

Volume 27.1 Spring/Summer 2024

Good NEWS

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Also in this issue:

- Educating and Empowering Young Women for 85 Years
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

Seeking Peace *and an* End to Gun Violence

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

Blessed are the Peacemakers...

Matthew 5:9

The Catholic High School of Baltimore and the various individuals working to combat gun violence speak to the life and words of St. Francis of Assisi and his message of peace and the dignity of all creation.

Grounded in the Franciscan values of St. Francis of Assisi, The Catholic High School of Baltimore (TCHS) provides a holistic education aimed at empowering young women to live with purpose. Beyond academic studies, TCHS' curriculum prepares students to make meaningful contributions to society, not only through acquired knowledge but also through personal growth and character development. The school fosters an environment imbued with the Gospel virtues of dignity and respect, offering abundant opportunities for students to develop skills for various professions while interweaving academic learning with personal growth. The school's motto, “Let Your Light Shine,” inspires students, faculty, families, and the community to make choices that cultivate a peace that is desperately needed in today's world.

Blessed are those who—through the past 85 years—have made TCHS a beacon of hope while sowing seeds of peace!

We, as the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia strive to be faithful to our charism of peace by working for justice—especially in our fight to end gun violence. The education of ourselves and others, praying contemplatively, and acting in the pursuit of a healthier society are essential if a pathway to peace is to become a reality.

Our Corporate Stand Against Gun Violence testifies to the importance we place on being agents of peace. In listening to tragic stories of gun violence, like that of Nick Elizalde, and participating in groups like the Chester Community Coalition, we seek ways to eliminate gun-related violence. Additionally, we make deliberate investment choices to influence corporate practices and give voice to our commitment.

By dedicating our time, effort, and resources, each of us has the power to increase peace and reduce conflict in the world around us. How we interact with our families, neighbors, and coworkers profoundly shapes the peace we can achieve in our communities.

May God Bless You Always and in All Ways!

Theresa Firenze, OSF



Sister Theresa Firenze, OSF
Congregational Minister



VOLUME 27.1
SPRING/SUMMER 2024

INSIDE *Good* NEWS CONTENTS

Point of View2

**TCHS – Educating and Empowering
Young Women for 85 Years4**

*The Catholic High School of
Baltimore was opened by the Sisters
of St. Francis in 1939—85 years ago!
Today, the school continues to pro-
vide a Franciscan education focused
on empowering students spiritually,
intellectually, socially, and physically.*

Written by Sara McDermott
Photography by Andrea Cipraini-Mecchi

People & Places10

**Seeking Peace and an End to
Gun Violence.12**

*Every day in America, there is
gun violence—the statistics are
staggering! The Sisters of St. Francis
of Philadelphia and their compan-
ions do what they can to bring to
light the enormity and the cost of
human life and advocate for change.*

Written by Sara McDermott
Photography by Andrea Cipraini-Mecchi

Sharing the Good News18

Focus.....20

Donor Spotlight22

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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.

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

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waste reduced: 100
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PREPRESS:
**PLEASE CHECK
THIS DATA**

On the cover: Meredith Elizalde remembers her son, Nick. Nick's life was tragically cut short during a shooting at a high school football game. Meredith was able to hold him as he passed away.

Alumnae, benefactors, and members of the Board of Trustees joined students, faculty, and staff to share the great honor and joy of the school's being named the Best Private Girls' High School in Baltimore AGAIN!



Educating *and* Empowering Young Women *for 85 Years*

Sister Ann chats with Dr. Barbara Nazelrod in the gallery bearing Dr. Nazelrod's name, a tribute bestowed upon her in 2021 to honor her two decades of unwavering guidance and commitment as the president of her alma mater.



✠ THE SCHOOL MOTTO, LUX TUA LUCEAT:
"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE," CELEBRATES THE
UNIQUENESS OF EACH STUDENT.



As director of mission and a teacher of theology at the school, Sister Ann Dutrow has a good rapport with the students and a good pulse on all the happenings within the school. From service projects to student and staff retreats, assemblies, and more, Sister Ann's presence is valued at TCHS.

Confetti filled the auditorium as the final words of the school song rang out in celebration of the announcement that The Catholic High School of Baltimore (TCHS) was named Best Private High School for Girls by *Baltimore Style Magazine*—for the SECOND year in a row. All members of the school community played a part in earning this well-deserved recognition. "This award is welcome validation that Catholic High continues to deliver on its promise to provide outstanding education in the Franciscan tradition...it is affirmation of everyone in our school community—from students to faculty and staff to alumnae and all who support the school," said school president Dr. Barbara Nazelrod.

Currently another celebration is underway at Catholic High. Above the main entryway of



TCHS offers students a wide range of experiences for holistic growth and development. In keeping with their teddy bear mascot and Cub sports teams, a new activity calls for each of the four class years to sponsor a bear in the wild. Usually displayed in the second-floor corridor—dressed for the season or holiday—these bears have been known to appear in prominent places at special events throughout the year.

TCHS are huge, neon numbers and letters 15 feet tall that proclaim “85 YEARS,” celebrating the school’s eighty-fifth anniversary year which began in the fall of 2023. Located on the highest point in the region, this far-reaching beacon gives yet another meaning to the school motto *Lux Tua Luceat*: “Let Your Light Shine.”

“Now we light up the whole neighborhood!” joked Barbara, herself a TCHS graduate from the class of 1968. As a child, she could see the school from her home and dreamed of going there—a dream that came true. Barbara eventually joined the many generations of women whose lives have been impacted by Catholic High.

A Special Place

As soon as you enter Catholic High, you realize this is no ordinary high school.

Sister Ann Dutrow, OSF, Catholic High’s director of mission, recalls first coming to the all-girls school as a layperson for a job interview back in 1984. “The minute I walked through the door, I could feel the whole atmosphere was very different from anywhere I had been. Teenage girls in high school are not really about eye contact or conversation...but they were so welcoming and warm. They couldn’t wait to help me.”

This desire to be helpful can be traced back to the school’s Franciscan roots. Catholic High is the only high school sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, and their charism has helped to form the school’s identity. “We share their charism and values,” Barbara said. “Young women come in and buy into the Franciscan identity, in terms of how they treat others and relate to everyone in the community.”

TCHS students come from over 60 zip codes and eight counties in Maryland. Students’ socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds vary but none of these differences matter. “They believe in treating everyone with care, respect, and kindness,” said Barbara.

