

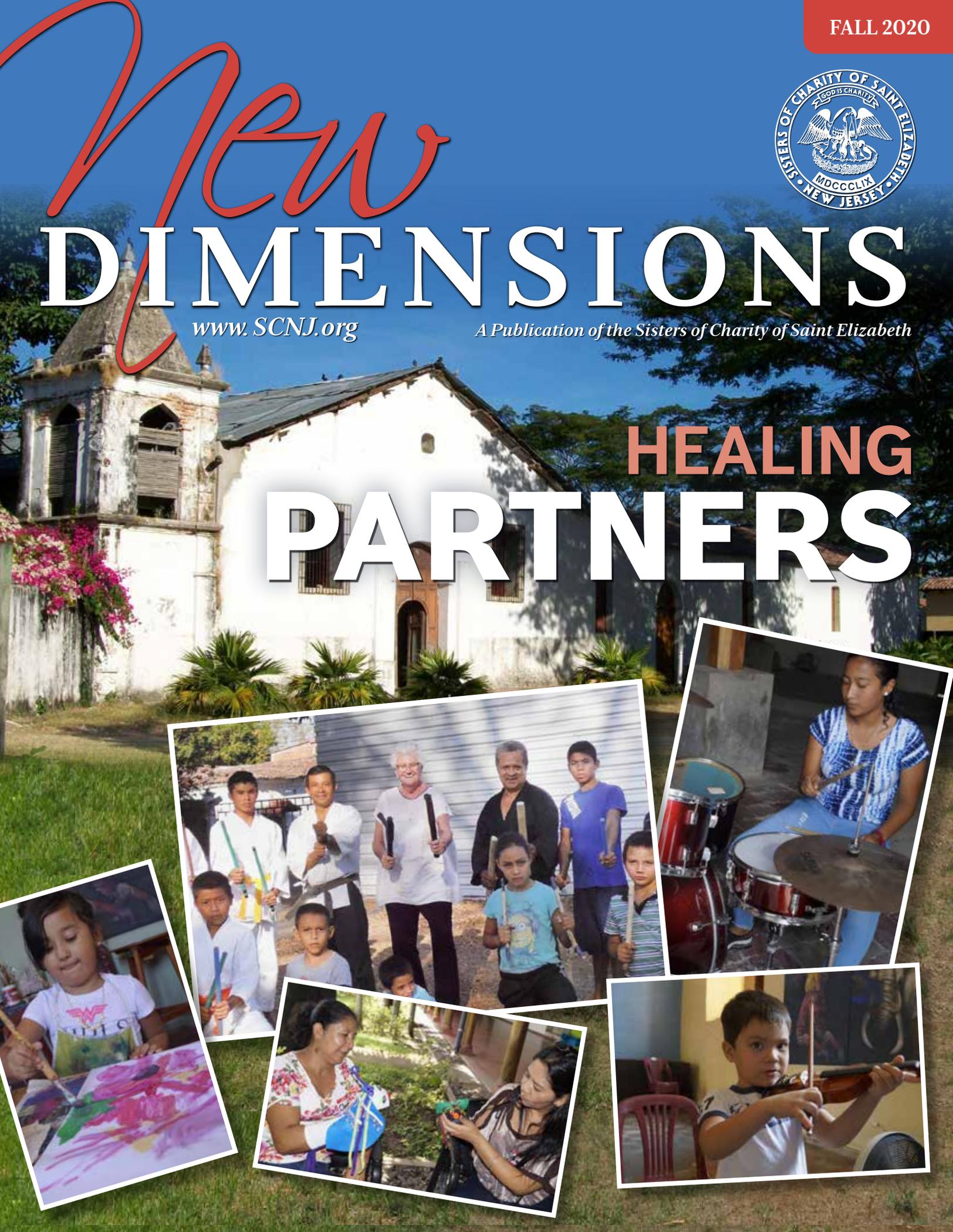


New DIMENSIONS

www.SCNJ.org

A Publication of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

HEALING PARTNERS



NEW Dimensions is the quarterly magazine of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, a congregation founded by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac, in Emmitsburg, Maryland in 1809. In 1859, Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan founded the New Jersey community known as the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth. Today the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth are engaged in education, health care, pastoral and social service ministries in 14 dioceses within the United States and El Salvador and Haiti. The Congregation currently numbers 208 vowed members. The Seton Associate relationship has 310 affiliated lay and religious women and men.

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Welcome

Dear Friends,

Adjusting to life in the new normal is a challenge! *Masks, Zoom, Social Distancing* are all things we did not deal with much before COVID-19! These six months have been unique in so many ways, but through it all we have continued the Mission, supported our Ministries and our sisters are becoming more and more comfortable with technology!



Our ministries received our support in a number of different ways during this time- we used our 1% Fund (voluntary contributions from our sisters) and our Ministry Fund (designated funds) to give monies to help them with expenses due to the COVID-19 epidemic; we annually receive requests for Ministry Grants and this year 14 ministries applied and we distributed \$75,000 to them. Your contributions enable us to do this and at the same time provide for the care of our aging and infirmed sisters. Our most recent initiative in fund raising is for our mission in El Salvador where Peggy O'Neill, SC, is guiding the development of the Center for Peace through the Arts. You will read more in this issue about this initiative and will have the opportunity to help support this project.

The article titled "Ministries ARE Blooming in the COVID-19 Era" talks about the impact the pandemic had on a few of our ministries and how they transitioned, reenergized, and created new ways of responding to the need of the people they serve.

Another article highlights the honor bestowed on Jane Francis Brady, S.C., the former CEO of St. Joseph Health who will be inducted in a virtual ceremony into the New Jersey Hall of Fame this Fall. We congratulate her and give thanks for the wonderful ministry she gave during her 28 years at this beloved sponsored ministry.

At the same time from the end of March through mid-May, we lost 15 of our sisters in death and could not celebrate their lives as we would normally do - it was a very difficult and stressful period for all of us. We also lost some of our Seton Associates during these months to illnesses too and mourn their loss.

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth concluded our 160th anniversary on September 26th - we could not do all of the celebrations as we would have liked, but it has been a blessed year in so many ways. The Academy of Saint Elizabeth is also celebrating its 160th anniversary this year and another article gives you some of the wonderful history of this beloved sponsored ministry.

All this is to say that we are alive and well - and with your support, both financially and spiritually in prayer, the charism of Boundless Charity is alive, inventive and moving forward in our time!

Peace,

Maureen Shaughnessy, S.C.

General Superior

On the Cover:

A glimpse of some of the students that benefit from the Centro Arte para la Paz in Suchitoto, El Salvador.

