

Volume 17.1 Spring 2014

# Good NEWS

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Also in this issue:

- Campus Culture of Empowering Students
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

# LIFE

*to the Rescue:*  
*A Win-Win Solution to Senior Care*

## Commitment Statement

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

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

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

## Mission Statement

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

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

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

## POINT OF VIEW

### The Seasons of our Lives

**T**he seasons of the year have captivated people's imagination throughout the ages. This fascination has been expressed in poetry, art, and music. For example, the artist Vincent Van Gogh felt inspired to capture the moods of the seasons. He spent long hours in fields and vineyards meticulously depicting the seasonal currents of nature. His paintings of iced, glazed branches, profuse greenery, meadows filled with flowers, and fields of golden wheat can easily put one in touch with the beauty of the eternal.



**Sister Esther Anderson, OSF  
Congregational Minister**

Observing the seasons in nature brings to mind the words of Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under the heavens.” If we accept this truth and learn to appreciate where we are in our lives, the many seasons we encounter can be lived fully with meaning and purpose. It helps to have guides and companions on the journey.

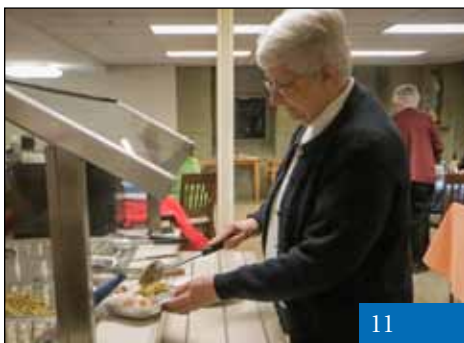
In this Good News, we encounter Sister Peggy Egan, Dean of Students at Neumann University, in her ministry to youth in the springtime of their lives. She encourages students to join a caring community that will help shape them for life. The fruits of her guidance are evidenced in the formation of the program, Cultivators of Care, by two student government leaders. This program trains student consultants as listeners to assist their peers in navigating the everyday challenges in their lives.

Sisters Marge Sullivan, Kate O'Donnell, Elizabeth Murphy, and others provide guidance and support to people in the fall and winter seasons of their lives. They minister in the LIFE programs at various locations. LIFE facilitates the all-inclusive care of the elderly. It promotes independence and the highest level of functioning while allowing dignity and choice for families. In this edition, we meet Joe who is paralyzed on one side as a result of a series of strokes. Personnel at LIFE remodeled Joe's apartment for his optimal mobility. He describes the effort as an act of love.

As we go through the seasons of our lives, hopefully we will have caring guides to accompany us. May we, in turn, reach out in support to our fellow travelers.

*Sister Esther Anderson, OSF*





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*Sisters Marge Sullivan, Kate O'Donnell, and Lillie Murphy all work to ensure that elderly persons get the care needed to sustain their well-being outside a nursing home setting. This integrated care program includes medical and nursing services, day care, pharmaceuticals, and transportation. The focus on individual dignity and personal faith needs ensures that seniors in their programs are living—not just surviving.*

Written by Deb Litman

Photography by Andrea Cipriani-Mecchi

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*For many students, college years are a time of great change. Those who choose Neumann University are joining a community that will help shape them for the next four years and beyond. The Culture of Caring initiative spearheaded by Sister Peggy Egan was developed to promote Neumann's five core values of reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship and to cultivate its caring culture rooted in Franciscan values.*

Written by Deb Litman

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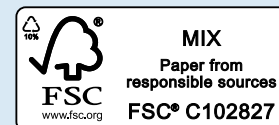
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The purpose of *Good News* is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia by sharing the good news of the congregation with our friends, family, companions, and sisters. Through this publication, we hope to share the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

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**On the cover:** Executive Director Sister Marge Sullivan spends time with a participant at LIFE at Lourdes in Pennsauken, New Jersey. Sister Marge makes a point of calling each person by name and taking the time to talk to people individually about the things that interest or concern them.

Sister Kate O'Donnell, who oversees three LIFE programs in Philadelphia, spends time with Leslie Costello and Martha Zindell at the St. Agnes Hospital facility. Sister Kate visits all three centers to do mission work and spiritual care. "I try to be as supportive as I can to each person at each center whether they are participants or staff members," said Sister Kate. "Sometimes that means just listening, sometimes praying with people. A lot of what I do is one on one—being there for people in whatever capacity they need at the moment."



# LIFE *to the* Rescue:

## *A Win-Win Solution to Senior Care*

**I**magine you are elderly and can no longer take care of yourself in your own home. You and your children agree that a nursing home is not an attractive option but work schedules make it impossible to provide the round-the-clock care your condition demands. Your daughter brings you into her home and attempts to set up a schedule of friends and relatives to help on the days she can't be there. It

isn't long, however, before unpredictable caretaker schedules, along with your increasing care needs, make the situation unworkable. Something has to change.

Fortunately for many seniors, LIFE (Living Independently for Elderly) programs around the country provide services for medically and financially fragile seniors in situations just like this one. Finding such

programs can be a blessing and a relief for many seniors—giving them the care, safety, and stimulation they require while allowing them to stay in their own homes or the homes of family members.

