

VISION

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Living Lives of Love

Volume 18 • Issue 1 • Spring/Summer 2014

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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

Sisters of Charity
Sponsorship

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Elizabeth Boyle was a dear friend of Elizabeth Seton, so much so that she was called the “dearest old friend, partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens.” Sister Elizabeth Boyle not only brought Mother Seton’s spirit to New York; her guidance as the first Mother of the independent community was both a gift and a grace. Her love of the New York Sisters and her beloved orphans was evidenced by her commitment and service. These produced not only the growth of the Congregation but of our ministries as well.

She served over 5,000 orphans, most of whom were the children of immigrants. Today, the New York Foundling, Casa, and our Immigration Task Force serve the new immigrants in a variety of ways. From this first sponsored work to the sponsored works of today we have consistently served immigrants over the years.

In 1861 we worked with the sick, especially those wounded in the Civil War, the draft riots, and the cholera epidemic. Today, through our hospitals, nursing home, and housing for those recovering from addiction and mental illness we continue this legacy in our sponsored works.

We can look at the ministries of the past and the commitment of the men and women who have journeyed with us over time. In each of these works the mission of the early sisters not only continues but has expanded to meet the needs of today. We have opened, expanded, and initiated new ministries to meet these needs.

Each service provided to those in need and to those living in poverty cannot continue without so many of our lay colleagues. These are the ones who carry on the mission of charity today and into the future. Within their current ministries in our sponsored works they adjust to meet and listen to the needs that are presented to them in order to remain vital and consistent with our mission. Each of us, like Mother Elizabeth Boyle, is a partner in the care of those we serve, bearing their burdens through our ministries.

As this month holds the anniversary of Elizabeth Boyle’s death (June 21, 1861), I’d like to end with this true story:


It was in the 1830’s at St. Patrick’s Asylum. The Sisters had to feed 250 children three times a day. Sr. Susan Knott, the housekeeper, told Mother Elizabeth Boyle, in tears, that there was nothing for dinner. Mother Elizabeth replied, “God will provide for His own, never fear. If He wishes us to be here, He will give us the means to do the good we wish to do. If He does not will it, the sooner the work goes down the better. Let us rely on His Providence alone.”

Sister Susan had barely left the office when the doorbell rang. A farmer asked to see Mother Elizabeth. (She recognized him as someone from whom she occasionally bought vegetables.) He told her that he couldn’t get the price he wanted for his produce so he decided to give his wagonload of veggies to the orphans.

Soon after the bell rang again. A complete stranger was at the door. He didn’t identify himself at all, but just gave Mother Elizabeth \$50. She sent a Sister to the butcher to buy meat for this providential dinner.

Can you not share your gifts with those in need and not be a stranger to the mission of Charity?

Peace,



Jane Iannucelli, SC
President



VISION enables the Sisters of Charity of New York to make a cohesive statement about how we reveal God’s love in our lives and the many and varied ways in which we respond to the signs of the times.



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Profile

Sister Miriam Anne Brennan

by Grace Henke, SC
& Patricia McGowan, SC



During her 75 years as a Sister of Charity, Sr. Miriam Anne Brennan has personified the American Nursing Association definition for nursing: “the protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities; the prevention of illness and injury; the alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human responses; and advocacy in health care for individuals, families, communities and populations.” And she has done it with an infectious smile and warm heart that transcends that definition.



Young Miriam Brennan before entering in 1939.

When she entered the Community in 1939 she had not intended to become a nurse. True, as a Holy Cross Academy senior she had visited St. Vincent’s Hospital in New York, but her “real desire” was to become a Sister of Charity, not a nurse.

In fact, a year after she entered the Community she was sent to St. Paul School in Brooklyn, where the pastor jokingly told her that the last third grade teacher had ended up in a mental institution. But did that frighten Sister Anne? Not a bit. The children were poor and, some might say, “Brooklyn tough.” But she loved it. A year later when she was missioned to St. Margaret of Cortona School in Riverdale to teach the second grade, she was still a very happy teacher and would

have been more than content to continue those “wonderful, wonderful days.”

Perhaps that high school visit to St. Vincent’s had been a premonition of things to come. She would continue to teach but her expertise would no longer be confined to a parish school classroom. In 1944 Sister Anne and three other sisters enrolled in the nursing program at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. One day a week they went to St. Vincent’s Hospital in Manhattan for clinical practice, and during their second and third years, all their classes were held at the Hospital. At the end of her studies, Sister Anne was awarded dual degrees, a BSN from the College and a diploma from St. Vincent’s School of Nursing.

World War II was still going on and she was excited to be included in the research the Hospital was doing, because many of the soldiers were coming back with Hodgkin’s disease. Her first assignment as an operating room nurse was not a happy experience. Seeing people, and then not seeing them again after the operations because they went back to their rooms, was quite upsetting. It was not what she wanted to do forever. But a blessing came from that experience and Sr. Anne is big on “trust in God and His blessings.”

Her next assignment was to the OB GYN Unit where “everything was alive and upbeat, centered on life and looked to the future.” As the Administrator of the Unit she had the opportunity to take care of mind, body, and spirit. It was not piecemeal work and she loved working in pastoral care and student supervision, along with her regular nursing duties.