Ministries ARE Blooming in the Covid-19 Era

by Sister Barbara Garland, SC

*“The Sisters of Charity are like petunias :
they bloom where they are planted!”*

This legendary saying, attributed to Mother Xavier, founder of our congregation, celebrates the many ways our ministries have transitioned, reenergized, and created new ways of responding to needs in the Covid-19 era. What follows are snapshots of the pandemic's impact and the response of some of our ministries.

SISTER CAROL HOBAN, SC, BREVARD, NC

Consider going to a clinic because you are not well. The medical professional who sees you depends on sight and touch and observing how you respond to questions and simple testing. Now in this time of Covid-19 this may be done through a non-visual landline or cell phone and computer.

Thirty-four years ago, Sister Carol Hoban, a nurse practitioner, and two Sisters of Mercy, one of whom was a medical doctor, founded the Frances Warde Family Health Center in western North Carolina. The Center, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, serves the rural, poor residents through urgent care and continuing health services.

In March 2020, with the onset of the pandemic, Sister Carol's healthcare ministry changed more dramatically than she anticipated. The Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina directed that anyone over 65 was to stay at home and work from home. In her area the coronavirus escalated in June, so Sister Carol's quarantine continues. Her health ministry is now a telephone and computer ministry for which there are defined criteria for

reimbursement similar to office visits. Sister Carol works with a regular landline phone without video and a computer for reference to health records. Her patients would be unable to use Zoom or Skype because they do not have access to internet or computers.

This has been a significant change for her!

Since she has served most of her patients for a long time, she finds the telephone service offers opportunity for socialization in the process of uncovering symptoms and health needs, and this is helpful. Often a considerable conversation is needed to



Sister Carol Hoban, SC, home 'nursing by computer'.

define the health problem. Sister Carol has found this to be a new form of health care for her -- a challenge that offers a new perspective on how she can help people. Just as it becomes a new normal, the Center will close at the end of September and Sister Carol will "try out" retirement for a while or longer!

**SISTER ROSEANN MAZZEO, SC
JERSEY CITY, NJ**

Hudson County women are blessed to have WomenRising in their midst. Under the leadership of Executive Director Sister Roseann Mazzeo, this agency is dedicated to assisting women and their families to achieve self-sufficiency and live safe, productive, and fulfilling lives, through social services, economic development, and advocacy services. Covid-19 has been a challenge to how this is accomplished.

WomenRising serves mainly women of color, immigrants, and women of low-income levels. Covid-19 and all its complexities have disproportionately affected these populations in



At WomenRising, a sister and brother used proceeds from a "lemonade stand" to purchase toys for other children.

terms of sickness, loss of employment, inadequate technology for their children's virtual schooling, domestic violence and in many other ways. Quarantine time and the lack of sufficient income to meet the basic needs of food, shelter, diapers, etc. increased the stress of daily interactions of many families. WomenRising saw these needs and actively sought additional resources. Assistance from local and state government agencies, an increase in individual donations, and generous in-kind or cash assistance

were received from local businesses and corporations. A campaign by a volunteer enlisted donations from family and friends and secured 22 Chrome books for children to engage in virtual schooling.

Here is a sample of their service: A woman from outside the U.S. was visiting her family in NJ. Due to COVID her visit was extended and she became a victim of domestic/elder abuse. She was brought to WomenRising's secure shelter. She spoke no English. The social worker located her daughter in her home country and arranged a tearful but happy phone call. Other resources, including translators, were identified and utilized to assist this woman. She is now scheduled to return home.

Achieving self-sufficiency is the goal, especially challenging in the current economic environment. Collaborating with a diversity of partners across all sectors and addressing the disparities based on race, economic status, and gender are essential to move forward together. Persistent and informed advocacy needs to give voice and focus on the systemic solutions that will promote a future of equality and hope.

**SISTER BEVERLY POLICASTRO, SC
PERTH AMBOY, NJ**

"My life has been a yo-yo life. I can never be sure one day what will happen in the next!" That is the description of what this elementary school principal has experienced since March. As principal of Perth Amboy Catholic Elementary School, Sr. Beverly Policastro's yo-yos come from staff, students, parents, the Metuchen Diocese school office, Gov. Phil Murphy, and vendors, as things are in constant movement. From beginning "remote" learning with little advanced preparation to responding to the next requirement for sanitation, each day is different. The September opening was even delayed by a week due to slow delivery of new essentials.



A very different beginning at Perth Amboy Catholic Elementary School.

Her community of learning is about 95% Hispanic and many parents struggle to understand what is happening because of language differences. Learning at home through technology is definitely an unprecedented experience for those parents, who are also affected by unemployment due to Covid-19's aftermath. Hers is the only Roman Catholic inner-city school in the Diocese of Metuchen, so she stands by herself when certain concerns arise. In the midst of the March-June period, the Diocesan School Office, due to declining funding, had her let three teachers and four aides go; they were the ones who taught the special subjects, e.g., music, art, etc., which her students loved.

As school begins this academic year, she will have 12 teachers for about 185 students. Forty percent of the students will do onsite learning and 60% remote learning. Classroom space has been reduced by the social-distancing requirement. In the midst of all this, Sr. Beverly and her staff are truly grateful to be seeing students once again and for the federal grant that provided needed technology so that learning could occur. She and her staff have approached this new school year with hope and excitement.

**SISTER JACQUELYN BALASIA, SC
CLARK, NJ**

If a prize were to be awarded for forethought and organization in the midst of the rapid changes caused by the coronavirus, Sister Jacquelyn Balasia and her staff at Mother Seton Regional High School, Clark, would have to be considered. As principal, Sister Jacquelyn praises the early understanding of her faculty of the effects this might have on learning. The sense of an educational community working together included supportive parents and cooperative students -- even with multiple plan changes for graduation.

At the beginning of March, before any restrictions had occurred, Sister Jacquelyn asked her faculty to consider remote learning and offer plans for this to happen. She asked faculty on her staff who were familiar with this new style of education to provide training and answer questions for the rest of the faculty. In the middle of March, as remote learning through technology was mandated, her faculty, staff, parents and students were ready to start --not in a sense of despair but of creativity and hope. Even in the midst of all of this, they voluntarily continued to provide hundreds of sandwiches and bags of food every Monday for the hungry at St. Joseph Social Center in Elizabeth.

That same future thinking and management carried through the summer as plans were developed for the opening of Mother Seton in September. With expectations of the state and the Newark Archdiocese changing daily as the virus expanded and contracted, Sr. Jacquelyn led the effort to develop a four-page, direct and succinct, master plan for reopening -- complete with sanitizing robots! With the choice of families to send 82.5% of the Mother Seton students back to school and 17.5% to continue virtual learning, the school was redesigned for social distancing, lunch periods, outside "breathing breaks," use of technology, written expectations as the basis for learning and testing, and other transitions.

How has it affected Sister Jacquelyn? She quickly says she is more and more grateful each day for the gifts of all involved in the Mother Seton learning community and their innovation and creativity that continue to give her great hope for the '20-21 academic year.