Embodying Values

Reflecting the way St. Francis of Assisi lived, the school subscribes to a set of RISES Franciscan values: Reverence, Integrity, Service, Excellence, and Stewardship. These values permeate all aspects of the school, from academics to athletics to how students respect and care for the building. “Taking care of the building and campus is part of good stewardship,” Barbara said. “Our floors shine like glass. There’s never graffiti, never trash anywhere.”

continued on page 6



(Top left) TCHS stands at the highest point in the region and can be seen far and wide. This “anchor” of the community has not only stood the test of time, but also serves its local neighborhoods. (Right) Sister Ann Dutrow teaches theology. Helping students to discover their own spirituality is key for her, even if they come from a different faith background. “We’re all on the same path, but just different trails,” Sister Ann said. (Bottom left) Students in one of the original forensic classes at TCHS gather to work together in the library with Sister Franciline. TCHS’s early classes are credited with having formed many of the school’s traditions.

continued from page 5

Students enter the school in ninth grade and instantly start to embody what it means to be a part of Catholic High. For example, students participate in day-long retreats that take place every year for each grade level. Each retreat has its own particular focus, depending on what is most important for the girls that year. Junior year, the focus is on recognizing one’s strengths and weaknesses. Students are empowered to figure out what it is that they have to offer the world. This again

ties into the motto “Let Your Light Shine,” words students truly take to heart.

This embodiment of school spirit has been present since the school’s inception, with the first class that entered in 1939. Through the efforts of Mother Mary Generosa McCafferty, OSF, with the permission of then-Archbishop Michael J. Curley, the Raming Estate, a 6-acre plot of undeveloped land, was transformed into Catholic High. The first class to enter didn’t even have uniforms but was fully invested in the school’s progress. They are

credited with having formed many of the school’s traditions. The fact that students are so earnestly involved in the growth and development is part of what makes the TCHS experience work so well.

Given their positive experiences, it’s not surprising that a great number of alums send their daughters to Catholic High. One such alum is Dr. Lisa Ruth, ’95, who credits Catholic High with preparing her for her career and strengthening her faith, in addition to introducing her to the women who remain her dearest friends.



▲ Robust extracurricular activities include multiple instrumental and choral groups in addition to an annual fall drama production and spring musical. The 2024 spring production of *Matilda*—the Musical was a big crowd-pleaser.

When the time came, she wanted the same experience for her child. “In May, my daughter, Magdalen, will join the thousands of women who have graduated from Catholic High,” she said. “I have no doubt she will continue to let her light shine in so many ways thanks to the strong academic and faith foundation she received and the community who has supported her.”

Catholic High has graduated over 13,000 students and counting, some of whom have let their light shine in ways that were unprecedented in history. Alison M. Healey, ’98, was elected just last year as the first female Maryland State’s Attorney in Harford County. Another example, Margaret Brewer, ’48, became the first-ever female Brigadier General in the United States Marine Corps. “At that time women rarely went into the military and were never officers, but she became one,” said Barbara.

▼ Choral students (l-r) Mackenzie Miller-Hubbart, Megan McCormick, Marissa Niattinger, and Peyton Nordeck, practice their barbershop quartet songs.



STUDENTS ARE EMPOWERED TO LIVE AND SHARE THE “RISES” FRANCISCAN VALUES OF REVERENCE, INTEGRITY, SERVICE, EXCELLENCE, AND STEWARDSHIP.

In addition to these noteworthy alums, Catholic High has graduated a high number of women who have become Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, oftentimes inspired by the sisters who educated them. These alums include sisters who went on to become hospital administrators, a pharmacist, a canon lawyer, and congregation leaders, etc. For example, Sister Lynn Lavin, OSF, ’67, is the only Catholic High graduate to be elected to the position of congregational minister. In addition, at least nine sisters who are former students returned to the school as teachers and administrators, such as Sister Mary Catherine Lewandowski, ’59, who returned to TCHS as principal in the 1980s.

A Standard Of Excellence

Beyond the values that form the school’s overall personality, Catholic High is forward-thinking in terms of what it can

offer academically. “All schools focus on academics, but we’re *known* for our academics,” said Barbara.

When Catholic High first opened its doors, the focus was on preparing young women for office jobs, teaching, nursing, or homemaking. While this model fulfilled the needs of the time, those days are long gone. For many decades now, the school’s focus has been to prepare young women for college. By continuing its work as an all-girls school, something increasingly rare in today’s world, Catholic High has empowered women to develop to their fullest potential.

TCHS offers many facilities and programs that set it apart. In addition to a well-rounded education, the school offers concentrations in visual and performing arts, law, engineering, biomedicine, and

continued on page 8

TCHS puts a huge emphasis on the deep blending of both science and art curriculums to help develop each young woman to her fullest. Among their arts programs, TCHS boasts the only all-girls marching band on the east coast.



continued from page 7

sports medicine. Catholic High was also the first Catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to offer STEM classes.

"The Law and Leadership Program makes me feel confident about going into law or politics in my future. It's truly unlike any other program around," said Sofia Schisler, '25. This unique program offers students the chance to improve their public speaking and communications skills while also gaining real-world experience in the field of law and garnering leadership opportunities.

"The Biomedical Program, headed by Dr. Celia Caballero, has prepared me so much for medical school and continues to teach me new skills," said Kaylee Castle, '25.

Given their resources, Catholic High grads have a definite advantage when it comes to pursuing a medical career. "We are the only high school with a hospital room," Barbara said. The hospital room is fully equipped with two beds and high-tech manikins that can have heart attacks, be checked for high blood pressure, and more. "Students get lots of hands-on experience." In this space, students are also undertaking achievements that most people could only dream of, such as the successful building of prosthetic limbs. "It's really amazing," said Barbara. "I walk around everyday thinking 'oh my gosh, look at this!'"

Through the science program, students have also taken trips to the Goddard Space Center, where employees like TCHS graduate Lisa Mazzuca, '87, are currently building the next satellite. Students

come away from the trips inspired, wanting to do that kind of work. They'd be following in the footsteps of another illustrious alum: Kathleen Anne Beres, '66. Kathleen was in the Orbital Science Corps, served as director of aerospace programs, and was a candidate in the Apollo Space Program in the 1980s.

The overall message is that the girls' opportunities are limitless, and that Catholic High will support them in whatever they wish to pursue.

Beyond The Classroom

Catholic High's work doesn't end with academics. The school also boasts outstanding extracurriculars, both in the performing arts and athletics. Just three years ago, students formed the Catholic High Marching Band, the only all-girls marching band on the east coast.

