



School Sisters *of* Notre Dame

Central Pacific Province

Winter 2013



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High Expectations

Willingness to learn reaps benefits
with one-on-one tutoring for adults



School Sisters of Notre Dame

of the Central Pacific Province live and minister from coast to coast as well as Guam, Nepal, Japan and beyond.

Contact the mission advancement department at missionadv@ssndcp.org.

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Love



FROM THE PROVINCIAL LEADER

Sister Mary Anne Owens, SSND



“Love cannot wait.”

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, March 1822, #1

Pronouncing her first vows, Theresa knew the strength and influence of love, as a force for conversion and transformation. Theresa's legacy continues as her words, *love cannot wait*, echo in the direction embraced at our most recent General Chapter. Challenged by social and economic crises in her day, Theresa believed educating girls

strengthened the family; she believed the world could be transformed through education. That same conviction characterizes the ministries of School Sisters today.

In this issue, we are pleased to present the first Central Pacific Province Stewardship Report. We are grateful for your generosity, your commitment of financial and prayerful support as we continue to respond to the crises and heart-breaks of our world.

Discover Milwaukee Achiever Literary Services, one of the numerous collaborative ministries of School Sisters' responding to unmet needs. Milwaukee Achiever continues its legacy of 30 years of helping adult learners, offering opportunities for learning, empowerment and community while embracing diversity, integrity and stewardship.

We pray with and for you, confident that together we will continue to respond knowing the needs are great and *“love cannot wait.”* 



Celebrating 180 Years

OF OUR CONGREGATION
1833-2013

ON THE COVER

Eida Berrios (left) with Sister Rita Clare Swenarski, her tutor at Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services. See article on pages 4-5.

Celebrating

CELEBRATING OUR SISTERS

Transforming the world through education



Sister Michelle Emmerich,



principal at Notre Dame High School in St. Louis, was invited to speak at the 60th anniversary celebration of Notre Dame High School in Kyoto, Japan, on Oct. 12. She addressed an assembly of students, teachers, parents and others. While in Japan, she visited the high school, elementary school and university founded by the SSNDs.

Sister Jackie Toben and



Let's Start, a support process for formerly incarcerated women in St. Louis, received the Liberty Bell Award from the Young Lawyers of the Missouri Bar Association on Oct. 19. This award is given to a non-legal organization that has engaged in public service activities significantly enhancing the local community.

Associate Janice England



and the Los Angeles based Lay Mission-Helpers received the 2012 Mission Award from the United States Catholic Mission Association, along with Mission Doctors Association. The two independent Catholic organizations have sent some 700 lay men and women (along with their families) to 36 mostly Third World countries – from Papua New Guinea to Cameroon, Thailand to Micronesia.

Visit our Facebook page for more stories and photos that Celebrate Our Sisters!
[facebook.com/ssnd.centralpacific](https://www.facebook.com/ssnd.centralpacific)

Sister Cecile Marie

Lubniewski, who is celebrating her 70th anniversary as a School Sister of Notre Dame, was recently honored by Interfaith Older Adult Programs and the Social Development Council in Milwaukee for her 20 years of volunteer service with both organizations.



Sister Gail Buckman



was named Outstanding Music Educator for 2012-13 by the St. Louis Metro District #8 of the Missouri Music Educators Association.

Right: Sister Mary Maher (pictured third from left) is the newly re-elected general superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She will work with a team of five elected general councilors: (from left) Sisters Inês Camiran of Brazil; M. Dominica Michalke of Germany; Maher; Maureen McGoe, vicar, of Canada; Vitória Marques of Brazil; and Carol Jean Dust of the USA.

Mankato Loyola Catholic School

On Nov. 29, the Mankato Loyola Catholic School welcomed four new members into Loyola Hall of Fame. **School Sisters of Notre Dame** were among the four inductees. The School Sisters were recognized for their collaboration with and support of Loyola Catholic School, as well as for the ways they model and reflect Loyola's four pillars: faith, service, academic excellence and leadership.

