



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION



Embracing diversity and the struggle for unity

In this issue: Stewardship Report



Sister Debra Marie Sciano, SSND

“The future, which begins with this New Year’s Day, is shrouded in as dense and mysterious a fog as is nature these days. Through it, only one star gleams for us – the infinitely wise and gracious providence of God.”

*~Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger
Letter #4758, December 31, 1872*

Dear Donors and Friends,

Happy New Year! The New Year is an opportunity to reflect on last year’s achievements and this year’s opportunities. What a year 2019 was for the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province! 2019 included the election and installation of a new provincial council, continuation of the important work of our ministries, and initiation of our Integrated Implementation Process, including moving sisters from St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, to St. Anthony’s Gardens in Covington, Louisiana. As we look toward 2020, we know there will be more changes and moves, and more opportunities to proclaim the good news.

This issue of the newsletter

focuses on *Embracing Diversity & the Struggle for Unity*, which fits perfectly with the New Year. Our cover story is about the Our Lady of Good Counsel Community Garden in Mankato, Minnesota. You’ll read how diversity shines in the people who work in the garden (pages 3 - 5).

The Sister Spotlight (page 5) highlights our sisters in Guam and their ongoing struggle for peace and unity on their small island.

We couldn’t do it all without you, our donors. Our featured donors can be found in the Donor Spotlight (page 6). To see how your contributions are used throughout the province, turn to the Resource Development Stewardship Report (page 7).

You won’t want to miss Around the Province (pages 8 - 10) and Awards and Honors (page 9) to catch highlights of the sisters in the province. We also recognize sisters who have moved on to their final reward in the last year (page 11). Finally, plan to join us for Upcoming Events (page 12)!

During this time of reflection and anticipation, we are grateful to you, our friends and supporters, who are so faithful to us and the important work of our ministries. We appreciate you and pray for you every day. May 2020 bring you and your loved ones much peace, happiness and success. ●

ON THE COVER:

The Little Sprouts Class of the Living Earth Center, Mankato, Minnesota.

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School Sisters of Notre Dame

Central Pacific Province live and minister in 21 states, the U.S. territory of Guam, and the countries of Italy, Japan and Nepal.

Contact Resource Development or inquire about finding a sister at missionadv@ssndcp.org.

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262-787-1037

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

170 Good Counsel Drive
Mankato, MN 56001-3138
507-389-4212

SANCTA MARIA IN RIPA

320 East Ripa Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63125-2897
314-633-7032



The United Nations of gardening

By Heidi Sampson, Communications

On a hot, humid, southern Minnesota evening, the Living Earth Center's community gardens at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota, gently pulsate with the sounds of a hoe being used to dislodge a pesky weed. Nearby, a rake is used to sift compost into loose black soil. At the picnic table in front of the Red Barn, a woman and her child snap green beans into an old wooden bowl for supper. To the left of the woman and child, the soft give and take of chattering neighbor gardeners offering support, ideas and assistance can be heard as a trio of School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) stroll through the gardens tending their plots and helping out where needed.

The image above is a small sampling of what one would see on any given night at the Living Earth Center's community gardens. The Living Earth Center, originally founded as the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM) in 1996, is a sponsored ministry of SSND. As a ministry of committed SSND and community collaborators from all spiritual traditions, CESRM brought together people who were passionate about ecological solidarity and enhancing relationships among each other, the local community, and the

greater earth. Today, the Living Earth Center has grown to be a vast network of gardeners, volunteers, and advocates who are finding common ground and building a resilient community that honors the interconnection of all things and the value that all can bring to this living earth.

"Today, we have over 100 gardeners," said Sister Mary Tacheny, co-founder of CESRM. "It makes no difference who you are. If you want a plot, you can have a plot. It's a small fee, which is waived if you can't afford it. People say that on any given night, the community gardens resemble a mini United Nations because of the sheer number of diverse people who come here to garden."

For Laura Peterson, Executive Director of the Living Earth Center, the community gardens are about story and narrative. "We have people that are coming from all different walks of life.

"We claim our authentic community life as a prophetic witness of unity in diversity and a service to God's people" (You Are Sent, C 7-9).



Laura Peterson (bottom center) assists a member of the Eng-AGE-Ment Garden. In the background, the Little Sprouts/Camp Mavericks plant vegetables.

We have different socio-economic backgrounds. We have different age backgrounds. We have different cultural and religious backgrounds."

One of Peterson's favorite stories to tell about the community garden is about a small group of male gardeners. One of the gardeners is a Kurdish asylee and the second gardener is a Hmong refugee. "I think it is this concept of sharing common ground," said Peterson. "The two men have become friends over the years. They don't speak the same language, and sometimes, there is a lot of language disconnect. But, they take care of each other.