### **Team-provided Integrated Care**

LIFE at Lourdes in Pennsauken, New Jersey, an extension of Lourdes Health System,



*Sister Marge, Executive Director of the LIFE at Lourdes program in Pennsauken, New Jersey, arrives at the center every day around seven A.M. to do a walk through before greeting participants as they arrive at this home away from home. Approximately 185 participants are enrolled in the program, making them eligible for everything from daily hot meals to comprehensive medical care. For many who come to the center, however, it is often the relationships they form that are the most life-giving.*



## “THE ACTIVITY, THE INTERACTION, AND THE SUPPORT KEEP PEOPLE GOING.”

is one such program. Run by executive director Sister Marge Sullivan, LIFE at Lourdes oversees every aspect of elderly participants' well-being outside a nursing home setting. A team of doctors, nurses, social workers, dietitians, and physical and occupational therapists manage the care of each individual, tailoring a plan to his or her specific needs. “We take care of people,

soup to nuts,” said Sister Marge. “Whatever occurs once a participant is in the program, we are responsible for it, no matter what. Utilizing an interdisciplinary team that knows the whole picture for each participant allows us to really integrate the care they receive.”

That integrated care includes all medical, nursing, social, and behavioral services such

as: day care; pharmaceuticals; transportation; medical equipment and supplies; nutrition; occupational, physical, and speech therapies; hospital stays; lab work; x-rays; surgical care; and more. In order to accomplish this, the program receives a flat fee from Medicaid or Medicare each month—less than the monthly cost of

*continued on page 6*



Valentino, Manuel, Victor, Luis, and Ramona (shown here) are regulars in the heated games of dominoes that are a daily occurrence in the game room at LIFE at Lourdes.



“THE LIFE PROGRAM IS BRILLIANT BECAUSE IT NOT ONLY GIVES PEOPLE THE MEDICAL AND NURSING CARE THEY NEED, BUT IT ALSO FACILITATES WHO THEY ARE AS HUMAN BEINGS.”

*continued from page 5*  
nursing facility care. “These programs succeed on many different levels,” said Sister Kate O’Donnell, vice-president of mission and pastoral services for Mercy Home and Community Health Services which oversees three LIFE programs in the Philadelphia area. “First, it is cheaper to keep people out of nursing homes. Second, people do better when they stay in their own environments.”

“I have come to learn how important someone’s home is to them,” said Sister Marge. “We have people who clearly struggle to stay in their own homes and who will not move out. We have to find creative ways to make it safe to stay. That right of self-determination is important. We will stand on our heads to make it happen.”

### A Hub of Activity

Service-rich LIFE centers serve as the heart of each LIFE program. On a typical day at LIFE at Lourdes, for example, eleven buses and vans pick up between 90-100 people

and bring them to the center for the day. Some folks head directly to the clinic to have their blood sugar tested. Others go straight to the day room for breakfast. After that, participants’ routines vary. They may go to physical or occupational therapy, take an exercise class, meet with social workers, play dominoes, visit with friends, or attend prayer services. Sometimes there are day trips to the aquarium, ballgames, or concerts. There is always a hot lunch. At the end of the day, participants are brought back to their homes—whether that means a family member’s house, their own apartment, or an assisted living arrangement.

The social aspects of the LIFE programs are very important to the seniors who take part in them. Seventy-one-year-old Joe has been coming to the LIFE at Lourdes Center for four years. Paralyzed on one side by a series of strokes, Joe lives alone and has assistance through the program for laundry, cleaning, and shopping. However, his struggles have not dampened his spirit. Beth Goldenburg, an occupational therapist at LIFE at

# Finding a LIFE/PACE Program Near You

Programs like the ones featured in this article (called PACE programs in most states) help seniors in the communities where they live. Currently there are 94 PACE/LIFE programs and two pre-PACE programs operating in 31 states in the U.S. An optional benefit under Medicare and Medicaid, PACE focuses entirely on older people who are frail enough to meet their state's standards for nursing home care. Eligible individuals who wish to participate must voluntarily enroll. Enrollees must

- be at least 55 years of age,
- live in the service area of a PACE organization,
- be screened by a team of doctors, nurses, and other health professionals as meeting that state's nursing facility level of care,
- be able to safely live in the community at the time of enrollment.

To find a PACE program in your area, visit [www.npaonline.org](http://www.npaonline.org) and click on the PACEFinder.



Lourdes, calls him “a one-man welcoming committee,” saying he has befriended many participants who are unsure about finding their place at the center. “I like to help people in need and I can do that because my own needs are taken care of here,” said Joe. “I enjoy myself here. What I have left, I like to use.”

Another participant, Al, was referred to LIFE at Lourdes by a local hospital where he had landed after being found, severely beaten, and left at the curb. With a history of various health and personal issues, Al had no place to live and no family willing to help. The LIFE program got him an efficiency apartment next to the center and set him up with the services he needed. They

also gave him a reason to get up in the morning. Now a changed man, Al walks over to the center every day. He picks up his medicine, gets a hot meal, and reports to his “job”—walking the center’s therapy dog four times a day. Along the way, Al meets and greets familiar faces. “We are his family,” said Sister Marge. “That is true for a lot of our participants.”

## Nourishing the Soul

Stories like Al’s illustrate some of the hard-to-measure benefits of staying out of a nursing home until one is actually needed. “The activity, the interaction, and the support keep people going,” said Sister Kate.

“I love working with our participants and I am constantly awed by their resilience. Despite all they have to deal with, there is a joy that radiates from them.”

