



SISTERS  
of CHARITY  
NEW YORK

# Vision

VOLUME 14, ISSUE II, Spring 2010

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Sr. Patricia Brennan has been a counselor and social worker at Fox House since 1989.

## Building Houses, Building Lives

by Eric P. Feldmann

When the Sisters of Charity of New York first articulated their purposes in their certificate of incorporation in January of 1849, they had, as their focus, the very people who, over 160 years later, are being served through the housing programs they sponsor.

The mission statement for their housing efforts reflects their concern for those with the greatest vulnerability. In part, it states that the Sisters of Charity of New York sponsor housing “as a concrete expression of our mission to reveal God’s love to all in need, especially the poor.” This commitment is an affirmation of the

importance of affordable housing for all.

Today, the Sisters of Charity sponsor nearly 500 units of housing with more than an additional 200 units under development.

The housing serves people who are elderly, mentally ill, formerly homeless and young, single mothers with babies. It spans a wide geographic area, from Staten Island to Manhattan to Rockland County.

Despite the range of programs offered, there are common characteristics: the housing is affordable, secure and well-

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## Letter From the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

During the cold winter months that we have just left behind, we tended to be more mindful about the plight of people who are homeless. Likewise, after the earthquake in Haiti, we were conscious of the urgent need for the survivors to find housing, even if only substantial tents, before the rainy season arrived. We recall that countless numbers of volunteers rushed to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to assist in the rebuilding of homes; their efforts continue even now, five years later. This issue of *Vision* focuses on the different types of housing that the Sisters of Charity have been involved in providing for diverse populations in the New York area.

I invite you to take a look at your own home with fresh eyes. The American poet John Howard Payne wrote this memorable line, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." It may or may not be humble, but look around and see the many blessings it offers you. One formerly homeless man in New York City said that each and every day he awakes and thanks God that he now has a home - and heat and hot water. Daily, he continues to be amazed that this single room occupancy is actually his. What blessings does your home provide? Have you become so accustomed to your home that you no longer really "see" it?

One's home often goes beyond the physical amenities and bespeaks hospitality. It is a place where we welcome others and engage in life-giving conversation. It is a place where we find true comfort, even when we are alone. It is a place where we can truly be ourselves, where we become renewed physically, intellectually and spiritually.

Jesus tells us, "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10). May God grant us the grace to live life fully as we go forth from our homes each day with gratitude and with the knowledge that God has emboldened us to be people of love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sr. Dorothy Metz, SC  
President

*Vision* enables the Sisters of Charity of New York to make a cohesive statement about how they reveal God's love in their lives and the many and varied ways in which they respond to the signs of the times.



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Article contributions to this publication are welcome; however, all submissions are subject to editorial and space constraints. See back page for our mailing address.



# Things of Beauty; Joys Forever

Mount Saint Vincent, which has been the Congregation's home base since 1857, is especially scenic in the spring. The natural beauty of the campus is enhanced by several sculptures by Sr. Margaret Beaudette.

A bronze grouping of St. Vincent de Paul with two students greets visitors to the College library.



In her campus studio, Sister works on her latest commission, featuring Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, the founder of the Assumptionist Fathers. It will be installed and dedicated this fall in Worcester, MA, at Assumption College, which was founded by the Assumptionists.

Photos by Chris Haggerty



This 10-ft.-high steel cross, adapted from the Congregation pin, greets visitors to the campus along the main road. It was dedicated on May 23, 1999 and includes a plaque in memory of Eileen Gagan Miller, CMSV class of 1934, at its base.



# Report from Haiti

SC Associate Miriam Ford and her friend Colleen Kelly, both nurse practitioners from the Bronx, were part of a six-person delegation that went to help with Haitian relief. Their first trip left New York on January 25. Their destination was Klinik Sen Michel, which is sponsored by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit who was part of the group. This report is excerpted from the emails that Miriam sent back



Despite TV reports, Miriam's group found no evidence of violence and insecurity in Port-au-Prince. Distribution of food, water and other necessities was orderly, as in this queue. In the darkest of times, Haiti has proven to be a country of brave, resilient and kind people and this behavior is far more prevalent than isolated incidents of violence.

able to distribute the aid provided by generous donors directly to the Haitian people faster than larger aid organizations could.

She reported many poignant stories. Of refugee camps numbering in the thousands. Of women giving birth in the streets. Of waking up at 5am to the sound of people singing songs of praise to Jesus. Of the theological college in the capital that lost eight seminarians. Of seeing only one food distribution center while travelling through Port-au-Prince. Of the hungry little girl who regularly came to a family that would share its food with her. Just before the earthquake, she was sent out to get an onion. The people in the home all survived; the little girl was killed.