23rd General Chapter

LEADERSHIP TEAM

School Sisters of Notre Dame elect international leadership team, set future direction

Sixty-five School Sisters of Notre Dame from 34 countries came together Sept. 19-Oct. 24 in Ariccia, Italy, for their 23rd General Chapter to elect a general council and develop a directional statement to guide the way sisters live their mission for the next five years.

The directional statement, "Love Cannot Wait," was the result of a congregation-wide consultation before the General Chapter and intense dialogue and prayerful reflection during the Chapter on the theme, "Called and sent to witness to unity in a divided world."



"I am overjoyed by the results of this chapter. Each chapter member gave herself over to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit working within her. We truly became a community of faith, hope and love, which itself is a witness to unity in a divided world," Sister Mary Maher said. "I believe great good will come from the efforts of all School Sisters and their colleagues when we live out the direction set at this General Chapter." 



*Sister Rita Clare Swenarski
and Eida Berrios*

HIGH *Expectations*

Story and photos by
Mary Conarchy

**Willingness to learn reaps benefits with
one-on-one tutoring for adults**

As an older student, I needed to learn how to learn again – to slow down, focus more and really listen.”

These words of experience come from Eida M. Berrios, a 55-year-old native of Puerto Rico, who has lived and worked as a nurse in Milwaukee for the past 20 years. Because of her job and family, especially her granddaughter, she wanted to improve her verbal and writing skills in English.

Having heard about Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services from one of her patients, Berrios decided to take the time from her very busy

schedule to be a student, again. She’s been coming to the Scott Street Center for three semesters and studying under the tutelage of Sister Rita Clare Swenarski, SSND.

At Milwaukee Achiever, after an assessment, a personalized plan is prepared and followed for each adult learner. The organization is very strict about students’ attendance. Berrios emphasized that she would recommend the program to others but only if they are willing to make the commitment of time and effort. She conveyed that the benefits are tremendous.

CARING FROM THE HEART

For Berrios, the tutor’s caring from the heart and generous sharing of time is very motivating.

“I appreciate the high expectations and standards that Sister Rita Clare has for me. I respect her and she respects me,” she said.

“I am much happier and more secure because of the support I receive at Milwaukee Achiever. Sister Rita Clare shares a fuller explanation of what I’m learning, which helps me to recognize my errors. She taught me how to slow down and

listen. I feel that I'm making progress with improving my verbal and writing skills."

Berrios values how she's been able to listen more attentively and avoid the tendency to swallow the endings of words.

Sister Rita Clare notes her student's great effort and innovation with finding ways to improve her learning: "Eida recognized how letter sounds are different between English and Spanish, which is a big challenge as she practices verbal skills on her own, at home. Therefore, she came up with the idea of bringing her iPhone to class – recording the correct pronunciation, for reinforcement, after the tutoring session."

AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE

Berrios has been enriched by the many multicultural learners she meets at Milwaukee Achiever, saying: "I've learned to appreciate many diverse cultures and to realize that though we come from different places, we share similar values as human beings. This new awareness has helped me as a person and in my nursing profession."

She also feels fortunate that at her nursing job, her manager respects different cultures and takes the time

to correct the English of those under her supervision.

Beyond the benefits at work, Berrios' grown daughter and son are very proud of their Mom for going to Milwaukee Achiever. Annabel, her 4-year-old granddaughter, inspires Berrios to want to keep learning the correct pronunciation of words!

THE TUTOR SHARES...

After ministering for 53 years in Catholic education – 21 years as a principal and 32 years as a teacher – Sister Rita Clare Swenarski transitioned from educating youngsters to a new role as a volunteer tutor of adults. She is one of more than 200 dedicated tutors who assist adult learners at



Sister Nancy Carol Trager and student

"I learned that I am not who I am by my own power. When I worked with welfare recipients at the MAXIMUS Learning Lab (managed by Milwaukee Achiever), I often heard the students demean themselves. It became my personal mission to help my learners see that when a person demeans him/herself, God is really demeaned because He is the Source of who we are.

"I appreciate the high expectations and standards that Sister Rita Clare has for me."

Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services. Seven SSNDs currently serve there as tutors and three are on the program's board of directors.

"At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed that we all may be one. Volunteering at Milwaukee Achiever helps me realize our unity and connectedness. It also broadens my vision and stretches my boundaries.