In her role as pastoral care provider at Mercy’s LIFE Centers in North Philly, South Philly, and Media, Pennsylvania, Sister Kate helps seniors there to cultivate their spiritual lives in the midst of diminishing physical abilities. She conducts two prayer services and a communion service at each center monthly. She also provides for the individual spiritual needs of participants. “Much of what I do is just talking with folks, listening to them, being as supportive as I can through whatever struggles

*continued on page 8*



*Nurse Dawn Green checks Lucy Hamilton's vitals. Many people served by LIFE programs are health/resource-deprived, making the care they receive absolutely essential. In addition to daily care, including blood sugar and blood pressure checks and monitoring of medication, the LIFE program provides on call medical care 24 hours a day.*



*Al comes to Sue Grayson's office to pick up the center's therapy dog, Bailey, for one of their regular walks. Sue is the director of operations at LIFE in New Jersey, and the one who takes Bailey home at the end of the day but Al takes special care to make sure Bailey gets plenty of love and attention.*



*Beth Goldenburg works with Joe Schmidt during his daily physical therapy session. Joe, a devoted Phillies fan, is known for his visor—which he is never without—and for his ability to help even the most reticent participants feel comfortable at the LIFE center.*





◀ *Retired from full-time ministry, Sister Lillie Murphy works on a part-time, volunteer basis at the LIFE program at St. Mary's Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. "The spiritual care of these people is very important to me and I do it with a passion," said Sister Lillie. "I can relate to them. I am elderly as well so we are on the same part of the journey. I live each day as well as I can live it with the knowledge that I am embraced by a God who really loves me. I try to pass that along."*

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they are facing," said Sister Kate. "Of course, being in this environment, I also do a lot of bereavement work. There are a lot of losses."

Retired from full-time ministry, Sister Lillie Murphy does similar work on a part-time, volunteer basis at a LIFE program at St. Mary's Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. In addition to providing a communion service each month, she listens, tells stories, and encourages participants to lead the spiritual aspects of their lives more fully. "The LIFE program is brilliant because it not only gives people the medical and nursing care they need, but it also facilitates who they are as human beings," said Sister Lillie. "It engages their faith. It allows them to preserve their dignity."

### Thriving, not just Surviving

Preserving dignity and making sure the seniors in their programs are living, not just surviving, extends beyond the centers and into the homes of each person enrolled in LIFE programs. This means ensuring safety by adding special equipment in home bathrooms, installing better lighting to allow

## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Pray for the peace, comfort, and care of the fragile elderly whose precarious physical and financial situations make daily living a struggle.
- Check up on elderly members for your community who live alone. Preparing a meal, taking them to the store, or simply sitting down for a coffee and chat could mean a world of difference in a person's life.
- Offer to provide respite care for a friend or relative who acts as caretaker for a loved one. Even the most loving and dedicated caregiver can become stressed and wearied. Periodic breaks allow caretakers to take some time to themselves and return to the task refreshed and revitalized.
- Volunteer your services at a local nursing home or senior center. Conduct a sing-along, lead a craft-project, or call BINGO numbers. Activity and stimulation are crucial to promoting physical health, enhancing cognitive function, and reducing loneliness and emotional distress among older adults.



▼ Conroy R. Walker lends a helping hand to Vilma Avila who has dementia. Vilma finds great joy in the activities at the Mercy LIFE Center. Her favorite activity is dancing and she has even assumed the challenge of teaching Sister Kate some dance steps.



► Arleen Paluszewski, a regular at the center for the past two years, looks forward to the daily arts and crafts projects that are part of her routine.

for greater vision, and providing medical alert systems. It also means finding ways for people to maintain independence, feel pride in themselves, and continue hobbies they enjoy.

“This is the first time I feel like I am doing what I am supposed to be doing with occupational therapy,” said Beth Goldenburg. “We are able to do things here that would not have been allowed by Medicare in other settings.”

Joe talks about the staff at the center helping him organize renovations at his apartment. Not only did they arrange for the removal of carpet and installation of wood floors to allow his wheelchair to operate more easily, but an aide from the center also came to box up all his personal belongings before the installation, replace them once the work was done, and sweep and mop the sawdust that was left behind. “That’s the kind of help you can’t find just anywhere,” said Joe. “That was an act of love.”

Beth even went into the home of a woman with failing eyesight and worked with her

to set up her kitchen in such a way that she can continue making simple dinners for herself. Beth has also enlisted the help of a center staff person from the finance department (and an avid quilter) to figure out a way that the woman could continue to do some of the hand quilting that she has enjoyed for decades. “In a traditional healthcare setting, I might work with someone on how to put on their pants with a stick or how to get from a wheelchair to a bed,” said Beth. “Here I can go beyond that to make people’s lives worth living.”

### A Caregiver’s Hope Fulfilled

Balancing independence and safety is not always easy. Sister Marge admits that sometimes deciding on the right approach can be a struggle. “There are often debates among members of the care team about what is best for a participant,” said Sister Marge. “Physical therapy approaches things from the standpoint of keeping people safe. Social work approaches situations from the perspective of participants’ right to make



▲ On a typical day, eleven buses pick up between 90-100 participants and bring them to LIFE at Lourdes.



decisions about their own lives. As much as we can, we hope to do both—honor participants’ wishes and maintain their safety.”

In the end, the LIFE teams do what any person would hope for from a caretaker—treat each participant the way a loving family member would treat them. LIFE teams consider the whole person—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually—going beyond basic needs and helping seniors continue to be full members of society. Participants’ lives tell the story of their success. Each senior who stays at home, continues a favorite activity, or maintains a fulfilling social life is a tangible example of a life lived more fully. “This is truly one of the most supportive programs I know,” said Sister Kate. “When I think of what LIFE does for the frail elderly who are so often pushed aside, I am honored to be a part of it.” ■

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

# PEOPLE & PLACES

*As an inductee into St. Gregory the Great's Hall of Fame, Sister Nora Nash was recognized not only for her achievements as an educator, but also for her outstanding advocacy efforts.*



## NEW JERSEY

Sister Nora Nash was one of eight individuals inducted into St. Gregory the Great's Hall of Fame. The honorees were recognized not only for their achievements in life, but also to acknowledge the role that their Catholic faith played in attaining those achievements. Sister Nora served as principal of St. Gregory's School in Hamilton Square from 1978-1993. Current principal Jason Briggs noted that Sister Nora "brought the school back from a planned closure after the 1978-1979 school year during extraordinarily challenging times at the parish and established academic programs which filled the school to capacity by the time she left."