Additional opportunities for students include college co-op programs and internships at places such as LifeBridge Health ExpressCare Centers and the engineering firm Whiting-Turner. To encourage and support the students undertaking medical internships, the school gifts them with

TCHS's biomedical program is a step above. Students get hands-on experience with things they usually wouldn't encounter until college or medical school. This includes dissecting a sheep's heart and working with human-like High Fidelity manikins, which are designed to experience a variety of symptoms and be treated by aspiring medical workers.





Acts of service are very important at TCHS. Students are required to fulfill 30 hours of community service each year, but many engage in more. This requirement is not seen as a “have-to.” Students find service to be an incredibly illuminating and rewarding part of their experience. These canned and dry goods were packed up and shipped to South America.

green scrubs, in honor of the school colors: green and gold.

What’s more, each student engages in 30 hours of community service per year, a requirement in Maryland schools. When it comes to giving service, Barbara noted that it’s “not just ‘you have to do it.’ It should be a meaningful experience, where they can empathize with people they’re working with and the situations they’re involved in. It winds up being truly eye-opening for them.”

Students might volunteer at a pregnancy center, soup kitchen, shelter for victims of abuse, or a variety of other settings in the wider Belair-Edison community of which they’re a part. The school is also very involved with the Northeast Housing Initiative (NEHI), which comprises the sixteen square blocks behind the Catholic High campus. The surrounding neighborhood calls the school their “anchor,” not only because it’s been there so long, but because of the support it offers the whole region.

Second to None

Thinking about what exactly makes Catholic High so special, Sister Ann said, “It gets down to a sincere interest and care for each student here. The faculty and staff are dedicated to making them successful, and the girls know it.”

“Our students go out and do amazing things,” Sister Ann continued. Reflecting on the words of St. Francis, *I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach you yours*, she pointed out that, “As one person, you do what you can do ... And that’s happening with our young women ... It’s a crucial time, those high school years. They know they have something good to offer, and here they have a nurturing, safe, supportive environment to explore that. It’s second to none.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Consider making a financial gift to TCHS that will enable them to keep offering high quality education to young women of all financial backgrounds.
- Empower the young women in your life. Historically, more emphasis has been put on helping young men to achieve academic and professional success. As one of the increasingly rare all-girls schools in the country, TCHS puts a focus on making sure their young women know they can achieve anything.
- Help any young people you know to focus on uncovering their unique gifts. At TCHS, they know that each person has their own special “light” that they can shine. Impart this message to any young people you know who are trying to find their own path.
- Take a cue from the students of TCHS and engage in acts of service. Look at your local community to see where there might be a need and where your special talents could be used.
- Support your local schools in whatever way works best for you. Attend events, contribute to scholarship funds, and support student-led endeavors.

PEOPLE & PLACES

► A camper gifts Sister Kathy Dauses with a homemade card to show gratitude for her experience at Camp I-CAN.



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.

TEXAS

On May 24, 2022, 19 students and two teachers from Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, were gunned down by an intruder. One year later, in summer 2023, **Sister Kathy Dauses** traveled to Uvalde to volunteer with a week-long summer camp experience to assist survivors and other children from the community by offering hope, love, and support. The camp is run by the Teresian Sisters who live and work in Uvalde at Sacred Heart School and St. Henry de Osso Family Project Center, where Camp I-CAN was held. Volunteers led spiritual activities where the children could share their feelings and pray for their siblings and friends who are no longer a part of their lives. They also created games and other activities, such as arts and crafts, exercises, and sing-alongs. The goals of Camp I-CAN were to give the students a sense of normalcy, to help them heal and feel safe, and above all, to let them have fun.

► (Top photo) Sister Rose Dvorak spoke at the 150th celebration of St. Joseph Medical Center in Reading. (Bottom photo) Sister Beth Howe, a doctor in the emergency department, cuts the cake.



PENNSYLVANIA

In 2023, **St. Joseph Medical Center (now PennState Health)** celebrated their 150th anniversary with a Mass and a day of fun. Members of the congregational leadership team, Sisters Theresa Firenze, Celeste Crine, Florence Hee, and Karen Pourby—along with Sisters Beth Howe, Rose Dvorak, and Pat Hinton were present at the event. It was a wonderful day to recognize the accomplishments of our sisters on whose shoulders we stand as well as those who have worked and ministered at the hospital over the years. In 1872, Rev. Msgr. George Bornemann, eager to address the needs of those who were poor and suffering, purchased a 3½ acre piece of land at the corner of Birch and Walnut Streets. On August 22, 1873, under his watchful eye and compassionate heart, St. Joseph Hospital, the first institution of its kind in Reading, was founded. In 1873, the Sisters of St. Francis began caring for the patients and assuming the responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the hospital and have been a faithful and vital presence ever since.





Sisters Theresa Firenze, Marie Cimino, and Mary Rita Paratore pose for a photo during the celebratory Mass at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church.



NEW JERSEY

On November 28, 2023, a Gratitude and Farewell Mass was celebrated by Bishop Sweeney at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Hewitt, New Jersey, in honor of **Sisters Mary Rita Paratore** and **Marie Cimino**. Sisters Mary Rita and Marie transitioned to live in Aston in early December and their departure brought to closure a near 40-year service at the parish and school (now closed) and 70 years as a religious community in the Diocese of Paterson. Prior to serving as a volunteer from 2011-2023 for Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Sister Mary Rita served as teacher, principal, administration, and DRE. Sister Marie served as a teacher aide for kindergarten at the school from 2003-2010 and returned to the parish to volunteer in 2012. Both sisters were presented with a Papal Blessing at the Mass.



WASHINGTON

Sister Patty Novak recently completed her training and became a Veriditas Trained Labyrinth Facilitator. Founder of Veriditas, Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress defines the importance, “The Labyrinth is a spiritual tool that has many applications in various settings. It reduces stress, quiets the mind, and opens the heart. It is a walking meditation, a path of prayer, and a blue print where psyche meets Spirit.”

(<https://www.veriditas.org/>). Already serving as a spiritual director, with this certification, Sister Patty will be able to lead workshops and retreat programs using this special technique to help people and enrich their lives.



DELAWARE

Sister Vicky Della Valle brings decades of teaching experience to her new position with St. Anthony of Padua School in Wilmington, Delaware. She began her ministry at the school as a volunteer but after speaking with Principal Judy White about the possibility of a teaching position, she is now ministering full-time. Education has been Sister Vicky’s primary ministry in her more than 40 years as a Franciscan. In an article published by *The Dialog*, Judy White notes, “It has been several years since we have had one of our beloved Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia on staff, and we feel incredibly blessed to welcome Sister Vicky into our school community.”