Continued, see p. 10

Sister Miriam Anne and Me



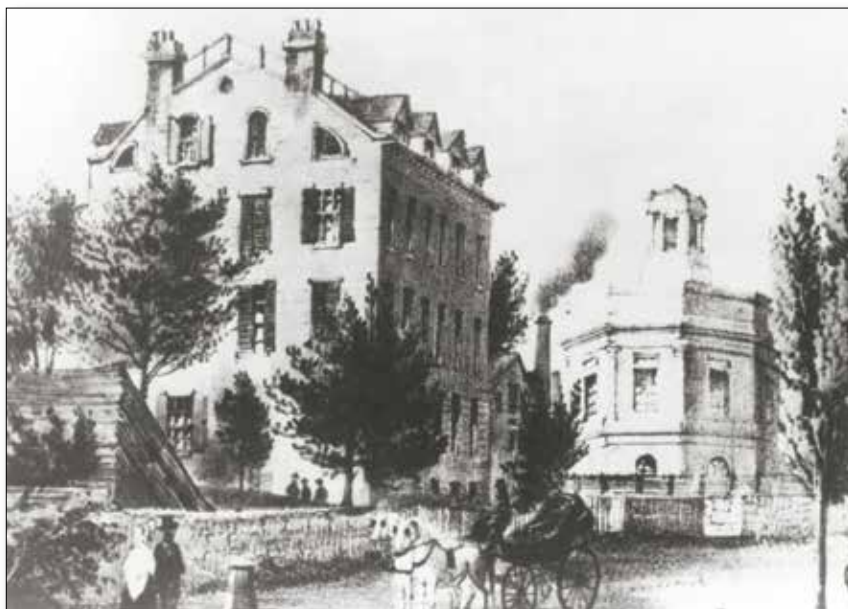
Last year I became an Associate of the Sisters of Charity. Over the years, I have learned more and more about the spirit, vitality, and dedication of the Sisters through the missions that they sponsor and drive. I have worked closely with them on a number of these, including St. Joseph’s Medical Center, St. Vincent’s

Hospital Westchester, Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center, and Fox House. Each of these serve many people whose various basic needs would not have been addressed if not for the Sisters’ involvement and forward vision, both individually and as a community.

Continued, see p. 10

St. Vincent's Hospital *In My Life*

by Miriam Kevin Phillips, SC



In response to the cholera epidemic that was ravaging New York City, the Sisters of Charity opened St. Vincent's Hospital in a rented brownstone on East 13th St. This was the first new mission of the fledgling community and the first Catholic hospital in New York City.

In 1965 the Beatles recorded a song entitled "*In My Life*." The first line of the song begins "*There are places I'll remember all my life.*"

What was it about St. Vincent's that made it so memorable in my life?

It was not the architecture! St. Vincent's was a hodgepodge cluster of buildings at the intersection of Seventh Avenue, Greenwich Avenue, and Eleventh Street. Bunched on the north was another cluster of buildings. It had "grown like Topsy" from a small community hospital into a major medical center.

Growing up in the West Village, I became fascinated by the imposing Seton Building, known affectionately as "The Wards." It was in this building that the poor, elderly, immigrants, uninsured, and homeless received care. It was an imposing structure visible from the many intersecting, winding streets for which Greenwich Village is famous.

In the area around the hospital its people spilled out into the surrounding neighborhood: famous doctors imposing in their manner, interns and residents hurrying to grab a quick lunch, nurses pristine in their white uniforms and unique nurse's cap, patients arriving and leaving. All the levels of workers necessary to keep the enterprise humming added to the mystique of "the Hospital."

It was the student nurses that held my fascination. Happy, energetic young people wore their distinctive uniform proudly. It was a uniform like no other: snappy, yes; comfortable, no. The blue material that made up the dress was imported from France. How fitting, since the Daughters of Charity were as visible to the poor of Paris as were our own Sisters of Charity to the poor of New York City.

The Sisters for the most part were the least visible outside the hospital walls. It was the age when women religious exerted their influence in more subtle ways. The habit contributed to their anonymity. They were rarely seen on the surrounding streets without a stated purpose and, of course, only with the permission of their superiors.

Inside the hallowed halls the Sisters were dynamos of charity. Their presence was palpable, their demeanor appropriate. In their quiet way they set the standard by which the people of St. Vincent's would be measured. The standards were high and consistently carried out. Before St. Vincent's closed someone asked an elderly environmental worker how he knew when he was doing a good job. He answered, "We all just watch the Sisters and follow their example."

September 11, 2001, terrorists attack the World Trade Center
St. Vincent's Hospital staff stood ready to receive the casualties and trauma victims from the horrific tragedy. The number of persons arriving at the emergency room was small because so many perished at the site of the attack.

Beginning as a file clerk in high school, then a student nurse, later the Director of the School of Nursing, and finally as the Senior Vice-President for Mission, my over fifty years at St. Vincent's has been an unbelievable, faith-filled journey. I watched the evolution of St. Vincent's into a major medical center which attracted outstanding doctors. It was a mecca of learning for students of every discipline in the healing sciences, resulting in many "firsts" for which St. Vincent's could claim credit. Students flocked to enroll in its outstanding teaching programs. Many medical and surgical breakthroughs which benefitted treatment modalities in other institutions of healing originated at St. Vincent's. They are chronicled in the medical annals.

During those years I was surrounded daily by living examples of charity. The people of St. Vincent's from the least to the most brilliant doctors had without knowing it been infused with a love for the poor, a desire to serve, and a unique identification that has branded them forever. We were a disparate group of individuals branded with that common purpose identifiable as St. Vincent's trademark.

In writing this article I deliberately chose to avoid a chronological history of this iconic institution. Many are readily available. Likewise, I am not addressing the frequently asked questions: How could St. Vincent's have closed? Who is to blame? What happened?



On April 10, 2010, St. Vincent's closed its doors forever. As the last patient was being transferred from the intensive care unit, doctors, nurses, and Sisters stood in tearful silence. In our brokenness we stood with pride for the 161 years of history that this one patient represented.

There would be a final Mass in our beautiful chapel. Then it was time to close the doors. Hospitals are very hierarchical organizations where chains of command are carefully observed. That day we were equals in grief, love, and bewilderment.

Four years have passed since that dark day. The St. Vincent's family is dispersed in many directions, but our identity is never in doubt as our spirit seeds the institutions of which we are now a part.

Yes, the spirit of St. Vincent's is alive and well, and we thank God for that as we sing with the Beatles, "*There are places I'll remember all my life.*" ■

Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center Establishes the Sister Miriam Kevin Phillips Award

by Sarra Young

Communications Coordinator
St. Elizabeth Seton Children's Foundation

The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center established the Sister Miriam Kevin Phillips Mission Award for Nursing Excellence during National Nurses Week last May. The award will be given annually to an RN or LPN who embodies the mission of the Pediatric Center in the care they provide to residents and their families. This award was made possible through funding by Willy Ryan of Rooster's Market in White Plains.