## DELAWARE

Anyone who knew Sister Ann Michele Zwosta recognized her artistic gifts and saw in her handcrafted quilts and needlework a gift for design. After Sister Ann's death, the folks at Padua Academy were looking for a way to recognize the many ways in which she helped to make Padua the widely recognized educational facility it is today. Recent renovations included plans for a classroom equipped for the graphic design class. The staff recognized the connection between Sister Ann's own gifts of artistry and design and the school's efforts to provide a well-equipped site for students' development in the use of technological design. Faculty members contributed to the endeavor and the new classroom became a reality. At the dedication ceremony, faculty member Barbara Markham explained that, as principal, Sister Ann "professionalized Padua, encouraging pedagogical experimentation and keeping technologically current... Her passion was design. Self-taught and highly skilled, she produced lovely needlepoints and absolutely glorious quilts. She was a true Renaissance woman."



*Padua Academy students enjoy the updated resources in the school's new graphic design classroom dedicated in memory of Sister Ann Michele Zwosta.*

## MARYLAND

The Catholic High School of Baltimore, one of our sponsored ministries, is 75 years old! Celebrations began in January and will continue over an 18-month period. Catholic High opened in 1939 and over these 75 years lives out its mission to "educate young women in an environment that fosters Christian attitudes of dignity and respect for the human person and all of creation." The school's mission continues to be "empowered by Gospel values and rooted in the spirit and traditions of Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi." That emphasis on Franciscan values was very evident this past October when the school—faculty and students alike—participated in a week-long celebration of St. Francis Day. Many of the classroom activities centered on care for creation and culminated in an assembly featuring Dan Misleh, president of the Catholic Coalition for Climate Change. Students were invited to sign the St. Francis Pledge and groups of students performed a volunteer clean-up of St. Vincent Cemetery.



*TCHS student Sarah Kulis displayed her St. Francis watercolor sunset project illustrating how simple things can be the most beautiful thing in life.*



## WASHINGTON

Each year Franciscan Health System and the Sisters of St. Francis present the Humanitarian of the Year Award to honor individuals who have shown extraordinary commitment to peacemaking and serving those who are poor. This year's recipients were the Enumclaw Regional Healthcare Foundation (ERHF) and René Popke. ERHF creates opportunities for individuals and organizations to come together, innovate, and address issues that impact the health of the community. René Popke,





▲ *Members of the Social Concerns Committee: (L-R) Sisters Hope Bauerlin, Margaret O'Brien, Alphonsus Moran, Eileen Valerie Kulacz, Ellen Mary Meskill, Dominica LoBianco, Janice Bahl, Anne Leo Broadhurst, Jacqueline Kotz, Maria De Guadalupe Diaz*

a tireless volunteer in the Enumclaw community, has coordinated or participated in numerous local projects, including the Enumclaw Street Fair, Oktoberfest, the Festival of Crafts, and Big Day Serving. During her term as ERHF's first executive director, she has seen the foundation expand its role and mission while continuing to have a significant impact on the greater plateau community. This year's award celebration was held at St. Ann's Convent and Sisters Donna Fread, Jude Connelly, and Kay Marie Duncan were all actively involved in the program.



## PENNSYLVANIA

If you're visiting our motherhouse in Aston, you might spot a notice posted in the elevator calling for donations of winter clothing or announcing a collection of monetary donations at specific liturgies, for example during Lent or Advent or on Thanksgiving. These notices are posted by the Social Concerns Committee—a dedicated group of sisters whose quiet work often goes unnoticed. Over recent years, the sisters have collected donations for the MacDonald Center in Portland, victims of both Hurricane Sandy and the flooded Mississippi area, St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, and the earthquake victims in Haiti. The list goes on and on but the intent remains the same—to provide aid for those whose lives have, in some way, been touched by poverty or misfortune.

This year's Thanksgiving collection benefited victims of the recent typhoon in the Philippines. The committee also looks to the ongoing needs of folks in local areas. Each winter they gather used clothing and coats and deliver them to Chester's Team Ministries. And several evenings a week they prepare meals for shut-ins. The meals are stored in a freezer at the motherhouse and eventually delivered to a local parish to become part of the larger endeavor.



## IRELAND

Sister Elizabeth Fitzpatrick recently enjoyed a special day with the Poor Clare Sisters in Dublin when she was invited to do a presentation on St. Francis. The experience was mutually enriching. "It was most rewarding and gave much food for thought and prayer," said Sister Patrice, abbess of the monastery. "We are blessed in our preachers and teachers and have every opportunity to grow in the life of the Spirit." Sister Elizabeth also felt blessed by her experience at the monastery, describing it as "music to my soul—akin to winning the Lotto without buying a ticket!" An additional surprise for Sister Elizabeth was learning that Sister Patrice is a cousin of our Sister Margaret Cunniffe. One more proof that ours is, indeed, a God of connections! Visit <http://www.pccdamians.ie> to see a photo of Sister Elizabeth with the Poor Clare Sisters.