Haitians were very distressed that their loved ones had died and had no proper funeral or burial. Even if you couldn't see bodies, the smell of death and decomposition was overwhelming.

Bishop Gumbleton has a web site where you can read more about the problems his group found and the work that's being done in Haiti. There also are more photos and videos at [www.bishopgumbleton.org](http://www.bishopgumbleton.org).

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Miriam Ford, fourth from left, with the faculty of the nursing school, where one of the tents will be used as a classroom.

during the two trips she made. In them, she described the conditions they found, the relief work that was being done, and the indomitable spirit of the Haitian people.

The Klinik Sen Michel building was not badly damaged, but survivors were reluctant to enter it and other standing structures for fear they might collapse in aftershocks, such as the 6.1 that came eight days after the initial 7.0 quake on January 12. Thankfully, all the Klinik's healthcare workers survived the quake, but they reported, "Everyone is homeless; we need help; we need everything."

Miriam's group brought down many medicines and supplies and evaluated future needs. They were



This young Haitian's spirit hasn't been crushed. Perhaps he was among the children hoping to get a double dose of cherry-flavored de-worming medication that Miriam had the foresight to bring.

# The Federation Sponsors a House of Charity

by Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC

The Sisters of Charity Federation, composed of 18 congregations across the United States and Canada, trace their roots back to the foundations laid by Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in France, and to Elizabeth Seton in the US. Together they have achieved what separately would have been more difficult, and the results of their collaboration have been marked by increased eagerness to expand projects and programs already in operation and discover new ways of being in partnership as well.

One group within the Federation is the Company of Charity Formation Personnel, CCFP. Its members are Sisters and Associates involved in the initial formation processes of their congregations: Vocation, Candidate and Novice Directors, those who work with Sisters in Temporary Profession, and Sisters and lay women who work with Lay Associates. They meet annually to share their wisdom and learn from one another. The meetings are always characterized by high energy and serious discussions about the tasks of the many levels of formation their congregations have entrusted to their care.

Several years ago, CCFP envisioned the establishment of a 'House of Charity,' an intentional community of Sisters of Charity. The vision became a reality as Federation leaders endorsed the proposal, agreed to support the House financially, and expressed willingness to encourage any member of their congregation who felt a call to be part of the inaugural community.

And so, this year, three Sisters will come together in New Orleans to share their home and their lives with young people whom they will invite singly and in groups, for shorter or longer periods of time, from many different parts of the country.

In this House of Charity young adults will experience community in all its aspects, living and working together, going about daily tasks such as shopping and cleaning, sharing meals, and building into the schedule space for shared prayer and reflection. The



Some of the Federation CCFP Sisters were volunteer leaders at the House of Charity during the Federation's Annual New Orleans Volunteer Experience in January. Sr. Claire E. Regan, SCNY, is in the center, wearing the hat. In front of her, in the purple jacket, is Sr. Renee Rose, DC-St. Louis. Third from left, peeking out, is Sr. Monica Gundler, SC-Cincinnati.

hope is that the time spent in this way will nurture the dreams and visions of the participants and provide a supportive environment for individual and group discernment about future life choices. The Sisters will serve as their mentors and joyful witnesses to the possibility of life lived in common.

The other goal of the program will be to provide volunteer ministry opportunities at various sites in the local area. New Orleans was chosen in large part because of the on-going need for rebuilding this still-ravaged city. The Sisters will also be involved in some aspect of ministry outreach.

Our Sr. Claire E. Regan is one of three Sisters who volunteered to be part of this venture. Blessed with many gifts of practical love for the poor and wonderful organizational ability, Claire will be an asset to the new local community and to the young people who will join them. She will soon connect with Sr. Monica Gundler, SC, from Cincinnati and Sr. Renee Rose, DC, from St. Louis as one of the founding members of this exciting new collaboration effort.

And the expected outcome? Simply a hope that the participants carry away with them a new understanding of and love for those whom they will have met along the way, a new sense of urgency about their part in creating a future full of promise. ■

*Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick is currently engaged in Retreat and Spiritual Direction programs and Charism Writing Projects for the Congregation.*



# Resurrecting New Orleans

by Sr. Mary Katherine Hamm, SC

Two students from the New York City area were part of a Sister of Charity Federation Service Trip to New Orleans during their Christmas 2009 vacation. Since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005, over two million volunteers have come to New Orleans, lending another layer of meaning to Blanche DuBois' words from the play "A Streetcar named Desire" – "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

The January 2010 service trip work force indeed became a force to be reckoned. It was comprised of rebuild project coordinators who were St. Vincent de Paul members from the local parishes; 19 young adults from across the US and Canada; and 11 Sisters of Charity. They cleared yards, caulked and painted houses and porches, installed attic stairs and floors and created a space for a food pantry with

energy, enthusiasm and compassion. Yet the change in the homes and projects was small compared to the change that took place in the hearts of the volunteers as they listened and learned from the survivors of Katrina.