The award's namesake, Sr. Miriam Kevin Phillips, SC, is a member of the Sisters of Charity and currently serves as the Canonical Secretary for the Sisters



From l-r: Willy Ryan; Carol Ryan; CEO of ESPC Pat Tursi; VP of Operations Lisa Poskanzer; honoree Maria Teresa Sangcap; Sr. Miriam Kevin; Chief Nursing Officer Judy Bianca; and ESPC Board Member Terry Macri. Ms. Sangcap received the Flame of Charity Award.

of Charity. Sister Kevin, who has a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in nursing, as well as a master's degree in nursing education, has had a long and admirable career in the nursing field. Formerly, she served as Director of the School of Nursing at St. Vincent's Hospital and Senior Vice President for Mission for St. Vincent Medical Centers.

Sister Kevin has served as a member of the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center Board of Directors since 2001. She

embodies the qualities of humility, simplicity, and charity that they value so dearly in their remembrances of their namesake, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, which is why this award is named in her honor.

Sister Kevin was on hand on May 7 as Maria Teresa Sangcap, RN, was awarded the first ever Mission Award for Nursing Excellence. Congratulations to Ms. Sangcap and Sr. Kevin for the well-deserved honors. ■

Sister Agnes Connolly, SC

1918–2013

On November 17, 2013 Sr. Agnes Connolly, a well-loved and respected Sister of Charity, left this world and entered into eternal life. While she is no longer present to us physically, her legacy remains alive.

Born on July 13, 1918 to Mary McCabe and Patrick Connolly, Agnes grew up in a close-knit family together with her brother, Francis, and her sisters, Mary and Catherine. She attended St. Francis de Sales Elementary School and went on to Cathedral High School. In 1940 she graduated from the College of Mount Saint Vincent with a BA degree in Chemistry. A few months later, in September 1940, she entered the Sisters of Charity of New York. At the conclusion of her Novitiate she pronounced her first vows on August 25, 1943, thus beginning her lifetime commitment to the mission of this community.

In her early years as a Sister of Charity she continued her studies in nursing and received her nursing license and her MA

really believe and find that we have a common base, or are our beliefs and vision of religious life so divided as to be mutually exclusive?" In an effort to address these issues, a year-long program known as Decisions '73 was designed to involve the Sisters in a process of listening, sharing, and learning. Sister Agnes became the general coordinator of this effort. Under her leadership the program resulted in a ground-breaking experience, providing opportunities to cross boundaries and to share differing opinions.

But this was only the beginning! In the following years Sr. Agnes would be very involved in the major shifts going on not only in religious life but also in the broader world and Church as the implementation of the Second Vatican Council opened the doors to a new church. In 1979 she was elected President of the Sisters of Charity. At an Assembly meeting in 1980 she identified very clearly the issues facing the



1979



Sisters Loretto Bernard Beagan and Agnes Connolly accompanied Cardinal Cooke during the dedication of Bayley Seton Hospital in Staten Island in 1981.



2013

Degree in Nursing Administration. Over the years the commitment of this special woman took on many

faces, including direct nursing service, hospital administration, novice director, Congregation leadership, board membership in several local, diocesan, and national groups, spiritual advisor, and much more. She was well respected not only within the Congregation but also within these various groups. For example, in 1980 she was elected President of ACWR (Archdiocesan Council of Women Religious) by acclamation.

Perhaps a few highlights from her years on the Council can offer a deeper insight into the depth and wisdom of this special woman. Sister Agnes was elected to the Council as a Regional Coordinator in 1971 at a moment in history when monumental shifts were going on, not only in religious life, but also in the broader society. In a letter to each Sister, the newly elected President, Sr. Margaret Dowling, named the issues clearly: "What do we have in common, now that many external unities are gone? Can we enter deeply into what we

Congregation when she observed that "... a changing society, a church in renewal, demands a

renewed, revitalized Congregation." She was very involved in planning Convocation '82, which addressed many of these issues, building on the theme "Charity: Gift and Call."

These years also witnessed greater collaboration among religious congregations to reflect on the current status of religious life and the challenges being faced. Our Associate program took shape during these years and Associates were invited to attend Convocation '82. After several years of intense work of rewriting our Constitution and Directory, it was approved in 1984 by Cardinal O'Connor. Sister Agnes was very involved in all of these projects.

As Sr. Agnes neared the end of her term in office, she gave a very moving talk ending with these words: "To be daughters of the Church is to be eyes and hands and feet and heart for Jesus—the one who reveals that God is love. This is our call, our mission." ■

by Theresa Capria, SC

It is difficult to believe that eight years after Hurricane Katrina smashed into New Orleans, many people have still have not been able to return to their homes. Some background might be helpful. The city of New Orleans can be compared to a large bowl surrounded by water: the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. Once the levees protecting the city were breached, it was simply a matter of the bowl being filled with the flood waters. Over 80% of New Orleans was covered by water. Saint Bernard's Parish (not a church, but a civic division) and the 9th Ward were especially hard hit, with people being rescued by boat through the roofs of their attics.



Above: Volunteers, mostly Sisters of Charity, pose in front of Raymond's House.

Shortly after the storm, which claimed over 1500 lives, the papers were filled with stories that can best be described as the "blame game": "The Mayor and his staff did not do enough," "FEMA was/seemed unprepared to respond," "The work of the Army Corps of Engineers was inadequate," "The City was dysfunctional," etc. All of these were contributing factors to the flooding caused by Lake Pontchartrain breaching the levees. But another factor one rarely hears about was the destruction of a levee by a commercial oil tanker. Thus the people of New Orleans do not refer to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath as one of the worst natural disasters in our country's history; rather they call it the worst human disaster. Another sad fact about the aftermath of the disaster is that, of the victims who tried to rebuild their homes and lives, 65% were ripped off by scams and dishonest contractors.