I'll often come in and see that if one is out of town, the other will be watering his garden. Or, they will be sharing different fruits and vegetables that they've grown. So it's this concept of coming together, even though they are growing food and sharing food that can be eaten, what they are also doing is creating a connection. This idea of connection is fundamental because it bridges that concept of difference and makes us one."

Peterson acknowledges that the community garden seems like an unlikely place for diversity, unity and community to flourish. However, while the gardens are about growing tomatoes, fruits and vegetables, community gardeners are also growing something a lot bigger. While that something bigger may not be seen or tasted in the physical sense, one can certainly feel the established connections and community engagement of the gardeners. "I think the concept of sustainability isn't just environmental," said Peterson. "Sustainability is how we are growing together and

becoming more resilient. We know things are going to become more challenging. We know that climate change is happening. We also know that times will become more difficult. That said, we are stronger together when we are unified and that takes community building, which is a positive consequence of community gardening and having these bigger conversations about stewardship."

Since the inception of the community gardens, the sisters

"It's this concept of coming together, even though they are growing food and sharing food that can be eaten, what they are also doing is creating a connection. This idea of connection is fundamental because it bridges that concept of difference and makes us one."

and lay staff of both CESRM and the Living Earth Center, have continually asked themselves one question. "What are ways that we can be good stewards of the land and the community?" They assist the evolution of the community gardens into a space that meets the ever-changing needs of the people.

Throughout the year, the Living Earth Center hosts several different workshops in an attempt



A group of garden enthusiasts discuss their passion at The Living Earth Center's community garden.

to meet community needs and interests. They have featured everything from Kombucha Brewing – which is a fermented probiotic drink that originated in China, but frequently is credited as having originated in Russia – to soap making. They have also held an introduction to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) workshop, offering gardening classes to children through a program called Little Sprouts.

This past growing season, Minnesota State University's (MNSU) School of Nursing and ACT on Alzheimer's, opened an Eng-AGE-Ment Garden, a dementia-friendly program designed specifically for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. MNSU students and professors take part in teaching community gardening classes designed to stimulate memories through touch and smell, conversation and sometimes, even dancing. Many of MNSU's nursing students continue to participate in the community gardens, even when school is out for the summer.



Little Sprouts enjoy the cool water from the hydrant after a hot day of gardening.

Continues on page 5 . . .



Peace, unity and acceptance in Guam

By Kaitlyn Holdmeyer, Communications

After World War II, many religious orders were asked to send missionaries to Guam. In 1949, the former Province of Milwaukee sent School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) to provide education to the indigenous people. The sisters were welcomed with open



**Sister Paulina
Raymond**

arms when the first school opened in September 1949. The number of registered students jumped from 149 to 301 in less than a month. Since 1949, women from Guam and the outer islands have become SSND. In 2000, Sister Paulina Raymond made first profession of vows in Talofoto, Guam, and stated, “I became a School Sister of Notre Dame because I was responding to a beautiful voice that led me into a clarity of heart.”

Sister Paulina struggles for unity and peace every day, “In the public school system, I stand up for what I believe will bring peace between co-workers, students and

parents. I try to be the voice parents can rely on.” Sister Paulina taught in private schools for many years in Talofoto, Guam, and just recently started teaching in a public school.

The struggle for unity and peace can be a challenge. Sister Paulina believes the hardship and struggles, “is like telling the sun to switch places with the moon and telling the turtle to become a bird. There are going to be differences and challenges in everything we say and do but, regardless, accepting the differences among people is what we have to do and is what we do every day.” ●

United Nations of gardening continues. . .

“We are trying to do more when it comes to community conversations,” said Peterson. “We want to bring people from varied backgrounds together to share some common ground. We also have our earth-centered celebrations, the summer and winter solstices. We’ve even done open mic nights at the Red Barn, as we try to incorporate more art and culture into the garden, in hopes of creating a movable living community space.”

Part of creating a moveable living space is also finding a way to entice the young adult population into visiting the community gardens. One particular new idea that’s been discussed as an option for young adults would be

conducting spoken word and hip hop nights at the Red Barn. The event could be called Dropping Beets.

“The concept of the Living Earth Center is essentially to provide a community growing space, both in the literal and figurative sense,” said Peterson. It’s a place where people can come together to share, not only common ground, but to get grounded within themselves. When you have a healthy ecosystem, you will find diversity, unity and people working together to build a resilient community. What that means is growing together, not only in the sense of growing food, but also in growing good and right relationships with one another.” ●



**Minnesota State University, Mankato,
nursing student dances with a participant
of the Eng-AGE-Ment Garden.**



Ensuring SSND educational efforts continue

By Sister Marcie Solms, Resource Development
Emily O'Neil, Communications

James and Cindy Cruz

James Cruz first met the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Guam in the 1960s. A member of a Navy family, James attended St. Francis elementary school in Yona. Two of his father's cousins, Sisters Mary Eucharita Cruz and Maria Teresia Cruz (deceased) were on the teaching staff.