PENNSYLVANIA

A 2023 article in *Global Sisters Report* shared information regarding networks of researchers who are promoting inquiry into the history of women religious. One of these is the International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association, or ISHWRA, which was established in 2021 by Cormac Begadon, Sarah Barthélemy,

and Gemma Betros. **Sister Helen Jacobson** has been the archivist for the Sisters of St. Francis for 20 years and is helping to share our history with ISHWRA. She is quoted in the article stating, “Women in general—and sisters in particular—are unsung heroes whose stories have been hidden and disregarded for far too long.” The article continues, “Through the International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association, Sister Helen has learned about several topics from different perspectives on matters of interest to women religious, especially in the United States. ‘It is interesting to learn about other religious congregations; to compare and contrast similar or unique circumstances regarding how decisions were made regarding a wide range of topics in the past as well as those being made today,’ she said.” Learn more here: <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/association-international-scholars-turns-focus-history-women-religious>.



Sister Helen Jacobson gives a peek into the archives room at Our Lady of Angels Convent, where so many invaluable records and items are kept.

► Memorial where Nick Elizalde died in a mass shooting outside of Roxborough High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



► Meredith Elizalde holds a portrait of her son Nick in front of the mural dedicated to him. Meredith helped paint the white helmet in his honor.



“WE ARE TAKING NEW STEPS TO BE A HEALING AND COMPASSIONATE PRESENCE IN A VIOLENT WORLD.”

Seeking Peace

▼ Sister Jean Rupertus (left) marches for peace with Chester residents. She helped form the Chester Community Coalition to combat gun violence in the streets of Chester, Pennsylvania—a city with one of the worst crime rates in the U.S. where many have lost loved ones to shootings.



Not many teens jump out of bed at 6 A.M., without an alarm clock, ready for their day—except for Nick Elizalde, an active 14-year-old who never went anywhere without a basketball in his hands. Like all children at age 14, Nick was excited to begin high school. He was excited to be on the football team, make new friends, and play games on his PlayStation.

But in September of 2022, five active shooters crashed a football game at Roxborough High School in Philadelphia, injuring five kids and killing one: Nick.

If Nick had lived, “He would be driving, playing basketball, and drinking a case of Sprite a day if I allowed him,” said his mother, Meredith, an academic coach at Neumann University. “Is he technically a statistic, number 23 of dead juveniles in 2022 in Philadelphia? Yes, but he’s a person. Every single victim is a person, and the ripple effect is enormous.”

“This is my child,” Meredith said. “I gave birth to this human being, they lifted him onto my chest when he was delivered. And he died on my chest, because of what we have allowed in this country.”

Meredith has traveled to Harrisburg to try and influence gun legislation but has often been met with cold treatment and even taunts by the opposition. When she heard about the work the Sisters of St. Francis were doing regarding the issue of gun violence, Meredith called it “uplifting.”

“As someone who is trying to navigate this life that’s been thrust on me ... I need people like the sisters to lead the charge,” said Meredith. The duty seemingly to take on the entire United States and speak out against gun violence often falls on the shoulders of victims’ loved ones, even as they try to manage intense grief. Advocates like the sisters help people like Meredith to simply “get out of bed in the morning.”



The sisters' commitment to gun activism takes many forms. They use traditional methods, such as participating in marches and rallies to raise awareness, but have also broken with tradition to try new tactics. This included buying stock in gun manufacturers like Smith and Wesson in order to have a voice at the table.



and an End to Gun Violence

Gaining A Voice

While the sisters' efforts to halt gun violence have been numerous, it's hard to effect real change without having the ear of the people supplying the actual guns. To achieve that, the sisters had to do something that would have been unimaginable half a century ago: become active shareholders in major gun corporations. Some recent national headlines have read: "Catholic Nuns Sue Smith & Wesson."

"No major company will listen to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia alone," said Tom McCaney, director of the sisters' Office of Corporate Social Responsibility, "but companies do have a responsibility to engage with their

shareholders." This is why the concept of becoming active shareholders was introduced. "Like most people, the sisters have a portfolio of investments for retirement," said Tom, noting that, most socially conscious investors screen out companies dealing with guns, but the sisters do the opposite. This new approach offered the sisters a chance to engage with such companies in the hopes of effecting change. With Smith & Wesson, one of the oldest and most prominent manufacturers of firearms in the United States, an investment wasn't made in support of the company's work. It was made to give sisters the opportunity to be stewards of their investment, ensuring that the company does right by the public.

The sisters have merged their voices with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of about 300 faith- and values-based investors. Most recently, the coalition filed a shareholder derivative action, which is technically a lawsuit. They are not suing Smith & Wesson for money, but rather its board members and executive management for "wantonly marketing" their weapons, particularly AR-15-style rifles, which can fire off 30 rounds in just 15 seconds. "With this particular action, the goal was to raise awareness and challenge management," said Tom. "We're not trying to take people's guns away. We're asking gun manufacturers like

continued on page 14



During his presentation, gun activist Shane Claiborne explained how guns are taken apart, melted down, and turned into gardening tools. With the first AK47 that was done, he explained how people in the neighborhood were invited to take turns pounding on the steel in honor of loved ones lost to gun violence.

continued from page 13

Smith & Wesson to be more responsible in how they market their products.”

Taking A Stand

Beyond this legal action, the sisters have advocated against gun violence by becoming active participants in rallies, marches, and protests. Through combined efforts of their Justice and Peace Committee (JPIC), Corporate Social Responsibility Office, sisters’ ministries, and affiliations with like-minded organizations, the sisters have focused on the issue of gun violence and the call to live the Gospel message of nonviolence.

These efforts have led the sisters to take a corporate stand against gun violence. Established in 2019, the corporate stand against gun violence states that “conscious of the growing use of assault and other weapons in our society, we commit to educate ourselves and others toward a culture of life—using our personal and corporate resources for the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.” This stand represents many voices joining together. “It’s over 300 people saying, ‘this is unacceptable,’” said Sister Pat Millen, JPIC Committee member and program



(Left) Shane Claiborne holds a brass heart made from melted down gun casings. Approximately 15 shell casings are used to make one heart. Among other items, gun parts are also used to make gardening tools and necklaces. (Right) Present at the event and speaking on behalf of her murdered grandson Nick Elizalde, Marge LaRue continues to fight for an end to gun violence. Victims’ loved ones often contribute their voices in trying to effect change, and the sisters want to help them be heard.



manager of the Chester Community Coalition (CCC), “It’s about affirming our belief in nonviolence.” This desire for peace stems directly from the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the world’s greatest peacemakers. As described by Pope Francis, “Wherever he [St. Francis] went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm, and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters.”

