exercises of connections, basic Tai Chi and acupressure
- Creation and naming of PLASTER masks
- Self-knowledge through body sculpture
- Bio-dance to work through areas of: vitality, affection, sexuality, creativity, and transcendence
- Poetry: Who am I? For what am I grateful? What do I offer?
- My voice, my name, my sound
- Mandala of Feelings as Closing Ritual

The participants left wanting the course to continue and pledged to create a dance class and reading circles at CAP. They left realizing that it is through language that we, as humans, interpret our reality. Thinking and the act of speech allow us to give meaning to what we do. Additionally we can transform (give new meaning to) our judgments and emotions through artistic media (painting, drawing, sculpture) and through dance, music, and literature. Because all of this happened by creating a group, it was possible to build safe relationships in a secure space that lent itself to accessing feelings often repressed and forgotten but which affect the emotional balance necessary for restoring joy in life!

This group/course created a synergy within the whole school of CAP and it reached all in that community who learn and teach a variety of art skills. The CAP staff and the elected officials on our town council have all signed up for the next session. So of course we are now looking for ways to repeat and extend this experience to many other Salvadorans who are influenced by this extreme atmosphere of violence and fear. We at CAP are still all about the prevention of violence and the building of a culture of peace. We live among so many people who are heroes and heroines, people who know the power of solidarity. They are survivors and their hope and faith were emboldened this year by the naming of Msgr. Romero, "Blessed" (Blessed Oscar Romero (1917-1980) was the Archbishop of San Salvador who was martyred while celebrating mass on March 24, 1980 because of his vigorous defense of the human rights of the poor in El Salvador.)

Part of our mission as Sisters of Charity is to create peace through justice and to embrace those especially at risk. I am a witness to how this mission has become so real to the people here in Suchitoto, El Salvador, by the generous actions of our sisters and all who share in our ministry. As we start this Year of Mercy, we begin with deeper hope and renewed faith that together we can experience the reconciliation needed to transform our fear and recapture the joy of living. If you would like to send a donation to support the CAP programs in El Salvador, please visit www.SCNJ.org and click the Donate Now button, then choose ‘Support of El Salvador Ministry’ from the dropdown menu.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sisters of Charity,

I feel lucky and thrilled that you sent me the beautiful story of the foundress of St. Elizabeth’s College. My years there were some of the happiest of my school experiences. I graduated from Fontbonne Hall in Brooklyn and St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn, my mother's alma mater, then to St. E's thank God!

Leonora Donahue Sheehan
Class of 1950

Thank you so much for the copies of NEW Dimensions. I read it with great interest. After having read the book about Mother Mary Xavier, it was wonderful to read the article in your publication and see the pictures. Maybe someday we will be able to visit the Convent and College. May our Lord reward your generosity.

In the Sacred Heart,
Sr. Maria Dolorosa, F.M.
These words were used to describe an early January trip to assist in rebuilding houses in New Orleans. Other expressions were humbling, integrated, delightful, learning, eye-opening, motivating.

Sister Maryanne Tracey and two College of Saint Elizabeth sophomores, Alexis Lerner and Catherine Bialkowski, travelled to the House of Charity in New Orleans to work with the St. Bernard Project, a grass roots effort begun shortly after the Katrina hurricane to assist poor homeowners whose homes were ruined.

The House of Charity, five years in planning, opened for its first young adult guests in January 2009. This is a joint project of congregations of the Sisters of Charity Federation to provide hospitality for persons connected with Vincentian congregations who wish to help those whose lives were radically changed by Katrina’s ravages. Partnering with the St. Bernard Project, a grass roots effort begun shortly after the Katrina hurricane to assist poor homeowners whose homes were ruined.

Meeting the homeowner is an important part of this ministry. Pamela and her daughter had moved nine times since Katrina struck, were living out of crates for over nine years, and had lost restoration funds to a dishonest contractor. Trying hard not to give up hope, Pamela came in contact with the St. Bernard Project -- and Sister Maryanne, Alexis, and Cathy and others who were there to be charity in the vision of St. Vincent de Paul. The volunteers and others became skilled in dry walling and corner beading -- definitely a new experience. What surprised Sister Maryanne was that they actually were able to do constructive work for Pamela -- and she provided the inspiration and hope that kept them at work.