Sister Mary Catherine Dundon and student

"Volunteering at Milwaukee Achiever directs my ministry toward education that transforms and calls all to eliminate the root causes of injustice." 

Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services, Inc. is a program for adults, founded by Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University and Mount Mary College, which are sponsored by the School Sisters of St. Francis, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, respectively. Learn more at www.milwaukeeachiever.org. For other adult learning opportunities associated with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, visit our website at www.ssndcentralpacific.org and click on *Experience*.



Welcome



WELCOME TO NEW DEVELOPMENT OFFICE STAFF!



Sister Monica Wagner came to the resource development office having been in the ministry of leadership as a provincial councilor. Prior to that, she served as a pastoral associate and pastoral administrator in the New Ulm Diocese in Minnesota for 16 years. She was born, raised and served as an SSND in Minnesota. She was an elementary teacher for 26 years. Sister Monica believes she brings strong pastoral skills to the donor relations position, including dedication as a School Sister of Notre Dame, an enthusiasm for life, meeting people where they are on their journey and spending time in nature every day. She enjoys connecting with donors through personal contacts and visits via phone. Sister Monica's office is in Mankato. She may be reached at **507-389-4231** or mlwagner@ssndcp.org.

Roy Rehme Jr. is the new major gifts officer with the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Previously he worked at Mercy Hospital, Washington, Mo., as the director of development and at Christian Brothers College High School, St. Louis, as director of alumni relations and annual giving. He is married with three young children and lives in Lake St. Louis, Mo.



Roy will be traveling throughout the province on a regular basis, meeting and getting to know the generous benefactors. He will also be cultivating new support for province needs. Roy is based at the province's central offices in St. Louis. He may be reached at **314-633-7042** or rrehme@ssndcp.org.

Sister Mary Delbert Weisensel comes to the ministry of donor relations after having served in the ministry of leadership as a provincial councilor for nine years. Immediately prior to provincial leadership, she ministered in Arizona in educational administration for 25 years and in the diocesan marriage tribunal for two years. She was born, raised and answered her call to religious life in Wisconsin. Sister Mary Delbert brings to her work of donor relations a deep love of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and an excitement to meet new people. She rejoices that she has reached the time in her life when she can say she is in ministry part-time. Sister Mary Delbert's office is in Dallas. She may be reached at **217-845-7410** or mdweisensel@ssndcp.org.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Last year, the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province joined with 15 other congregations of women religious in the St. Louis area to launch a campaign supporting the rights of immigrants. Throughout the summer, this coalition of women religious sponsored billboards across Missouri with the message, "I was an immigrant and you

welcomed me" – based on Jesus' words from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The article about the billboards in the *St. Louis Review*, the newspaper for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, stated, "the billboards are primarily in

rural areas because of the expense of purchasing billboard space" and "the sisters also wish to bring the billboards to St. Louis." After reading this article, the Drury family and DDI Media offered support by putting up two



Grateful



2011-2012 STEWARDSHIP REPORT

*School Sisters Of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province*

We are grateful to each of you for your support as together we continue the legacy of our foundress, Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger. This first province Stewardship Report reveals your gracious generosity. We are blessed by your faithful support – in prayer, interest and involvement in our ministries, investment in Blessed Theresa’s legacy.

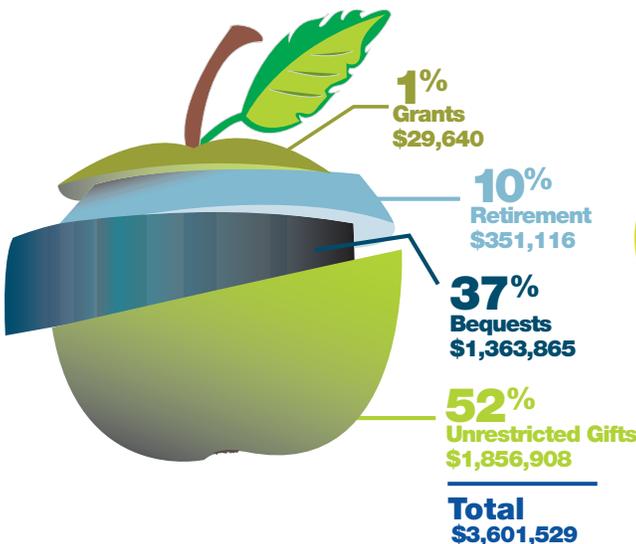
Your contributions assist us in caring for our sisters who are sick and retired from active ministries as they now minister through prayer and presence.