The Sisters of Charity of New York sponsored Francelie St. Fort and Sabrina Booth on this service trip. Francelie is a nursing major in her junior year at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Sabrina graduated last year from CMSV and is now graduate student in Columbia University in the field of Mental Health. This admirable young woman was also one of the volunteers in the first year of our Charity in the City service program.

A day after this service trip, news came of the Haiti earthquake. One can only imagine how many years it will take for the people to recover from this catastrophe. With the help of volunteers of all ages, the people who live there won't have to do it alone.



Sr. Claire E. Regan in front of the House of Charity.

## Francelie St. Fort's Perspective

It has always been my dream to go to New Orleans, Louisiana; yet, finding a way to get there was a major challenge before me. Therefore, when Sr. Kati informed me of a service trip to New Orleans I was beyond excited, I knew this was a dream come true.

Before I arrived in New Orleans, I could not fully grasp the opportunity presented before me. It was not until Tuesday morning, after meeting many appreciative city residents that I realized how important my help would be to these people. The people of New Orleans were very grateful. They also were astonished to see how many people continued to care for them, although years have passed since this drastic tragedy. Nevertheless, I was more taken back by the New Orleaners willingness to help, feed, and provide for us, the volunteers. Although these individuals lost everything, they were willing to share the little they had left.

I thank God for this opportunity, because I realized I made a difference. It took the transformation of a damaged classroom into a food pantry to come to this understanding. A room, that initially looked as though it could never be restored to order by a single pair of hands, was transformed into a spacious well-stocked pantry by teamwork. Therefore, I left New Orleans with this thought: although impossible for one individual to rebuild a home, with helping hands, the people of New Orleans can reach endless possibilities. ➡



Sr. Kati Hamm with the two CMSV volunteers, Sabrina Booth (at left) and Francelie St. Fort.



The January group of volunteers outside the House of Charity.

## Sabrina Booth's Reflection

It is difficult to separate my thoughts and feelings about New Orleans without telling you about the people I had the opportunity to meet.

One of my assignments was to paint the home of a gentleman whose sole concern was to improve its condition so that his children could visit him (his wife has chosen not to resettle in New Orleans). He told me that the flood experience was like going on vacation for a couple of days – and being told you can't return home and your loved ones have been lost. It made me realize how much I take for granted being able to go home each day.

Another assignment for us was to pull weeds from a backyard, caulk windows and install attic stairs in a woman's house. She had been taken advantage by contractors. One of the volunteers asked her, "How do you cope with all that has happened?" Her response was that "you take the bitter with the sweet".

I was amazed by the continued faith in God of many of the residents of New Orleans. One lady cooked dinner for all the volunteers to show her appreciation for the work being done. Through it all, the people we met showed gracious hospitality to the volunteers, even though they may not have had much. The fact they prayed for us meant a lot to me and I was humbled by their kindness.

I desire to have faith that can withstand the tests of life and yet praise HIM at the end of the day. I may have already said this but, my New Orleans experience was truly unforgettable. ■

*Sr. Mary Katherine Hamm, a Sister of Charity – Halifax, is the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs. To learn more about volunteer opportunities with the Sisters, visit our web page <http://www.scny.org/becomevolunteer.html> or contact Sr. Katherine at [mkhamm@scny.org](mailto:mkhamm@scny.org) or 718.549.9200 x 264.*



## Building Houses

*(continued from front cover)*

maintained; residents are treated with dignity and offered services appropriate for their individual needs.

The first housing was developed on Staten Island in the mid 1980s. Under the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 Program, 75 units of affordable housing for the elderly were created on property originally owned by Olivet Presbyterian Church. To this day, there continues to be a strong relationship between the church and the Sisters of Charity; the current board chair is a member of the parish.

Since then, three additional 202 programs with a total of 217 units—St. Vincent's Manor, St. Elizabeth's Manor and Sister Elizabeth Boyle Manor—have been developed on Staten Island.



Joseph House on Staten Island was the Congregation's first housing development.

Under the 202 program, HUD provides the capital financing and operating subsidies needed. Each of the buildings has its own social service coordinator who offers recreational programming, helps residents with entitlements and provides access to community-based support services.

Residents of the 202 housing pay 30% of their



Seton Village in Nanuet looks like a condo community on a golf course.

adjusted income for their apartments; the Federal government pays the balance. Applicants must be 62 years of age or older and meet a maximum income threshold. They must also have a need based on spending 50% or more of their income on housing, living in substandard housing or being at risk of eviction.