Cathy noted that she was 9 at the time of Katrina, so her first impression was being so surprised at the damage remaining, especially the stairs to homes going nowhere. She was taken by the friendliness and the culture of the South in the midst of so much affecting its people. Alexis will continue to remember Pamela’s face when she saw how her house was coming to life once again as well as the gratitude she feels now for how much she has been given in life, things that had been taken from the people in New Orleans. It was wonderful to be part of hope restored!

If you would like to join in this life-changing experience, contact Sister Maryanne Tracey at mtracey@scnj.org or 973-290-5325.
On November 5, 2015 Don Bosco Prep celebrated 100 years of history and recognized some very special people who have contributed to its success at their President’s Gala. Our very own Sister Mary Culhane, SC, was one of those people honored for her thirty plus years of service to the young men of DPB. Pictured here are Very Reverend Pascual Villanueva, SDB, Rector Major Emeritus of the Salesian Congregation from Rome, Sister Mary Culhane and Mr. John Stanczak, principal of Don Bosco. This was the closing ceremony of the Centennial Year of the school, as Don Bosco Prep was founded in 1915.

WomenRising, Inc. celebrated its 110th anniversary with an Oct. 22 gala at the Liberty House in Jersey City. All proceeds from this event benefited WomenRising, which provides women with supportive counseling, crisis intervention, workforce development and job placement, shelter for victims of domestic violence, outreach, advocacy, and referrals. Pictured in the above photo are Sister Roseann Mazzeo, SC, Director; Eric Boyce, Business Manager; Secretary/Treasurer of Plumbers Local 24 and Honoree; and Mary (Coleman) Donnelly, Board President.

The late Sister Carol Johnston, SC, dedicated her life to social justice. She started an advisory community group in Newark to clean up the Passaic River from toxins. She did this as the Project and Planning Director for the Ironbound Community Corporation. In September of 2015 in Newark’s Riverfront Park, a silver plaque was placed on a boulder resting on a grassy hill overlooking the Passaic River. The plaque bears Sister Carol Johnston’s name and says that, “She loved Newark, fought for justice and helped us return to our river.”

The Mother Xavier Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity Award was initiated in the 100th anniversary year of Mother Xavier’s death. It honors a Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth or Seton Associate who exemplifies the “conviction that a life of charity requires a faith that does justice,” (Toward Boundless Charity, C20). The recipient demonstrates a notable commitment to the values of peace, justice and ecological integrity and the Vincentian focus on systemic change of unjust structures.” Sister Mary George Senderak was presented with the award at Congregation Day, September 26, 2015. Sister received an award etched with a drawing of Mother Xavier and $300 in donations was split between three charities of her choice in her name. Pictured above - Sister Rosemary Moynihan, Sister Mary George Senderak, Sister Patricia Mennor and Father Terrence Moran.

On September 17, 2015, the Mayor of Elizabeth, Christian Bollwage, joined by the Freeholders of Union County, directors of city agencies, and the women of Josephine’s Place, sisters and employees, gathered as the mayor cut the ribbon signifying the expansion of Josephine’s Place.

The Sisters of Charity were honored at the 2015 Alumnae/i Association’s Holiday Boutique. All the Sisters of Charity who taught at the college over the years were recognized for their excellence in teaching and mentoring of their students. Many of our graduates credit their personal and professional success to the sisters who taught them. Sister Kathleen Flanagan, ’65; Sister Anne Haarer, ’62; Sister Irma Marie Kessler, ’60; Sister Agnes Vincent Rueshoff, ’60; Sister Elena Colicelli, ’72; and Sister Teresa Bruno, ’72, were chosen to represent this outstanding contribution to alumnae because they are also alumnae.

The Sisters of Charity of St. Bridget’s, Jersey City, were presented with the 2016 Humanitarian of the Year award by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America. Sister Barbara Nesbihal was presented with the award on December 12, 2015, at the 13th Annual Christmas Dinner Dance at the Casino In The Park.
Congratulations to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth who have celebrated milestones in their religious life. We celebrate these 57 faithful women for continuing the mission of Christ in the world for 3,445 cumulative years.

If you recognize one of the Sisters and would like to send a correspondence to her, please mail it to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Communications Office, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, NJ  07961-0476 or e-mail it to escharity@scnj.org.