James appreciates the professionalism and passion for learning that his teachers, mostly SSND, instilled in him at a young age. He admitted they often had to "channel my energies."

After James' family moved to California, he remembers Sister Maria Teresia visiting his family and "being interested in how we were doing in school and always being so proud of what we accomplished."

He and his wife, Cindy, now live in Scottsburg, Indiana. As a



James and Cindy Cruz.

couple, they continue to support SSND so that their educational efforts can continue. They also want to help to provide for the retired sisters "ensuring that they can be as comfortable as possible."

Judge Andrew Gleeson

Judge Andrew Gleeson has a total of 19 years of education, all of which were within Catholic institutions. As a lifelong resident of East St. Louis and Belleville, Illinois, Judge Gleeson attended Holy Angels School, Althoff Catholic High School, the University of Notre Dame and Saint Louis University School of Law. "I've been a lawyer for 34 years, a judge for 16 years, and for the last three years, I've been the Chief Judge of the 20th Judicial Circuit Court in the State of Illinois," said Judge Gleeson.

While at Holy Angels School, in East St. Louis, Illinois, Judge Gleeson first met the School Sisters of Notre Dame. "Holy Angels School was staffed by SSND. It holds a special place in my heart and I attribute that time in my life as the most positive and formative period because of their influence. I would like to



Judge Andrew Gleeson with Sisters Urban Maureen Molitor (L) and Barbara Geers (R).

say thanks to Sister Barb Geers, my first grade teacher, Sister Urban Maureen Molitor, a math teacher in my later years, and Sister Barbara Jean Rupp, who had been principal of Holy Angels for a period of time, and to all of the sisters who have gone to their heavenly reward. My participation in their ministry is my way of saying thanks and affirmation of my strong belief and appreciation in the mission of SSND."

For more stories visit: www.ssndcp.org/meet-our-donors. ●

Please remember SSND in your will.

Make a planned gift to the sisters. Please contact Mary Kay Murray at 262-787-1037 or mmurray@ssndcp.org. Those who remember SSND in their estate plans are recognized as Blessed Theresa Society members, honoring their extraordinary generosity. Visit: www.ssndcp.org/planned-giving.



From the director of resource development

By Mary Kay Murray, Resource Development

Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger and Mother Caroline Friess built their lives in hopes, dreams and visions of a better world. They believed in education, the importance of achieving dreams and in a better life, as one lived for and with Christ. Their example of faith exemplifies Christ to all of us. Their teachings that the love of Christ shall end divisions, frees everyone.

We know you are asked

to financially support many organizations and people, all with good causes. We are grateful that you have chosen to support the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who continue to give the same witness of faith and loving service as did their sisters.

The sisters' urgent needs are the world's immediate needs, the sisters' mission is God's mission and they continue to care for all creation and struggle for unity as

they embrace diversity.

I am grateful for your caring support of the sisters who have been a special part of your life.

The financial picture outlining how your gifts were used this past year is provided below. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Kay Murray at 262-787-1037 or mmurray@ssndcp.org. ●

Stewardship Report 2018-2019

SOURCES OF GIFT INCOME

Individuals	\$2,661,910	(47.0%)
Bequests	\$2,555,168	(45.1%)
Special Events	\$406,356	(7.1%)
Grants	\$39,500	(.8%)
Total:	\$5,662,934	



SOURCES OF GIFT INCOME

HOW THE GIFTS WERE USED

Retirement Needs	\$3,271,125	(57.8%)
Support of Sponsored & Affiliated Ministries	\$1,440,297	(25.4%)
Pastoral Care	\$540,392	(9.6%)
Sisters & Associates Formation and Education	\$228,815	(4%)
Global Justice and Peace Ministry Work	\$182,305	(3.2%)
Total:	\$5,662,934	



HOW THE GIFTS WERE USED

Masses of Appreciation

The School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province hosted their annual Masses of Appreciation and brunches this past fall. Each year, donor gatherings recognize and thank donors for their generosity and partnership in ministry. ●



**Notre Dame of Elm Grove,
Elm Grove, Wisconsin.**



**Our Lady of Good Counsel,
Mankato, Minnesota.**



**St. Mary of the Pines,
Chatawa, Mississippi.**



**Sancta Maria in Ripa,
St. Louis, Missouri.**



Craft Fair & Garage Sale Mankato, Minnesota



Golf Tournament & Card Party Dayton, Minnesota

Learn more about upcoming events at:
www.ssndcp.org/events20



NoFest Octoberfest Winners of \$2,019! Kim and Will Decker

Awards and Honors



Loyola Catholic School and the Schola Foundation inducted the late **Sister Mary Beth Schraml** into the Schola Hall of Fame. Sister Mary Beth was honored for her service in assisting Loyola's ability to offer high-quality, faith-based education in Mankato, Minnesota.