In the late 1990s, the Sisters began planning for a 106-unit, affordable housing program for those 55 years of age and older. Today, Seton Village in Nanuet is a reality. It has three residence buildings

and a community center spread across a 14-acre campus. As with the housing on Staten Island, there is a social service coordinator. At Seton Village, this position is held by a member of the Congregation, Sr. Eileen P. Walsh, RN. The project was built with Low Income Housing Tax Credits and



bond funds. Residents' rents are based on their income.

In the mid 1990s, two additional projects were developed by the Sisters of Charity in Manhattan. Seton House, on Lexington Avenue at 121 Street, provides affordable housing to 16 families, ➡



many of whom were formerly homeless. Space within the building is rented to Harms Reduction, a community-based, not-for-profit coalition that offers counseling services to at-risk young people and adults. Seton House was built with funding from New York City. Casa Cecilia, which has 35 units spread between two buildings, is located in the Hamilton Heights section of Manhattan, on 153 Street just off Broadway. As with Seton House, Casa Cecilia offers housing to low-income families.



In the beginning: Sr. Florence Speth reviews blueprints for Fox House, which was still on the drawing board in this 1985 photo. With her is Joseph Druffel, known as the architect of the poor.

Also in Manhattan, on E. 117 Street, is Fox House. Sr. Florence Speth, who has worked with the poor in East Harlem for all her religious life, helped plan and develop this Tier II shelter. She has served as its executive director since it opened in 1989. Fox House is unique in that it provides housing, meals and support services to young, single mothers and their babies. The goal of Fox House is to offer transitional housing while the residents develop life skills to allow them to live in permanent, community-based housing.

Last year, Sr. Ann Citarella began working as the mission coordinator for the housing programs

operated by the Sisters of Charity. She insures that the residents and staff of the housing are mindful of the Congregation's housing mission. She also works with the social service coordinators, particularly in Manhattan, as they respond to the challenges facing the residents.

The housing efforts of the Congregation are very often carried out in collaboration with other not-for-profit organizations. On Staten Island, the social service programming is implemented under contract with the Community Agency for Senior Citizens and the Jewish Community Center. In Manhattan, the operational management and social service coordination are provided in partnership with West End Intergeneration Housing Development Fund Company.

Each of the housing programs has a separate board made up of Sisters of Charity and dedicated community residents. Drawing upon their areas of expertise, the board members help review policies, monitor the finances and provide counsel to the staff.

Currently, the Congregation has two other 202 projects under development on Staten Island, one with 60 units and another with 80 units. It also is completing construction on a 19-unit project being built on Staten Island under the HUD Section 811 Program, which is very much like the 202 Program but for residents with special needs. This project, Sister Louise de Marillac Manor, will serve the mentally ill.

The Congregation also is developing a 50-unit project for formerly homeless women with mentally disorders and their children. Sophia House will be on a parcel of land next to Casa Cecilia which the Congregation recently purchased from The New York Foundling, another Congregation-sponsored agency. There will be on-site support from social service personnel.

For more information on the housing sponsored directly by the Sisters of Charity of New York, please call Eric Feldmann's office at 718-477-6803. ■

*Eric Feldmann is the Executive Director of Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation. He has been associated with the Sisters of Charity since 1972 and began developing affordable housing in 1983.*

# Spring Benefit for Congregation's Ministries

This year's Spring Benefit proudly featured one of the Congregation's own: Sr. Trudé Collins.

Sr. Trudé, more commonly known in her South Bronx neighborhood by her religious name of Sr. Thomas, was selected to be the guest of honor at this year's fundraiser.



Sister is the Director of the Community Outreach Program in St. Athanasius parish, where she has lived and worked for almost 50 years as a very effective community leader.

Appropriately enough for someone who helped create over 5,000 units of quality, low-income housing for the working poor, an apartment building with 105 units for working families was named in Sister's honor in 2005. The Sr. Thomas, SC building is at 870 Southern Boulevard.

In January of this year, Sister Trudé/Thomas was named one of the 25 Influential Women in the Bronx for her mission to better the borough. (In *The BronxTimes*, January 14, 2010 issue.)

## About the Benefit

The purpose of this annual event is to raise funds to support the Congregation's *Charity Response Team (CRT)* – six ministries that address often-unmet needs. The CRT is comprised of:

- **The Elizabeth Seton Women's Center:** the Manhattan support group that welcomes ALL women regardless of age, income, ethnic group or religious belief.



"Faith sees...  
a giant oak in  
an acorn."