If you would like to make a donation in their honor, contact the Development Office at srcharity@scnj.org or 973-290-5480.

80 YEARS
Sister Miriam Patrice Kane
Sister Mary Catherine Regan
Sister Mary Agnes Hanley
Sister Margaret Shalvoy
Sister Mary Catherine Regan
Sister Paula Bray
Sister Mary Pierre McPhee

75 YEARS
Sister Clare Maureen Tracy
Sister Barbara Aires
Sister Beverly Ann Bligh
Sister Jo Ann Bromley
Sister Jo Ann Eileen Butler
Sister Jane Teresa Culligan
Sister Madeline Fahey

70 YEARS
Sister Geraldine Ann Brady
Sister Kathleen Flanagan
Sister Janet Lehmann
Sister Janet McLaughlin
Sister Anne Marie Moroney
Sister Catherine Morrisett
Sister Frances Salemi
Sister Miriam Patrice Kane

65 YEARS
Sister Maria Brigita Fitzsimmons
Sister Marie Charitina Frabizio
Sister Barbara Ginther
Sister Elizabeth Ann Holler
Sister Joseph Marian Hudson
Sister Joan Lowden
Sister Rosemary McGavin

60 YEARS
Sister Geraldine Ann Brady
Sister Kathleen Flanagan
Sister Janet Lehmann
Sister Janet McLaughlin
Sister Anne Marie Moroney
Sister Catherine Morrisett
Sister Frances Salemi
Sister Miriam Patrice Kane

55 YEARS
Sister Geraldine Ann Brady
Sister Kathleen Flanagan
Sister Janet Lehmann
Sister Janet McLaughlin
Sister Anne Marie Moroney
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JUBILARIANS

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65 YEARS

Sister Patricia Meidhof
Sister Mary Jane O'Hare
Sister Mary Susan Boyle
Sister Mary Agnita Chonko
Sister Barbara Conroy
Sister Donna Crocco
Sister Ellen Mary Desmond

60 YEARS

Sister Jean Young
Sister Therese Christine Amero
Sister Barbara Brady
Sister Marguerite Brennan
Sister Barbara Brown
Sister John Margaret Harrington
Sister Beverly Ornes

50 YEARS

Sister Barbara Nesbihal
Sister Patricia Reynolds
Sister Ann Stango
Sister Anita Louise Thompson
Sister Rita Toomey
Sister Maryanne Van Note
Sister Joyce Vincent

25 YEARS

Monica
Sister Margaret Conlon
Sister Elizabeth Kremp
Sister Rosemary Moynihan
Sister Elizabeth Scheick
Sister Mary Dolores Spano
Sister Maryanne Tracey
Sister Margaret McCann
The Bayscape Garden located at Maris Stella Retreat and Conference Center in Harvey Cedars, N.J. near Beggans Cottage was begun through a collaboration between Maris Stella and the American Littoral Society. The society is an Environmental Agency headquartered in Sandy Hook, N.J. Each year on Memorial Day weekend, countless volunteers from the Sisters of Charity, Seton Associates, CSE Students and friends bring the garden back to life after the winter. Karol Sundholm, a Master Gardener, volunteers at Maris Stella, working on the Bayscape Garden throughout the spring, summer and fall. The Garden is composed only of plants and flowers indigenous to Long Beach Island. Last year the Band of ’62, those who entered the Sisters of Charity in 1962, donated a bench located in the garden in memory of Sister Carol Johnston, SC.

The Shrine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is located on the bayside next to the chapel and is tended to by the same gardeners who take care of the Bayscape Garden. Numerous people stop at the shrine to say a prayer and take pictures.

The gardeners tend to the beautiful Crape Myrtle trees that line the center driveway, the gardens on the ocean side around Saint Vincent’s and the landscaping in front of Kane. Maris Stella would not be as alive and colorful as it is without the hours of work that volunteers give so generously.

“As a Congregation we challenge ourselves to sustain the mission by: acting with conscious awareness of our interdependence with one another and all creation.”

Taken from The Direction Statement of the General Assembly of 2015

Maris Stella Gardens
by Sister Patricia Dotzauer

JOSEPHINE’S PLACE – ABC’s of Healthy Living
by Sister Judith Mertz

Partnering with Groundworks of Elizabeth, Merck, Horizon Foundation of New Jersey and Trinitas Regional Medical Center and School of Nursing has made it possible to carry through the goals of ABC’s of Healthy Living.