A corporate stand is not something that is reached lightly. “We don’t just say we’re going to do it; there’s an education that takes place first,” said Sister Marijane Hresko, OSF, former program manager at the CCC. Sisters attend seminars, engage in

discussions, and reflect on the issue through personal contemplation and prayer. When the time comes, each sister makes the choice either to support or oppose the corporate stand, giving her reasons why—80% of the sisters must be in favor of a corporate stand for it to become official.

Being Active

For Catholic Sisters Week in March 2024, the congregation cosponsored an event with Nuns Against Gun Violence, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and Neumann University entitled, “Beating Guns: Hope for People Who Are Weary of Violence.” Guest speaker, activist, and author Shane Claiborne explained how

people can take a creative approach to anti-violence and turn instruments of death into garden tools and other life-affirming items. The event brought together approximately 150 sisters, companions, students and faculty from Neumann University, as well as members of the community.

Additionally, the sisters' involvement in organizations such as the CCC sheds more light on the issue. The CCC initially came into existence when Sister Jean Rupertus, OSF, ministering in Chester, Pennsylvania, realized those she served were often victims of or witnesses to gun violence. Chester, a small city outside Philadelphia, has one of the highest crime rates in the entire country. She felt called to do more and learned of an opportunity to apply for an anti-violence grant from Catholic Health Initiatives. In 2018, after she partnered with Fran Stier, another anti-violence advocate, the CCC was born. While any victim of gun violence faces trauma, Sister Marijane pointed out, "At the CCC, we're not only offering services to the person who was shot; it goes way beyond that."

"A lot of times you look at a school shooting, and a child who was killed, and it makes headlines for a few days," said Sister Pat. "But you also need to look at the long-term effects on the family, the community, and the school. It's not only that child who was affected. It's also their best friend. It's their next-door neighbor. It's the family of

the person who did it. The impact is on the entire neighborhood."

As a result, Sister Marijane explained, "We utilize the Spectrum of Prevention," a tool developed by former director of the Contra Costa Health Services Prevention Program, Larry Cohen. It emphasizes six key areas: individual knowledge, community education, educating providers, fostering networks, changing organizational practices, and influencing policy and legislation. All these things must be in place if there's to be real progress.

Time Will Tell

Time will tell whether the sisters' stance on gun violence will bring about real change. Chief among the changes they hope to see, in addition to more responsible marketing of guns, are nationwide background checks for anyone purchasing a firearm and universal laws across all states for obtaining a gun. "Otherwise, a person who is unable to buy a gun in one state can simply cross state lines and buy one elsewhere," said Sister Pat. Rules could be developed like those needed to obtain a driver's license, drink alcohol, or vote. Some sound and simple changes could really make a significant difference.

There is reason to be hopeful. The same strategies the sisters are employing to address gun violence have yielded results in other areas before. Change can happen when enough people believe and act

together. "We are taking new steps to be a healing and compassionate presence in a violent world," said Sister Pat.

In reflecting on what she most wants to share, Meredith simply states, "I don't want Nick's death to be in vain." The sisters have heard this plea and pray others will as well. ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Take a stand against gun violence, deciding for yourself that the current rate of violence is no longer acceptable. Familiarize yourself with the facts around gun violence and act to prioritize the protection of human life.
- People often ignore the gun violence issue until it hits close to home. Instead, educate yourself on the facts around gun violence and what you can do to help prevent it before there's an incident. Be a source of information for others, as well, on warning signs when it comes to potential shootings, the truth surrounding gun reform, and putting the focus on rational, safe gun laws.
- Help support organizations that seek to prevent gun violence. Donate to the Sisters of St. Francis and to organizations like the CCC to help them continue their good work.
- Consider volunteering to assist those who have been victims of gun violence or who have lost loved ones to gun violence. Participate in rallies, marches, and other events to add your voice to the demand for gun reform.
- Write to your representatives to voice your concerns and the change you'd like to see when it comes to gun legislation.



Many Sisters of St. Francis wore orange and joined Ceasefire PA for their annual peace walk held in June to coincide with National Gun Violence Awareness day.

“OUR CHILDREN HAVE SUFFERED
SO MUCH YET THEY ARE STILL JUST
KIDS FULL OF LOVE AND JOY.”

Beating *the Odds with* Hope



◀ Sister Mary Owens, IVBM, former executive director of Nyumbani Children's Home, gathers the children from Nyumbani Children's Home to congratulate and celebrate with those who are newly confirmed.



▲ The children who live at Nyumbani Children's Home are warm and beautiful youngsters who have had a difficult start in life and must overcome many hardships, but they are full of hope for their future. Sister Julie said, “The faith and spirit of the children here is amazing.”

The ministry of Sister Julia Mulvihill in Africa was first featured in the Summer 2006 issue of *Good News*. Nyumbani Children's Home in Nairobi, Kenya, is an orphanage that was established in 1992 in response to the growing number of HIV+ children in Africa. In 2004 God called Sister Julia to go as a missionary to Kenya. She thought, “I am 60 years old, and this is really foolish to be thinking about going to Africa to work with AIDS orphans”; however, three months later, she arrived and that was 20 years ago.

Sister Julia notes that not much has changed for her since she arrived in 2004, “I am still ministering to HIV+ orphans and loving all of them.” However, much *has* changed over the years at the home. Sister Julia has seen over 100 orphaned children reintegrated into Kenyan society after completing high school and starting their college courses. Because of the care Nyumbani provides, these children are given a new lease on life. Over the years Nyumbani has undergone many renovations and expansions—four new hostels for older children were built, a garage was converted into a computer center, a library was added, and Sister Julia herself paid to convert another garage into an art center. In addition, an ISO Certified Diagnostic Laboratory was built to help facilitate care. All this, with the help of generous donors,

► Sister Mary Owens had been very hands on and worked closely with Sister Julie in planning programs and activities for the children. Every effort is made to encourage the children to enjoy life and sustain their hopes for the future.



and Courage

makes it possible for Nyumbani to offer life-changing comprehensive medical, nutritional, life-skills, psychological, educational, and spiritual care.

Sister Julia's actual title at Nyumbani Children's Home is children's activities coordinator, but she does so much more. She is a loving and healing presence; an encouraging guiding light to the children, all while helping to provide a fun, playful atmosphere that children deserve. "God's love shines through me to them and vice versa," she said. On weekends and holidays, the children love to play. Many items have been donated including balls, jump ropes, trampolines, bikes, etc., that enhance the joy of the children.