With this as context, it is time to look at Nuns Build 2013. Saint Bernard Project is one of the groups working to rebuild homes for folks dislocated by the flooding. This grassroots organization has rebuilt hundreds of homes, allowing families to return to their roots. Saint Bernard Project has a current waiting list of 153 homeowners. Nuns Build has worked with Saint Bernard Project for five years. Each November, women religious and their families and friends travel to New Orleans to give of their time and talent for a week. Volunteers are assigned to different homes that are in varying stages of rebuilding. At each site there are Americorps Volunteers who organize, train, and direct the work.

Continued, see p. 14

Nuns Build 2013

Four Sisters of Charity Join Other Congregations in New Orleans to Rebuild a Home

by Jean Flannelly, SC



Sister Rosemary Petrucelli received a red hammer in recognition of four years of service.



Sister Eileen Judge, who attended Nuns Build for the first time in 2013, came away with several new skills.

Sisters of Charity Sponsorship

by Karen Helfenstein, SC

The word Sponsorship is a relatively new term that describes the relationship of religious Congregations to organizations. Some of those founded by the Sisters of Charity are more than 100 years old, others have been opened more recently in response to new needs. Several years ago the Sisters of Charity of New York asked a group of Sisters and lay colleagues to work together on a plan to maintain and strengthen the sense of Mission in each of our sponsored ministries. This group became a Task Force and explored how to sustain the philosophy and values inherent in our Sisters of Charity Mission Statement developed in 1978.

In 2004 the Sisters of Charity adopted the Sponsorship Statement that reads: "The Sisters of Charity of New York sponsor ministries as a concrete expression of our mission to reveal God's love to all in need, especially the poor. The mission of these faith-based services extends the mission of Charity by the quality of the programs, fiscal stability, and organizational culture. We work in partnership to promote common values."



As Sponsors, the Sisters of Charity of New York have the authority to determine the mission of each organization and, assisted by lay leaders, to instill in workers the tradition and philosophy that spring from our core values: Respect for each person, Integrity in all deliberations, Compassion toward everyone, and Excellence in Service. Sponsors aim to ensure that workers today continue to interact with each other and with the people served by the organization in a manner that identifies us as

followers of Jesus.

In 2007, the Congregation established an office of Sponsorship Services and appointed a full time Director of Sponsorship Services. In the past seven years, the various sponsored ministries have each included, in their employee orientation programs, a session dedicated to the mission and history of both the organization and the Sponsors, the Sisters of Charity of New York. Given the increasing number of laity working with us, there is a need to be intentional in this effort to tell the story that was often told by Sisters working side by side with lay workers.

Saint Joseph's Medical Center

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Admissions | 9,033 |
| Discharges | 8,976 |
| Ambulatory Surgery Visits | 3,578 |
| Emergency Room Visits | 39,509 |
| Primary Care Clinic Visits | 28,323 |
| Outpatient Psychiatry Visits | 123,979 |
| Outpatient Rehabilitation Visits | 8,735 |
| Renal Dialysis Visits | 4,548 |
| Methadone Clinic Visits | 587,661 |
| Alcohol Clinics | 46,315 |
| Private Referred Ambulatory Visits | 68,841 |
| Dental Clinic Visits | 7,359 |
| Residential Days – Supportive Housing | 216,657 |

College of Mount Saint Vincent

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Total Enrollment as of 9/1/13 | 1781 |
| Undergraduate College | 1,481 *FTE PT/59 |
| Nursing Degree Completion (2nd degree) | 132 *FTE |
| Graduate Students | +/- 99 *FTE |

*FTE = Full Time Equivalent

SC Housing Development Corp.

Affordable Housing Units by Location

| Location | Units | Residents |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| Manhattan | 68 | 166 |
| Rockland County | 106 | 113 |
| Staten Island | 451 | 528 |

Our poor little mustard seed spreads its branches well.

Elizabeth Ann Seton

Sister Barbara Ford Peace Center

Mission in Guatemala

| Program | Participants |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Prevention of violence | 210 |
| Youth | 255 |
| Nutrition | 75 |
| Human rights education | 2,650 |

Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center

135 Children in residence,
68 discharges

- » 35 to home/family
- » 22 to other facility
- » 2 to foster care
- » 3 deaths
- » 10 lost bed when hospitalized

John A. Coleman School

Unduplicated count of
918 children served

- » 62 in home & community-based settings
- » 566 school age, preschool, integrated and early intervention settings
- » 371 received 944 evaluations
- » 345 families received ongoing service coordination

Children's Rehabilitation Center

Unduplicated Count of 1,539 children served

- » 26,047 medical & therapeutic services provided
- » 643 new referrals to Children's Rehabilitation Center
- » 31 families receiving Care-At-Home case management
- » 22 training & staff development opportunities

Elizabeth Seton Women's Center

New board appointed in June 2013

Together we have discovered the amazing number of lives touched by the services provided through the sponsored ministries of the Sisters of Charity. That number exceeds 1,000,000 in any given calendar year. This story is a summary of the life-giving and life-saving work that goes on every day as our lay colleagues do extraordinary things, in our name, for those in need.

The disciples of John the Baptist were sent by John to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come or shall we wait for another?" In reply Jesus told them, "Go, and tell John what you see: the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the poor have the word of God preached to them." So the disciples of John went back to him and together they became aware of all that God was doing right before their eyes.

Today, many may ask of Sisters, "As you grow older and fewer, is this all there is to your mission or will these good works continue?" In reply we can say, "Look around you and see that children live in safe homes, elderly people have affordable housing, the sick are healed, the hungry are fed, the homeless have the word of God revealed to them, new immigrants find community and relief of some of their burdens, and blessed are we who eat of the fruit of the fields of our farm." God is doing new things today. ■

Fox House

Emergency Housing

- » Capacity for 17 families
- » 76 families served in 2013
- » This saw a 33% increase in families referred to Fox House by the Department of Homeless Services.

Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates

Over 3,000 lives touched

- » Shelters visited every week for 2-3 hour sessions
- » Each week street ministry takes place reaching those living in parks, under overpasses, and other public locations.

Part of the Solution (POTS)

More than 18,000 individuals assisted.
Note: This represents a 50% increase,
up from 12,000 in 2012.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Individuals enrolled in *SNAP | 1,200 |
| Evictions prevented | 192 |
| Individuals receiving *EITC | 161 |
| Individuals placed in supportive housing | 28 |
| Meals provided | 680,000 |
| Individuals received Case Management services | 4,500 |
| Service units in Day-to-Day Program (showers, haircuts, clothing supplied, etc.) | 46,000 |
| Families participated in the Family Club Program | 12 |
| Cash and non-cash benefits provided to the surrounding community | \$8.8 mil |

*SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
*EITC = Earned Income Tax Credit

Sisters Hill Farm

- » 80,000 lbs. of food grown
- » 10,000 lbs. donated to those in poverty
- » 232 shareholders receive weekly shares of vegetables from May to November

Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center (Casa de Esperanza)

More than 413 new
immigrants served

- » English language classes
- » Citizenship classes
- » Advocacy, parenting
- » Health workshops
- » Immigration workshops
- » Immigration attorney consultations
- » Skills training and job placement, etc.

The New York Foundling

| | |
|---|--------|
| Day care/ nursery | 80 |
| Summer camp | 135 |
| After school | 218 |
| Foster Boarding Homes | 1,037 |
| Congregate Care | 355 |
| Children reunited-family | 304 |
| Foster children adopted | 94 |
| Families Receiving Preventive Services | 671 |
| Individuals Receiving Temporary Housing, Youth Aging Out | 25 |
| Individuals in Maternity Residence | 28 |
| Individuals receiving Counseling | 322 |
| Individuals- Treatment for Addiction | 66 |
| Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Residences | 196 |
| Adults Receiving Overnight Respite | 75 |
| Children Receiving Overnight Respite | 164 |
| Haven Academy | 239 |
| Head Start- Puerto Rico | 1,190+ |
| Total Services | 5,199 |



Sister Miriam Anne during her tenure at St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan.

SISTER MIRIAM ANNE BRENNAN

Continued from p. 3

During this time the idea of natural childbirth was becoming popular and, in the evenings, Sr. Anne held maternity classes for patients, nurses, students, and even expectant fathers. With Dr. Jere Faison she helped to create the first Premature Ambulance "Preemie Transport" and Premature Center in New York City. By using city money and private financial aid, at-risk babies born prematurely at other hospitals were brought to St. Vincent's to receive the latest in neonatal care.

It seems almost serendipitous that Sr. Anne herself was a one-and-a-half-pound preemie, and like other babies of that size, was not expected to live. Her parents, Mary and Thomas, kept their only child warm in a laundry basket surrounded by hot water bottles. And now she was able to provide the latest expertise and care for these tiniest of babies.

She truly loved her years in obstetrics and may have been a bit disappointed when, in 1957, she was sent to begin a new two-year School of Nursing at St. Vincent's Hospital on Staten Island. The work was exciting and challenging and, as she had done and would continue to do throughout her nursing years, she multi-tasked bravely and with a great deal of enthusiasm as the Director of Nursing.

These were wonderful years for her. She loved the intimacy of Staten Island because she really got to know the Sisters, the staff, the students, and the patients as friends and as family. And it was here that she began her lasting friendship with Sr. Mary Linehan.

Nine years later, in 1966, she was once again open to the

Spirit when the General Assembly felt the need for a consultant for the Sisters' health care. They initiated the position of Health Care Coordinator and Sister Miriam Anne was chosen for the job. (This was the first time that one sister was appointed by the Council to oversee the health care for the entire community.)

With no real job description at hand, she sought advice from the Sisters, nurses, and Dr. Raymond Boller, Personnel Health Director at St. Vincent's in Manhattan. As Coordinator she was responsible to address the health needs of all the sisters, to introduce them to the newest trends in preventive health, to help them understand and accept the fact that, even though they were all self-sacrificing people (as their own mothers had been), they still needed to embrace a common-sense attitude about their own health. Her own common-sense approach to life, her wit, her compassion, and her inborn positive outlook on life were useful tools for her success in this undertaking.

Her eternal optimism went with her to St. Joseph's Hospital in 1970 when she became Director of its School of Nursing P.N. Program and then Assistant Director for In-Service Education for Nurses.

In 1981 she became the Nursing Administrator for the Convent of Mary the Queen, the retirement home for our Sisters, along with another term as Community Health Coordinator. She then undertook the task of part-time coordinator of nursing services for the Sisters at the Convent of Mount Saint Vincent.

For the last six years she has been volunteering her services at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, where she now lives, as a "ward clerk." However, Sr. Anne is a special type of ward clerk: her health expertise, her cheerfulness, and her enthusiasm for all of life are sources of comfort to all those who live in the Convent. She also likens herself to "an old shoe in the closet—one which people take out when they want comfort." Well, we all know that, after 75 years as a Sister of Charity, she is most certainly more than that. She truly brings an enormous amount of comfort to all and she does it with a thankfulness to God and the Congregation for trusting her, training her, and giving her responsibilities that have made her life fulfilled. It is a trust that has been well placed. ■

SISTER MIRIAM ANNE AND ME

Continued from p. 3

My first introduction to the Sisters was as a college student in 1975. Working at a newly opened senior citizen project in Yonkers, I met my very first Sister of Charity. Sister Miriam Anne Brennan was reaching out to coordinate with some seniors in need of affordable housing. Sr. Annie was then Administrator of the Convent of Mary the Queen and she introduced me to Sr. Mary Linehan, President of St.

Joseph's Hospital, who was just about to open their Nursing Home. Through these connections, we developed a holistic array of services to seniors throughout Yonkers. They knew that working with other providers in collaboration, they could extend their reach to many more. These Sisters were forward-thinking and true to the mission of the Congregation, to help those in need, particularly the poor.