We will continue to be good stewards of your gifts. Together with you, our partners, we are educating others, assisting them to reach the fullness of their potential as they direct their gifts to make the world a better place.



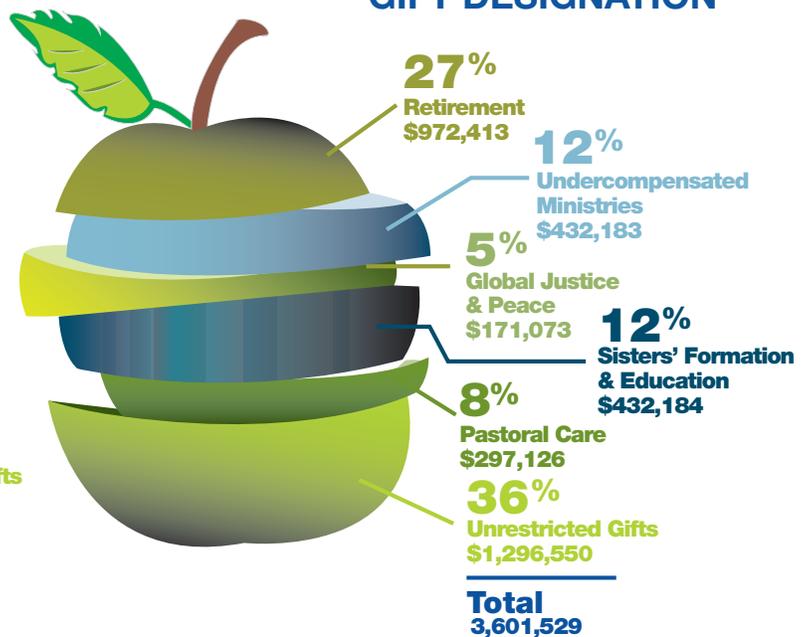
Sister Ann Marie Bonvie, director of Notre Dame Preschool in St. Louis, with one of the students. Read more about the closing of the preschool in the next issue of this newsletter.

GIFTS RECEIVED



Please know we respect you and your privacy. We do not sell or share your information.

GIFT DESIGNATION



billboards on I-70, one in downtown St. Louis and one in Wright City, Mo.

Charles L. Drury and his eight brothers and sisters, his seven children and 12 of his grandchildren have been taught by SSNDs since 1940 in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Over the years, Charles and Shirley Drury and their family have been generous benefactors to the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Tim Drury explained the importance of giving to an organization

that you know will use the donation wisely and spend it to help others.

“Trust is a wonderful thing,” Tim added. “You have to establish trust with an organization and have relationships



Charles and Shirley Drury

with them. It makes you feel good to know you are helping an organization that helps others.”

The SSNDs and the other women religious congregations in the St. Louis area extend a gracious thank you to the Drury family and DDI Media for donating the two billboards for the Immigration Welcoming Communities Campaign!



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Central Pacific Province

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Our Mission

is to proclaim the Good News as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.

You Are Sent, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

You're Invited

Please join us for our Spring Events!

Women's Leadership Luncheons

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 11:30 A.M.

Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, WI
Presentation by Danae D. Davis, Chief Executive Officer of PEARLS for Teen Girls, Inc.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 11:30 A.M.

Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, MO
Presentation by Bridget (McDermott) Flood, Executive Director of the Incarnate Word Foundation

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 11:30 A.M.

Notre Dame of Dallas, Dallas, TX
Presentation by Dr. Susan Hanssen, Associate Professor of History at the University of Dallas

Look for invitations in the mail or email. Register online at www.ssndcentralpacific.org. Additional province activities can be found on our website and Facebook page.



Wine & Chocolate Soiree

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 5:30 P.M.

Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, WI

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 6 P.M.

Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, MO

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 5:30 P.M.

Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, MN