Opening Mass at Mother Seton Regional High School takes on a whole new look.

**SISTER ELISE GITTRICH, SC
EL PASO, TX**

El Paso is the site of the Opportunity Center for the Homeless where Sister Elise Gittrich serves as director of Elder Care. Recently she has focused her ministry on assisting the women who come to the Center. On any given day, approximately 50 women and 100 men are given hospitality. The pandemic, quite active in Texas, has caused a number of changes to the services.

Social distancing has reduced the number of beds available in their main service. Newly arriving homeless men and women stay at local motels (definitely not elegant!) for 14 days of quarantine before being welcomed at the shelter, and many--- because of their lifestyle--- cannot stay in one place that long. Food is delivered by the Opportunity Center staff to those in the motels. A parking lot has been converted to a drop-in center and is now a "tent city." Those who leave the motels early may find a spot here.



Drop-in center converted into a tent city in El Paso.

Early one morning Sister Elise went to the tent city and found a man who was dead, perhaps since about 1 a.m. He was covered with flies, dirt, etc. She was able to briefly pray for him with some of the others there, but because of the virus could not clean him or care for him in any way before his body was removed by the police. Staff needs to be a constant presence here due to the vast extent of people who have mental disorders or are abusing drugs.

In working with these men and women, staff and residents become family to each other. One woman resident who was constantly available to help others has now been accepted in a formal recovery program and hopes to continue to work with the Opportunity Center when she finishes. It is people like this that give Sister Elise a strong sense of gratitude for being able to be present to so many of those for whom society has little concern.

In the midst of the many transitions and creative responses, each of these Sisters of Charity, along with so many others, has been present for those afflicted with this virus and for the family members and friends who have been mourned. Truly they are blooming Women of Charity!

WORKING FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, EARTH IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

by Fr. Terrence Moran, Director of the Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity

So much of our action for peace, justice, and ecological integrity is done in community. We attend demonstrations together, plan and network on committees together, and gather in groups to educate ourselves on justice issues together. Almost overnight, COVID-19 and social distancing have made our accustomed ways of social activism impossible. With justice advocates everywhere, the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth has been using creative ways to advance our mission in difficult circumstances.

A lot gets done by ZOOM these days. The justice promoters of the Charity Federation have met by ZOOM. I have participated in ZOOM webinars on how the pandemic affects immigrants and refugees and also for activities to celebrate *Laudato Si'* week at the end of May. Every morning I gather with a group of peace activists on ZOOM for lectio divina on the daily readings and to support one another. As part of our efforts to become an anti-racist Congregation, we are planning a ZOOM webinar in October on racism in religious life with a follow-up ZOOM discussion group on Ibram Kendi's book *How to Be an Antiracist*. In September, the SC Ecospirituality Reflection group met by ZOOM and heard a presentation from Sister of Charity of Cincinnati Cj Willie. While we miss each other's company, attendance is usually better at ZOOM meetings and we can have speakers from anywhere in the world - and you don't have to leave home or work, get dressed up, battle traffic, or worry about weather cancellations.

Advocacy by phone, email and signing on to letters and statements on the SC PJEI Priority Issues are on-going. There is intense advocacy around people experiencing homelessness, an important issue for the SCs. You can't shelter at home if you don't have one! NJ immigration advocates have found a creative way to protest. Several times we have driven in car caravans around local detention centers, honking our horns and demanding the release of people in immigration detention because of the dangers of COVID-19 in prisons. We observe social distancing and still make our voices heard. We join as best we can in national and international events. We contributed a quilt panel to the virtual commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, praying with fabric and needles for the end of the scourge of nuclear weapons. When The Supreme Court made its decision to uphold the program that protects immigrants brought to



Lovers of the Cross Sisters, Luyen Pham and Linh Tran, and Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Patricia Reynolds, crafted this beautiful quilt panel for the Peace Ribbon Project.



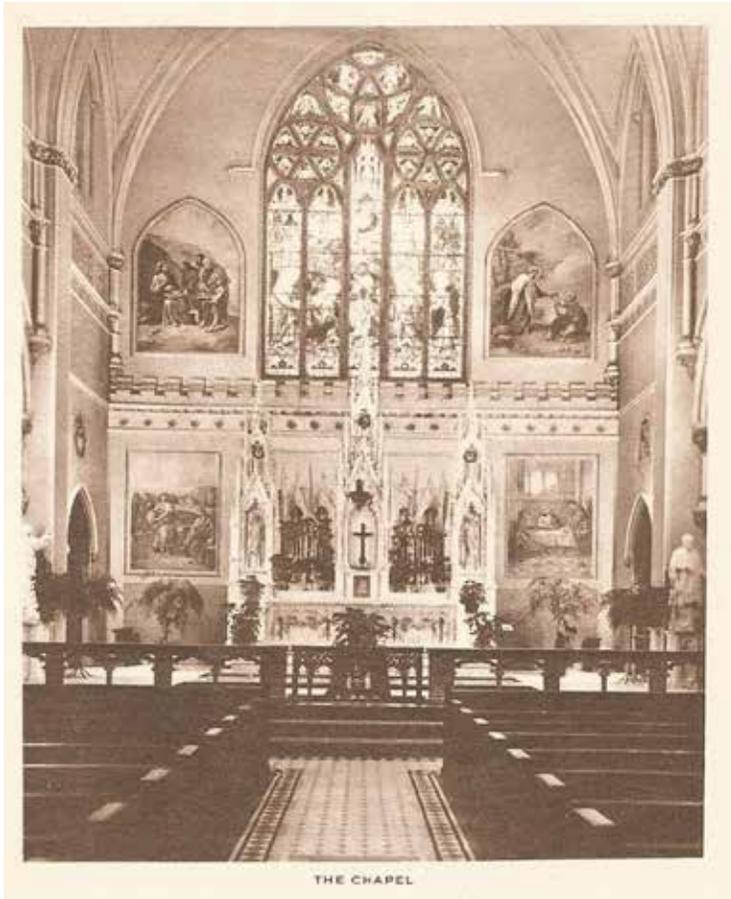
Sister Elena Colicelli rings the bells of Holy Family Chapel to celebrate the Supreme Court decision upholding DACA.

the country as children and allows them to work, commonly known as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), we joined religious organizations all over the country in ringing the bells of Holy Family Chapel for seven minutes, a minute for each 100,000 DACA recipients protected under the program.

Small actions for Earth can make a big difference. John Di Mucci, director of Sponsorship and Mission Office, has replaced the wasteful plastic pod for our office Keurig machine with reusable plastic ones and bought Fair Trade coffee from Haiti.