For all the success of raising healthy, happy children, there have been heartaches as well. Timmy was born HIV+ and ended up in the sick room for care. Cytomegalovirus had attacked his immune system and because he was drug resistant, he was unable to fight it. He first went blind and then had multiple strokes. Sister Julia cared for him as his condition continued to worsen. "I spent my days comforting Timmy and praying with him as our medical team worked hard to save him. We prayed that God would free him from the pain and asked God to either give us a miracle of physical healing or welcome Timmy into his loving embrace," Sister



▲ Since she arrived in 2004, Sister Julia has enjoyed celebrating the holidays with the children at Nyumbani, stating it "always makes the Spirit of God come alive."

Julia said. After spending months at Timmy's bedside, he eventually succumbed to his illness. Now, Sister Julia prays that he inspires the other children to keep fighting HIV, to keep taking their meds, and do whatever it is they need to do to stay healthy. Though death still threatens, today most Nyumbani children are living to adulthood with the promise of many productive years ahead. The availability of better antiretroviral medicine and innovative treatment means the children born with HIV can have a normal life expectancy if they continue to take their ARV's.

"Our children have suffered so much yet they are still just kids full of love and

joy. They grabbed my heart 20 years ago and they will not let it go," Sister Julia remarked. As she looks to the future, her greatest concern is that they will not be able to maintain the program due to a lack of funding. "The poverty here is appalling but Faith in God is alive and well and God's love is truly present in the people with whom and to whom I minister," Sister Julia continued. Nyumbani currently provides a loving home to 93 HIV+ children in Kenya. ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Visit www.nyumbani.org to learn more about Nyumbani Children's Home.
- Make a donation to the **Sisters of St. Francis** and let us know that you'd like it to be used to benefit the children at Nyumbani.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.

See more good news at www.osfphila.org

Sisters Support Neumann's Student Center



The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia founded Neumann University in 1965 and their commitment to education, social justice, and service to others continues to animate the campus today. For 59 years, the sisters have supported the university with financial investments, academic expertise, and administrative leadership. As Neumann looks ahead to 2035 with an ambitious campus master plan, the sisters' commitment remains strong with a pledge of \$600,000 to support the construction of a new student center.

Neumann University Accent magazine featuring an article about the sister's support shows a drawing of the new building.

The center, which will be built on the site of the parking lot adjacent to Flynn Hall, will provide open spaces, tables, chairs, and lounges where students can relax or discuss class assignments. It also will include areas for clubs, activities, offices, game rooms,

a bookstore, café, a black box theatre, dining services, and mission and ministry. Sister Theresa Firenze, the congregational minister, put it succinctly, "Central to our charism is the building of relationships, so what better place to nurture those relationships than in a space where people can gather and get to know one another?"

Gathering Day and Vow Renewal

In August 2023, approximately 150 sisters, companions, and guests gathered in the Mirenda Center at Neumann University to spend the day learning about racism in our Church and world. In addition to the in-person participants, sisters and companions across the country participated virtually. The morning began with the renewal of vows of Sister Maria Anna Dela Paz. Then, Sister Anita Baird, DHM, gave a presentation entitled "Eucharist at the Heart of Racial Justice: Transforming Our Religious Institutions into Anti-racist, Multi-cultural Communities." Sister Anita spoke about the history of racism in our country, particularly emphasizing the Church's role in creating and perpetuating racism with the Doctrine of Discovery and participation in the slave trade. She asked those gathered to consider the following questions: Are we willing to share power equally? Can we commit to dismantling racism? Can we dwell together

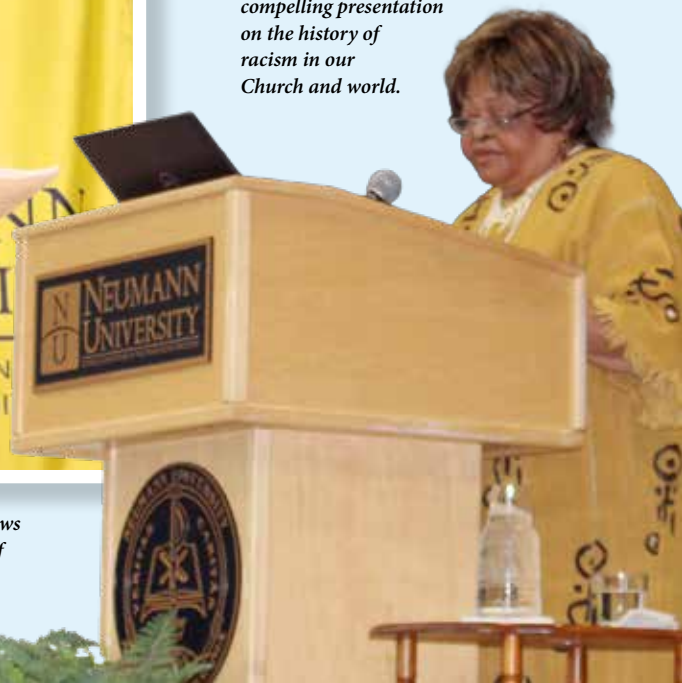
in God's Trinitarian love? Dismantling racism is a goal and objective of the Sisters of St. Francis and our companions and

we will continue to educate ourselves and others and take action to combat racism in our world.



Sister Maria Anna Dela Paz renews her vows for another year as a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

Sister Anita Baird gave a compelling presentation on the history of racism in our Church and world.





The Sisters of St. Francis took a Corporate Stand against Human Trafficking in 2008, stating, "We have a responsibility to speak out to do what we can to eradicate this blatant abuse of human dignity."

Boston Area Sisters Collaborate Against Human Trafficking

An inter-congregational group represented by the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, the Medical Missionary Sisters of Mary, the Holy Union Sisters, the Marist Missionary Sisters, and the Sisters of St. Joseph has formed the Boston Unit of LCWR anti-human trafficking coalition. Impelled by the call to live the Gospel, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Boston Unit Anti-Trafficking Coalition promotes the dignity of persons who were trafficked. The coalition is committed to raising awareness through education; collaborating with others to ensure necessary services with compassion; advocating for justice; and praying for victims and for oppressors (all affected). In this way, the group seeks to abolish modern-day slavery in all its forms—something that each congregation has worked on independently in their respective congregations for some time. The Sisters of St. Francis took a corporate stand against human trafficking in 2003 where they expressed their conviction that, "Fear limits possibilities. Those who

are victims of trafficking live in fear and sometimes loss of hope. We cannot be fearful to step out and take a stand for those who look to us."