- **Fox House:** the East Harlem-based shelter for homeless young women and their children.
- **Seton House:** the East Harlem, multi-family facility that was renovated for the needs of formerly homeless families.
- **Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association:** the ministry that forms faith communities with the NYC homeless population found in shelters, drop-in centers, drug rehabilitation program and at an HIV/AIDS residence.
- **Part of the Solution (POTS):** the loving community in the Bronx that offers all low-income people who come to its door a community kitchen, pantry, legal services, case management and many other services.
- **Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center / AKA Casa de Esperanza:** The vibrant and welcoming community in Yonkers that responds to the needs of new immigrants with ESL and citizenship classes, baby-sitting, food and clothing, job opportunities, translating and advocacy services.

## About the Event

The three-hour Benefit was held at the Yale Club opposite Grand Central Station. It included a cocktail reception and silent auction. Pianist Laurence Rosania provided music. There was a raffle featuring a one-week stay at the Marriott Orlando World Center with airfare for four from New York to Orlando.

If you weren't able to join us on May 13, but would like to support our CRT ministries, contact Bill Hurley, Director of Development for the Congregation: 718-549-9200 x 234 or [bhurly@scny.org](mailto:bhurly@scny.org) ■

Many of the acorns produced last fall by the oaks at Mount Saint Vincent (and not eaten by the squirrels) are sprouting now.

They could be a metaphor for the growth of the Sisters of Charity of New York from the Congregation's early days.

*Quote by William Arthur Ward, 20th century scholar, editor, pastor, teacher and author of Fountains of Faith. He is one of America's most quoted writers of inspirational maxims.*



# The Oak of Shrub Oak

by Sr. Patricia McGowan, SC

This past fall, the first parish in the world named in honor of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton dedicated its Gala to a Sister of Charity. The pastor praised this Sister by calling her “our own Mother Seton; one who has touched the lives of literally thousands of parishioners for almost four and a half decades.”

That Sister of Charity is Sr. Miriam Gabriel Obraz.

In August 1966, Sr. Gabriel, along with five other Sisters of Charity, arrived at the historic village of Shrub Oak, NY, to open a new school. Sr. Gabriel was the first grade teacher. In 1974, she became the principal.

In these days of constant movement, it might be considered highly unusual for a person to stay in the same workplace for 44 years, but Sr. Gabriel has done just that because she “strongly believes in a Catholic education” and “wants the words of Mother Seton ‘be children of the Church’ to become an integral part of their primary education.”

To that end, at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School, the faith development of the children is foremost in Sr. Gabriel’s mind. So she ensures that “relationship with the Lord is nurtured and maintained,” through daily prayers, at frequent school liturgies and by practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

On the 100th day of this school year, the students in all grades proudly displayed the creative ways by which they were collecting money for the soon-to-be-built Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center in Yonkers. In March, after liturgy, the students put on a St. Patrick’s Day performance (served up with Irish soda bread) for local senior citizens.

A palpable feeling of happiness permeates the school building. Students, teachers, staff and parents are busy doing many things and doing them in a happy, orderly manner. Sr. Gabriel attributes this to her “wonderful, dedicated staff.” Still, this could not be the daily routine without a caring, dedicated leader.

As a principal she believes strongly in the importance of partnership with parents. To her, parents are the primary teachers and the role of the school is “to nurture, support and complement”



This is how Sr. Gabriel is most often seen in candid photos – bending over to help one of her students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School.

the work of these parents.

Perhaps, then, hearing the words of a parent can help explain why Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School has grown in numbers and in the esteem of so many: “We believe Seton has given our children strong foundations both spiritually and academically.”

And hearing the words of others can explain why Sr. Gabriel has become their “own Mother Seton”:

- Sr. Gabriel is “a woman of faith; a woman of vision; a woman of service.”
- Sr. Gabriel has “graced our children with the love of God and of learning.”
- Sr. Gabriel has “taught us to give, to respect, to understand, to forgive and to love.”

A Chilean teacher, Gabriela Mistral, once wrote, “Many things can wait. Children cannot. To them we cannot say ‘tomorrow.’ Their name is ‘today.’”

There have been thousands of children and thousands of “todays” for Sr. Gabriel at Shrub Oak. Dare we add “Ad multos annos” to her time there? ■

*Sr. Patricia McGowan has been teaching Journalism at the College of Mount Saint Vincent since 1981 and chaired the Communications Department there for nine years. She is on the advisory board for this newsletter.*



## Remembering Sr. Bobbie

May 5 will always be a significant but sad day for the Sisters of Charity of New York. It is the anniversary of the death of Sr. Barbara Ford in 2001.

Sr. Bobbie, as she was affectionately known to most, was serving in the Diocese of Quiché as a health coordinator when she was shot and killed in an apparent robbery attempt in Guatemala City.

Sister worked in Guatemala for 20 years. Since 1989, she had been helping victims of the country's 36-year civil war recover from their psychological wounds. She assisted the bishops of Guatemala in their project to aid in the recovery of bodies interred in mass graves; about 200,000 Guatemalans lost their lives in the war. She established the Mental Health Program of Quiché to help people cope with their memories of the terrible violence they witnessed.