▲ *Sister Eileen Valerie Kulacz packages a dinner which will later be delivered to one of the shut-ins in the area.*

## OREGON

In November, the St. Anthony Hospital community held the long-awaited ribbon ceremony to mark the completion of the new medical facility. Congregational minister Sister Esther Anderson shared the story of the hospital's 112-year history which began with a three-story house and 12 patients. In 1901 Dr. F.W. Vincent gave Mother Stanislaus \$250, instructing her to find additional funds to build a hospital—an order she carried out by placing containers in local bars! At the November



*The new St. Anthony Hospital continues a long history of Franciscan healthcare in the Pendleton area.*

ceremony, in addition to the ribbon cutting, board chair Jerry Simpson dedicated a healing garden to Sister Marie Monica Borden, a board member and pastoral volunteer. Attendees were able to tour the new facility. An open house was also held the following weekend for local residents. On December 20, the doors of the old hospital closed. Inpatients were transferred to the new facility, all hospital facilities were operable, and the next chapter of St. Anthony's service to the Pendleton area became a reality.



◀ Sister Peggy talks with students among banners proclaiming Neumann University's five core values: reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship. The signs are more than window dressing. Neumann tour guides, residence assistants, staff members, and faculty all around campus can be heard talking about what is unique and positive about the "Neumann experience."

For many students, the college years are a time of great change. Undergraduates often move away from home, select a personalized course of study, make new friends, and encounter new opportunities. Students at Neumann University in Aston, Pennsylvania, are no exception. When they choose Neumann, they are joining a community that will help shape them for the next four years and beyond.

### Establishing the Culture

Long known as a place with a welcoming atmosphere, Neumann began making a more conscious effort several years ago to promote its five core values of reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship and to cultivate its caring culture rooted in Franciscan values. The Culture of Caring initiative was spearheaded by



◀ Sister Peggy Egan sits down with a student in Bachmann lobby on Neumann's campus. Sister Peggy is seen by students, not as an administrator in an ivory tower, but as a listener, facilitator, mentor, and ally.

# Campus Culture of Empowering





*Residence Life Director Michael Webster talks with Sister Peggy in front of the entrance to one of Neumann's dormitories. The two work hand in hand to promote the culture of caring at Neumann.*

Sister Peggy Egan, now dean of students at Neumann, who was inspired to undertake the campaign during her time as the university's interim director of the Counseling Center.

"Neumann was already a very friendly place," said Sister Peggy, "but what I was hearing at the counseling center was that the culture here was not a familiar one for all incoming students. I felt it was important that we help enculturate students who were faced with new or different situations. This meant teaching and modeling trust, care for one another, acceptance of differences, and respectful communication."

That kind of response to careful listening has been crucial to Sister Peggy's unassuming but transformative role as dean of students at Neumann. "One of Sister Peggy's great strengths is that she listens

well and is not afraid of what she hears," said Dr. Joseph Glass, assistant professor of Communications and Media Art at Neumann. "She says, 'This is what I am hearing; what do you want to do about it?'"

Sister Peggy's open-minded, lead-from-behind approach has allowed students to take the driver's seat in fostering Neumann's unique culture. "I am a facilitator, a listening agent, someone they can bounce ideas off of," said Sister Peggy. "Hopefully I can help them understand what true collaboration is, how to come to situations with an open agenda."

One solution that came from student brainstorming was a more up-front approach to culture-building. For senior Alex Maurizzo, an admissions tour guide and resident assistant (R.A.) in a freshman dormitory, this means promoting Neumann ideals even before students matriculate. "From the moment prospective students step on campus for tours, I begin showing and telling them what it means to be part of the Neumann community," said Alex.

As R.A., Alex literally papers the walls of her hallway with messages about the Neumann University experience. On the first day of orientation, she and the other

resident assistants perform scenarios that illustrate "the Neumann way" of doing things. In addition, Sister Peggy meets with all residents and personally invites students to become a part of the culture of caring. "We are very direct about it," said Sister Peggy. "We do a blitz."

Student leaders at Neumann say the approach is working. "There is an atmosphere here where peers, faculty, and staff treat one another with respect and work to promote one another's success," said student government president Frank Altamuro. "Student leaders have been educated in it and it is spreading from them to the rest of the campus community."

## Serving One Another

Sister Peggy also encourages students to lead the way when it comes to acting as a support network for their peers. For those looking for a willing ear to talk through everyday problems or stressors, Neumann has developed the Cultivators of Care program—the brainchild of Frank and student government vice-president Tiffany Connelly. The cultivators of care consist of twenty students trained by the wellness

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▼ *The Cultivators of Care program was the brain child of student government president Frank Altamuro and student government vice-president Tiffany Connelly. The two have collaborated as campus leaders throughout their Neumann experience to offer students the opportunity to talk through their problems with nonjudgemental peers.*



π "THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE HERE WHERE PEERS, FACULTY, AND STAFF TREAT ONE ANOTHER WITH RESPECT AND WORK TO PROMOTE ONE ANOTHER'S SUCCESS."

# Students

*continued from page 13*

staff as listeners in the dorms. These students visit the dorms on a regular basis to serve as consistent, nonjudgmental peers with whom to talk through day-to-day issues.

"Let's say you get in an argument with your R.A. or the members of your sports team," said Tiffany. "That is not always something you can or want to talk to a friend or a faculty member about. Sometimes it helps to have an objective peer to whom you can talk about things. That's what the cultivators of care are for students."

"I think that having that consistent presence builds community," said Frank. "Of course, for anything serious we are trained to refer to the Wellness Center but for a lot of students, having a neutral person to listen and help with day-to-day problems is just what they need."

For those issues that do require professional intervention, the Wellness Center is an option that many students say doesn't carry the stigma that sometimes comes with traditional on-campus mental health clinics. "Visiting the Wellness Center is not something that people feel awkward about at Neumann," said Tiffany. "It is seen as a place for mentoring or advice, a place to be enlightened, to relax and seek whatever help you need."