Working with St. Joseph's over the years, we have developed additional housing, expanding the number of people served. If not for Sr. Annie Brennan's original introduction, maybe our paths would never have crossed and my own commitment to the poor possibly would not have been established or deepened. I guess Sr. Annie was my spark. "There but for the grace of God ..." ■

Jim Landy, Associate

CLINICA MEDICA Y DENTAL STA. ELIZABETH ANN SETON



From left to right: Patricia Rosso, Katherine Dowdle, Bernadette Amicucci, and Kathryn Caltabiano



Inset photo: Sr. Anne Denise Brennan (back right) and Sr. Ceil Harriendorf (front right) hosted the nurses at their convent.

Alumnae Bring the Spirit of CMSV Nursing to Guatemala

by Bernadette Amicucci
DNS, RN, CNE

*To speak the joy of my soul at
the prospect of being asked to
assist the poor, visit the sick,
comfort the afflicted, clothe
little innocents and teach
them to love God!*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

native local physician, Dr. Jose Miguel Vasquez, the nurses helped to assess and provide care to the underserved people of the area during the week of February 2 to 9.

In addition to their work in the clinics, the alumnae had the opportunity to forge bonds with the Sisters of Charity whose work was established 53 years ago in this area. Sisters Immaculata Burke, Marie Tolle, Ann Denise Brennan, and Cecelia Harriendorf hosted the women at their convent. The histories of the Sisters of Charity, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Louise de Marillac were explored. Time was also provided for spiritual reflection and renewal. A visit to the Barbara Ford Peace Center in Santa Cruz concluded the trip. Sister Virginia Searing shared some of the poignant and violent history of the Guatemalan people as well as the vision and mission of the Center for the future. Many opportunities exist at the Center for interested volunteers to work with the Guatemalan people.

The alumnae visited many areas in Guatemala and were welcomed by the people everywhere they went. They were able to experience the beauty and color of the country, its people, and the Mayan culture. It was a learning experience as well as a service mission for all involved.

The medical and pastoral efforts of the Sisters of Charity in Guatemala have been supported by the Catholic Diocese of Spokane, Washington, for over 50 years. Bishop Blase J. Cupich of Spokane visited the area to witness the many charitable works being performed. Mass was concelebrated at the convent with a neighboring parish priest, Rev. David Baronti.

The CMSV nursing alumnae included:

- » Bernadette (DeNisco) Amicucci DNS, RN, CNE of Pleasantville, NY; CMSV Post masters certificate in nursing education, Class of 2007
- » Kathryn (O'Brien) Caltabiano MS, RN of Oswego, NY; CMSV BSN Class of 1980
- » Katherine (Sullivan) Dowdle MS, RN, CNE of Dobbs Ferry, NY; CMSV BSN Class of 1980
- » Patricia (Jadge) Rosso BSN, RN of Manhasset, NY; CMSV BSN Class of 1990

The alumnae described their experience as "a journey to provide care and also feed one's soul."

Information about the Barbara Ford Peace Center can be obtained by emailing centrodepazbarbaraford@gmail.com Future alumnae trips are planned. Those interested can contact Sr. Cecelia Harriendorf at the Center. ■

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

Please visit our website at www.scny.org/memoriam.html for complete biographies of our Sisters.

Sister Agnes Connolly, SC (Sr. Agnes Miriam)

Entered: 1940 + Date of Death: 11/17/13 + Age: 95
Congregation President: 1979–1987

As a nurse, Sister Agnes inspired all with her knowledge, professionalism, and dedication in caring for the sick and those who cared for them. As a sister in leadership, she was innovative, decisive, and inspirational. *See page 6.*



Sister Ruth Marion McCullough, SC

Entered: 1938 + Date of Death: 11/26/13 + Age: 97

Sister Ruth Marion's first ministry was education but her accounting acumen was quickly recognized. She served in the field of accounting for St. Vincent's Hospital and for the Archdiocese of New York. Her business and organizational talents were greatly appreciated wherever she served.



Sister Marian C. Delaney, SC (Sr. James Marian)

Entered: 1952 + Date of Death: 11/29/13 + Age: 79

Sister Marian's active ministry was all in the field of nursing. She will be remembered for her kindness and compassion as well as for the excellent nursing care she provided for so many throughout her lifetime.



Sister Regina Catherine Gorga, SC

Entered: 1941 + Date of Death: 12/1/13 + Age: 93

A career educator, Sister Regina Catherine was a special woman who gave of herself constantly in every situation. Her friendliness and helpfulness contributed to the spirit of each and every ministry in which she served.



Sister Mary Whamond, SC (Sr. Mary de Lourdes)

Entered: 1943 + Date of Death: 12/12/13 + Age: 94

Ministering first with the Order of the Visitation and then with the Sisters of Charity, Sister Mary served as educator, administrator, and secretary. In every experience of her life, she reflected joy, humor, and great kindness.



Sister Claire Marian Barton, SC

Entered: 1947 + Date of Death: 1/17/14 + Age: 88

Sister Claire's entire ministry was spent in hospitals managed and staffed by the Congregation. As a supervisor, administrator, chaplain, and volunteer she brought the mission of the Sisters of Charity to each of her assignments. Her dedicated service to patients, their families, and staff are an inspiration for us all.



Sister Constance Horan, SC (Sr. Constance Marie)

Entered: 1932 + Date of Death: 1/20/14 + Age: 100

Sister Constance was a faithful and innovative educator. As educator, Sr. Constance was best known for her work at Grace Institute. Her remarkable talents were especially recognized in the Merchandising Department where she supported many immigrants in their careers.



Sister Martha Cummings, SC (Sr. James Carmita)

Entered: 1955 + Date of Death: 2/16/14 + Age: 76

Sister Martha began her ministry in education. She would go on to nursing, then administration. Sister Martha was a kind and compassionate teacher and nurse. Her students, patients, and all who worked with and for her enjoyed her sense of humor and her quick wit.