This project, in the backyard of Josephine’s Place in the City of Elizabeth, incorporates nutrition and all aspects of health through workshops and on-hands experience. One phase of this program, covering the past four-and-a-half years, centered on education and cultivation of earth boxes, plants and herbs.

“Come and Grow With Us” included education in:
- Nutritional value of vegetables and herbs
- Ways to prepare the earth for the growing of plants and herbs
- Instruction on how to plant the herbs and vegetables
- Care for the gardens
- Knowledge of how to decipher weeds from real plants/herbs
- Timing for cutting the vegetable and herbs.... and how to do the cutting.

Workshops were provided on cooking and preserving the produce. Demonstrations focused on the various ways of cooking vegetables, specifically, grilling, Woking, steaming, and baking. The participants and the facilitator shared recipes. Workshops featured the best times to purchase produce, for example, when is it most ripe. In addition, the women enrolled in the workshop learned how to read labels and to recognize the most nutritional ingredients.

Garden of Peace, as the space is referred to, provides a place for learning, laughter, creativity and community building. Plans for the coming year include the expansion of the garden to the outside front area of Josephine’s Place. This will allow opening the garden to others.

Member of Groundworks of Elizabeth
by Sister Judith Mertz

Sister Carol Johnston, SC (RIP) and Bonnie Lynch, Seton Associate (r) in front of the Bayscape Garden.

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Sister Carol Johnston, SC (RIP) and Bonnie Lynch, Seton Associate (r) in front of the Bayscape Garden.
Main Street in Paterson, N.J., is the hub of urban life in this city. But city dwellers are gawking at a very rare sight along Main Street – a vegetable garden cultivated by the Father English Community Center (FECC) of Catholic Family and Community Services (CFCS) an agency of Catholic Charities. An empty, trash filled lot has been changed to a productive garden by the staff and volunteers of FECC with the assistance of City Green, a non-profit organization establishing urban farms and gardens in northern New Jersey. In 2015, the garden produced 1,000 lbs. of fresh fruits and vegetables for distribution to the needy at the FECC Food Pantry.

Sister Maureen Sullivan, grant writer for diocesan Catholic Charities’ Catholic Family and Community Services, is coordinator of the garden with the assistance of Carlos Roldan, director of the food pantry at FECC. Nancy Hirdt and Andy San Felippo from Our Lady of the Magnificat Parish in Kinnelon are also part of FECC’s “garden team.” "Our overall vision of the community garden is a space that provides a green area where adults and children can connect with nature, learn how to grow healthy food and harvest produce for themselves and other needy persons," Sister Maureen said. "It will produce healthy food, but will also bring people together and promotes gardening skills for the urban dweller. It can also be a place with some quiet space to sit, read, talk or dream.”

With the garden now in place, many residents pass by with a sense of pride and happiness to see the space green and full of life. What has caught the attention of many city-dwellers is the four-foot cornstalks. "Soon the corn will be taller than me," Sister Maureen said with a chuckle.

The Garden of Hope is not the only CFCS garden involving a Sister of Charity. At Hope House, Dover, N.J., Sister Roberta Feil rejuvenated an older garden with a grant from the Sisters of Charity Ministry Grants. With the help of staff, volunteers and clients, the garden provides fresh produce for the Hope House Food Pantry. The garden program also provided nutrition workshops, "Cooking Light, Cooking Right" to clients.

During the spring and summer months, the FECC gardeners usually meet on Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Volunteers are welcome and no experience is needed. For more information, call (973-881-0280) ext. 538.
Sister Marie Russo  
*Charity Nourished by Prayer*

Whether teaching English to foreign missionaries, leading a tai chi class at Josephine's Place, offering private counseling, or facilitating a women's spirituality group at her parish, it seems as if Sister Marie Russo is always on the go in a ministry of charity. Energized by a full schedule of diverse ministries, Sister Marie is invariably calm, soft spoken, and gracious. To Sister Marie, ministries of charity are nourished by prayer. She relies upon and cherishes her prayer time as she seeks to live each day close to God.