That help can come in different forms, from more traditional counseling to yoga classes or simply quiet time in the meditation room. "People come to work on stress management, to deal with homesickness, to focus on exercise and nutrition," said Tiffany.

### Empowering the Students

For Sister Peggy, the goal is always to empower students to make the changes

they want to see in their own lives, in the campus community, and in the world at large. Student leadership is encouraged and fostered in many ways, one of which is through a chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), a national leadership honor society.

The Institute for Student Leadership Formation which houses the ODK Leadership Honor Society features two conferences each year dealing with topics such as servant leadership, emotional intelligence, teambuilding, and professionalism in the workplace. In the early years of the conferences, the task force that planned the sessions was led by faculty and staff with help from students. Today, the students plan and run the conferences on their own, putting into practice the very leadership skills they have learned. "Our student leaders are superb," said Sister Peggy. "They have assumed a great deal of responsibility



*Tiffany Connelly continues to grow from the leadership skills she has learned at Neumann. Not only is the Mock Trial Club that she began still thriving, but she also runs a review for her classmates before final exams. Tiffany is a shining example of the Cultivators of Care program.*



# HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Pray for young people who are navigating the challenges of their first experiences away from home.
- Volunteer with adolescents or young adults in your area. Having a network of support has been shown to help young people achieve success, build resilience, and overcome adversity.
- Facilitate a culture of caring in your own family, classroom, or office. Respecting others, tolerating differences, handling conflict in a positive manner, and being kind and generous to everyone with whom you interact can have a wonderful trickle-down effect.
- Adjust your leadership style to be more in line with the philosophy of servant leadership. A servant leader is a servant first—sharing power, putting the needs of others first, and helping the people around them to develop and perform as highly as possible.

and shown amazing initiative. They have taken something that was once a faculty and staff project and made it their own.”

That kind of personal ownership by students of their college experience is widespread at Neumann. It is not uncommon for a freshman to start a new club based on a personal interest or bring an idea for a new event to school administrators. “The first thing you hear at Neumann is ‘get involved,’” said Frank. “Students here have the opportunity to explore and experiment with whatever is of interest to them. We each have the ability to make our vision a reality.”

From his first year at Neumann, Frank did just that. In addition to starting



▲ A wall display by Alex Maurizzio, RA of a freshman dorm, encourages students on her freshman hall to be part of the culture of caring.

▶ Alex shows Sister Peggy a bulletin board she also created that informs students about unhealthy relationships. This topic is a major focus of discussion sessions on campus. “It is important to open up dialogue, to talk about how the hook-up culture hurts young people,” said Sister Peggy. “Nothing changes if we hide our faces from the situation.”



the Cultivators of Care program with Tiffany, he began a Mock Trial Club that is still thriving. As part of the Leadership Institute initiative, Frank and other leaders also organized a flash mob during orientation that was a huge success. Frank even serves on Neumann’s Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Committee, providing student input on matters of academics, mission and ministry, and student affairs. He sits alongside the board president, trustees, and local business people and says that he feels as much a part of the conversation as any other member of the committee. A recent proposal put together by students and submitted by Frank proposed a new student center on campus to create more space for Neumann’s 38 clubs to meet. The proposal was well received by the committee and evaluation is underway to determine a suitable site for the project. “Students can have that kind of effect at Neumann,” said Frank. “Neumann has taught us so much about servant leadership as well as how to get things accomplished.”

## Walking the Talk

“Neumann provides constant opportunity,” said Frank. “It is a place where you can see your aspirations for yourself and your community come to fruition, where care and compassion set the tone and opportunity is around every corner. You can see and feel that every day.”

That deeply held belief among students is a clear indication that Sister Peggy’s strategy is working. By being the kind of leader who leads—not by standing at the front of the line but by opening doors so that others can pass through—Sister Peggy is grooming the leaders of tomorrow. “I remind the students that they are in leadership to serve,” said Sister Peggy. “Neumann is the training ground. The real work begins when they graduate and begin to change the world.” ■

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

# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

*Everyone has within a piece of good news.*

— Anne Frank (adapted)

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



*Sister Matthew Cola with one of her beautiful paintings.*

## Leaving a Mark on Ringwood

Sister Matthew Cola has been popular in the media lately! An article in the *Wayne Patch*, “Wednesday in the Park with The Artist Nun” by Michael Malzone, tells the story of how the author first met Sister Matthew in the park in Ringwood, New Jersey. Sister Matthew admired his painting and introduced herself. “She told me about her career teaching, her passion for art and opera, her early life in Queens,” she said. Michael wrote of all that Sister Matthew has done for those she met over the years and told of how that first meeting developed into a 10-year friendship. *Suburban Trends* also carried an article on Sister Matthew—this one written by Holly Stewart and focused on a proclamation awarded Sister Matthew by the Ringwood Borough Council. The proclamation outlined Sister Matthew’s contribu-

tions to borough residents and cited her “great love for God, humanity, travel, and the arts.” The article recalled Sister Matthew’s earlier ongoing campaign to have a traffic light installed at Skyline Drive and Erskine Road. Borough manager Scott Heck indicated that Sister Matthew later contacted the council about two other problematic intersections. One has already been acted on and the other is under consideration. Both articles referred to Sister Matthew’s move to Pennsylvania. Michael Malzone spoke of how much she would be missed by everyone in the painting class. Mayor Linda Schaefer jokingly asked Sister Matthew how many traffic lights she would erect in Philadelphia. And Sister Matthew herself? She simply announced, “I’m going to paint—and then I’m going to paint some more!”