An easy way for you to participate in our PJEI mission is to like and follow the PJEI Office Facebook page. Updated multiple times a day, our page offers opportunities for inspiration, education, and action. Check it out! <https://www.facebook.com/Office-of-Peace-Justice-and-Ecological-IntegritySisters-of-Charity-300157523445664>

Like everyone, the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity with other justice advocates is adjusting to the "new normal." And we are discovering, to paraphrase St. Vincent de Paul, that justice is inventive to infinity.



This 1930s photo shows the oil paintings that were on the walls from 1934 to 1958.

Holy Family Chapel THEN & NOW

by Sister Noreen Neary, SC

Holy Family Chapel is a beautiful worship space which the Sisters of Charity share with the Academy and University communities, as well as with our families and neighbors. As stewards of this sacred place, the Sisters of Charity have cared for it since its dedication on Dec. 30, 1909, renovating it over the years to meet the needs of those who worship God here. In recent decades the chapel has been made more accessible to persons with disabilities and the walls and beautiful stained glass windows have been repaired as needed. The chapel has been enhanced in the past few years by the shrine of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, SC, and the transformation of an adjacent room into a Legacy Room, which seeks to share the life and spirituality of the Beata. Most recently the wooden floors



Steamcleaning the altar.



New Floors

have been refinished and the pews and kneelers fitted with new cushions. While the chapel is being updated for the 21st century with the means to live-stream services via the Internet, the Carrara marble spires of the beautiful Shanley altar – donated in 1909 by Mrs. Julia Shanley in memory of her late husband Bernard – are being power-cleaned of the residue of 11 decades of incense and candle smoke.

We are hoping to celebrate the completion of these renovations by adding new pavers to the walkway in front of the Chapel. These pavers will be available for purchase and personalization. Stay tuned for further information on how to purchase your very own paver!



WHY DO WE STAY?

by Sister Peggy O'Neill, SC

Just what am I, Hermana Peggy, still in El Salvador after 33 years! Let me give you a glimpse to convince you why “we” Sisters of Charity have stayed.

It has all been a marvelous experience, a wonderful privilege. Clearly, I carry intense images from the many years...images of pain and beauty, violence and tenderness, transformation, resiliency and terror. It has been such a gift to share life so closely with these Salvadorans: to have been taken into their homes and hearts, to have been so trusted and so loved. The deep emotional bonds that formed through shared vulnerability during the war years cemented us, and the rebuilding after the peace accords kept feeding our dreams of a new day.

Ten years ago, I co-founded with Pat Farrell, OSF, *Centro Arte para la Paz*, (CAP), a healing space for youth born, post-war, but born into a world of suffering and loss, a world of sadness and endless stories of the war. It was clear they carried inherited war trauma, and needed to know that, even though you cannot erase memories, you can learn how to manage them. We decided that we would use the arts to be the vehicle to

build a culture of peace, both personal and social. We would help these youngsters and ourselves learn to touch our memories with tenderness, and invite, especially our youth, to know with all they carry they could still imagine and dream and discover beauty and hope.

I have been the director of CAP all of these 10 years. We offer classes in music, drawing, painting, art, sculpture, dance, and martial arts, as well as skills like computers, chess and ESL. All of these opportunities are free and available during the week and on weekends. Grades K through 9 attend classes only half days so they come to us before or after their formal classes or better still on weekends. The Municipality of Suchitoto, where I live, has an urban area surrounded by 87 rural communities. The families in the farming areas are all former refugees and it is difficult for rural students to come to the peace center building during the week because of the distance. However, we go to their schools with certain offerings and they come to the Center in trucks on Saturdays and Sundays for classes. Our roads are still challenging, but we do remember harder times having to walk everywhere.

Generous individuals or institutions make possible all of our classes by funding the salaries of the teachers. There are 19 teachers supported by these funds and at least 600+ students attend each semester.

Right from the beginning, we knew we needed a business to support and maintain the administration of this alternative educational Peace Center, and so we decided our business would be space rental.

We took over an abandoned school built in 1914 by Dominican sisters. In 1980, they were forced to leave the property due to many death threats. The sisters never returned after 25 years, as they did not have enough sisters nor enough money to rebuild. We were only two at the time, with no money, but we did have a real passion for this needed focus on building a culture of peace. The trauma of war lingers, and gang violence grows. It was so clear that young people needed protection and we all needed to find ways to take away our fear. We needed to bring back the joy of living.

Abandonment not only meant repairs, but some areas were not fit for students to enter safely and needed restructuring, like the beautiful 1840 private chapel that not only survived 150 years, but earthquakes, civil war and 25 years of abandonment.

Like all creative Sisters of Charity, we got to work and converted the old Dominican Convent on the property into a hostel, expanded the school, added a community museum and a cafe, and built three apartments. Now we are transforming the old private chapel into a Performing Arts Center. This historic building will be for student presentations, special events, conferences *et al.* So many projects in poorer countries have failed because they are not sustainable. We are dedicated to making sure CAP will have a plan to be more self-sustaining.

This new multi-purpose chapel area will seat 300 and its side aisles will be gallery space for national and local artists including our own young artists. It will also be space for banquets for hotels and events in town. I am quite busy right now, even though we are in phase 2 of the pandemic. I have been negotiating for new floors, an electrical system, doors, solar energy... to bring this chapel back to life. We even have the old bell from the 1840's ready to ring again SOON!

I want you to know our visitors share the joy of watching young people who live in quite sparse conditions perform with such dignity and grace. Most of their parents never had the opportunity to receive formal schooling. They and I relish the sounds of classical ensembles, acoustical guitars, flutes and Celtic harps. I watch beauty and pain expressed on canvas. What a joy to see some of our own students become some of our teachers! The pandemic has immersed us into a strange silence but it has shown us what we have been building in CAP is truly spiritual

formation. The arts help us participate more fully in the gift of being human. If we are truly more human, we will truly be less violent.

My continued experiences here lay claim on my energies to do all in my power to prevent war and torture and to commit to ongoing conversion to non-violence, both personal and social. A more Sister of Charity way of saying it is; to commit to strive toward boundless loving.

It seems to me that each new ministry we began here was the right thing at the right time...something truly needed at that moment produced by the context. CAP aims to rebuild and nurture people's spirits, to maintain their hope in a world that is so broken, so pained still, by the violence of gangs, the separation of families, and the systemic sins of inequality that were never erased by the cruel civil war. There was no attempt to address the economic inequalities...that enslaved the majority.

We are so connected and it shouts out to me as I reflect on the following:

Our civil war ended 28 years ago, the one here in El Salvador, the war that so scarred me and all of the Sisters of Charity because of my presence. We here at CAP must not permit the systemic sins of inequality to keep lingering.

Oh, the pain of 400 years after THE civil war... the war that still scars all of us. We must not permit the systemic sins of inequality to keep lingering.