In Memoriam

Sister Joan Bunty
(formerly Sister Josephine Mary)
March 31, 2024

Sister Jude Connelly
March 28, 2024

Sister Eleanor Horneman
(formerly Sister John Magdalen)
March 14, 2024

Sister Veronica Marie Tevis
March 5, 2024

Sister Anna Maria Keenaghan
(formerly Sister Mary Lydia)
February 19, 2024

Sister Marie Juliana Damhosi
January 21, 2024

Sister Anna Mae Coll
(formerly Sister James Bernard)
January 20, 2024

Sister Florence Leone Poch
January 7, 2024

Sister Mary O'Mahony
(formerly Sister Mary Cornelia)
December 10, 2023

Sister Imelda Dooley
(formerly Sister Imelda Catherine)
November 20, 2023

Sister Mary Elizabeth Coleman
(formerly Sister Daniel Patrice)
November 14, 2023

Sister Bernadette [de Lourdes] Gardiner
November 12, 2023

Sister Theresa Regina Stalnaker
October 25, 2023

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.

70 years
Professed 1954

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS

SISTER MARGARET CUNIFFE

SISTER DOLORES DUFFY

SISTER MARY FRANCES FLOOD

SISTER CARMEL GREGG

SISTER ISABEL MARIE HAUGHEY

SISTER DAMIAN MARIE JACKSON

SISTER REGINA MCCLOSKEY

SISTER BERNADETTE MCGOLDRICK

SISTER NOELITA MARIE RODRIGUEZ

SISTER VIRGINIA SPIEGEL

SISTER DOLORA TAYLOR

SISTER JEAN USTASIEWSKI

50 years
Professed 1974

GOLDEN JUBILARIAN

SISTER RONNIE GRIER

25 years
Professed 1999

SILVER JUBILARIAN

SISTER MARY BETH ANTONELLI

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

FoCUS

“CHARMAINE IS A SPECIAL PERSON WHO IS GENEROUS WITH HER TIME AND TALENT, SHARING STORIES AND HER SENSE OF HUMOR. SISTERS LEAVE LADY CLARE SALON WITH A LOVELY HAIRDO AND A SMILE ON THEIR FACE.”

— SISTER KATHY DONOVAN, OSF

► Charmaine, a single woman, enjoys spending her free time with friends and playing Bingo at the local Lions Club.



CHARMAINE RIDDLE

For many Catholic sisters, having a simple, modest hairstyle is an important part of their religious vow of poverty. Since 2000, Charmaine Riddle has been the lead hairdresser at Assisi House, the congregation's retirement residence in Aston, Pennsylvania. She knows styles need to be simple, avoiding elaborate cutting or coloring. Her goal is to give each sister a look that makes her feel good while still fitting within the norms of the convent.

Charmaine came to know the Sisters of St. Francis while she had her own shop in Parkside, Delaware County—a shop she had for 39 years. A customer recommended Charmaine apply to be the sisters' occasional hairdresser. Born in Chester, Charmaine had attended St. Rose of Lima School and was taught by Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters. She recalls the first time a sister came into her shop to get her hair cut. “It was the first time I had ever seen a sister remove her veil. It moved me to tears. I had to step away for a moment,” Charmaine said.

After so many years of service the sisters who come into Lady Clare Salon are like family to Charmaine. “I enjoy the sisters and their stories,” she said. Charmaine, along with two other occasional stylists, Tracy Walsh and Sherry O'Flynn, offer services from cuts and styles to perms and manicures for the sisters. Styling the sisters' hair for special occasions like Jubilee makes Charmaine feel good, “I never imagined myself in a place like this, but when I first walked in here, I felt like I belonged.” Sister Kathy Donovan shared, “Charmaine is a woman of faith who truly exhibits our Franciscan mission and charism by her warmth and ability to make each sister feel better about herself.”

Charmaine finds her work deeply rewarding, providing a service that helps these women feel a sense of renewal and self-care while still upholding their faith. For the sisters, a trip to Lady Clare Salon is a treat and a chance to bond with someone who understands their needs. Charmaine considers herself blessed to be able to use her skills to bring out the inner and outer beauty of these exceptional women.

► As a part-time employee, Charmaine does about eight haircuts a day by appointment, but welcomes a walk-in or visit from a sister just to chat as well.



▲ Sister Mary Theresa Coll gets a haircut from Charmaine at Lady Clare Salon.



Ritual Blessing and Closure at Anna's Place

On Wednesday, September 6, approximately 100 sisters, volunteers, donors, and guests gathered at Anna's Place in Chester, Pennsylvania, to honor the 14 years of hospitality ministry that occurred within its walls, since it first opened in 2009. Anna's Place, named after the congregation's foundress, Maria Anna Bachmann, closed at the end of September 2023. In honor of the closing, it was important to have time to ritualize and to celebrate the relationships that have blossomed over the years. Along one side of the room were tables with pictures of staff, guests, and volunteers engaged in the many activities offered by Anna's Place through the years—computer classes, flower arrangement, art, and Bingo.



A group of current and former staff and volunteers for Anna's Place posed for a photo at the closing ritual and blessing.

Sister Theresa Firenze, congregational minister, spoke, "Today is a day to pay tribute to and give thanks to all who are the beneficiaries of the relationships nurtured at Anna's Place." She then went on to list those who played a role in bringing Anna's Place to birth, from those who were part of the Bachmann Project, to those who were part of the needs assessment spearheaded by Sister Mary Peter Kerner (deceased), to those who served in ministry at Anna's Place

through the years including Sisters Julie McCole, Jean Rupertus, Maggie Gannon, Cathy McGowen, Libby Pepe, and Virginia Spiegel. She also thanked all the volunteers who contributed their time and talents to Anna's Place. Sister Theresa concluded her comments saying, "We ask for God's inspiration for what is next for us to do, and to take to heart Anna's challenge: 'As long as God does not stop giving to us, we shall not stop giving to (others).'"

Exploring Franciscan Justice

The networking among Franciscan organizations engaging with young adults came alive in the first Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference, a collaborative venture organized by the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) around the theme "Preserving God's Planet Together." From Friday, October 13 through Monday, October 16, 2023, almost 100 participants from Franciscan colleges, Franciscan Service Network volunteer programs, and FAN Franciscan Justice Circles gathered at the Washington Retreat House of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement in Washington, D.C., for four days of building relationships while learning about the connections between Franciscan spirituality, Catholic Social Teaching, and advocacy for ecological justice.



Participants from the Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference gather on the steps of Capitol Building before their visits to individual congressional offices.



Krista Clements (consultant for the Franciscan Federation), Sister Diane Tomkinson, and the students that traveled from Neumann University ready to meet with Sen. Fetterman's staff.

Sister Diane Tomkinson attended this initial Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference with eight undergrad students from Neumann University, graduate student Dariana Troilo, and Guilherme Lopez—Neumann's Director of Campus Ministry. Neumann students enjoyed interacting with students from other Franciscan colleges, as well as with young adults participating in various volunteer programs sponsored by members of the Franciscan Service Network. Members of the FAN staff, including Sisters Marie Lucey and Maria Orlandini, were hospitable hosts and gracious guides throughout the weekend.

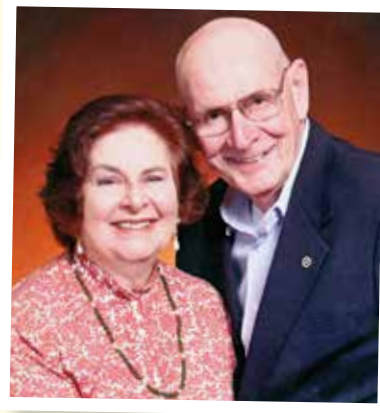
The young adults who attended this first FAN Franciscan Justice Leadership training returned to their universities with new relationships, knowledge, and skills to become advocates for justice in their local communities and beyond. Neumann students and staff used their new skills to enrich their local FAN Franciscan Justice Circle on campus. The group includes 15 students who come together twice a month to learn about justice initiatives happening at the local, state, and national level.

Donor Spotlight

“VIANN’S FAITHFUL GOODNESS IS NOT ONLY A BEAUTIFUL REFLECTION OF THE IMPACT SR. FRANCIS ANNE HARPER MADE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, BUT HER FAITHFUL GENEROSITY ALSO WITNESSES HER COMMITMENT TO CARE FOR OTHERS AS TAUGHT BY HER MOTHER.”

— SISTER DEBORAH KRIST, OSF

► Viann and Anthony Powers currently live in Colorado. Over the years, Viann has worked as an aid to young, abused women and as a mental health therapist.



VIANN POWERS

Viann (McCullion) Powers grew up in a devout Catholic family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and has fond memories of attending St. Ludwig’s Elementary School and Hallahan High School. The sisters who taught her, including the Sisters of St. Francis, Sisters of St. Joseph, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, had a profound impact on her life.

One sister in particular, Sister Francis Anne Harper, OSF (deceased), held a special place in Viann’s heart. As her second and third grade religion teacher, Sister Francis Anne made a deep impression on Viann. “My heart was touched as a young child preparing for first communion and confirmation, in which I embraced the middle name Cecilia in honor of my mother. Sister Francis Anne was wonderful and prepared me as an enthusiastic child.”

Years later, after seeing a photo of Sister Francis Anne in a publication, Viann called and confirmed that this was indeed the same sister that she had “so many sweet memories of.” Viann was able to reconnect with Sister Francis Anne and they became dear friends. She has a great appreciation for the Sisters of St. Francis and has visited the motherhouse in Aston many times over the years, attending Mass and having lunch. Her giving spirit towards the sisters stems from her mother’s example of welcoming and donating to sisters in need despite limited means.

Now married for 53 years with two grown daughters, Viann and her husband Anthony enjoy contributing to the Sisters of St. Francis and other religious orders in gratitude for the positive impact they have had. Even though Tony, a retired Marine, is not actively religious himself, he fully supports, is loving, and respectful of Viann’s faith and charitable giving. “The Good Lord has always been very active in my life,” shared Viann.

Viann’s charitable spirit and gratitude toward the sisters for shaping her spiritual life is inspiring. The Sisters of St. Francis are blessed to have donors like her who provide not just financial gifts, but heartfelt support. Her story is a testament to the immeasurable positive impact the sisters have had on so many lives over the years.

► Viann—posing for a photo during her first communion at St. Ludwig’s in Philadelphia—was raised Catholic, and she and her husband Anthony raised their two daughters the same way — both attended Catholic schools and are strong in their faith.



▲ At age 17, Viann was in a full body cast after being hit by a car. Unable to participate in a concert, Bishop Sheen noticed her and went to her. From that day forward they were close friends.



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SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION



Our Sisters in Assisi House are Grateful!

We are so very grateful for your continued support through donations to help with our Assisi House renovation project for our

sisters with memory challenges and those in need of assisted living. The first phase, creating the new memory care unit, is finishing up. The sisters are transitioning and acclimating to this new space. The second phase will turn their previous living area into assisted care living units for sisters not requiring full nursing support yet. Your generosity has made this project achievable. Your thoughtfulness allows the sisters at Assisi House to keep their ministry of prayer and hospitality thriving! Our heartfelt blessings for your ongoing kindness. Thank you!

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| ☐ The sisters' elder care | ☐ Assisi House capital needs |
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For more information contact: Sister Deborah Krist, (610) 558-7713, OSFF@osfphila.org.

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Photo Credit: Robyn Jeney/Natural Lands



A 46-acre park planned in Aston Township includes woodlands and an open meadow and will have hiking trails added.

New Park Opening in Aston

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia recently sold a 46-acre parcel of land to Natural Lands in Aston Township, who announced that the open space in Aston Township will be used for a new park. The purchase began two years ago when Natural Lands reached out to the sisters as one of several proactive efforts to preserve the largest unprotected properties in southeastern Pennsylvania. The land consists of woodlands and an open meadow and hiking trails will be added. In an article in *Philly Voice*, Robyn Jeney, land protection project manager for Natural Lands is quoted, stating, "It was a bargain sale, which means the sisters accepted a little less than the assessed value. The preservation of this land is especially significant in a community that is almost 100% developed and with a density of nearly 3,000 residents per square mile." The Sisters of St. Francis have welcomed the chance to convert the unused land into an open space for the public.

THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS
OF PHILADELPHIA

29TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

*Save the date and
join us for a
great day on the greens!*

**Monday, September 30, 2024
Penn Oaks Golf Club, West Chester, PA**



▲ From *The Catholic High School of Baltimore's* opening in 1939 until 1957, Sister Carmelia Cetrone taught math, Latin, and French. Dubbed "Carmie" by her students, here she has the attention of a senior class—easily identified by their senior bows, a tradition that lives on to this day. Doris Argo (Class of 1947) described Sister Carmelia as a magnificent teacher who had a heart of gold, always active and advising her students to be the same, saying it was better to "wear out than rust out." Read more about Catholic High on page 12.