Sister Immaculata Burke, SC

Entered: 1953 + Date of Death: 3/8/14 + Age: 94

Missioned to Guatemala since 1971, Sr. Immaculata had the heart of a true daughter of Elizabeth Seton, the soul of a missionary, the skill of a healer, the compassion of one who walked the way of charity "with the least" of the brothers and sisters of Jesus.



Sister Miriam Thomas Collins, SC

Entered: 1951 + Date of Death: 3/20/14 + Age: 80

After teaching for thirteen years, Sr. Thomas served as a community organizer in the South Bronx. She was widely known in the South Bronx because of her energy and exuberance. She worked closely with the people, helping them to meet their needs. She held a seat in the Hunts Point Community Corporation.



Sister Jean Atkinson, SC

Entered: 1950 + Date of Death: 5/1/14 + Age: 81

Sister Jeanne's ministries were in elementary education and library science, serving in schools and the medical field. She became known for her cheerful smile, friendliness, and sense of humor.



Sister Winifred O'Toole, SC (Sr. Marian Robert)

Entered: 1952 + Date of Death: 5/1/14 + Age: 81

A born teacher, Sr. Winifred excelled in primary education, serving for over twenty-five years at schools throughout the Archdiocese. She then used her expertise to teach Special Education. She became interested in liturgical dance and shared her talent at many Congregation prayer services.



Catechetical Office Hits Milestone

Reflecting on Sisters of Charity Religious Education History

by Constance Brennan, SC

The Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York celebrated its 30th anniversary in the autumn of 2013. Since its founding in January 1983 by Cardinal Terence Cooke and Sister Joan Curtin, C.N.D., countless catechetical leaders have ministered tirelessly to hand on the faith. They heard the command, “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mk.16:16). Cardinal Dolan has said theirs is a sacred task, and many others have praised their vision, courage, and commitment to spreading God’s word.

Reflecting on the dedication of these catechists conjures up images of Elizabeth Seton and the work of our first Sisters in New York. Today, if Elizabeth Seton were walking the streets of New York, she would no doubt be actively involved in the catechetical program. Her letters reveal that she was truly committed to the children entrusted to her care, longing to communicate God’s love for them. In addition to serving as administrator at St. Joseph’s Free School in Emmitsburg, Maryland, she accepted the additional task of teaching religion. A visit to Emmitsburg almost always brings a sister to Elizabeth’s beloved grotto on St. Mary’s Mountain, where



Sister Mary Jerome Ely organized adult religion classes on Sunday afternoons in St. Peter’s Church on Barclay Street in lower Manhattan, providing the parents with the catechetical knowledge their children learned during the week.

she can imagine Elizabeth seated on a small, sturdy rock, surrounded by children. They listen attentively as she prepares them to receive the Eucharist for the first time, or conveys to them the tenderness of their heavenly Father. There, in spite of the many hardships she endured, she exuded a peace that touched the hearts of many youngsters.

Memories of Elizabeth Seton’s selfless dedication to religious instruction must have motivated the sisters when they came to New York, for from their early days they followed her example. As Manhattan became the “island of immigrants,” it also became the “island of churches.” The Bishops established one parish after another, and the newly appointed pastors faced

overwhelming responsibilities. Almost at once, they recognized the need to tell the children the story of God’s love, and to introduce them to the life of Jesus and to prepare them for the sacraments, they frequently turned to the sisters.

As early as 1854, Rev. Walter Quarter, pastor of St. Lawrence O’Toole, asked Mother Mary Jerome Ely for sisters to instruct the children in his parish. She graciously answered his call. Sister Mary Josepha, with Frances Quinn, a student from the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent, walked from the motherhouse at McGown’s Pass at 105th Street to 84th Street several times a week. They crossed fields, muddy or frozen, encountered geese and cows, and passed Shantytown along the way that they might nurture the faith of the young children.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, before pastors could build their parish schools, they made similar requests and, again, the sisters responded. They traveled from St. Lawrence on East 84th Street to

St. Paul, Harlem, and for twenty years to St. Rose of Lima in Washington Heights. They also taught in St. Monica, St. Bernard, and Sacred Heart Parishes. ■

French Bread Baskets by CASA

Happy memories and lots of photos weren’t the only souvenirs that Sisters Jean Bocian and Terese McElroy brought home from their Vincentian Heritage pilgrimage to France a few years ago. They were fascinated by the square bread baskets that they saw in every outdoor market. Made of brightly colored cloth, the baskets seemed perfect for the talented seamstresses at Casa de Esperanza to replicate.

Sister Jean remarked, “From France, the land of St. Vincent de Paul, we



brought back these bread baskets. Giving bread to the hungry was so much a part of Vincent’s ministry. In Yonkers the

women at Casa figured out how to make a pattern and re-create the baskets. We sell their crafts and return the money to them, so they in turn can provide bread for their families. It seems like a very Vincentian thing to do!”

With Sr. Jean as Director, Casa was opened by the Congregation in 1998 in Yonkers, NY, as a multi-service center for those newly arrived in this country. Casa is currently a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity. ■ Regina Bechtle, SC



“Come and Serve” with the Sisters of Charity Federation Group

Mary Lou McGrath, SC

January 2014. With gratitude to the Sisters of Charity of New York for a generous grant, two students from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, Katelyn Wentworth and Kristen Macatangay,

and I arrived at the House of Charity in New Orleans for a “Come and Serve” experience. We were welcomed by the Sisters who staff the Federation House, among them our Sr. Claire Regan, ten other college students, and the Sisters of Charity who accompanied them.

Driven by a desire to join others in continued post-Katrina work, we were filled with energy. We were assigned by the Saint Bernard Project to reconstruction work, where we battled the “Arctic Cold” snap (what a surprise!) and worked on houses in various stages of “tear down and build up.” Although we came to give, we received much! Listening to the stories of the families, their courage and perseverance, filled us with gratitude and awe. We reflected on our daily experience, prayed together, and even had a chance to visit the French Quarter and see a few parades kick off Carnival Season.

We have lots to share with everyone at the college and the Sisters. It was a great opportunity for all of us to get to know each other, spend time with other Sisters from the Charity Family, and help those struggling to rebuild their lives. The experience continues to unfold within each of us as we returned to Campus. ■

NUNS BUILD

Continued from p. 7

Although it was the first trip for Srs. Margaret Ellen Burke, Jean Flannelly, and Eileen Judge of Stanfordsville, New York, to Nuns Build, it was the fourth for Sr. Rosemary Petrucelli. She was among the five honorees receiving a Red Hammer at the 2013 dinner honoring the 80-plus volunteers from across the country who came to New Orleans for the sixth Nuns Build. The Red Hammer is awarded for four years of service.

Our experience is best described as the Charity Connection. We were warmly welcomed at the House of Charity where we joined 17 other Charity groups from Cincinnati, Halifax, Leavenworth, Nazareth, and New Orleans. We were all assigned to the same work site. The house had been framed but there were no interior walls. Before long we became experts in measuring, cutting, rasping, and attaching drywall. When we finished on Friday, the house had walls that were ready for mudding.

Raymond, the homeowner, is a native of New Orleans and a U.S. Air Force veteran. He escaped with his wife, daughter, and granddaughter and relocated in Texas. In 2006 his wife died, adding to the burden of living. He has come through on the other side and was looking forward to coming home before Christmas. Twice he visited us and was very grateful and quite generous in complementing us on our work.

Back home at the House of Charity, the sense of community was palpable and especially evident as we gathered for Morning Prayer before heading off to our work site. Lest you get the impression that it was all work, we need to talk about the Knights of Columbus, who sponsored an opening dinner and provided lunch on a couple of days.

Saint Jude’s Center also feted us and we watched a film about the Women Religious in New Orleans entitled *We Will Not Be Moved*. The documentary narrated the stories of the Sisters who ministered here prior to Katrina, reviewed the damages they sustained and their refusal to leave the City and its people. The Tropical Isle is one of the landmarks in the French Quarter. Its owners treated us to free drinks in their upstairs room, where some of the sisters demonstrated championship skills at Air Hockey.

On Thursday, all involved in the Saint Bernard Project gathered for a Welcome Home party for Miss Virginia. Her home was completed! Friday night was another trip to the French Quarter for local food and Cajun dancing. It seems that if you were good at Irish step dancing, you have a foot up on Cajun dancing.

An image that best describes the week is a community of women rooted in Christ and impelled to serve. ■

LEFSA Hosts Super Bowl Sunday

by Patrice Athanasidy

The Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates (LEFSA) turned the Super Bowl into a truly super Sunday for a number of homeless people in the St. Jean Baptiste Church area of Manhattan. The brainchild of James Addison, operations manager at LEFSA, this special Super Bowl Sunday was a way for James' family to share their Super Bowl tradition with a number of those in the community who had no place to see the game. James said he and his family often gather for the Super Bowl, so this year he asked them if they would like to share their party with members of the St. Jean Baptiste community. His family happily agreed and began planning a menu. He put word out on the street and on Super Bowl Sunday, some 35 people joined in the party.

Members of the Addison family and LEFSA did all the cooking and kept the food rolling from kickoff to halftime to the final whistle. Guests feasted on chili, wings, and other typical Super Bowl fare, while enjoying

the game and conversation. One gentleman began teaching James's grandson how to play chess before the game started.

Pointing to the community feeling, James said, "It was probably one of the best times I had at the Super Bowl. I think I am going to make it an annual event." He said he could not have done it without the help of his family and Karolina May, the Director of LEFSA. He said the guests were all very grateful that LEFSA had thought of them.

Sister Karen Helfenstein described how James talked about his idea just a few weeks before and how amazing it was that it all came together so quickly. "They had between 30 and 35 guys coming. They just kept food coming. They made it such a wonderful party." She concluded, "The guys are still saying, 'thanks so much for thinking of us.'"

LEFSA runs a number of programs year round for homeless men and women. James says the main goal is always to make the people he visits with feel comfortable and safe. The first important step, he said, is treating each person with dignity and respect. ■



Message in a Bottle from Seton Village

Residents and staff of Seton Village, a Sisters of Charity-sponsored affordable housing complex for seniors in Nanuet, NY, are known for their fun-loving and creative spirit. For Seton Village's tenth anniversary last year, a group took an early fall cruise to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Sister Eileen Patricia Walsh, Resident Services Director, came up with a unique public relations idea. She and resident Barbara Heaney arranged to drop two bottles into the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean, each containing greetings, information about Seton Village, and a request for the finders to drop a note in reply. On November 12, Sr. Eileen opened her e-mail to find this note:



Hello residents of Seton Village,

Happy 10th Anniversary, this year!!

My name is Shawna (age 43). I think you will be pleased to hear that my Husband (54), Mike Finley, found your message in a bottle while he was beach combing, in Morden, Nova Scotia, yesterday, November 11, 2013. It was quite a pleasant surprise! We are wondering if you would like for us to put your note back in the bottle, add a note of our own, then toss it back into the Bay of Fundy so the next person who may find it will know where the bottle has traveled? We would be happy to do so! Thanks for sharing the fun with us!!!

As they say, you never know.... ■

ReginaBechtle, SC

Save the Date



Join Us

Wednesday, September 17, 2014
for lunch at

Xaviars X2O on the Hudson

Please help us support the Sisters of Charity ministries to those living in poverty.

11:30 am to 3:00 pm

71 Water Grant Street

Yonkers, NY 10701

Good food, old and new friends

Call Mary Ann Lynch at 718-879-5267

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2014 Annual Spring Benefit



A beautiful spring evening at the Water Club on New York City's eastside waterfront was the setting for the 9th Annual Spring Benefit. Nearly 200 partners in ministry joined Sisters, staff, and friends to enjoy good food, conversation, and friendship in support of our ministries of service to those living in poverty. Deryck A. Palmer and Thomas Hoering were this year's honorees. We hope you'll join us next year for this wonderful event.