Perhaps most rewarding to Sister Marie is her work teaching English as a Second Language to international religious women at Assumption College for Sisters. "I feel that it's really a ministry to missionaries. These sisters come from Africa, Vietnam and El Salvador, and they will go back to be heads of communities or schools or hospitals, helping the poor in their own countries."

Whatever Sister Marie does in ministry always relates back to the foundation provided by prayer. Sister Marie says, "I need to spend my time in prayer every day. I enjoy praying in the office, praying the rosary, going to daily Mass, and having quiet prayer."

Sister Marie feels blessed by the friendship of her sisters in the community who encourage and support her on her journey in ministry. She is grateful to be part of a community so committed to being open and responsive to changing needs. Although it was wonderful in the past to have great numbers of sisters in the community, she believes that the influence of the Sisters of Charity in the world is greater today than ever before and says, "So many people respond to our dedication to the poor and our love of God."

"I need to spend my time in prayer every day. I enjoy praying in the office, praying the rosary, going to daily Mass, and having quiet prayer."

The prospect of continuing to serve God's people energizes Sister Marie as she moves forward in her ministries rooted in prayer. "The Sisters of Charity have always tried to be faithful servants, and I know we will continue to serve God's people. Wonderful things are happening, and I have hope that whatever happens in the future will be what God wants."

Sister Lillian Silkowski  
*A Gift of Connecting with Youth*

Anyone who has ever been blessed to meet Sister Lillian Silkowski will agree that there is no such thing as an abrupt, impersonal encounter with Sister Lillian. Throughout her many years as a Sister of Charity, Sister Lillian has always taken the time to listen and to share a smile and a story. Especially in her ministry with children and youth, she built relationships based on trust, affirmation, and the assurance of God's presence and goodness.

Sports were always an important part of the way that Sister Lillian related to young people. She coached and refereed for girls' basketball and worked extensively with CYO basketball and baseball teams. An incident that happened shortly after she began teaching at Holy Cross School in Harrison reveals her love of sports and her gift of connecting with youth. "I was in my classroom after school and trying to work on my lesson plan when I heard the rhythmic bouncing of a basketball in the gym, and it was driving me crazy." She couldn't resist checking in on the activity in the gym, where some older boys were having difficulty trying to teach the grammar school boys how to execute a give-and-go.

She tells the story, "I watch for a while, and finally I say, 'George, can I help you?' I hang my veil on a peg so it won't get in the way and I jog onto the court. George numbly moves into position and I dribble the ball, pass it off to George, and George gives it back to me. In one motion, up I go and the ball goes into the basket. After that, I walk off the court, put my veil back on, and say, 'See, fellows, that's how you're supposed to do it.'"

At the core of Sister Lillian's life now, as always, is a deep and very personal relationship with God. Her prayer life is characterized by frequent conversations with God throughout the day. She is continually amazed by the little coincidences that God brings to bless her life, knowing what she needs before she recognizes it herself.

"Something will happen, and I'll give a word of thanks and ask, 'How'd you know I wanted that?'" Sister Lillian trusts in God as her ever present guide, companion, and friend as she continues her journey of more than 60 years as a Sister of Charity.

(Both articles were edited from interviews by Wendy Relation).
For 155 years, the young women of the Academy of Saint Elizabeth have gathered to chat and enjoy one another's company. The older photograph of the original academy building was taken circa 1870, while today's students gather outside Xavier Hall, which was completed in 1899.

The Academy of Saint Elizabeth is proud of their rich history as the first all-girls Catholic high school for young women in the state of New Jersey. Today, the Academy remains dedicated to their core values of educational excellence, charity, community, justice and service. The mission continues...
In Memoriam

Please visit “Remember Our Deceased Sisters in Your Prayers” at www.SCNJ.org for reflections on the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth who died between September 1, 2015 and February 15, 2016. May our sisters enjoy the fruits of their labor as well as peace with their God.

Sharing Our Sisters’ Artwork
by Donna Sartor-Halatin

One of the ideas that came from the Communications Office in 2015 was to help share some of the artwork of our own sisters. In September, I reached out to our sister artists to see if they would like to participate in a Christmas card project that would promote some of their creations. Three sisters responded and were generous enough to let me use one or two of their drawings to put on Christmas and thank-you cards. Those who participated were Sister Anne Haarer, Sister Mary Culhane and Sister Pat Flynn.