The Sisters of Charity of New York have been healthcare and catechetical workers at several sites in Guatemala since 1971. They went there in response to a call from Pope John XXIII who asked North American Catholics to share personnel and

resources with Latin America. In some small villages in this Central American country, our Sisters were the first resident religious (sister or priest) to serve there in over 100 years.

Seven of our Sisters are currently on mission in Guatemala. Sr. M. Immaculata Burke is a registered nurse and the health coordinator for the Diocese of Solala. Sr. T. Marie Tolle is a catechist and trains others to be catechists; she also helps Sr. Immaculata in the clinic. Sr. Virginia Searing is Director of the Barbara Ford Peace Center in Santa Cruz de Quiché and is assisted by Sr. Mary Meyler. Sr. Eileen Judge, a geriatric nurse practitioner, is responsible for the healthcare of residents at Hogar de los Ancianos, a home for the elderly poor in Santa Cruz del Quiché. She also works part-time promoting our Associate program. (Our first Guatemalan Associate, Laura Morales Chitic, was received March, 2010). Sr. Gloria De Arteaga works on vocation outreach. Sr. Anne Denise Brennan is Formation Director for the Congregation and is setting up a program in Guatemala for women interested in exploring religious life. ■

## Report from Haiti *(continued from page 4)*

Miriam Ford and her husband Jack Marth have been SC Associates since 1992. Jack is a lawyer and works with POTS, one of the Congregation's sponsored ministries; see p.10. The Fords have three children.

**As we go to press, we received this thank you note from Miriam and Colleen Kelly for the \$28,600 that the Sisters, SC Associates, their staff and friends donated for Haitian relief.**

*Dear Sisters and fellow Associates,*

*Heartfelt "thank you" for your very generous support of the people of Haiti and - in particular - your support of the tent project.*

*Through your kindness, the Catholic*

*University of Haiti now has two large tents that are used as classrooms.*

*As the rainy season has begun, the students were unable to attend classes that had previously been held outside. The tents have made it possible for the students to continue their learning. The Director of the Nursing School reports, "the students are thrilled and very comfortable studying and taking their exams."*

*Thank you again. The charism of Elizabeth, Vincent and Louise shines through each of you - in your kind notes, generous donations, and most importantly, your prayers. Know that you are all in ours.*

*— Miriam & Colleen*



# St. Vincent's Hospital

As you probably are aware, a solution to the financial problems of St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan could not be found. The Sisters of Charity of New York are deeply saddened by this development.

For over 160 years, the Sisters and their lay associates at the hospital served the health needs of those in the lower west side of Manhattan.

Sister Jane Iannucelli, SC, the Director of Sponsorship Services for the Sisters of Charity of New York, also serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers. About the decision to close the facility, Sr. Jane said:

"The leadership of St. Vincent's has been truly humbled by the massive outpouring of support coming from all over Greenwich Village and beyond – not just in the hours since our Board of Directors came to the extremely difficult decision to close our inpatient and acute care services, but throughout the last months when our fate has hung in the balance. We will never be able to adequately express our gratitude to our doctors, nurses and staff; elected officials; and the community that we have called home for more than 160 years for their unwavering support



Sr. Loretto Bernard Beagan and a nurse at the Children's Day Party held during National Hospital Week, May 7-13 in 1967. These children had been born in St. Vincent's during that week five years earlier.

Sister was the Administrator at St. Vincent's Manhattan from 1939 to 1960, when she was elected Mother General of the Congregation, a position which she held until 1966.

She was a graduate of St. Vincent's School of Nursing. Mother Loretto was the first woman to receive the Distinguished Service Award of the American Hospital Association.

during these tough times. The Sisters of Charity acknowledge that the quality services to our patients are the result of the hard work of many colleagues. Though we wish there could have been a different outcome, we will fully cooperate with Governor Paterson's efforts to evaluate other healthcare opportunities, including the potential creation of an urgent care center combined with other vital services for the outpatient needs on the West Side of Manhattan."

## About St. Vincent's Hospital and the Sisters of Charity of New York

St. Vincent's was the first new mission of the Sisters of Charity of New York after they were formally established as a congregation in 1846. It got its start in a small, rented house on West 13 Street. Sister Mary Angela Hughes, SC, with three other Sisters, opened the 30-bed hospital November 1, 1849 to treat victims of a cholera epidemic that was raging through the city at that time.

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Sr. Miriam Gertrude Halloran with student nurses in 1982. During her 44-year association with St. Vincent's, Sister was a nurse, the head nurse / supervisor, a chemistry instructor, and head of the Science Dept. She oversaw nursing student activities, directed public relations at the hospital from 1966-86, coordinated alumnae relations, and served as the archivist.