*People from surrounding villages wait their turn at the clinic in Ferrier. They frequently travel by donkey or on horseback.*

## Lending a Helping Hand in Haiti

Sister Vicky Della Valle continues her ministry in Pestel working with the Sylvania Franciscans who staff the mission. She spends her time teaching English classes and—at the same time—learning a bit of Kreyol. She was impressed with the new sewing school which was set up in a house rented from one of the local people. The project is very popular with residents—so much so that Sister Vicky feels they might soon outgrow the facility. The sisters were also on hand to join a group of parishioners at the home of Mr. St. John whose house was badly damaged in a storm. A local carpenter did repairs without charge and the neighbors gathered when the repaired home was blessed by Sister Fidelis. Sister Vicky hasn’t gone it alone, however. Sisters Nora McCarthy and Eleanor Joseph Peck also joined the team on a part-time basis.

## Continuing to Pay It Forward

In her later years, Sister Jean Ustasiewski’s mother lived at St. Ignatius Nursing Home in Philadelphia, a facility operated by the Felician Sisters and where Sister Jean’s two aunts (both Felicians) were missioned. Following Mrs. Ustasiewski’s death, Sister Jean decided that she wanted to do something in her mother’s memory. Since 2005, she and Sister Marie Therese Carr have held monthly prayer services at St. Ignatius for the residents. They also bring a gift for each resident—usually something connected with the prayer service or the time of year. And remembering how much her mother enjoyed playing bingo with the other residents,

Sisters Jean and Therese also bring along some money so the residents have a bit extra to start them out at their next bingo game. “In June we had a wonderful celebration,” Sister Jean recalled, “We served the residents a treat of fresh fruit prepared by our food service staff—just to show the people how special they are.” How do these two sisters fund their visits and gifts for the folks at St. Ignatius? Very definitely from their own funds. “This is one way for me to give direct service to those who are poor,” Sister Jean said. “We continue to do it because currently we have the resources—and Mom’s making sure we have what we need!”



*Sisters Marie Therese Carr and Jean Ustasiewski make a final check on prayer services and gifts for their December visit to St. Ignatius Nursing Home.*





## In Memoriam

Sister Gabriel Lee  
October 21, 2013

Sister Apollonia Morelli  
October 21, 2013

Sister Michael Catherine Lewis  
October 23, 2013

Sister Anne Amrhein  
October 24, 2013

Sister Agnes McLoughlin  
(formerly Sister Agnes Cornelia)  
November 9, 2013

Sister Eleanor Francis Filist  
November 25, 2013

Sister Mary Kenny  
(formerly Sister Anne Margaret)  
December 16, 2013

Sister Maria Vincenta Rodriquez  
December 23, 2013

Sister Anne Gallagher  
(formerly Sister Margaret Leo)  
January 12, 2014

Sister Marietta Wallaert  
(formerly Sister Agnes Madeline)  
January 21, 2014

Sister Irma Francis Godsil  
January 22, 2014

CELEBRATING

# Jubilee

AS SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

*Congratulations to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia celebrating milestones in their religious life! Join with us in congratulating them on many years of service to the people of God as Sisters of St. Francis.*

**80 years**  
Professed 1934  
**RUBY JUBILARIAN**

SISTER JOELLA MATT

**75 years**  
Professed 1939  
**DIAMOND JUBILARIANS**

SISTER INEZ CECILIA KOCKLER

SISTER ANNE MCMAHON

**70 years**  
Professed 1944  
**DIAMOND JUBILARIANS**

SISTER HELENA JOSEPH BALBACH

SISTER NADINE ROSE BENNETT

SISTER AGNES BONNER

SISTER MIRIAM GRACE DEVLIN

SISTER ANGELA ERHARD

SISTER HELEN ST PAUL HERBERICH

SISTER ROSA MYSTICA MCFADDEN

SISTER JAMES FRANCES MCGLASHEN

SISTER FRANCIS PAUL TORRE

**50 years**  
Professed 1964  
**GOLDEN JUBILARIANS**

SISTER NOREEN PATRICIA BUTTIMER

SISTER THERESA CURTIN

SISTER MARGARET MARY EGAN

SISTER CONSTANCE JEAN FURSETH

SISTER RUTH ELIZABETH GOODWIN

SISTER JOSEPHINE MARIE HARTY

SISTER GEORGINA MARMINO

SISTER PATRICIA MICHALEK

SISTER EDYTHE HESTER NORMAN

SISTER CATHARINE O'DONNELL

SISTER NATALIE PANAS

SISTER PAULA MARIE RANDOW

SISTER LORETTA SCHAFF

SISTER WANDA MARIE SCHLAGER

SISTER STEPHANIE MARIE UNGER

SISTER CAROL ANN WARNKE

**25 years**  
Professed 1989  
**GOLDEN JUBILARIANS**

SISTER BARBARA CARR

► **Recognize a name? Would you like to reconnect or send a congratulatory note? Send communications to Florence Smith, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014 [communications@osfphila.org](mailto:communications@osfphila.org)**



## Remembering the Troops in Prayer

In addition to her regular ministry of teaching at the Catholic High School of Baltimore, Sister Margaret Xavier Romans uses her skill with a needle to create prayer pillows for folks who are ill or who have experienced difficult situations of one sort or another. Each pillow cover is created in the recipient's favorite color and Sister Margaret cross-stitches the person's name and the meaning of that name on the cover. Recently one of the pillows was sent to an individual serving in the military. Instead of the usual 14-inch size, Sister Margaret made this one small enough to fit into the leg pocket of the person's uniform. She later received a thank-you. Instead of the usual card, however, this thank-you consisted of an American flag and a certificate—both encased in glass—thanking her for supporting “Enduring Freedom.” The certificate indicated that the flag had flown over the American base in Afghanistan in her honor.