Sister Sharon Rose Terbrock was the recipient of the Fr. John Vogler Community Award in honor of her many years of volunteering in the office of Criminal Justice Ministry (CJM).



Notre Dame School of Dallas was named the SMART Exemplary School in North America by SMART Technologies. To read more about the award visit [Dallas Uptown BubbleLife](http://DallasUptownBubbleLife.com).

Sister Debra Sciano received the Faithful Servant Award from the St. Thomas More Lawyers Society of Wisconsin. She was recognized for her dedicated work in Children's Court for the Milwaukee County District Attorney's office and more recently for her service as a family law mediator.





The School Sisters of Notre Dame are celebrating 145 years of service in Chatawa, Mississippi, as St. Mary of the Pines closes and sisters move to St. Anthony's Gardens in Covington, Louisiana.





"Precious and blessed is the death of the faithful before God. . . for they die in union with their dear Jesus, in the grace of God, in peace."

~Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger,
Letter #11, September 10, 1831

January

Mary Brian Overfield
Chatawa, Mississippi

Mary Beth Schraml
Mankato, Minnesota

M. Mercita Reinbold
Mankato, Minnesota

Clara Ruesch
Formerly **Mary Myron**
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

February

Eileen Donovan
Formerly **Miriam Daniel**
St. Louis, Missouri

Rita Marie Schneider
Mankato, Minnesota

March

Rosarine Gonzales
Chatawa, Mississippi

Eleanor Francis
Frankenberg
St. Louis, Missouri

April

Mary Ingrid Hamm
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

Mary Agnes Therese
Hastreiter
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

Jane Marie Kulczak
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

May

Anne Miriam Kimura
Kyoto, Japan

June

Marjorie Myers
Formerly **Mary Benjamin**
Mankato, Minnesota

Mercita Batog
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

July

Rose Elaine Kessler
Chatawa, Mississippi

Mary Alcuin Rottjakob
Bridgeton, Missouri

Marie Christine Hippler
Metairie, Louisiana

August

Margaret Mary Judge
St. Louis, Missouri

Colleen Hennessey
Formerly **Audrey Ann**
Chatawa, Mississippi

Mary Lorenzo Schuster
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

John Marie Budde
Greenfield, Wisconsin

Dolores Shea
Bridgeton, Missouri

September

Mary DeMontford Berchtold
Bridgeton, Missouri

October

M. Claudette Hudalla
Mankato, Minnesota

Lucille Heidenreich
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

Mary Donald Miller
Mankato, Minnesota

Celly Ann Amparano
Jefferson City, Missouri

Carol Ann Collins
St. Louis, Missouri

Mary Odile Poliquin
Bridgeton, Missouri

Elvira Marie Zozaya
Los Angeles, California

November

Mary Helen Hotze
Bridgeton, Missouri

Madeleine Sophie Witt
Bridgeton, Missouri

Therese Even
Mankato, Minnesota

Roselle Zollar
Mankato, Minnesota

Carine Dirkers
Bridgeton, Missouri

December

Alice Borries
Bridgeton, Missouri

Susan Birk
Bridgeton, Missouri

M. Frances Therese Jungwirth
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

View obituary profiles at:
www.ssnep.org/obit.



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

Love Gives Everything, Directional Statement of the 24th General Chapter, 2017

Join us for our upcoming Resource Development Events!



Women's Leadership Luncheons

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Mount Mary University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Monday, March 9, 2020

River City Casino Event Center
St. Louis, Missouri

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Brookhaven Country Club
Farmers Branch, Texas

Thursday, March 26, 2020

Midpointe Event Center
St. Paul, Minnesota

Learn more at
www.ssndcp.org/events20.

Check out additional
province activities
on our website
and Facebook at:
[facebook.com/ssnd.
centralpacific](https://facebook.com/ssnd.centralpacific).

CONNECT WITH US!



An Evening on the Emerald Isle: An SSND Signature Event

Saturday, April 25, 2020

Sancta Maria in Ripa
St. Louis, Missouri

Back to Our Roots: A Garden Celebration

Saturday, June 13, 2020

Notre Dame of Elm Grove
Elm Grove, Wisconsin