I am grateful that we have stayed in Suchitoto to build a Peace Center, to build healing space. Healing is hard work and it takes a long time...more than 28 years, more than 400 years.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO
COMPLETE THE
RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE
PEACE CENTER**

.....

Donate by texting
HEALINGPARTNERS
to 41444
or Donate online
at <https://igfn.us/f/2w8c/n>

THANK YOU!

2019 JUBILEE

Congratulations to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth who have celebrated milestones in their religious life. 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, 1000 North Main Street, Charleston, SC 29403. If you would like to make a donation in their honor, contact the Development Office at (803) 742-2222.

Since we did not publish a **NEW Dimensions** Spring 2020 issue, we are publishing this special Jubilee issue.

75 YEARS



Sister Lawrence Mahon, SC



Sister Anita William O'Neil, SC



Sister Mary Lou Hayden, SC



Sister Mary Jo Ward, SC



Sister Leo Veronica Cassotta, SC



Sister Dorothy Sheahan, SC

70 YEARS

65 YEARS



Sister Grace Reape, SC



Sister Maureen Shaughnessy, SC



Sister Marilyn Zaino, SC



Sister Marie Russo, SC



Sister Judith Mertz, SC



Sister Gloria O'Brien, SC

60 YEARS



Sister Mary Patricia Hooper, SC



Sister Marcella Nolan, SC



Sister Jeanne Agans, SC



Sister Dianne Moore, SC



Sister Cecilia McManus, SC



Sister Catherine Vincent, SC

55 YEARS

LARIANS

We celebrate these 36 faithful women for continuing the mission of Christ in the world for 2,130 cumulative years. Contact the Communications Office, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, NJ 07961-0476 or e-mail it to escharity@scnj.org. Contact the Communications Office at srcharity@scnj.org or 973-290-5480 or visit www.SCNJ.org.

the 2020 Jubilarians will be recognized in the Spring 2021 issue.

65 YEARS



Sister Clare Mary Roden, SC



Sister Anita Marcellis, SC



Sister Maureen Joseph Kirwan, SC



Sister Mary Morley, SC



Sister Mary Ellen Verdon, SC



Sister Margaret Killough, SC

55 YEARS



Sister Diane Dillon, SC



Sister Cecilia Charles Flanagan, SC



Sister Carol Hoban, SC



Sister Beatrice Guider, SC



Sister Roseann Mazzeo, SC



Sister Rosanne Caiazzo, SC

50 YEARS

45 YEARS

40 YEARS



Sister Mary Clark, SC



Sister Maryanne Campeotto, SC



Sister Prudentia Ngozi Osuji, SC



Sister Mary Teresa Orbegozo, SC



Sister Dolores Lew, SC



Sister Cheryl France, SC

FIRST ACADEMY Principal

by Molly McKenna '21

I'm sure we all have our own ideas of what the Academy of Saint Elizabeth is. Some of us may think of scrunched-up socks, some of stairs upon stairs upon stairs, some of morning prayer or the bell tower stretching into the sky. From transfers who have been here mere months, to teachers with tenures longer than their students have been alive, we've all been here long enough to develop our own image of this school.

What most people won't think of, I'm willing to wager, is the time before the SmartBoards (now Promethean tablets) or the skirts that show our knees or even the electric lights. For there was a time, long, long ago, when this school was lit only by flame and oil, when you could count on two hands the number of students in attendance, and when the building we all know was but a glimmer in the eyes of a few particularly ambitious sisters. Amidst the echo of gunfire in the South and the development of the first periodic table, this school was built from the ground up through the labor and tenacity of a handful of young women. And 160 years later, we're still here.

The Academy was one of a handful of schools founded out of a desire to educate Catholic children. Catholicism, at this time, was seen as a low-down, dirty religion belonging to the immigrants, a new wave of whom were crossing the Atlantic from Ireland and Germany. In Ireland, many parents would simply keep their kids home from school, or else subject the children to anti-Catholic teachings at the hands of the Protestant authorities.

In New Jersey, however, Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, nephew of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, for whom our school was named, saw the importance of educating the Catholic children. In 1858, five young women volunteered their lives to the education and care of children, orphans, and the unfortunate. They were sent to Cincinnati for their training and in 1859, Sister Mary Xavier Mehegan (better known now as Mother Xavier) and Sister Mary Catherine Nevin, two New York Sisters of Charity, were lent to Bishop Bayley to be Mother Superior and her assistant, respectively. The first motherhouse was in Newark, but in July 1860, they moved to the property we now call our campus. Immediately after, they started a select school for girls. Sister Mary Pauline Kelligar, the second directress of the Academy, would later write in her diary, describing three early sisters as "David's mighty men of old" who "could do the things that David did, and were ranked high among the royal followers of the divine King." The first two of these three were Mother Xavier and Sister Mary Catherine. The third was Sister Mary Agnes O'Neill.



Sister Mary Agnes O'Neill

Born Margaret Anne O'Neill, Sister Mary Agnes was one of the five young women who made up the first of the New Jersey Sisters of Charity. She was 22 at the time. She came from a prominent Catholic family in Paterson. Her brother John would become the city alderman and treasurer, and her brother Charles the mayor of Jersey City. Her younger sister Teresa would enter the Sisters of Charity in 1866, and the daughters of her other sisters would attend the Academy of Saint Elizabeth.

I think it's safe to say that few of us have heard her name before. I certainly hadn't. But it was Sister Mary Agnes O'Neill who spearheaded the growth of the Academy during its early years. It is due to her efforts that we have, say, the grotto at the bottom of the hill; that the early sisters were granted the privilege of a local post office; and that the Academy, some years after its founding, was said to offer young ladies an education comparable to that of a university. It was due to her that a new generation of young women was educated in not just music and art, but Latin, Greek, math, and science, for the Academy was not, and was never intended to be, a finishing school. And it was due to Sister Mary Agnes and her compatriots that Bishop Bernard McQuaid would later remark, "We men could never have done with this place what [the] sisters have managed to do."

Sister Mary Agnes O'Neill, 24 years old by now, was made directress of the Academy as soon as it was founded. At this time, the Motherhouse and the Academy were housed in a small building at the bottom of the hill. The Sisters had built it themselves, along with every other crop they sowed, path they laid, and stone they carried. That building was razed in

1883, five years after the ground was broken for the building on the top of the hill which now houses our school.

The Academy's first enrollment was seven girls. For 17 years, Sister Mary Agnes ran this school, stopping only when it became absolutely medically necessary. She was called by the other sisters "The Angel of Cheerfulness," for in her many ambitions and relentless zeal, she offered nothing but optimism. As the young community struggled through hard labor and endless service, she came to be seen as a source of encouragement and support. The prosperity of the Academy consumed her entire being, and her entire life, short as it was, came to revolve around this school. Year after year, she sent off girls with Elizabethan laurels to join a fledgling group of educated women.