◀ **Sister Margaret Xavier Romans shows TCHS junior Sara Nakasone the flag and thank-you she received from the prayer pillow she sent to Afghanistan.**

► *Philip Leach, foundation board chair, sees the current role of the board one of identifying people and opportunities to whom the foundation can make immediate appeal.*



# FoCUS

## PHILIP LEACH

“OUR FUTURE SUCCESSES  
WILL LIKELY COME FROM  
FRIENDS OF FRIENDS AND  
THOSE THAT KNOW US  
BY THE LEGACY OF WHO  
WE ARE.”

▼ *Phil, his wife Eileen, and their daughter Emily were all educated in Catholic schools and share the desire to be “part of the solution, giving back to those who gave so much to us.”*

When Philip Leach became part of the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation Board, he brought with him a history of connections with the congregation. His aunt, Sister Agnes Bonner, is a Franciscan and both Phil and his wife Eileen knew our sisters from elementary school. He also brought with him a history of service orientation, having served on boards and committees, for example, with Salesianum School, the Grand Opera House, and Habitat for Humanity. Now that Phil serves as chair of the foundation board, he envisions—in addition to the traditional support role—using an “extension model” to create new connections between the foundation and supporters. “The extension model promotes more frequent and smaller interactions rather than the older, bi-party (client-host) relationship,” he explained. “Our future successes will likely come from friends of friends and those that know us by the legacy of who we are.”

Phil has already begun to implement these “extensions.” For example, he foresees using social media to use current friends and supporters to reach others not normally identified to us. In fact, he has already made a step in this direction with “Franciscan Faces in Wilmington,” a Facebook page sharing photos and memories of our sisters’ history in Delaware schools. Another Wilmington effort involved establishing a group of alumni from Catholic schools—Catechism Kids—and arranging to have them participate in the annual St. Patrick’s Parade. A group of our sisters joined the marchers. And that’s just the beginning! “In Wilmington—and by extension, other cities where our sisters have ministered—we’ll host three events specific to locale and appeal,” Phil explained.

Sister Mary Vandergeest, foundation director, described Phil as a doer and a shaker. “He seeks out opportunities to put the sisters’ name out there,” she explained. “He’s filled with ideas, is creative and innovative, and has the energy needed to bring about positive results—and he understands our mission.” Referring to that mission, Phil says, “Francis of Assisi admitted his human failings but knew that God worked through him. That’s the same for all of us. If I live the way I was taught, the message delivers itself. I must reach out to meet and connect with many who are just like me. Our role as a board is to make that reconnection easy and joyful!”

◀ *Phil saw involvement in the St. Patrick’s Parade as a springboard for other “friending” events to complement other local efforts on behalf of the foundation.*





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## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

### Are you interested in helping a worthy cause but question how to get started?

**The Sisters of St. Francis Foundation is in need of volunteers to support our fundraising efforts.**

Tasks needing helping hands include but are not limited to computer work, filing, preparing mailings, general office work, and assisting with fundraising events.

If you have time to spare and welcome the opportunity to volunteer, complete the form below and return it in the enclosed envelope. You are also welcome to contact Sister Mary Vandergeest, OSF, by phone at (610) 558-7713 or by email at [mvdgeest@osfphila.org](mailto:mvdgeest@osfphila.org).

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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HAVE AN EXPERTISE OR SPECIAL TALENT THAT WOULD BE USEFUL? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Volunteers are  
unpaid, not  
because they are  
worthless but  
because they are  
priceless.*

— Anonymous

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## Sowing More Than Seeds

We frequently read media accounts about the “problems” of today’s youth but Anna’s Place in Chester frequently boasts of the gifts and generosity of young people. For example, last April the youth group at St. John Chrysostom Parish in Wallingford made a donation to Anna’s Place—money raised after undertaking a 24-hour fast. The letter accompanying the donation explained that they fasted to help feed the hungry. However, their fasting also allowed them to “enter into a deeper sense of prayer and reflection to experience a better understanding of the hunger and suffering present in our communities.” Two other groups of young people helped to create a community garden at Anna’s Place. Neumann

University students cleared debris and pulled weeds to prepare the designated area. Then, after other volunteers laid out the plant and vegetable beds, students from Bache-Martin Elementary School and their teacher, Jeff Rupertus, filled the beds with soil. With actual planting taking place this spring, the community garden will provide a “bit of country” in the middle of Chester!



*In May 1964, Reverend Mother Mary Agnes, superior general of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, is seen as she turned the first spade of earth at the groundbreaking of Our Lady of Angels College. The college on the grounds of the motherhouse was built to allow sisters and novices to attend college without undue hardship. Today Our Lady of Angels—now known as Neumann University—is a pillar in the community, offering a Catholic education rooted in Franciscan Values. Read how Sister Peggy Egan, dean of students at Neumann University cultivates a culture of caring in students on page 12.*

## Spring Brings Fruits of Change

Spring brings with it a real sense of newness at Assisi House in Aston! Since January the sisters have been enjoying the renovated social space with its enlarged visiting areas and the comfort of relaxing and chatting in front of the cheery hearth. In the living areas, the enlarged and restructured laundry areas have made it possible for those sisters who are able to take care of their own laundry—giving them a greater sense of independence. And before long, work on the country kitchens and the lounges will be completed—providing the sisters with additional areas for gathering and enjoying life together.