## St. Vincent's Hospital

*(continued from page 13)*

St. Vincent's Hospital was a new type of mission for the Sisters of Charity of New York. Since first coming to New York City in 1817, the Sisters had been in child care and educational ministries. This was the first hospital they opened, but it wouldn't be the last. The Sisters proved so adept that by 1898, more than half of all private institutions in New York City were "Sister" managed hospitals. By 1908, when the Congregation was comprised of about 1,400 women, the Sisters of Charity of New York supervised 11 hospitals in which 12,000 patients were treated during that year alone. In all, the Sisters founded or administered 13 general or specialized hospitals in New York.

St. Vincent's always reflected the charism of the Sisters: to give every service in their power, especially to the poor and those who might need their service. Their opening of the facility filled one of New York City's longtime and desperate needs – a hospital that would serve those who could not afford to pay, as well as those who could. From the beginning, St. Vincent's was a haven for the sick poor; it welcomed all who needed its services, regardless of religion or race.

In 1892, the Congregation opened St. Vincent's School of Nursing to formalize the training of nurses. The school received its certification from the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1905, one of the first such schools to be so recognized.

Besides providing healthcare to those in the Chelsea and Greenwich Village area, over the years, St. Vincent's also treated victims of disasters, such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory conflagration on March 25, 1911, the sinking of the Titanic in April 1912 and the World Trade Center terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. It has served succeeding generations of poor immigrants over the decades.

St. Vincent's was one of the early institutions to respond to the AIDS epidemic. It diagnosed some of the first known cases of HIV in the city in the early 1980s. It opened its Comprehensive HIV Center in 1988; this clinic was the first of its kind on the east coast to welcome and care



At our Sponsorship Celebration last September, Sr. Miriam Kevin Phillips and Henry J. Amoroso accepted the Mission Award on behalf of Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers. Sr. Kevin is the Chief Mission Officer and Amoroso the President and CEO of SVCMC.

for individuals with the disease who were turned away and stigmatized elsewhere.

The Sisters of Charity of New York hope that elected officials who vowed to fight to preserve some services at St. Vincent's will be successful.

From the days of the cholera epidemic to the tragedy of 9/11, the Sisters of Charity have been in the forefront of the healthcare providers. They continue to sponsor:

- St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers, which they established in 1888
- St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester, which they founded in 1879 – the first hospital in New York State for the mentally ill.

In response to contemporary needs and events, the Sisters have expanded their ministries beyond the original ones of education, healthcare and childcare. They now:

- serve in parish ministries
- offer spiritual direction and retreat opportunities
- work in missions in Guatemala
- operate and serve in homeless, new immigrant and women's centers
- sponsor a number of affordable housing facilities for those in need
- are active in ecological concerns

You'll find more information about the Congregation's ministries and activities of today at our web site [www.scny.org](http://www.scny.org) ■



# In Memoriam



## **Sr. Mary Perpetua Collins • Educator / Administrator**

*Entered: 1923 • Final vows: 1929 • Age at death: 104 (1/27/2010)*

As a teenager, Marguerite first met and was impressed by the Sisters of Charity while visiting her hospitalized confessor. She entered the order at age 18 and took Mary Perpetua as her religious name.

Sister spent 55 fulfilling years in the education field. She first taught on the elementary level for 20 years, and then served as schools' administrator for 24 years. She was known as "a principal's principal" and kept up with the latest educational trends so that her students would have the best preparation possible. Sr. Perpetua's final ten years in a school were as a librarian.

At age 78, Sister took on a 2-year term as coordinator at the Mount Saint Vincent Convent, a ministry she found extremely satisfying.

Sr. Perpetua lived up to her religious name and was the longest-serving member of the community – 86 years.

### **Ministries**

#### *Bronx:*

- St. Gabriel (1942-58)

#### *Manhattan:*

- Blessed Sacrament (1926-42)
- St. Lawrence Academy (1958-60)
- St. Bernard (1971-81)

#### *Outside NYC:*

- St. Gregory's, Harrison (1960-64)
- Elizabeth Seton Academy, Yonkers (1964-66)
- Academy of Mount St. Vincent, Tuxedo (1966-70)



## **Sr. Patricia Humphrey • Educator**

*Religious Name: Sr. Michael Mercedes • Entered: 1949 • Final vows: 1958 • Age at death: 80 (3/1/2010)*

For 42 years, Sr. Patricia was an elementary school teacher par excellence who believed that education encompassed the whole life of a child, even at home. She embodied Mother Seton's belief that tenderness is "the language children best understand." Creative and energetic, Sister gave herself fully to the schools and parishes where she served, and was much loved by all.