Each individually wrapped packet contained three Christmas cards and three thank-you cards, each with a different design by one of the three artists. We asked for a $10 donation for each packet. We decided to pick two ministries to receive the profits from the sale of the cards. The first was the Centro Arte para la Paz in El Salvador. The second was the Haitian “goat program” that teaches families how to maintain and raise goats for food and reproduction so that they can sustain future families.

The cards were available at the annual Christmas Concert in December and also to all the Motherhouse sisters. Since this was my pilot program, I decided to start off small scale. The total amount raised from the cards was $922; each ministry received $461. A banner was printed to let folks know where their donations were headed. Thank you to our sister artists for sharing their beautiful art with us. Look for our next project for the spring/summer months —coming soon!

(l to r) Sisters Pat Flynn, Anne Haarer, and Mary Culhane displaying their beautiful artwork at the annual Christmas Concert.
Adopt a Student Nurse from Haiti

Sister Janet Lehmann, teacher of student nurses in Haiti, is bringing 20 women from Haiti to Convent Station this summer. These women are in training at the Université de Notre Dame in Jacmel, Haiti.

They will be doing skills training for two weeks at Trinitas Hospital in Elizabeth, N. J. and will be housed at the College of Saint Elizabeth. The student nurses are required to provide their own airfare. The Sisters of Charity are seeking donations to assist with the expenses related to this trip (food, field trips, cost of buses, etc.).

This venture is a collaborative effort among Sisters of Charity, the College of Saint Elizabeth and Trinitas Hospital. The anticipated cost per student nurse is $300-$500.

Please make donations by mail or through the website www.SCNJ.org by May 15. No donation is too small! Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Haiti Nurse Project, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, NJ 07961-0476.

Sisters of Charity Annual Harvest Festival

One of the highlights of the month of October is the celebration of the annual Sisters of Charity Harvest Festival. The Madison Hotel was bursting with enthusiasm as many guests gathered to honor Alix Ann Arlinghaus, recipient of the Mehegan Award, and Carlotta Budd, who was given the Caritas Award. These awards are presented to persons who have demonstrated an extraordinary personal commitment to the mission of charity.

The atrium, where the guests enjoyed a variety of hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and good conversation, was filled with an aura of camaraderie and fun. This spirit spilled over to the ballroom, where a delicious dinner was followed by an evening of dancing to the highly acclaimed music of Tim McLoone and the Shirleys.

All 200 guests waited eagerly to see who would go home with one of the gift baskets or the proceeds from the 50-50.

Harvest Festival 2015 was a great success both as a fund raiser and a friend raiser and all look forward to another special night at Harvest Festival 2016.
Jesus Christ came “to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour” (Luke 4:18-29). The mission of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth is to proclaim and live this Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Through Baptism and Confirmation each Christian is incorporated into Christ and called to continue his work. This is the mission given to the entire Church. In the tradition of Saint Vincent de Paul our Congregation participates in the mission of the Church fundamentally through ministry supported and nourished by prayer and vowed life in community. From the beginning our ministry has encompassed commitments in education, health care, and pastoral and social services.

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Toward Boundless Charity
September 29, 1989
Your donations help us

Continue the mission

Education

Sisters of Charity serve in parish elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and in a wide range of educational ministries to youth and adults.

Healthcare

Sisters of Charity serve as physicians, psychotherapists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, therapists, and patient advocates.

Pastoral & Social Services

Sisters of Charity serve as counselors, social workers, chaplains, pastoral associates, and immigration specialists, and provide direct care to people in need in the United States, Haiti, and El Salvador.

Care of Retired & Infirm Sisters

Sisters of Charity who are retired and infirm continue to serve in a wide range of volunteer ministries and are devoted to the ministry of prayer. Donations are gratefully used to provide skilled nursing care and meet other needs.
Upcoming Events

Spring 50/50 Raffle
Drawing takes place on
Wednesday, April 27, 2016
There will be 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners!

Spring Lake Luncheon
Spring Lake Bath & Tennis Club
Tuesday, June 7, 2016
With guest speaker Mary Lou Quinlan, author of “The God Box” and performer of the one woman play based on her New York Times bestselling book.

9th Annual Golf Outing
Echo Lake Country Club, Westfield, N.J.
Monday, June 20, 2016