By 1875, fifteen years after the establishment of the school, Sister Mary Agnes' health began to fail her. It was a pulmonary disease of some design, though whether they knew this at the time, I can't quite say. She did not let this stop her in her devotion to the Academy; if anything, it sparked a new ambition. As her work at the Academy was taken on by several other sisters, she set her sights on the construction of a grotto, which was to be a replica of the one found in Lourdes. Designed to "receive the first kiss of the rising sun," the grotto was completed in 1876, miraculously coming to fruition in her lifetime.

Always the dreamer, Sister Mary Agnes cast her gaze up, to the top of the hill, where she often walked with her father, despite her failing heart. Her greatest dream was to see the Motherhouse, along with the Academy, move to the top of the hill. For Sister Mary Agnes envisioned a time when the community would outgrow the home-made building at the bottom of the hill. She, unlike many of her fellow sisters, knew that the snail's pace at which they marched would not last forever. There was a future for the community, one which involved a "white city" (the new Motherhouse, Xavier Hall and Holy Family Chapel, all constructed of white stone) which overlooked the hills, rather than gazed up at them. In 1870, a mere decade after the establishment of the community, she created what she dubbed the "New Building Book" to raise funds so that her dream could become a reality. As the years crept along, and it became harder and harder for her to ascend that hill, the dream stayed alive in her. I'm sure it's no surprise that this dream was realized, for here we sit now, in the spot Sister Mary Agnes had envisioned for us. She, however, never lived to see this happen. It wasn't until four months after her death that construction began on her beloved white city.

In April 1877, an ailing Sister Mary Agnes put in a special request with Mother Xavier that young Sister Mary Pauline Kelliger be her successor as directress of the academy. For the next few months, she instructed Sister Pauline in all her duties, even when she was too weak to do so from anywhere but her bed. By September, the start of a new school year,

when Sister Pauline assumed her new position, Sister Mary Agnes' condition had worsened considerably. She was only 41 and, if one were to judge by her family history, she should have had many years left ahead of her. But on Nov. 9, 1877, the community of sisters and students could hear the *De Profundis* bell tolling, signaling her worldly death. The senior class would not receive their laurels that summer. A commencement ceremony seemed out of place in the absence of their beloved directress. The community of students, parents, and sisters, for whom her death left a gaping void, would wait until June 1879 to send off Sister Pauline's first graduating class.

A newspaper of the time, echoing the sentiments of Revolutionary hero Nathan Hale, would write of Sister Mary Agnes that it was her "regret that she had but one life to give for the Community and the schools which she so loved." Others would say that she lived "a long life in a short time." It is true that her life was marked by great accomplishments, despite the short duration. She was only 41 when she died and it had been just 19 years since she first volunteered to join a community that didn't yet exist. In those years, she built from the ground up a school which still stands to this day.

The O'Neill family would continue to be benefactors of the Sisters of Charity. The chapel and Academy were constructed largely with their support. In the chapel, there lies in the right transept a stained glass window depicting Saint Agnes. It was at Mother Xavier's insistence that this, along with the stained glass window depicting Saint Catherine, be included to memorialize Sister Mary Agnes, as well as Sister Mary Catherine Nevin. It's one of those things, along with the grotto about which she was so passionate, that I never noticed until a book told me it was there. I went to look for it, immediately after leaving the archives with this new knowledge, and every time I enter the chapel since then, I find my eyes drawn to it. Sister Mary Agnes O'Neill never saw that stained glass window, nor did she see the chapel for which it was made, nor did she even see the building which houses it.

I think many of us have gotten over the novelty of this school which captivated us upon first arriving. We no longer take the time to appreciate the intricately tiled floors or the walls lined with pictures of students from decades ago or the long and rich history of this community, which many students don't even know. If there's one message I want to impart here, it's that to see this school still standing and to see what it has become would have been something Sister Mary Agnes could only have dreamed of. *This, what this school is, what we are, is something she dedicated her entire religious life to creating. We are her dream come true.* So the next time you look at that stained glass window or pass by the grotto or gaze upon the "white city" for which she so longed, I'd like to ask that you take a moment to think of who gave you the chance to be here, and how happy she would have been to have you in her community.



Blessing at Motherhouse.



Blessing at Seton House.



Blessing at Cemetery.

Celebration of the 160th Anniversary of the Transfer of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth from Newark to Madison

On July 2 we celebrated our arrival to Convent Station 160 years ago, with an outdoor “moving” prayer service which began at Seton House, processed to Holy Family Cemetery, and finally to the Porte Cochere at the front door of the Motherhouse. A short prayer service was held at each location to commemorate its significance in the history of the Congregation.

The prayer at Seton House reflected on foundational roots, especially the Feast of the Visitation on July 2, 1860, when Mother Xavier set out with the five young sisters trained in Cincinnati: S. Mary Agnes O’Neill, S. Ann Elizabeth Lynagh, S. Mary Vincent Daly, S. Mary Joseph Plunkett, S. Mary Cleophas Duffy and four other new young sisters. Headed for a new community called the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Mother Xavier carried in her lap, the white Carrara marble statue of Our Blessed

Mother, a gift from New York Sisters of Charity. When they arrived at their new home in Madison, they were confident of God’s providence and full of hope for the future.

The Holy Family Cemetery prayer was in memory of our sisters who lived before us and among us during the past 160 years. These women were the guides and inspiration of our early days.

The final destination for prayer, the Motherhouse, honored the women who entered here to be formed in religious life, to grow in understanding of the profound truth that God is Love, and to be sent forth impelled by the Charity of Christ to bring God’s love to the world. Thousands of our sisters have been carriers of God’s love through both their formal ministries and the spontaneous reaching out to persons in need.



Wendy Relation and Scooter



Barbara Clark and Francis



Denise Ericksson and Fluffy



Karen Soto and Buster



Suzie Vail and Scarlett

QUARANTINED WITH OUR FURRY FRIENDS

by Donna Sartor-Halatin

Those of us who are pet owners know just how much they add to our lives –happiness, joy, and unwavering devotion. The mental benefits of pet ownership are even more valuable during such stressful times as a global pandemic, especially during a quarantine situation when you have little contact with the outside world. As communities worldwide shut down to practice social distancing and prevent the spread of disease, we and our pets may have gone a little stir crazy stuck in our homes all day. Fortunately, we were able to rely on each other for companionship and entertainment, even during such uncertain times.

Here are some of our lay employees hunkering down with their pets during the stay-at-home mandate from March through June.



Sarah Bodnar and Harpo



Kevin Bremer and Layla



Donna Sartor with Peanut, Mackenzie and Enzo



Dennis Cupido with Lucky and Millie



Bobby Geraghty and Honey

WHAT IS A SISTER OF CHARITY **MINISTRY GRANT?**

by Donna Sartor-Halatin

Each year the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth offer grants to ministries where our Sisters and Seton Associates serve. Applications are submitted to the Ministry Grant committee and include the amount requested for the project, a description of the impending project, a timeline for completion, how the project relates to the Mission of the Sisters of Charity, and any additional information that may give the committee a better understanding of the project. Also included in the application is a breakdown of expenses that show exactly where the funds will be allocated.

After all of the applications are reviewed, the committee decides how the Ministry Grant funds will be shared. The expectation is that one year after the funds are granted, the applicant/ministry is responsible for submitting a report explaining how and when their objectives were achieved, the outcomes, and how the project has made a difference in people's lives.

In 2020-2021, 14 Ministry Grants totaling \$75,000 were awarded. The following are just a few examples of ministries that were recipients of the grants and how the monies will be used. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the plans have been put on hold or are taking a bit longer to implement.

JOSEPHINE'S PLACE, ELIZABETH, NJ

(Gail Driscoll, Director) - Amount awarded: \$6,000

The purpose of the grant is to enhance computers and to upgrade software at Josephine's Place, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth. The goals are to gain remote access capability, to improve IT capabilities and upgrade technology and software, and to enhance external presence by creating new marketing materials. The projected timeline is July 2020 - June 2021. Given the ability to make these changes and upgrades, the women of Josephine's Place will benefit from more current and suitable classes for the workplace. The improved marketing materials will be used to reach out to donors and to corporations when asking for financial support. These changes and improvements will



Caridad took a computer class and achieved her certificate upon completion. Her proud teacher, Roberta Loften, is a volunteer at Josephine's Place.

allow more women to benefit from all there is to offer at Josephine's Place.

MOTHER SETON REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CLARK, NJ

(Sister Jacquelyn Balasia, SC, Principal, and Sister Mary Anne Kattlack, SC, Campus Ministry Director) - Amount awarded: \$5,000

The overall goal of this project is to create a 'physical space' where both short and long-term social service projects can be managed to serve the poor and most vulnerable in communities surrounding the school. *Sisters of Charity Service Center* will unite the missions of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth and Mother Seton Regional High School to raise the awareness of the MSR student (and their families), of both institutions' desires to serve the poor of their communities while participating in social service opportunities that directly reflect and bring attention to the connection between the Sisters of Charity and Mother Seton Regional HS.



Mother Seton's 'Sandwich Run'.

One project, called *The Sandwich Run*, was inspired by a desire by the students and faculty of the high school to make a change in the lives of those in need. Every Monday morning, since school started this year, the school community is invited to 'RUN' sandwiches in and drop them off at a collection spot in the Food Sciences classroom. Sister Mary Anne then gathers and 'RUNS' the sandwiches each week to the Saint Joseph's Social Center in Elizabeth's soup kitchen that is in desperate need of donations. Weekly, on average, Mother Seton High School 'RUNS' 170 sandwiches from Clark to Elizabeth.

CATHOLIC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES (CFCS) OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES, PATERSON, NJ

(Sister Maureen Sullivan, SC, and Director of Pastoral Ministry, Community Programs & Volunteers) - Amount awarded: \$2,250

This grant will help to fund the Catholic Family & Community Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Recognition Program. CFCS has a variety of volunteer-staffed programs

for the needy. A formal program for the volunteers will make service more meaningful and encourage them to reach out to serve their communities. The funds will assist Sister Maureen's ability to create materials and data that will help her to engage better with the volunteers, especially those that she cannot work with directly.



Tim Grathwohl, Carlos Roldan (Dir. FECC Food Pantry), Sister Maureen Sullivan, SC, and Matthew Winnert organize a food drive.

In 2019, CFCS had 1,438 volunteers from 48 groups from schools and colleges, parishes, non-profits, community services and businesses. These volunteers provided in total 50,377 hours of service.

The vision of CFCS is to be the leading advocate and compassionate provider of social services to all God's people in need, especially the disadvantaged in our society, which fits right in with the mission of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH COALITION TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS, ELIZABETH, NJ

(Sister Maryanne Tracey, SC, and Volunteer) - Amount awarded: \$3,500

The grant money will be used to cover some of the costs for the Marianist Family Retreat to be held in Cape May, in February 2021. The families in the program will participate in the weekend retreat to build life skills needed in their families, such as bonding, communication skills, problem solving, team work and situational thinking. The weekend offers family-centered meals, group activities, therapeutic workshops, spiritual workshops and family-building themed activities. This program, through the Coalition, empowers clients with tools and support to transition to safe, affordable permanent housing so that they can live healthy, productive lives so they can be an active part of their community and, in turn, be treated with dignity and respect.



A time to enjoy each other at the Marianist Family Retreat.

This retreat gives families an opportunity to network and socialize with each other, thus having a positive impact on their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Families have shown great improvement in interfamilial relationships as a result of group activities presented during these retreats.



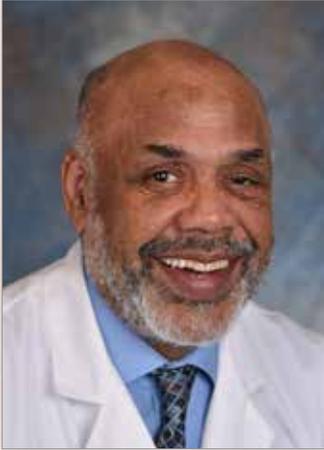
New Seton Associates: John Cutola, Megan Lisa Knight, Barbara Morrison, James O'Hern, Susanne Palombo, Vivino Piscopo, Rev. Anthony Randazzo, Carla Reinhardt, Claudette Scutari and Roberta Warner. Lifetime Seton Associates: Linda Amitrano, Maria Capozzoli, Marie Noel, Theresa Nolan, Olivia Burla Olson and Jessica Velasquez-Julca (not pictured).

Welcome to Our NEW and LIFETIME Seton Associates

We are so grateful that we were able to welcome our new Seton Associates and our Seton Associates that have accepted their Lifetime commitments at a celebration in Holy Family Chapel on September 12th. Although Rosemary Carroll, Director of Seton Associates, began her retirement at the end of July, she gladly returned for the day to assist with the Rite of Acceptance ceremony. We are blessed to have these men and women as part of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth family.

NJ HALL OF FAME STATUS

IT'S OFFICIAL! Sister Jane Frances Brady, SC, will be inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame, receiving the Public Service Award. As the former President and CEO of St. Joseph's Health, Sister Jane is well-known and respected for her advocacy for healthcare for the poor on a national and state level. The Virtual ceremony will take place on Sunday, October 18, 2020. Congratulations Sister Jane!



James N. Pruden,
MD, FACEP



Mary McTigue,
DNP, RNC, CENP

ANNOUNCING THE

Virtual Harvest Festival 2020

OCTOBER 29, 2020

We hope that you'll join us for this year's Harvest Festival, our first ever virtual event. The Sisters of Charity will be honoring Mary McTigue, DNP, RNC, CENP from Trinitas Regional Medical Center and James N. Pruden, MD, FACEP from St. Joseph's Health. Throughout their careers in healthcare, both honorees have exemplified the mission of boundless charity. Their commitment to selfless service has never been more evident than during the Covid-19 pandemic.

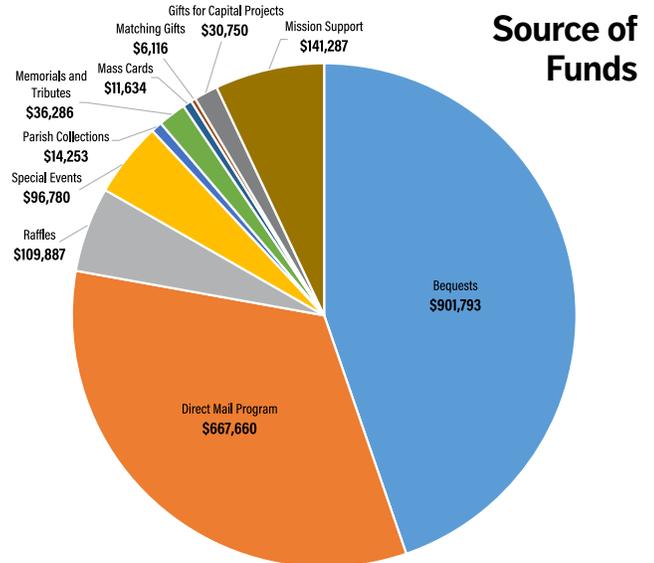
Our virtual event on October 29 will highlight the extraordinary contributions of Dr. McTigue and Dr. Pruden and also provide a unique opportunity for us to share the mission and ministries of the Sisters of Charity today. Please go to our website, www.SCNJ.org, to register or support our event as a sponsor or participant in our Harvest Festival Raffle. You can also make a donation by texting **HARVESTFEST** to 41444.

In this unprecedented time, join us for a celebration of charity and help us make this year's Harvest Festival our most successful fundraiser ever.

Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

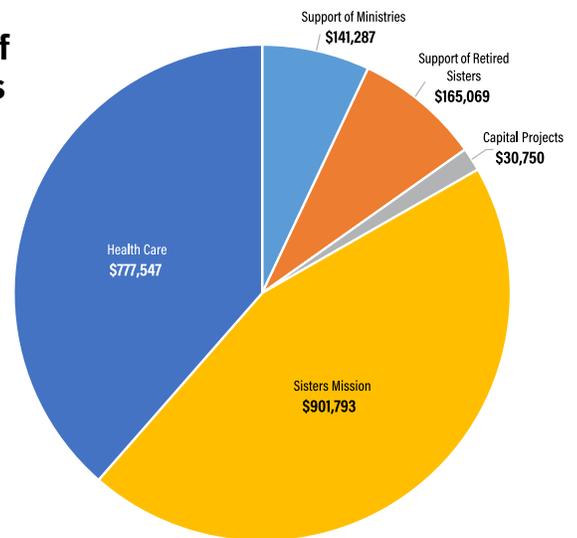
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020*



Bequests	\$901,793
Direct Mail Program	\$667,660
Raffles	\$109,887
Special Events	\$96,780
Parish Collections	\$14,253
Memorials and Tributes	\$36,286
Mass Cards	\$11,634
Matching Gifts	\$6,116
Gifts for Capital Projects	\$30,750
Mission Support	\$141,287
TOTAL	\$ 2,016,446

Use of Funds



Support of Ministries	\$141,287
Support of Retired Sisters	\$165,069
Capital Projects	\$30,750
Sisters Mission	\$901,793
Health Care	\$777,547
TOTAL	\$2,016,446

*Development Office Financial Report for July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 available upon request

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 and Seton Associates who died between November 16, 2019 and September 20, 2020.



Sister Joan Woods, SC
(Sister Agnes Clare)
DECEMBER 3, 2019



Sister Dolores Walsh, SC
(Sister Mary Dolores)
MARCH 30, 2020



Sister Teresa Marian Case, SC
APRIL 7, 2020



Sister Joan Lowden, SC
(Sister Catherine Veronica)
APRIL 8, 2020



Sister Julia Scanlan, SC
(Sister Marie Patricia)
APRIL 13, 2020



Sister Rose Mary Barrood, SC
(Sister Anne Rosaline)
APRIL 20, 2020



Sister Dorothy Jose Lichtenberg, SC
APRIL 20, 2020



Sister Agnes Lucy Robinson, SC
APRIL 23, 2020



Sister Miriam Patrice Kane, SC
APRIL 30, 2020



Sister Patricia Flynn, SC
(Sister Therese Josephine)
MAY 1, 2020



Sister Francis Raftery, SC
(Sister Francis Marita)
MAY 2, 2020



Sister Ellen Margaret Staiger, SC
MAY 5, 2020



Sister Rose Mary Colavito, SC
(Sister Maria Crucis)
MAY 5, 2020



Sister Mary Pierre McPhee, SC
MAY 6, 2020



Sister Mary Susan Boyle, SC
MAY 7, 2020



Sister John Margaret Harrington, SC
MAY 10, 2020



Sister Barbara Jenkins, SC
(Sister Veronica Joseph)
JUNE 11, 2020



Sister Theodora Furniss, SC
(Sister Margaret Ellen)
JULY 29, 2020



Sister Mary Ellen Gleason, SC
(Sister Michael Joseph)
SEPTEMBER 3, 2020



Sister Ann Matthew Lorusso, SC
SEPTEMBER 12, 2020



Sister Ursula Carr, SC
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

SETON ASSOCIATES:

Catherine Hanley – November 28, 2019
Lucille Sproules – December 10, 2019
Bernadette McTighe – January 16, 2020
Ann R. Dlouhy – July 21, 2020

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

P.O. Box 476

Convent Station, N.J. 07961-0476

www.SCNJ.org



SistersofCharityofSaintElizabeth



sisters_of_charity

Upcoming Events

For all upcoming events please contact:

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth Development Office

P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, N.J. 07961-0476 • 973-290-5454/5409

srcharity@scnj.org • www.SCNJ.org



Virtual Harvest Festival

Honoring Mary McTigue, DNP, RNC, CENP and
James N. Pruden, MD, FACEP

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Text HARVESTFEST to 41444 to donate



Fall 50/50 Raffle

Drawing takes place on

Tuesday, November 24, 2020



13th Annual Golf Outing

Shackamaxon Country Club, Scotch Plains, NJ

Monday, May 24, 2021