Her longest ministry by far, was in White Plains, where she taught at the parish school for 24 years and continued to volunteer at the school and in the parish for 14 years after her retirement.

When ill health brought Sr. Patricia to Mary the Queen,

she enjoyed the activities there and the visits from the many friends she made in her 38 years in White Plains.

### **Ministries**

#### *Bronx:*

- St. Raymond's (1952-54)

#### *Manhattan:*

- Immaculate Conception (1954-60)
- Our Lady of Good Counsel (1960-66)
- Holy Name of Jesus (1966-70)

#### *White Plains:*

- St. John the Evangelist (1970-94)



## **Sr. Dorothy O'Brien • Educator**

*Entered: 1939 • Final vows: 1944 • Transferred to SCNY: 1977 • Age at death: 90 (3/22/2010)*

Sr. Dorothy began her religious life as a Daughter of Mary, Health of the Sick. She was one of the early members of this Congregation and was part of the community's decision to disband.

In 1977, Sister transferred to the Sisters of Charity of New York, the community of her Aunt Kittie (Sr. Miriam Ursula Farnan) who had died in 1957 after 57 years of service.

In 2005, Sr. Dorothy was presented with the Terence Cardinal Cooke Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Field of Catechesis. This new award recognized pioneers of the Catechetical Office and leaders who had given 20 or more years to the ministry.

Colleagues described Sister as a well-loved, responsible, diligent, dedicated woman of prayer. A faithful friend, she kept up with those in her former community.

### **Ministries**

As a Daughter of Mary, Health of the Sick, Sr. Dorothy worked with the Catholic Medical Mission Board in NYC, at the Daughters' Motherhouse in Cragmoor, NY, and as religious educator in Ellenville and Kingston, NY.

As a Sister of Charity of New York, Dorothy' ministry was religious education in these parishes:

- *Bronx:* Our Lady of Angels (1981-86)
- *Larchmont:* Sts. John & Paul parish / Newman Nursing Home (1992-98)
- *Millbrook:* St. Joseph (1988-90)
- *Scarsdale:* Immaculate Heart of Mary (1991-92)
- *Yonkers:* St. Denis (1976-81)
- *Ulster County:* Sister was the first Regional Director of Religious Education in the county.

*(continued on back cover)*

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## *In Memoriam* (concludes)



### **Sr. Geraldine Little • Educator / Librarian**

*Religious Name: Sr. Miriam John • Entered: 1946 • Final vows: 1951 • Age at death: 84 (3/29/2010)*

Sr. Geraldine's education ministry spanned all levels, but she is best known for her 37 years at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. There she was an elementary education instructor for 11 years, a librarian for 25 years, and a volunteer for one year. Sister was helpful, knowledgeable and professional.

Sr. Geraldine enthusiastically embraced the Second Vatican Council, especially its renewal of the Church's liturgy, and ardently promoted the "full, conscious and active participation" that the Council sought. As a natural outcome of her prayer, she often wrote letters in support of social justice issues.

At the retirement convents, Sister was a gracious presence to Sisters and staff alike.

#### **Ministries**

##### *Bronx:*

- St. Barnabas HS (1960-61)
- College of Mount Saint Vincent (1961-98)

##### *Manhattan*

- Immaculate Conception (1948-53)

##### *Scarsdale*

- Immaculate Heart of Mary (1953-60)



### **Sr. Eleanor O'Doherty • Educator / Librarian / Advocate**

*Religious Name: Sr. Mary Brendan • Entered: 1952 • Final vows: 1960 • Age at death: 79 (4/2/2010)*

After teaching for six years on the elementary and 16 years on the high school level, Sr. Eleanor interned at NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby group. That was perfect preparation for her four-year term as Social Concerns Director for the Congregation. After that, Sister earned a degree in Library Science and spent 22 years as librarian at St. Barnabas HS.

A faculty colleague once described Sr. Eleanor as the consummate high school history teacher, who even checked term paper footnotes for accuracy! Her keen grasp of current events and her gift for research and writing helped us "to examine the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel" (Constitution of the Sisters of Charity, 5.2). Sr. Eleanor was an accomplished seamstress and knitter, an avid

reader, an engaging conversationalist and an intrepid traveler.

#### **Ministries**

##### *Bronx*

- St. Anthony (1956-58)
- St. Barnabas HS (1983-2000 & 2001-06)

##### *Manhattan*

- St. Agnes (1958-60)
- Our Lady of Good Counsel (1960-62)

##### *Westchester*

- Rye: Academy of Resurrection (1962-67)
- New Rochelle: St. Gabriel HS (1967-71 & '73-78)

##### *Outside of New York State*

- York, PA: York Catholic HS (1971-73)

## *Reflection:*

*'Thy will be done' – what a comfort and support those four little words are to my soul.*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton