

The Sisters of St. Francis  
of Philadelphia  
609 S. Convent Road  
Aston, PA 19014-1207

Change Service Requested

See our website at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

What do *you* think?

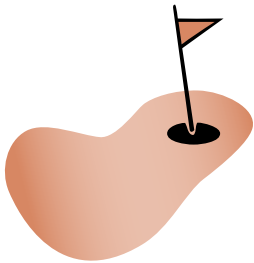
We invite your comments and suggestions about *Good News*. Send to Florence Smith, (610) 558-7726, [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

Mission Statement

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

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

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



13th Annual Golf  
Tournament  
Fundraiser

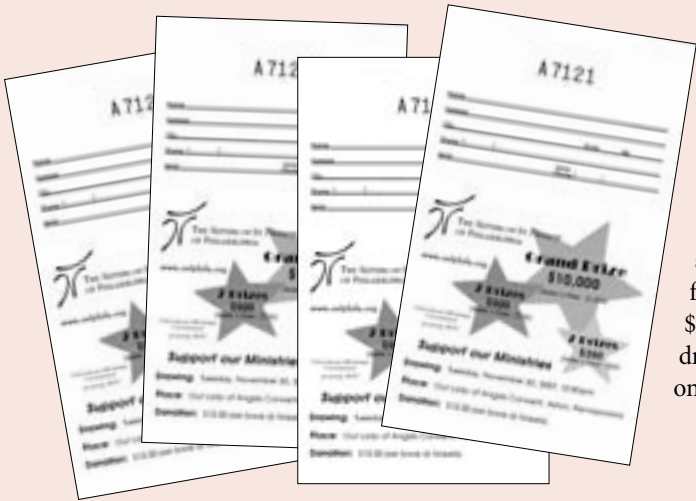
- Goal:** \$100,000
- Why:** Help support the ministries of the Sisters of St. Francis—and enjoy a good game of golf and the company of friends at the same time!
- When:** September 12, 2007  
12 noon
- Where:** The Springhaven Club  
Wallingford, PA
- Contact:** Sharon Tracy  
(610) 558-5352,  
[stracy@osfphila.org](mailto:stracy@osfphila.org)

Consider Being  
a Sponsor!

- \$275 Sponsor a sister  
\$1,000 Silver Sponsor  
\$5,000 Gold Sponsor  
\$10,000 Platinum Sponsor

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ROYERSFORD, PA  
PERMIT NO. 539

Maria Cabrera prepared traditional Easter eggs, las cascarones de huevo, which will be filled with confetti and broken above the heads of the children, for good luck. [Learn more about Maria and IPJC on page 3.](#)



Annual Fall Raffle

Interested in helping the Sisters of St. Francis support their ministries? Contact Sharon Tracy, (610) 558-5352, [stracy@osfphila.org](mailto:stracy@osfphila.org) to get your tickets for the annual raffle. Prizes range from \$350 to \$10,000. Winning tickets will be drawn on November 20. You might be one of the lucky winners!



As far back as 1881, senior citizens like the men pictured here were living on the convent property in Aston, some of them in what is now St. Elizabeth House. The 1880 U.S. census lists these men and women as “indigents.” Today the Sisters of St. Francis continue to minister with families who are homeless. Read about the families who find a fresh start in life at St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Story on page 8.



# NEWS

Volume 10.2 Summer 2007

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

VERSIÓN  
EN ESPAÑOL  
DENTRO

## Women's Circles: Tapping the Power Within

*Also in this issue:*

- A Home for "In-Between" Times
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News



INSIDE  
*Good*  
NEWS

Point of View .....2

Women’s Circles: Tapping  
the Power Within ..... 3

*IPJC’s Women’s Justice Circles  
help women to become advocates  
on their own behalf.*

Written by Kathryn Hunt  
Photography by Susie Fitzhugh

People & Places .....6

A Home for “In-Between”  
Times ..... 8

*St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter  
works to heal the suffering of those  
who are homeless—five families  
at a time.*

Written by Kathryn Hunt  
Photography by Andrea Cipriani-Mecchi

Focus .....10

Sharing the Good News .....11

Commitment Statement

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

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

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

**Communications Office**  
609 South Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014  
Tel 610-558-7726 Fax 610-558-6131  
goodnews@osfphila.org

**Interim Managing Editor**  
Sister Ann Marie Slavín, OSF

**Editorial Board**  
Companion Valerie Cummings  
Sister Donna Fread, OSF  
Sister Pat Hutchison, OSF  
Sister Helen Jacobson, OSF  
Sister Pat Michalek, OSF  
Sister Ann Marie Slavín, OSF

**Graphic Design**  
Geneen Pintof

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

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

Visit our website!  
[www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

♻️ Printed on recycled paper.

POINT OF VIEW

Claiming the power within...

Sometimes in facing the challenges that life sends us, our vision becomes blurred by stressors and setbacks, leaving us unable to claim our own inner strength and insight. Sometimes we need to believe in what others see in us and to trust enough to risk seeing the power that we hold within ourselves.

In this issue of *Good News*, we will meet women who have learned to claim their inner power with the assistance of the staff and services of St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, and the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle, Washington.

St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter is celebrating its 20th anniversary of offering refuge and safety to homeless families whose stories are filled with the searing pain of domestic violence and the staggering loss of job, home, and security. You will meet Sister Chris Kranichfeld, director, and dedicated volunteers who have given generously of their services so that families in need can feel welcomed and encouraged to have hope for their future. Doris Campbell shares her story of finding support and encouragement at St. Mary’s for herself and her daughter, Susan, who is a diabetic. As their life stabilized, she and Susan volunteered two times a month in the playroom in an effort “to give back” what had so generously been given to them. Today, she explores her own inner gift as an artist, trusting in her talent for others to appreciate and enjoy.

What an inspiration to meet women of the Pacific Northwest who come together in Women’s Justice Circles through the direction and assistance of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle, Washington. Through the collaboration of sixteen religious congregations, including the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, IPJC’s staff and volunteers empower women to find their voice to speak out addressing the social issues of immigration, just wages, healthcare, homelessness, and discrimination.

Through their faith-based model of community organizing, IPJC works to build relationships and community among the women gathered so that they might address the issues that are directly impacting their lives. These Women’s Justice Circles offer women like Maria, Urania, and Maribel of Wapato, Washington, the opportunity and resources to claim their inner strength and clear voices to become advocates on their own behalf. Through their efforts and insight, they have brought positive changes to their workplace and family life. What an energizing testimony in hearing Maribel say, “I learned that just because we’re women doesn’t mean we can’t still do things... You find ways together of solving problems.”

As we all live into the challenges that life presents us each day, let us be thankful for the blessings that are ours! Let us be aware that we each need to be women and men of faith, trusting in the power of God alive within us, claiming our own inner strength and clear voice to be advocates for justice and peace in our family, workplace, and community. Our voices raised together can make a difference, can impact change so that others might live in safety and with human dignity.

May these summer months be rich in blessings for you and your family! You are closely remembered in our prayers!

*Lynn Patrice Lavin, osf.*

Sister Lynn Patrice Lavin, OSF  
Congregational Minister

**On the cover:** Maribel often works from dawn to dusk in the fields and in a laundry to help support her family. She and her husband have three children: their son Abelito and twin daughters, Mariana and Mariela.



*Sister Donna Fread, OSF, led a gathering of women associated with the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle. Sister Donna is a longtime volunteer with IPJC. The women had a spirited conversation about “The Role of Religious Life in the Northwest.”*

# Women’s Circles: Tapping *the* Power Within

“I LEARNED THAT JUST BECAUSE WE’RE WOMEN DOESN’T MEAN WE CAN’T STILL DO THINGS. I BRING MY QUESTIONS HERE. YOU FIND WAYS TOGETHER OF SOLVING PROBLEMS.”

“We didn’t know as women what power we might have. We hadn’t ever spoken out,” said Maria Cabrera. Cabrera is a member of the Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato, Washington. Last year she went with other members of the group to the state capitol in Olympia to speak to legislators on behalf of her community. Wapato is one of the poorest towns in Washington and home to a large population of Mexican immigrants. Cabrera had walked across the Texas border without papers when she was fifteen years old. “I never imagined I would speak in front of a group of 200 people but I did it. I felt happy about it,” Cabrera said. “Now as women we can see what we lack and what our communities lack and try to do something about it.”

Seventy percent of the residents of Wapato—the town Cabrera has called home now for twenty-four years—are Hispanic, persons drawn north by American growers in need of laborers for the orchards and fields of the lush Yakima Valley. Cabrera came to the U.S. shortly after her mother’s death to earn money for the education of her younger brothers back home.



*Urania Ibarra and her husband Javier (with daughters Maria Guadalupe and Joanna) have managed to buy their own home with earnings from their work in the fields, orchards, and packing sheds of the Yakima Valley. Urania is one of the original members of the Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato, Washington.*

Today, Maria, her husband, and their five children are all U.S. citizens.

## Where Prayer Leads: Working Together

The Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato is one of more than one hundred women’s circles in the Pacific Northwest launched by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center (IPJC) in Seattle. It is a unique collaboration of sixteen religious congregations dedicated to addressing the root causes of social injustice and poverty. Sister Linda Haydock, SNJM, is the executive director of  
*continued on page 4*

*Urania Ibarra, a member of the Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato, works long hours in an apricot orchard “de-twinning” blossoms. She and other immigrant women are paid \$2.25 per tree. A seasoned worker can do 30 trees in a day.*





The Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle, Washington, is supported by sixteen religious congregations in the Northwest and Midwest. The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia are actively involved in the unique collaborative effort to address the root causes of poverty and injustice.

IPJC Sponsoring  
Congregations

**Adrian Dominican Sisters**  
Adrian, Michigan

**Oregon Province Jesuits**  
Portland, Oregon

**Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary**  
Marylhurst, Oregon

**Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia**  
Aston, Pennsylvania

**Sisters of Providence**  
Seattle, Washington

**Tacoma Dominicans**  
Tacoma, Washington

**Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace**  
Bellevue, Washington

IPJC Affiliate Congregations

**Benedictine Sisters of Cottonwood, Idaho**  
Cottonwood, Idaho

**Benedictine Sisters of Lacey**  
Lacey, Washington

**Benedictine Sisters of Mount Angel**  
Mount Angel, Oregon

**Religious of the Sacred Heart**  
Bellevue, Washington

**Sinsinawa Dominicans**  
Sinsinawa, Wisconsin

**Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
Seaside, Oregon

**Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet**  
Pasco, Washington

**Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon**  
Beaverton, Oregon

**Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union**  
Moscow, Idaho



*Work in the orchard is over for the day. Maribel and her son Abelito head home. Children often accompany their parents in the fields; childcare is beyond the means of most families.*

“BY SPONSORING THE PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER, WE CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO MAKE CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES. WE CAN’T REACH THEM ALL DIRECTLY BUT BY COLLABORATING WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS ORDERS, WE CAN DO MORE.”

*continued from page 3*

IPJC. Founded in 1991, IPJC grew out of a desire on the part of women religious in the Northwest to respond to homelessness and other urgent issues. “We asked ourselves, ‘What could we do more effectively and deeply by working together, than we could do on our own? How does our prayer lead us to respond?’” The result has been the formation of one of the strongest collaborations among religious congregations in the nation.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia are one of the cosponsors of IPJC. Their participation reflects an enduring commitment to social justice for those who are poor and dispossessed, whose voices are rarely heard in the clamor of American political life.

“The Sisters of St. Francis can’t do everything in the world that we’d like to do,” said Franciscan Sister Donna Fread, a volunteer with IPJC. “But by sponsoring the Peace & Justice Center, we can support people who are trying to make changes in their lives. We can’t reach them all directly but by collaborating with other religious orders, we can do more.”

While recognizing the value of services that meet immediate needs, IPJC focuses on the far horizon. Its resources support activities that address systemic inequities about immigration, healthcare, human rights, and the environment. “We have developed a feminine and faith-based model of community organizing,” Sister Linda said. “We build relationships and community and out of those we address the issues of our day.”

The Women’s Justice Circles, housed in shelters and parishes and community centers, are designed to empower women like Maria Cabrera to become advocates on their own behalf to address the issues that concern them. Each circle chooses the issues it wishes to address.

Justice For Immigrants

Urania Ibarra is a friend of Maria Cabrera’s and a longtime participant in the Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato. The women meet at the Marie Rose House, a sanctuary and resource center founded by Sisters of the Holy Names, also a cosponsor of IPJC. What began as an eight-week process has now been going for three years and Urania has been part of it since the beginning.

The women started by getting to know one another and received training in community organizing from IPJC staff—how to research an issue, how to talk with public officials, how to organize a campaign. As they talked, las mujeres del Circulo de Justicia, the women in the justice circle, all Spanish-speakers, discovered they had a problem in common; they were all unhappy with their treatment at a local food bank.

“They gave you the same amount of food no matter what the size of your family and asked for many pieces of ID, which made some people uncomfortable,” Ibarra explained. “And there was a volunteer who was rude and racist toward Mexicans.” The women invited the director of the food bank to talk with them at one of their meetings. The volunteer was soon



*Maria Cabrera dressed her granddaughter Noemi in the traditional costume of her Mexican homeland, Michoacán, for Easter holiday. Cabrera is a member of an IPJC Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato.*

replaced and the food distribution policy was changed. “It was the first time I’d ever met with an official,” Ibarra recalled. “It was an eye opener. That’s why we like the women’s circle. We do things we’d never be able to do without each other.”

Buoyed by their success, the women turned their attention to the issue of immigration reform. Ibarra has lived in Wapato for eighteen years, raising five children. “A person has to work really hard to pay the bills,” she said. During the harvest, her husband works in the fields and Urania joins him from 5 A.M. to 3 P.M., before she heads into the packing shed to work until one in the morning. The Ibarras are buying their own home in Wapato with their earnings.



*The Women’s Justice Circle in Wapato meets at the Marie Rose House, a sanctuary and resource center founded by the Sisters of the Holy Names, one of sixteen religious congregations associated with IPJC, including the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Sister Mary Ellen Robinson, SNJM, (far right), joins the women for their meetings. L to R: Rebecca Szeper of the IPJC; Leticia Perez, Maria Elena Cruz, and Bertha Rosales.*





*St. Peter Claver Parish Church holds two services in Spanish each weekend to serve the needs of Catholic families in Wapato, an agricultural community in Eastern Washington. Mass is often standing room only.*

Ibarra remembers an evening when the immigration authorities showed up. “They came into the shed where I worked and took out all the people without papers, a lot of people I knew from my home in Mexico, mothers with children at home alone.” Although Ibarra and her family have papers, she has many friends who don’t. “We have to see if we can do something to change this so people can work in peace and not fear,” she said.

**Women’s Voices:  
Joining The Dialogue**

The women drew up a petition, signed by hundreds of their neighbors, and carried it to the offices of U.S. Senator Patty Murray. “It was a good choice for an action,” said Maria Cabrera. She and las mujeres del Circulo met with Senator Murray’s staff to

plead their case for immigration reform that would regularize the status of millions of immigrants upon whose labor American businesses depend. “We learned we have a senator on our side,” said Cabrera. “I think that people here now need to be given a chance.”

Maribel, another member of the Women’s Circle, arrived in the Yakima Valley only five years ago, joining her husband who had been working and sending money home for her and their children, for a decade. Her situation remains precarious. “Well, the main thing is, some people don’t have papers and they live with the worry all the time,” she said.

Maribel nonetheless went with the others to Senator Murray’s office to present the petition. “I do feel satisfied with what we did. It gave us a little light of hope. But I think

that we need to keep asking for reforms,” Maribel said, adding that she has changed a lot since joining the Women’s Justice Circle. “I’ve made friends; I’ve learned how things work in the U.S.,” she said. “I learned that just because we’re women doesn’t mean we can’t still do things. I bring my questions here. You find ways together of solving problems.”

“We don’t really empower them,” said Sister Donna Fread about the women who participate in Women’s Justice Circles, like the one that has helped Barajas find her voice. “The women’s circles just help them see that the power is already within them.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).



*Sister Linda Haydock (in dark coat), SNJM, is the executive director of Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle, Washington. Earlier this year she boarded a bus with laywomen and women religious for a visit to the state legislature to ensure that “the Gospel message to care for our brothers and sisters is heard loud and clear.”*

HOW  
YOU  
CAN  
HELP...

- Make a cash donation to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We’ll send your contribution to the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle to support its Women’s Justice Circles like the one profiled in our story.
- Listen carefully to the debate about immigration issues; try to see beyond the contentious headlines to understand the consequences of public policies on families and children. The voices of immigrants themselves are rarely heard in the debate; seek out families in your parish or community and ask them what they think a fair immigration policy would look like.
- Work with religious congregations in your area or region to address issues that are important to you. Several congregations working together may be better able to advance a cause than working alone. Poverty is in every town, city, and rural community. What does your faith challenge you to do to address the needs of those who are poor who live near you?
- If you feel immigration raids unjustly penalize low-income immigrant families and workers, join with others near you (in a church or a parish) to shelter or provide support for families living with the fear of being deported.

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

# PEOPLE & PLACES

## Who *are* the ‘Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia’?

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

### Advocacy Alert

Learn more about the evils of human trafficking and ways to address the issue:



### PENNSYLVANIA

When Companion John Vernon learned that Clare House, a small retreat house connected with the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston, needed volunteers, he inquired and learned of a very definite way he could be of service. A member of the U.S. Navy, John had been a cook on a ship during the Vietnam War. His offer to cook for the retreatants was gratefully accepted and for the past eight years John has gifted the guests at Clare House with his culinary expertise once a month. His lasagna is a special favorite and repeat visitors also look forward to his homemade key lime pie. John also contributes to the environment at Clare House—he frequently arrives with a bouquet of flowers to place before the statue of the Blessed Mother. John’s reason for this service is simple. “I’ve been through some tough times in my life,” he explained. “The sisters were always there for me. This is my way of giving something back.”

*Sister Vicky DellaValle, bundled up against the Alaskan cold, traveled for an hour across the frozen Yukon River to reach one of the outlying villages.*

### PENNSYLVANIA

Ever thought about the “faith life” of today’s college students? For seven Neumann College students, this past Easter season climaxed their participation in a two-year Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program. As part of the RCIA program, Sister Patricia Smith prepared the students for the reception of the sacraments. At the services held in Our Lady of Angels Chapel in the congregation’s Motherhouse in Aston, seven students were confirmed and one student was baptized and received Eucharist for the first time.



### ALASKA

Sister Victoria DellaValle’s Easter vacation took on a new dimension this year—a chance to visit with the four sisters who minister in southwestern Alaska and to experience life among the Yup’ik Eskimos. In St. Marys she visited a village school and learned an Eskimo dance. Traveling by snow mobile to Mountain Village for the Easter Triduum, she visited with a Yup’ik family and was privileged to be part of a “Feed,” a celebration commemorating an important family event—in this case the third anniversary of the death of a beloved grandchild. Traveling over the vast terrain and snow-covered roads, sitting in the back of either a snow mobile or a four wheeler—all were new experiences. But for Sister Vicky, the most significant experience was meeting the warm hearted Yup’ik Eskimos and being part of—at least for a short time—a world of refreshing simplicity.

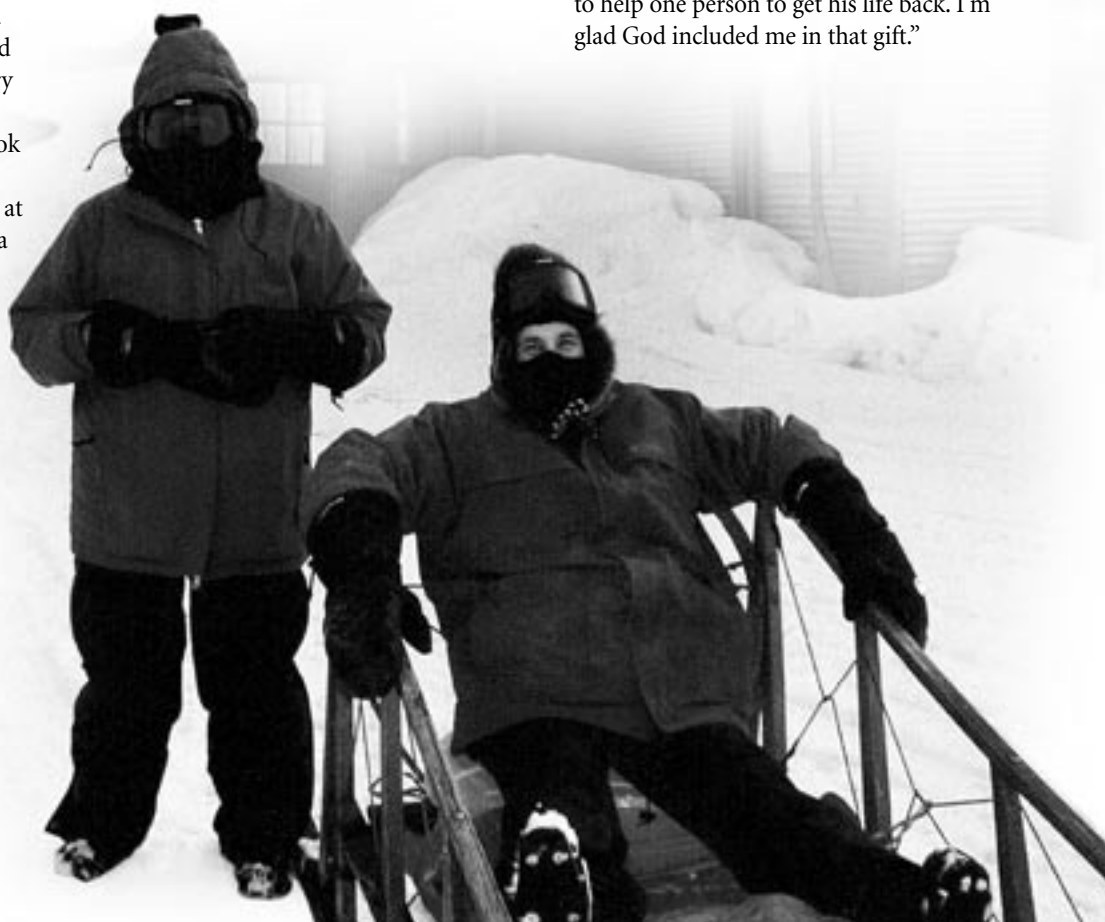
### PENNSYLVANIA

The Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston is well known for its many programs, excellent speakers, and spiritually enriching retreats. What may not be so well known, however, is the Center’s outreach to groups in times of struggle. For dedicated elementary school faculties, the news that their schools are being closed because of low enrollments or financial constraints results in great pain and sadness. Conscious of this pain, the Center staff have, for the past three years, invited these faculties to avail themselves of the Center’s facilities. These special days have provided a healing space, a “time away,” and an opportunity to simply “be” together. After a recent visit, one faculty member wrote, “Every single one of us was greatly inspired, affirmed, and encouraged by the simple, profound manner” of the Spiritual Center staff.



### LOUISIANA

Neumann students also take seriously the mandate to translate their faith into action. Two teams of Neumann students under the direction of Melissa Hickey, Director of Campus Ministry, traveled to New Orleans to assist in the rebuilding effort. One team spent four days gutting the home of a seventy-eight year old widower. The students were particularly touched by the sight of the owner watching silently as they carried thirty years of memories from the house and piled them by the curb. These experiences will long remain with the Neumann teams. “I have never experienced anything like this trip before,” said student Heather Kell. “It brought great pride and joy knowing we all worked very hard in a short amount of time to help one person to get his life back. I’m glad God included me in that gift.”







*The “helping hand” extended by the volunteer teams from St. Leo the Great Parish is still reaching out to assist the families whose homes—and lives—were devastated by Hurricane Katrina.*

ALABAMA

June found young women from both the east and west coasts traveling to Mobile to join vocation directors Sisters Patricia Novak, Christine Still, and Mary Beth Antonelli for a week of service. The team worked at Most Pure Heart of Mary, an inner city school and parish, helping with summer cleaning, painting, and home visiting. In addition to providing the young women with the opportunity to share their time and gifts with others, the week also gave them a first-hand experience of community life, faith-sharing, and prayer that is so vital to the life of the Sisters of St. Francis.



WASHINGTON/  
OREGON

The Sisters of St. Francis have joined with other advocacy groups to address the issue of human trafficking. Both as individuals and in small groups, the sisters have educated themselves, encouraged others to speak out, and taken specific actions to address the growing evil of trafficking. For one group of sisters in the Pacific Northwest, that involvement has resulted in a very concrete action. In order to expand their own knowledge of the issue, the sisters arranged for speakers from Catholic Charities in Portland to meet with them. They learned that when law enforcement agencies conduct raids of organizations and sites suspected of enslaving trafficking victims, those victims lack even basic needs like soap and toothbrushes. As a result the sisters have been collecting supplies and packaging personal hygiene kits that will be distributed to the women, men, and children who are victims of this twenty-first century form of slavery.



MARYLAND

Like most seniors, Marella Torsella and Yana Griffin found graduation night a bit-tersweet experience. Both young women relished the final days spent with friends and their final participation in school activities at the Catholic High School of Baltimore. However, they also look forward to a bright future—to college and a career. Throughout their four years at TCHS, Marella and Yana were both designated as “Franciscan Scholars.” As such they both received scholarships from the Sisters of St. Francis that made their TCHS education possible. “I believe the Franciscan values I learned during the past four years have aided me in becoming a strong, mature young woman,” Marella said. “I will forever be indebted to Catholic High and the Sisters of St. Francis for the quality education I received.” For Yana, being a Franciscan scholar was a source of motivation. “It made me strive for more, to increase my faith in God, and to always seek more knowledge,” she said.

*Marella Torsella (seen here with her mother, Cecilia Pineda Torsella, a TCHS alumna) served as senior class executive and belonged to the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, and the Tri-M Music Honor Society. She will study nursing at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.*



NEW JERSEY

Remember the story of the volunteer teams helping to “reclaim” damaged homes in New Orleans? When the team from St. Leo the Great Parish in Lincroft returned home, they did so with a deep realization that their work was not finished. Two team members, Ray Breault and Tom Rossano, remained in contact with Benny and Lourdes Pampo whose home they had cleared and gutted. Tom and Ray researched grant possibilities to help the Pampos restore their home and succeeded in securing a grant from the Louisiana Recovery Agency’s “Road Home” program. When it was finally decided that the Pampo home could not be salvaged, the family arranged to move into a new home in Baton Rouge closer to their son—a move made possible by this grant. Thanks to the Lincroft team’s “helping hand,” the Pampo family are definitely on the “road home”!

*Yana Griffin (seen here with her mother, Veda English) will attend the University of Texas in San Antonio to study foreign languages and business.*



AWARDS  
SPOTLIGHT



*While we appreciate the many gifts of our sisters, we are especially pleased when those gifts are recognized by the broader community. The following sisters recently received special awards:*

*Sister Clare Carty  
Pennsylvania*

Women of Vision Award  
Bucks County Women’s Fund

*Sister Mary O’Mahony  
California*

Distinguished Staff Member Award  
Diocese of San Bernardino

*Sister George Mary Rhodes  
Delaware*

2007 Community Builders Award  
St. Anthony of Padua Grade School

*Sister Corinne Wright  
Pennsylvania*

Peacemaker Award  
Franciscan Federation





*Lois Ashworth has been a volunteer at St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for 13 years. The work is so meaningful to her that she drives for an hour from her home in Maryland, where she moved after she retired, to continue to be part of the effort at the Phoenixville shelter near Philadelphia.*

✠ ST. MARY'S CONTINUES TO OFFER REFUGE TO FAMILIES AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE FRANCISCAN COMMITMENT TO CARE FOR ALL CREATION, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND THOSE WHO HAVE NO VOICE.

# A Home for "In-Between"



*Shelter residents have told Lois Ashworth (left) that they feel St. Mary's is "a homey, comfortable place." Each family has a private room, like this one, for the duration of the family's stay at the shelter.*

*Barbara Kepler began volunteering at the shelter nearly two decades ago. She attends a Presbyterian church in Phoenixville, one of 26 nearby congregations that support the shelter by providing meals and financial contributions.*



In the 1980s, thousands of Americans found themselves without a roof over their heads, squeezed by cuts in social programs and soaring housing costs. For the first time since the Great Depression, men and women who were homeless, often with children in tow, out of cash and out of options, surfaced on the streets of American cities. Out of loving concern for those who are poor, Franciscan Sisters Margaret Jones and Imelda Bernadette Feeney decided to respond to the mounting crisis.

"On a wing and a prayer, not knowing where the food or money or anything would come from," recalled longtime shelter volunteer Kathe Spohn, the sisters managed to establish a shelter in a vacant parish building that had once been a convent. Located in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, thirty miles west of Philadelphia, St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter opened its doors in 1987 to families who were

homeless. The shelter has since given refuge to more than 450 families and helped many back on their feet.

Kathe Spohn, now a retired schoolteacher, had dropped by the shelter not long after it opened and was greeted at the door by the two foundresses. "Before I left I had agreed to become a volunteer," Spohn said. "I loved them. They were just amazing." She still volunteers at the shelter once a week. Lois Ashworth, also a volunteer and retired schoolteacher, joins Spohn on Wednesdays to set up a dinner buffet for the families in residence and to tidy up the kitchen afterwards. Thirty churches in the area take turns preparing and delivering dinners to the shelter.

"The residents say to us that it is a homey, comfortable place," said Ashworth, who pointed to the warm dining area, cozy bedrooms, and brightly decorated children's playroom. "People who say 'This could





Young guests at the annual Valentine's Day Brunch enjoy good food for a good cause. The benefit offers guests the chance to socialize with family and friends, while supporting St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter.



Sister Chris Kranichfeld and volunteer Kathe Spohn add up the expense and income columns after the Valentine's Day Brunch. The event raises funds for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter and spreads the word about the shelter and its needs.

# Times

never happen to me' are fooling themselves. Difficulties can come upon you when you least expect it."

## Women and Homelessness

Doris Campbell's\* life began to unravel not long after moving to Philadelphia with her daughter Susan.\* Campbell, a graphic artist and single mother, moved in with a friend and soon found "a good job with great wages," she said. But when things went sour with her friend, she found herself suddenly without a place to live, no savings to fall back on, and no one to call. "My family ... there's no one there I can depend on," she explained. "Going home was not an option."

Susan is a diabetic and Campbell worried about how to pay for her daughter's healthcare. "The medical thing with Susan—that's my biggest worry—missing work, the out-of-pocket expenses for her medicine. I basically live paycheck to paycheck," she said. Families make up the fastest growing segment of the homeless population according to the National Center on Family Homelessness. Eighty-five percent of families who are homeless are headed by single mothers whose average annual income is less than \$8,000. A staggering 92% of women who are homeless have experienced family violence; 40% of children have witnessed it.

Campbell called St. Mary's and made her way out to Phoenixville for an interview with Sister Chris Kranichfeld, the executive director of the shelter. Doris and Susan moved into their own room that night. Five families at a time are housed at St. Mary's shelter and can stay up to eight weeks. Sister Chris gets to know the families firsthand. "There is a sense of camaraderie between women who find themselves in the same boat," she said. "You

might think you're the only one but soon you're sharing a laundry room and bathroom with others in the same situation and something begins to shift."

Almost everything at the shelter has been donated: beds, sofas, blankets. Over the years the kitchen has been updated, the walls painted, the carpets replaced. "There is peacefulness in the house," said Sister Chris. "You feel the prayers of all those good sisters who lived here all those years ago." Children living at the shelter are enrolled in school within a week of arrival and parents are connected to the shelter's partner programs, Open Hearth and Orion Communities, for assistance with jobs and housing.

## When Hard Times Hit

Susan took to her new home right away. "She felt we belonged there," her mother said. "The sisters were so giving. Susan sees people struggle and have a hard time but at St. Mary's she also saw how generous people could be." Campbell was stretched thin between her job, her concern for Susan, and efforts to find permanent housing. "Having a child and not knowing where we were going to stay—that's all I was focusing on. 'Where am I going to go? What am I going to do?'" she said. Distracted and worried, Campbell wasn't surprised when her boss called her in and told her he was letting her go.

Job counselors with St. Mary's partner, Orion, helped Doris Campbell find another job and, after eight weeks at the shelter, Open Hearth helped Campbell locate permanent housing. "We came



Chris Paris volunteers in the playroom of St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter. "I'm there to support them," she said of the children who come to make crafts and spend time with Chris and other volunteers in the evenings.

back two times a month to volunteer in St. Mary's playroom," Campbell recalled. "And we volunteered at the Valentine's Day benefit. I wanted to give back."

## Community Support for St. Mary's Shelter

Shelter volunteers Kathe Spohn and Lois Ashworth, along with thirty other volunteers, plan and host St. Mary's Valentine's Day breakfast benefit every February. One hundred people showed up the first year. Now, thirteen years later, Kathe and her volunteers set the table for 500 guests. "There is so much support from the community," she noted. "It's become a social event, a place for people to enjoy the food and each other's company."

Barbara Kepler, a volunteer and a former board member, is a member of the team that puts on the annual benefit. She gives her time to the shelter because she believes in its approach. "St. Mary's looks at the total

*continued on page 10*

**Share with us the good news of what you did!**

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

# HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Make a cash donation to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and we'll send your contribution to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Your gift will support the efforts of volunteers, like those profiled in our story, to help families until they can get back on their feet.
- When you pass a homeless person on the street, meet his or her gaze with fresh eyes and a compassionate heart and, at the very least, offer a greeting.
- Consider donating women's clothing (in good condition) appropriate for a job interview and the workplace to a shelter near you. Many women who are homeless do not have the clothes they need for work. Purses, briefcases and backpacks also come in handy. Think about working with your friends and fellow parishioners to assemble a large donation. Be sure to check with the shelter ahead of time about their needs and storage capacity.
- Consider volunteering at a homeless shelter near your home. Bring your own special skills and interests and make a contribution of your time and spirit. You'll touch many lives and enjoy the pleasure of helping others.
- Remember the families who do not have a roof over their heads tonight. Keep them in your prayers.

*Volunteer Barbara Kepler explained that St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter "looks at the total person and encourages them so they can move forward with their lives, beyond homelessness."*



**St. Mary’s Franciscan  
Shelter Celebrates Twenty  
Years of Service**

On October 25, 1987, the convent at St. Mary’s Parish in Phoenixville was dedicated and became St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter. The first family arrived on November 19, 1987. In October 2007 the shelter celebrates its 20th Anniversary with several events.

*October 19, 2007*

Gathering of donors and friends of the shelter for a dinner auction

Proceeds benefit the shelter.

Rivercrest Golf Club

*October 27, 2007*

*11 A.M.*

Prayer Service, dedication of trees in honor of shelter volunteers, and lunch

**A Home for  
“In-Between”  
Times**

*continued from page 9*

person,” she said. “They offer encouragement so people can move forward with their lives. They help with jobs and savings and housing.”

**Starting Over, Moving On**

Last year Doris Campbell and Susan moved to a small town in upstate New York. Campbell is working now in a copy center on a university campus and Susan, 10, “is thriving,” she said. The town is a “nice safe place for us to live. I thought we’d stand a good chance here and I was right.” Campbell has been working on her own art and has two gallery shows lined up to exhibit her paintings. “I focus so much on being a mom; it’s good to have the world say ‘yes’ to my art,” she said.

“They were wonderful to us,” Campbell said of the staff and volunteers at St. Mary’s shelter. St. Mary’s continues to offer refuge to families as an expression of the Franciscan commitment to care for all creation, especially women, children, and those who have no voice. “It’s a blessing,” agreed volunteer Kathe Spohn. “I love working with the sisters. I wouldn’t give it up for the world.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

*Kathe Spohn and Barbara Kepler put the finishing touches on tonight’s dinner—homemade soup, salad, bread, and cheese—to serve to the families staying at the shelter.*

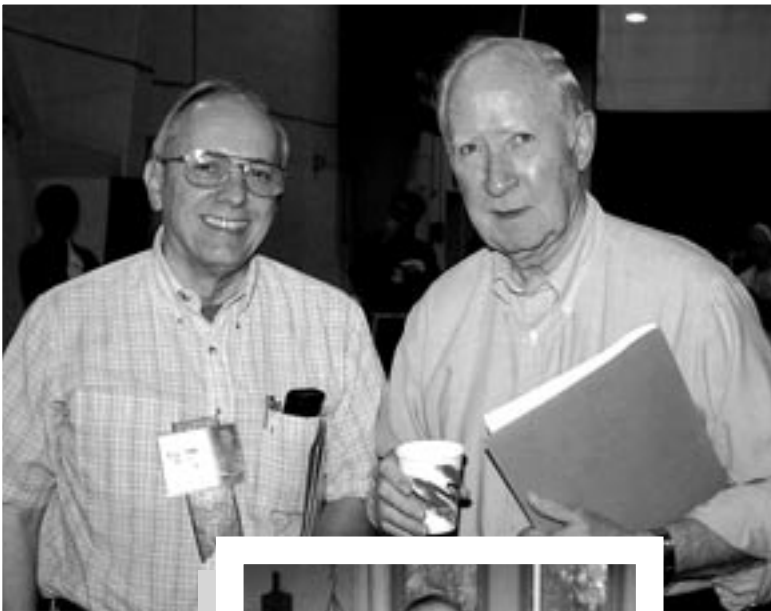
**FoCUS**

**CYPRIAN ROSEN**

**BY SISTER HELEN JACOBSON, OSF**

CYPRIAN GIFTS US AS  
WOMEN IN THE CHURCH  
WITH TRANSPARENCY,  
FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY,  
AND SENSITIVITY.

*The Bonaventure Fest held in Aston, Pennsylvania, August 2003, provided a welcome opportunity to reconnect with fellow Franciscan scholars such as Zachary Hayes, OFM.*



*Living with five other friars, Cyprian does his fair share of domestic chores like cooking and cleaning. A diabetic and survivor of open heart surgery, he exercises to maintain good health. Cyprian’s latest challenge is to complete his doctoral thesis in Canon Law by 2008.*



When a connection enjoys a longstanding relationship to the point that it is considered a natural “go-together,” it becomes difficult to think of one without the other: peanut butter and jelly, Fourth of July and fireworks, motherhood and apple pie. Similarly when the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia think “liturgical celebrant”—daily, weekend, or special occasion—the immediate association is with Cyprian Rosen, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin.

The history of this connection began in 1975. Sister Kathleen Moffatt and Cyprian were taking the same Franciscan Studies summer course at St. Bonaventure University. This single contact grew to include other acquaintances, all of which marked the beginning of a relationship with the congregation. Years later when Sister Kathleen was serving on General Council and Cyprian was living in Wilmington, this contact was revived, broadened, and deepened when he assumed the dual role of chaplain and instructor for four summer renewal programs (1983-86) at the Motherhouse. Finally, in the early 90s, circumstances were such that Cyprian’s sporadic celebration of Mass at Our Lady of Angels Convent became much more frequent and evolved naturally into his “official ministry” as Motherhouse chaplain.

Raised in Little Falls, New York, and taught religion by the Capuchin

Sisters of the Infant Jesus (later known as Franciscan Sisters of Ringwood), Cyprian credits his own Capuchin vocation to the nourishing influence of Sister Anne Italia. Thus, Cyprian experienced our 2003 merger with that congregation as the “closing of a circle” for him. Since his entrance into the seminary in 1949, Cyprian has lived, studied, and ministered in the Mid-Atlantic States, Italy, and England, predominantly involved in formation work with offshoots into adult education, marriage tribunal, and provincial leadership.

For one who laughingly admits to “escaping” to the boiler room while rector and teacher at the high school seminary, Cyprian’s current “escapes” are birding and reading. The gift of a book on birding from the family doctor introduced him to this boyhood nature interest that has since grown into a lifelong hobby. But an even greater source of relaxation for Cyprian is “leisure reading”; his tastes gravitate toward science fiction and mystery.

Cyprian claims that he has received more than he has given, citing that our prayerful support, the many friendships he has enjoyed, his involvement in Franciscan Studies, and being sensitized to the needs of women—especially sisters—in the church, has all been “blessing” to him. Conversely, the sisters see Cyprian as a blessing and gift to them. As scholar, “Cyprian is the best in the country for teaching the writings of St. Francis,” claims Sister Kathleen Moffatt. To summarize Sr. Andrea Likovich’s experience of him as presider at liturgy, Cyprian gifts us as women in the church with transparency (not getting in the way of the assembly’s prayer), flexibility, adaptability, and sensitivity. Sister Lynn Patrice Lavin remarks, “He has journeyed with us as a congregation through many joys as well as challenges, has been a steadfast support in encouraging us to live the Gospel in our times as Francis and Clare did, has truly shared life with us and we are so much richer for it!” But the sentiment mentioned repeatedly by most and expressed here by Sister Elise Betz is that “the best word to describe who Cyprian has been to all of us is ‘brother.’”



# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

*Everyone has within a piece of good news.*

— Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

## WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. FRANCIS AND ST. CLARE

MAY 12 TO MAY 23, 2008

Join seasoned guides,  
Franciscan Father John Cella and  
Sr. Anne Amati, OSF,  
for a profound spiritual experience  
in Rome and Assisi



Have you been restless for something new? Are you a family member, friend, and/or co-worker of a Sister of St. Francis? Come join us as a pilgrim and discover the beautiful setting of Italy. A highlight of the pilgrimage is the experience of the holy shrines of St. Francis and St. Clare.

Walk the streets, sit awhile in the piazzas, pray in the churches where Francis and Clare left their footprints, enjoyed a social life, and deepened their spiritual journey.



### PILGRIMAGE INCLUDES:

ROME: St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, catacombs, and an opportunity to see the Pope

ASSISI: Basilica of St. Francis, LaVerna (where St. Francis received the Stigmata), the Church at San Damiano, and much more.



THREE DAYS IN ROME  
SEVEN DAYS IN ASSISI  
(Two days for travel)



Price is \$3,756 from Philadelphia.

Full package includes airfare; lodging in Rome and Assisi; most meals; all group entrance fees; all taxi services in Assisi; taxes, security fees and airport taxes; bus transfers and luggage handling; gratuities for bus drivers, lodging, restaurants, and luggage.



For more information, call 610-558-5352  
or e-mail: [stracy@osfphila.org](mailto:stracy@osfphila.org).

## A Fond Farewell... And A Warm Welcome!



Liz Verna

In March we bade farewell to Liz Verna. Liz served as Director of Communications for the Sisters of St. Francis for almost four-teen years and was Managing

Editor of *Good News* since its inception in 1998. We wish her well in her new position as Director of Communications for the Burlington County Bridge Commission in Palmyra, New Jersey.



Florence Smith

We also extend a welcome to Florence Smith, our new Director of Communications. Florence will also assume the role of Managing Editor of *Good News*.

With her background and expertise in communications, graphic design, and management, Florence is a welcome addition to the congregation's communication department.



## In Memoriam

Sister Rose Anthony Brady  
5/5/07

Sister Rose Elizabeth Pfadenhauer  
5/1/07

Sister Norine Joseph Mulvey  
4/16/07

Sister Margaret McDonald  
(Sister Margaret Crucifixa)  
3/29/07

Sister Alvera Staed  
3/14/07

Sister Cleomata Comiskey  
3/10/07

Sister Jacqueline Schuster  
3/5/07

Sister Regina Angelorum Mexal  
2/13/07

Sister Magdalen Joseph Drury  
2/7/07



## Did You Know?

There are 486 Companions in Mission.

- 15 Companions in Ministry
- 200 Companions in Prayer
- 271 Companions in Faith

Need more information about the Companion relationship? Contact [companions@osfphila.org](mailto:companions@osfphila.org).

## Update on Drexel Neumann Academy

Drexel Neumann Academy is well on its way to opening in September 2007. The school, cosponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Neumann College, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and St. Katherine Drexel Parish, is the last Catholic school in Chester and is the passport to the future for the children who will attend. Sister Maggie Gannon, president of the newly formed school, reports that she anticipates an enrollment of approximately 225 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. At this point several grades have already reached their maximum capacity. Principal Sister Cathy McGowan, SSJ, brings a wealth of experience and a passion for education and children. She is in the process of setting up the faculty and curriculum for the 2007-2008 school year. Several members of the Sisters of St. Francis have volunteered to work in the school. Visit the school's new website at <http://teacherweb.com/PA/DrexelNeumannAcademy/SchoolHomePage>.

