

VISION

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Living Lives of Love

Volume 18 • Issue 2 • Autumn 2014

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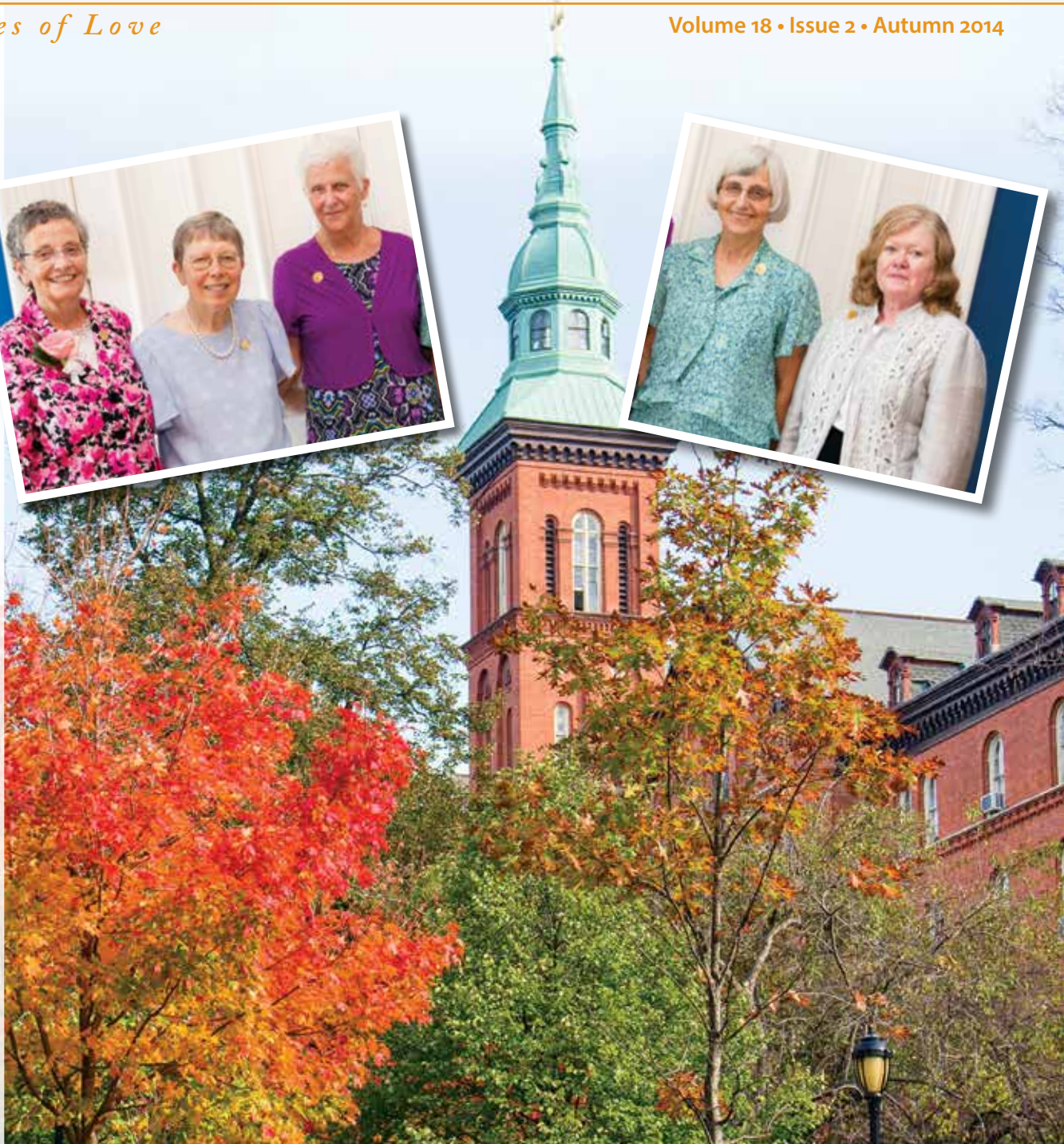
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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

*Golden Jubilarians
Celebrated*

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Do you remember the days of concentrated orange juice? As it melted and water was added to the pitcher there was enough juice for breakfast and beyond.

Just think of the concentration of grace held in the seeds of a vocation. As life experiences happen and grace is responded to there is enough grace—more than enough—to live the mission as a Sister of Charity.

This is the year to celebrate the Consecrated Life, not just as an idea, but as a reality in each sister's life. This issue of *Vision* tells stories of women who live this life.

Our jubilarians—women of strong hearts and searching eyes. It is in their responses to grace that the mission of charity grew and still grows.

Our teachers and mentors—the women who helped us find our way into this life of commitment to mission, our “sponsors.” The example of their lives whetted our appetite to explore what it meant for us to choose this way of life.

Our women of stubborn hearts—dauntless in planting gardens of education, healing, and presence to the most vulnerable among us. Each and every one has moved to a variety of garden spots, planting an ever richer variety of seed.

As is true in many a garden, the seeds grow into flowers that continue to bloom long after we move on. As others enjoy the sight and beauty of the work of our hands they give praise and honor to our God. What a rich legacy! What a difference a committed life makes.

When the time came to be rooted in one garden we moved to one of our retirement convents; we realized our commitment led us to a life of prayer, presence, and witness to the mission of charity. We did not think we would have to move again. However, a new call came, and hard as it was, we followed that call, which led us out into the unknown, to leave behind what was familiar. Only women whose vowed life is an example of grace responding to grace could do this. What courage they have! Over and over again they have poured out their love only to have our God fill up their hearts again. These women of strong heart, searching eyes, and stubborn love have shown us the way.

Yes, we celebrate the year of Consecrated Life not just as an idea but as a life committed to the Mission of Jesus from 1809 to this very day. It is to our women of wisdom, our elders, our sponsors, and our gardeners that our hearts speak with love and gratitude. They in turn look to each of us and call us to continue to be of strong heart, searching eyes, and stubborn love.

Let us rejoice and be glad.

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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When you finish reading your copy of *VISION*, we'd appreciate it if you would consider passing it along and help us spread the word about our work and history. Drop it off in your church vestibule, your local Catholic school, doctor's office or other waiting room, laundromat, community or senior center, or any other place you see a stack of magazines. You never know who might pick it up—perhaps a former student, friend, or colleague. Thank you!

Congregation Members Honored

God calls you to work in this vineyard. Go therefore, having but a single heart and a single intention, and in this way you will bear much fruit.

St. Vincent de Paul



Bishop Paul Bootkoski, Sr. Peggie Beaudette, and Mr. Frank DiNapoli



Sr. Katherine Seibert, left, receives award in Sullivan County. Sr. Kevin John Shields, O.P., right



Sr. Florence Speth received the Father Victor Yanitelli, S.J. Award from SOAR!



Associate Jim Landy with Sr. Kathleen Lunsmann, IHM, President of SOAR!



Sr. Virginia Searing, center, Cardinal Rodriguez, and Mary Sedutto, Executive Director of HHH



Sr. Margaret Egan, center, with Dr. Jerry Rivera-Wilson, left, and Dr. Illana R. Lane

The Year of Consecrated Life officially began on November 30, but for the Sisters of Charity it seems to have started back in April. Members of the Congregation have been the recipients of several awards and honors by individuals and prestigious organizations alike. The common thread throughout the events was that the acceptance of each individual was always made on behalf of the Congregation, paying tribute to the support and love of all that makes service in mission possible.

The Sisters of Charity were the guests of Mr. Frank DiNapoli and Bishop Paul Bootkoski of the Diocese of Metuchen at a special celebration on April 27 in Piscataway to honor Sr. Margaret Beaudette for her lifetime accomplishments as sculptor and educator. The occasion also honored the Congregation as we approach almost 200 years of service. Bishop Bootkoski and Mr. DiNapoli presented Sr. Margaret with a Papal Blessing at the festive event that also included her family, colleagues, and friends.

The dinner was sponsored by Mr. DiNapoli, who became acquainted with Sr. Margaret when he commissioned her to sculpt a statue of Mary, the Sorrowful Mother in memory of

his late wife, Josephine. The statue was blessed and dedicated by Bishop Bootkoski at an All Souls Day Mass in 2012 at Holy Cross Cemetery in East Brunswick, NJ. In presenting the Papal Blessing, Bishop Bootkoski said, "Sister Peggie is a wonderful woman, a religious woman who exemplifies what you, the Sisters of Charity, and all religious women have done for the Church in the United States. You are good women who have made the Church what it is today. You are the unsung heroes." To ensure that the Sisters traveled comfortably and safely to New Jersey, Mr. DiNapoli provided a bus from Mount Saint Vincent. Sister Margaret and all in attendance were very grateful for Mr. DiNapoli's kindness and generosity.



Sr. Eileen Fagan

In early July, Sr. Eileen Fagan participated with a group of theologians in a two-week program in Rome titled "Doing Theology in a Roman Context." Since this was the first such program for theologians and was very favorably received, Sr. Eileen will be working with a committee planning future programs in Rome.

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Golden Jubilarians, from left, Sisters Vivienne Joyce, Suzanne Wallin, Kathleen Byrnes, Carol De Angelo, and Carol Finegan

Celebrating Our Golden Jubilarians Two Hundred Fifty Years of Loving Service

By Patricia McGowan, SC

New York City was the place to be in 1964. It was a city of possibilities. The New York Worlds Fair was opening in Queens: its theme was “Peace through Understanding.” The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge finally connected Staten Island to Brooklyn. Europe (by way of Beatlemania) invaded our shores through our television sets. But, perhaps most important that year were the possibilities and the challenges that the Second Vatican Council, as it drew to a close, was offering to the Church and all its people.

That same joyful message of excitement and of openness to the Holy Spirit was evident once again on September 6 when five Sisters of Charity of New York celebrated their Golden Jubilees at Mount Saint Vincent.

During the Mass at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception on that day Sr.

Jane Iannucelli, President of the Congregation, called each of these women: Sisters Kathleen Byrnes, Carol De Angelo, Carol Finegan, Vivienne Joyce, and Suzanne Ellen Wallin, the “Faces of Charity”—women who have shared the Good News of the Gospel with so many in so many varied ministries.

Sister Vivienne Joyce spoke for the group when she asked all present to reflect on the Second Vatican Council once more and to embrace its Spirit, a spirit that is, she said, “permeating all things, opening up new ways of relating to God, to ourselves, to others, and to the evolving cosmos.”



Sr. Carol Finegan performed with the choir during the Jubilee Mass.



Entering the chapel, above from left, Sisters Kathleen Byrnes and Suzanne Wallin. Below: Sisters Carol De Angelo and Vivienne Joyce





Above: Sr. Vivienne Joyce offered a reflection on behalf of the Golden Jubilarians. Right: the five Sisters renewed their vows before the gathering of family, friends, Associates and members of the Sisters of Charity.



The YES these Sisters said to the Holy Spirit 50 years ago is still a lived YES today, one that invites all of us to a life “of faith, hope, and love, ... we are all God’s people and nothing is more sacred than the lives we live.”

Rev. Joseph Shields, the celebrant, ended the Mass by asking the congregation to affirm the Jubilarians’ YES with a loud AMEN. It was an AMEN that resounded throughout the chapel and across the Hudson River to the Palisades.

Meet Our Golden Jubilarians



Her first job after college was in personnel at St. Vincent’s Hospital, and it was there that **Vivienne Joyce** met the Sisters of Charity. Sister Vivienne was sent as a novice to study catechetical theology at Manhattan College. She remembers that what was definitely not her choice became a wonderful experience and a sustaining resource throughout days of questioning after Vatican II. The

simultaneous study of theology and social work was the beginning of a lifelong fascination with the mystery of God and the mystery of each person’s life. Earlier roots of this might be found in her parent’s conversations: one parent inviting trust in God and the other declaring that God helps those who help themselves.

Her first mission as a professed sister was at the New York Foundling, where today she serves on the Program Quality Committee of the Board. In later years she lived and worked in a lower-east-side neighborhood and taught at the Harlem Family Institute. As she describes it, she learned to pray by listening to the stories of others. Vincent de Paul encouraged people to pay attention to the events of their day; to turn them over and over so as to better read the story God writes in them. She is convinced that people often cast a light they

do not themselves experience. Her searching interest in the relationship between religion, faith, and emotional experience led to a certification in psychoanalysis.

During a time of discouragement, she read the writings of Elizabeth Seton as if she were her analyst. But she was drawn in and nourished by her immense faith; Elizabeth had expectations of God.

Sister Vivienne is trained in Vincentian spiritual formation and Ignatian spirituality. From 1981 to 2005 she served as associate director of an interfaith Pastoral Counseling D. Min. program jointly sponsored by the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health and Hebrew Union College. Engaging in the ministry of spiritual direction since 2000, she has taught direction and supervision at Fordham University and at Inisfada Retreat House, in Manhasset, Long Island. She also co-led a post-9-11 pastoral strategies seminar for the Catholic Charities Social Ministry Office. During this time she served on the founding board of the Elizabeth Seton Women’s Center. The Center sought to foster the development of women so that their experience and gifts might be valued and made available. In recent years Sister Vivienne has been ministering with and to young adults who are giving retreats to other young adults—a unique and surprising blessing.

Sister Vivienne feels deeply blessed and grateful to have lived with other sisters who have a deep commitment to service to others and have consciously sought to nurture and strengthen their relationships in community.

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Once a “good guy” always a “good guy” Sister Rita King

The following article, reprinted with permission, speaks of one Sister of Charity who made a difference in many students' lives. She has taught history in the classroom and helped to set up the Archives of the Sisters of Charity to preserve the history of her congregation. Sister Rita King, an accomplished historian, loves being a Sister of Charity.

By Kathy McCarthy '58
Bishop McDonnell Memorial High School

When I was a freshman at Bishop's I recall our Grade Advisor and History teacher, Sister Helen Maria, telling us about the home of the Sisters of Charity on the Hudson River. Sister always referred to it as “The Mount” and talked of its beauty and rolling hills. Sounded like paradise to us frosh! Mary Ellen Lavelle Murphy '59 and I got to see those rolling hills and the beautiful spot on the Hudson River this June when we met with Sister Rita King at “The Mount.”

Sister Rita King taught at Bishop's from 1961 to 1965. She was known to the students at that time as Sister Rita Regina. Sister is a native of Yonkers, NY and attended St. Mary's Elementary School and St. Barnabas HS. She entered the Sisters of Charity of New York in 1948 and taught fifth and eighth grades at Seton Academy for ten years prior to her assignment to Bishop McDonnell Memorial HS. Her new assignment was to teach History to the junior and senior classes. Sister Rita has fond memories of her time at Bishop's. She enjoyed the camaraderie of the four other religious communities with whom she shared the responsibility of educating over 2000 young women. She is still in touch with many of the sisters as well as many of her students, to whom she instilled her love of history.

Sister Rita loved making history come alive so that it would be relevant to her students. One semester, while teaching an American History course, Sister thought, “why not take advantage of the events that occurred in Brooklyn!” The Battle of Long Island took place right in our own backyard, Brooklyn



Heights. During the discussion Sister Rita noticed that the students were looking at her as if she were a little daffy. How could a Battle of Long Island take place in Brooklyn? After getting the same response from another class, Sister decided that a geography class was in order before she could go on!

The years 1961 to 1965 were a time of many changes that impacted the lives of the young students: Vatican II, the Space Program, the assassination of our President John F. Kennedy, and the Civil Rights Movement are some of the highlights of the time. It was an exciting time!

Sister Rita recalled exactly where she was on November 22, 1963 when the news of President Kennedy's death was announced. Her class was taking a test and she was in the back of the classroom when the PA system broke the news. All Sister Rita could see was the backs of the students' heads but felt their shock at hearing such tragic news. Thanks to the advances of television the students became eyewitnesses to history.

The Sisters of Charity were a prominent presence in the Bronx and Harlem. When the Civil Rights Movement was underway in 1964 the sisters were invited to march in a rally to support the Civil Rights Act. Sister Rita said that the Sisters of Charity proudly accepted the invitation and asked the other religious communities at Bishop's to join them. Sister Rita recalls that it was

a wonderful day. In unity there is strength!

In December of 1964 Sister Rita's classes presented her with a WMCA Good Guy sweatshirt. Her students called the radio station to win a sweatshirt for a teacher they admired and Sister Rita was at the top of their list. Sister proudly accepted the shirt and the admiration of her students.

Following her assignment at Bishop's, Sister Rita headed to Staten Island to be the Chair of the History Department at St. Joseph by the Sea HS. After a few years she was assigned



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Bishop McDonnell High School Vocations *By Constance Brennan, SC*



Graduates of Bishop McDonnell, left to right, seated: Sisters Maria Rhoda, Rita Marie, M. Lucy, Maria Dominic, Miriam Ruth, M. Eugene, Helen Dolores. Middle row: Sisters James Marie, Regina Grace, Miriam Martin, Maria Regis, Florence Mary, Marie Anne, Maria Concepta, Margaret Marion. Top row: Sisters Maria Angela, M. Canisius, Maria Celestia, Marie Christine, Kathleen Miriam, Catherine Dolores, and Regina Eileen. Photo was taken in 1946 at St. Joseph's Hall, Brooklyn.

Bishop McDonnell Memorial High School for Girls opened as a Brooklyn Diocesan High School in 1926. Built and organized as a scholarship school, its goal was to inspire Catholic American girls with their Christian heritage and the principles of the American Democratic system. It provided a liberal arts education for students who planned on continuing their academic education, as well as providing marketable skills for those students who wished to enter the work world upon graduation. It was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood; Sisters of Mercy, Brooklyn; Daughters of Wisdom; and the Sisters of Charity of New York. "Bishops," as it was lovingly called by its students, was the only all-girls school in the Diocese to be equally staffed by more than one congregation of women religious. The school closed in June, 1973 and to this day has an active alumnae association which meets periodically in

Bishop Laughlin School in Brooklyn. Each year it gratefully acknowledges those Sisters who gave love, service, and friendship to their many students. Over fifty vocations to the Sisters of Charity of New York resulted from the

example of their lives, including the present president of the Sisters of Charity of New York, Sister Jane Iannucelli, as well as Sisters Wilda Asfour, Frances Devine, Mary Jane Fitzgibbon, Anna Marian Lascell, Mary Liegey, Mary Lou McGrath, Josephine Rog, Marie Schutte, Helen Scoltock, Florence Speth, Mary Tommasino, and Monica Wood who are in ministry today.



Today's graduates of Bishop McDonnell include, left to right above, Sisters Wilda Asfour, Monica Wood, Frances Devine, Mary Jane Fitzgibbon, and Florence Speth. Above right from top: Sisters Mary Tommasino, Mary Lou McGrath, and Helen Scoltock.



to Trinity School in Pennsylvania, then back to the Bronx for 14 years at St. Barnabas HS, and then she was given an assignment at Cathedral HS.

The Sisters of Charity recognized Sister Rita's historical abilities and in 1990 asked her to be the archivist for the community, a job she held until 2009. During this time Sister was also President of the organization Archivists of Women Religious (ACWR). She held this post for three years. Sister is often asked to give talks for the organization and was able to include a visit with her nephew in Seattle on one occasion.

Sister Rita invited Sister Catherine Smith (aka Sister

Miriam Magdalen) to join us while we were visiting. Sister Catherine was happy to see former Bishop's students. She was the head of the Homemaking Department from 1952 to 1965 and is still in touch with many of her students. Sister Catherine lives at Ely Residence at Mount Saint Vincent and gets to enjoy the rolling hills at that beautiful spot on the Hudson River

The Sisters of Charity of New York continue their mission of social services, education, nursing, and orphan care. Kudos to Sister Rita King and the Sisters of Charity of New York for the exemplary work you have done and continue to do.

A Word From Our Sponsors

By Regina Bechtle, SC

The story of connections between Sisters of yesterday and today are a valuable part of our shared history...



Sister Helen Wade (right) with her sponsor, Sr. Frances Devine

Before a young woman entered the Sisters of Charity, it was the custom for her to choose a professed Sister as her “sponsor.” Perhaps she was a favorite teacher from elementary or high school, college or nursing school. Perhaps she was recommended by a priest. No doubt the Sister was someone the young woman admired and in whom she could confide her hopes and questions about her fledgling sense of call.

As Susie prepared to enter a way of life that seemed quite mysterious, her Sister-sponsor gave practical and spiritual advice. Through the years, as Susie received a new name, moved through the novitiate, continued her education, and began her ministry, her sponsor often helped young Sr. Mary Susan to make it through more than one rough spot. As years passed and Sr. Mary Susan grew in her vocation, the pattern was frequently repeated, as she in turn became a mentor for other young women.

The story of connections between Sisters of yesterday and today are a valuable part of our shared history—a living link of Charity. But for some reason (perhaps related to a bygone understanding that equated humility with anonymity), our archival records do not have information about Sisters’ sponsors. Recently, to fill this gap, Sisters in our retirement houses were asked to complete a brief questionnaire. This article gives a sample of the heartfelt and heartwarming stories shared—more to come!

Qualities

What led a young woman to choose Sr. X as her sponsor? Among the reasons given: she was practical, spiritual, inspiring, kind, reassuring, responsible, positive, happy. She was a great listener; she had integrity and a good sense of humor.

Call it magnetism, call it charisma—an indefinable “something” drew people to certain Sisters. Sister Mary Kay Finneran always sensed that her sponsor, Sr. Regina de Lourdes Regan, loved being a Sister of Charity. She truly revealed God’s love, Sr. Mary Kay commented, long before the words became part of our mission statement.

When Sr. Helen Maureen Wade first met Sr. Frances Devine in her Cathedral High School homeroom, she knew that the then Sr. James Marie would influence her life in profound ways. At first the young girl had little interest in becoming a Sister, but gradually she changed her mind and heart. Sixty years later, Sr. Helen Maureen credits the shift to her contact with Sr. Frances.

Several Sisters recalled gratefully that, in days when family budgets were tight, their sponsors helped to purchase the clothing and supplies that young women had to bring with them when they entered. Others noted the unforgettable kindness of Sisters who reached out to students’ families, helping them through hard times of illness, unemployment, death.

Still others, like Sr. Mary Christine Rogers, have fond memories of how their sponsors (hers was Sr. Anna Mercedes—Anne Courtney) kept in touch with families who were understandably anxious about their daughters in the novitiate, and reassured each that the other was doing fine. Sister Maria Bernadette Conlin, recalls Sr. Evyleen Larkin, “cared, not only about me, but also about my parents. As they wanted happiness for me, so too, did she—and she could put it in just such terms.”

Models in ministry and spiritual mentors

Sister Mary Chrysostom Lynch and Sr. Teresa Dolores Wolf had full teaching schedules as English and math professors at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. But they also managed to teach religion to children in St. John's parish, Yonkers. As a college student, Sr. Georgette Dircks accompanied them on weekday afternoons and Sundays, and the seeds of her vocation were sown.

To her prospective candidates, including Sr. Georgette and Sr. Eileen T. Kelly, Sr. Chrysostom suggested solid spiritual books on prayer and the life of Christ. Sister "Chrissy" advised Eileen, then a college freshman, not to force herself to read what had no appeal. Eileen devoured the books on prayer and the life of Christ that her sponsor later gave her—not the usual fare for novices of that day!

Sister Mary Jerome Cusick, a teacher at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scarsdale, provided a teenager and college student who later became her candidate, Sr. Marie Paula Holdman, with biographies of Mother Seton and St. Vincent de Paul.

Sister Eleanor Fitzgerald says of her sponsor, Sr. Marian Teresa Delitzsch, "She planted in me the seed that led to my entering the community," a sentiment echoed by many. Sister Margaret C. Kelly's sponsor, Sr. Miriam Carmel McGovern, often brought her "on pilgrimage to Mount Saint Vincent to pray to Our Lady of Fatima and to walk around the grounds," thus generously sharing her "two special loves."

When young Anne Marie Falloon would meet Sr. Vincent Mary Waldorf on the convent porch in their Staten Island parish, they would talk and even share prayer. Sister Anne Marie remembers her sponsor as a woman of deep faith. Sister Vincent hailed from St. Edward's Parish, Shamokin, PA, a cradle of vocations. Thirty-seven women entered the Sisters of Charity of New York from St. Edward's over a period of 50 years.

Good questions, good advice

Sister Catherine (Joseph Marietta) Molony brought many women to the community. Sister Maureen Alexander had her as a chemistry and math teacher in Blessed Sacrament High School, Manhattan. One day Sr. Catherine, who knew that Maureen lived in the same parish, asked if she ever went to Mass before school. "It made me think," said Sr. Maureen. Before long she was attending Mass regularly, praying and talking with Sr. Catherine about her future.

Sister Marita Regina Bronner recalls Sr. Mary Scholastica Cosgrove's sage advice: "Get over your hurts as quickly as possible. Life is too short to go around feeling sorry for yourself." Sister Scholastica also advised Sr. Joan Anderson to have a year of work experience before entering.

When Sr. Theresa Gravino was a twelve-year-old at St. Raymond's School, her fifth-grade teacher, Sr. Mary Albert Lilly, wrote to her: "Theresa, if you learn to love our dear Lord in the tabernacle very much, you will find that no matter what happens, you will be happy."

Sister Maria Christine O'Connor encouraged her 7th grade pupil and later candidate, Sr. Miriam Jude Trank, to remember that God is good and to trust Him when things seemed hard.

Sister Mary Chrysostom Lynch told her candidates in no uncertain terms, "You are responsible to God for this call; no one can do it for you."

Through the years, many Sisters inspired and nurtured vocations to the Sisters of Charity. They lived our spirit and mission and passed it on to later generations, so that new chapters in the story of Charity might unfold. We thank God for the witness of these living links in the chain of Charity, and look forward to more memorable words from our sponsors.



Sister Jean Flannelly (left) with her sponsor, Sr. Mary Gertrude Keckeissen

"...if you learn to love our dear Lord in the tabernacle very much, you will find that no matter what happens, you will be happy."

Sister Carol De Angelo's journey of fifty years as a Sister of Charity involved her in varied ministries all over the New York Archdiocese with institutions serving God's people in many places and in many different ways.



In her first ministry at Yonkers Catholic Charities, she was privileged to listen to the stories of the people and communities of Yonkers and Westchester County and accompany them, sharing the joys and sufferings of the people of God. Later, in East Harlem in several parishes, working with the New York Foundling, Family Health Services, and other programs, she accompanied teens, young mothers, and parishioners in their life journey. In her time in ministry in these parishes she came to understand more deeply the living Body of Christ and the call of Vatican II.

Sister Carol's eight years on the Executive Council of the Sisters of

Charity revealed to her the gift of vocation, the beauty, inspiration, and courage of each sister's faith and personal relationship with God. She truly felt the Spirit at work uniting the Congregation as one amidst differences.

Afterward, she returned to the field of health care at the Sisters of Charity Health Care System on Staten Island, at Catholic Health Care Network (NY Archdiocese), and at Cabrini of Westchester, Dobbs Ferry.

Sister Carol's involvement in eco-spirituality and care of God's Creation at Marydell Faith and Life Center, Nyack, began with the new millennium. She worked with ROAR (Religious



Sister Carol De Angelo with family and friends

Organizations Along the River), with leaders in groups such as GreenFaith, Riverkeeper, Lower Hudson Group Sierra Club, Grassroots Environmental Education, and many others that called to a deeper appreciation of Earth and all its communities of Life.

In recent years in her role as Director of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation for the Sisters of Charity of New York, her circle of friends and colleagues has grown. The chairs and members of the Sisters of Charity Task Force groups, the Interfaith Women's Dialogue Group, the Stanfordville Cosmological Spirituality Group, the Hub Café, and the Life Transforming Spirituality Group are some of many where faith and life are shared from an integrated, inclusive, spirit-filled perspective. These communities challenge and inspire Sr. Carol.

For Sr. Carol, the richness and vitality of her vowed religious life comes from those with whom she has been privileged to journey in her many ministries, the people who enriched her life and deepened her understanding of God and what it means to live the gospel and love as Jesus did.

Margaret Comaskey

Sister Kathleen Byrnes has taken on numerous challenges during her 50 years as a Sister of Charity, always ready to serve in a new way or a new location.

She brings all that experience to her current position as a Regional Coordinator of the Sisters of Charity. Her ability to meet each challenge with a smile makes her a wonderful liaison for Sisters and Associates alike.



Sister Kathleen began her ministry as a teacher at St. Paul School in Manhattan. She also served there as assistant principal and principal, dedicating more

than ten years to the St. Paul family. She followed the same pattern of growing leadership with the Archdiocese's Parish School Planning Program, beginning as assistant director and then serving for three years as director.

Sister Kathleen changed ministry gears when she became a case worker at the New York Foundling. While there she also served as a home finder, adoption worker, and foster care worker.

After studying at the Maryknoll Language School in Bolivia, Sr. Kathleen switched gears again and served in Guatemala as a pastoral worker for seven years. She worked with several communities, including San Marcos and El Quiché.

Upon her return to the States, Sr. Kathleen served on Staten Island for nearly a decade as Community Resource Coordinator at the Sisters of Charity

Healthcare facility and as a social worker at St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Center. She also directed the Mobile Soup Kitchen ministry at St. John's Bread and Life in Brooklyn before bringing her myriad of experiences to the Leadership Team.

A Manhattan native, Sr. Kathleen holds a bachelor's degree in history from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, an MS in Elementary Education



Sister Kathleen Byrnes with family and friends

from Hunter College, and an MSW from Fordham University. She also holds New York State Certification in School Administration.

Sister Kathleen entered the Congregation in 1964 and her religious name was Sister Maura Thomas. She is a graduate of St. Raymond Academy and St. Raymond Elementary School, both in the Bronx.

Patrice Athanasidy

Sister Carol Finegan has dedicated her career to education, serving as a teacher for the first 25 years and as a college administrator for the next quarter of a century.



Currently the director of institutional research, Sr. Carol has been an integral part of the College

Sister Carol came to the Mount after teaching at Our Lady of Victory in Dobbs Ferry for more than a decade. She brought her high energy and humor to teaching

of Mount Saint Vincent campus since 1989. Beginning as scheduler, she also served as assistant registrar and assistant director of admissions/transfer counselor.

As technology changed, so did Sr. Carol's job descriptions. She became director of information systems in 1992 and also served as director of administrative computing before becoming the keeper of college statistics as the director of institutional research in 1995.

Numbers are only one part of Sr. Carol's dedication to the Mount. She can be heard singing at liturgies and seen tending to flowers all around campus, showing her love for the things that truly make Mount Saint Vincent the campus it is.

Sister Carol came to the Mount after teaching at Our Lady of Victory in Dobbs Ferry for more than a decade. She brought her high energy and humor to teaching

religion, mathematics, and computer science. She began her teaching career at St. Gabriel's in 1969, teaching eighth graders through the mid-1970s.

A native of Albany, Sr. Carol holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, an MA in Secondary Education from Hunter College, and an MS in computer science from Iona College.

Sister Carol entered the Congregation in 1964. She is a graduate of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Academy of the Resurrection, both in Rye.

Patrice Athanasidy



Sisters Vivienne, Carol, and Suzanne renew their vows.

Sister Suzanne Ellen Wallin dedicated much of her career to religious education. Sister Suzanne began her ministry as a religion teacher at Cardinal Spellman High School in 1968, serving there until 1972. She then served as religious education coordinator at St. Frances de Chantal in the Bronx and St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Brigid in Manhattan. In 1982 Sr. Suzanne was appointed pastoral worker at St. Teresa Church in Manhattan for a year. She then served as a senior religion teacher and campus minister at St. Jean Baptiste High School in Manhattan from 1983 to 1986.



In 1986 Sr. Suzanne began working with immigrants in Brooklyn as a counselor. She served at the Southside

Community Mission until 1994, when she took a year-long sabbatical in New Hampshire before officially retiring.

Retirement did not slow down Sr. Suzanne's dedication to those in need. From 1996 to 1999 she served as a geriatric volunteer at Saint Joseph's Medical Center Nursing Home. From 1999 to 2001 she was a volunteer teacher at St. Catherine of Genoa in Manhattan with the New York Foundling Outreach Program. She also served for a year as a campus minister at John Jay College of Criminal Justice before beginning her volunteer work at St. Joseph's. Today Sr. Suzanne serves as a pastoral care volunteer at Saint Joseph's Medical Center and volunteers her time at St. Peter's School in Yonkers.

A native of Brattleboro, Vermont, Sr. Suzanne holds a bachelor's degree in French and Secondary Education

from the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She earned a master of arts in religious education from Fordham University and completed certification in Christian Spirituality at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Sister Suzanne entered the Congregation in 1964 at St. Michael's in Brattleboro. She also graduated from St. Michael Elementary School and St. Michael High School.

Patrice Athanasidy



Sister Theresa Capria helps set the altar with Sisters Suzanne and Kathleen.

Sister Katherine Seibert, MD, was honored for her contributions in health care by the SUNY Sullivan Foundation at a dinner honoring six “Women Who Make a Difference” on August 21. Joined by family, colleagues, Sisters of Charity, and friends for the award dinner, Sr. Katherine was introduced by Sr. Kevin John Shields, O.P., who told guests about Sr. Katherine’s education and professional background and details about some of the prestigious honors she has received.

In accepting the award, Sr. Katherine said, “It is a great privilege for me to practice the special calling as physician in Sullivan County. At Hudson River HealthCare, the mission is to improve the health status of our community, especially for the underserved and vulnerable. There are many uninsured, needy, and undocumented; sometimes people just out of rehab or incarceration struggling to find hope, health, meaning in life, and the basic necessities. Sometimes people seek escape from the reality of poverty using drugs or alcohol. Many want meaningful jobs, but cannot or do not know how to find a job. For me, I thank God that I have the health and strength to be part of the struggle to find solutions for better health and life for the people I serve.”

At their annual dinner at the New York Athletic Club on September 19, SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) bestowed the Father Victor Yanitelli S.J. Award on Sr. Florence Speth. SOAR! presents the memorial recognition annually to a senior religious in acknowledgment of active and creative service in addressing the needs of others. A Sister of Charity for 55 years, Sr. Florence is the founder of Fox House, a shelter for homeless women and children, and has served as director since its opening in 1989. In speaking of Sr. Florence’s ministry, Sr. Jane Iannucelli said, “Her life’s work has been devoted to the people of East Harlem, particularly to women and children. Her kindness and compassion has changed the lives of countless others.”

Also recognized by SOAR! at their dinner was Sisters of Charity Associate Jim Landy. Jim was presented with the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award, SOAR!’s highest honor. The award is given annually to individuals and couples who have distinguished themselves through the sharing of their leadership and generosity in the Catholic community in the spirit of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Jim currently serves as chairman of the board of trustees of Saint Joseph’s Medical Center, as well as a board member of Sacred Heart Housing and St. Joseph’s Housing, both of which provide housing and support for the elderly and infirm. Sister Jane, who has known Jim for more than twenty years, said, “His remarkable business acumen is surpassed only by his love for our church and for the poor. Together those gifts have helped create over 600 homes for the underprivileged.”

Sister Virginia Searing and the Sisters of Charity Congregation were honored by Hope for a Healthier Humanity (HHH) on September 22 in recognition of the mission in Guatemala. His Eminence Oscar Andres Cardinal

Rodriguez M., SDB,[check initials] presented the award to Sr. Virginia and the Congregation saying, “This award is given to those who have selflessly dedicated their time, talents, and treasures to those in great need throughout the world. You are, therefore, most fitting to receive it, and we all thank you for so graciously being with us this evening.... The work of the Sister Barbara Ford Peace Center is not merely to support just causes, but to build the capacity of those you support, so that they might go on to build a bounteous and peaceful environment of their own. You and your colleagues have made a difference in the lives of countless millions, and these advances will not be undone!” Mrs. Mary Healey Sedutto, Executive Director of HHH, joined Cardinal Rodriguez in presenting the award and paying tribute to the Sisters of Charity. Dozens of Sisters were welcomed by HHH to join in the celebration.

The 39th Anniversary of the canonization of Elizabeth Seton was celebrated at the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center on September 23 in a very special way. The morning began with a meaningful age- and developmentally-appropriate “Story Time with Mother Seton,” during which Sr. Constance

Brennan, dressed as Mother Seton, explained to the residents the significance of the canonization celebration. Mother Seton was accompanied by her cat, Yankee, for the event.

After story time and a question and answer period with “Mother Seton,” Associate [OK to add?] Patricia Tursi, CEO of the Pediatric



Sr. Marie Morris, “Mother Seton” with Yankee, and Jackie Manaro

Center and the John A. Coleman School, pre-

sented the Education Mission Award in Honor of Sr. Marie Morris, to John A. Coleman School occupational therapist Jackie Manaro. “Sister Marie Morris has served as an inspiration to our staff and our children for a decade now, which is why we named our Education Mission Award in her honor,” said Patricia Tursi. “We have always been able to count on her expertise, her guidance, and her devotion to help us provide the best educational opportunities for the very special children we serve. In the compassionate spirit of Mother Seton, Sr. Marie works alongside the Coleman School’s teachers, therapists, and nurses to ensure that our beloved children can achieve their fullest potential.”

Sister Margaret Egan was the recipient of the R. Neal Appleby Outstanding Teacher Award, which was bestowed by the New York State Association for Teacher Educators at their annual conference with the New York Association of

Continued, see page 16

After 57 years, the Convent of Mary the Queen in Yonkers will close its doors as a retirement home for the Sisters of Charity of New York

By Maryellen Blumlein, SC

Having completed an in-depth study of the Congregation's three retirement facilities and the future retirement needs of the Sisters, the Sisters of Charity Board voted to close the Convent of Mary the Queen within the next year. Because of the need for extensive renovations and upgrades, it was seen as more financially viable to look for other options to meet the needs of our Sisters. With the help of outside consulting groups, the Sisters of Charity Board researched senior care facilities in the area surrounding Mount Saint Vincent. Conscious of the desire of our retired sisters to remain together and the need to find a facility which met both the physical and spiritual needs of the sisters, the board settled upon the Jewish Home Lifecare facility in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx. JHL offers three levels of care on the one campus: assisted living, independent living with health care assistance, and skilled nursing care.

The first group of Sisters, including Sisters from the Queen and Mount Saint Vincent Convent, began moving in early September. Twenty-three sisters now reside in studio apartments in the assisted living facility. In early November, twenty-three sisters moved from Mary the Queen into Kittay House where they also have their own studio apartments and will receive the medical and physical help they need from the Archcare Pace Program.

Two floors of the Zweig building are currently under renovation and, when work is completed, the remaining sisters

from Mary the Queen will be moved into the skilled nursing facility on the JHL campus. Here the sisters will continue to receive expert nursing care. All three buildings in which our sisters will reside will have a chapel that will contain beloved objects from the chapel at Mary the Queen. Mass continues to be available for the sisters, and prayer and reflection in the various chapels. There is also a community room in each location where the sisters can gather for various activities.

The staff of JHL has been very welcoming and accommodating to the Sisters of Charity and the other residents of the facility are pleased to be sharing life with our sisters. The sisters themselves have already begun to form new relationships and provide warmth and companionship to their fellow residents.

On September 22, 2014, the Sisters of Charity Board and the Human Resources Director met with the staff of the Convent of Mary the Queen. Termination notices were issued to the majority of the staff whose employment will end on December 31, 2014. The remaining staff will continue employment until June 1, 2015.

The Sisters of Charity ask all for their continued prayers for the Sisters as they transition into their new homes, and for the devoted employees of the Convent of Mary the Queen as they seek new employment. Many of the staff at the Queen have been longtime workers and are very devoted to the Sisters. The Sisters will surely miss them as much as they will miss the sisters.

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

Please visit our website at www.scny.org/news/in-memoriam-2014 for complete biographies of our Sisters

Sister Virginia Catharine Jarczynski, SC

Entered: 1946 + Date of Death: 7/23/14 + Age: 90

Sister Catharine's ministries included education, both in New York and the Bahamas, working with volunteers at the New York Foundling, and serving as staff member at Mary of the Ocean in Ventnor, NJ.



Sister Marilda Joseph Aeillo, SC

Entered: 1943 + Date of Death: 8/26/14 + Age: 98

Sister Marilda's first and only mission was the New York Foundling Hospital. She ministered here in many capacities over the course of more than sixty years. She enjoyed all her work, but most especially supervising the children who were under her care.



Sister Kathleen Marie Gregg, SC (Sr. Michael Marie)

Entered: 1950 + Date of Death: 10/17/14 + Age: 83

Sister Kathleen began her ministry in education, then transitioned to high school guidance. She later taught special education and then worked as a specialist in Process Facilitation and a consultant with several colleges.



Sister Marie Dolorosa Hen, SC

Entered: 1949 + Date of Death: 10/30/14 + Age: 84

Sister Dolorosa's first ministry was elementary education. She used her summers to volunteer in Saint Agatha Home, Nanuet. There she bonded with many children who looked forward to her return each year. She later served as group mother at St. Mary Home, Brooklyn.





STUBBORN LOVE: *Cultivating Culture and the New Convent Garden in Yonkers*

By April Boone

Beginning in 1857, the Sisters of Charity started their mission—cultivating Westchester’s urban landscape—by attending to the needs of their two loves: the sick and the student.

In those early days, many pioneer sisters taught at St. Mary’s school, adjacent to St. Joseph’s Hospital, off South Broadway in Yonkers, and Immaculate Conception—St. Mary’s Church. The primary school building of St. Mary’s, which evokes many fond memories for families in that area, closed in 2011, and the adjoining convent, which was home to generations of sisters, was demolished in 2013 due to abandonment and disrepair. Although many sisters lived happy days in that charming brick and frame convent, it was time for the current pastor of St. Mary’s Church, Msgr. Hugh Corrigan, to deal with the vacant lot. Monsignor Corrigan, inspired by the historical significance of the Sisters’ contributions and the spirit of charity that continues to permeate the neighborhood, decided to construct a sacred outdoor garden, filling it with plants and religious statuary. Among the statues is one of Elizabeth Seton by Sr. Margaret Beaudette.

As part of this enduring tribute he repurposed the original bricks of the demolished convent into a beautiful walkway and patio, and had the names of all the Sisters of Charity,

living and deceased, who had taught at the school and lived in the convent memorialized on a plaque surrounded by roses.

One of the rosebushes was transplanted from the adjacent garden of the Convent of Mary the Queen, adding further significance to the prayerful space now called the Convent Garden.

This past spring, the senior Sisters from the Convent of Mary the Queen made time for a special blessing of the new plantings and lovely surroundings. Often, many parishioners of St. Mary’s Church have made this scenic, sentimental location a favorite spot for snapping photos after First Communions, Confirmations, and weddings.

It is ironic that the neighboring facility for the senior Sisters, the Convent of Mary the Queen on Vark Street in Yonkers, will also be closing. It seems a metaphor that so much of the charism of Charity has been about cultivating a culture of caring, seeding lessons, and growing faith. Now, the cities of New York and Yonkers have reaped the harvest of dedication, love, and incarnational hospitality that has characterized the zeal of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

The poem by Sr. Regina Bechtle on page 15 captures the essence of the times we are living in: the garden of struggle and delight that is a part of the “stubborn love,” that will continue to flourish in the hearts and in the earth of New York.

Mission

Always the ones in need,
the door knocking at night,
always the call from far away:
“Send us women with strong hearts
and searching eyes.
Soon.”

More always went
than could be spared,
pulses of fire,
magnets of light,
into grimy streets,
rank caves,
stark sheds,
stern prairies,
swelling fields,
blinding trails,
pouring their love like sweat,
wearing the stench of the poor.

They served themselves up
like food, like bread.

What love they had! They spent it,
threw it into the wild wind,
let their seeds be eaten alive
or ground into furrows
of stone and soot.

We who follow, decades later,
find seeds sprouted, rooted,
flowers of light
to wave in the wind.

We bless those green spikes
that cracked the sidewalks,
bless roots tight and twined,
bless the stubborn love
that linked the cobbled lives and streets,
that holds them still,
from the underside—
sturdy legacy.

Regina Bechtle, SC

Congregation Welcomes New Director of Development



Anne Marie at her first event, the luncheon at Xavier's X20

In his book, *The Spirituality of Fundraising*, Henri J. M. Nouwen says, “From the perspective of the gospel, fundraising is not a response to a crisis. Fundraising is, first and foremost, a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people to our mission.” It is these words that newly appointed Director of Development, Anne Marie Gardiner, tries to live out each day.

For over 25 years, Anne Marie has been involved in the ministry of fund-raising for congregations of men and women religious. Starting in the 1980s, Anne Marie has seen many changes in donor giving habits and has faced many economic challenges in helping organizations realize their fund-raising goals. “The biggest difference I notice today is that our donors are much more interested in seeing how their donations are making a difference. Accountability and transparency have always been important, but I am finding more and more people want to have a ‘hands on’ experience with the organization in addition to giving their financial support.”

Anne Marie’s relationship with the congregation started at a very early age. She was taught by the Sisters of Charity of New York in the first grade at Incarnation School in Washington Heights. When her family moved to New Jersey, she was taught by the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Tenafly, NJ. After high school she completed her education at the College of St. Elizabeth in Convent Station, NJ, sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth.

“To say that St. Elizabeth Ann Seton has had an influence on my life is an understatement!” says Anne Marie. “I have carried her charism in my heart from a very young girl.” Working for the Sisters of Charity of New York enables her to carry out this charism in her work to raise much needed funds for the ministries the sisters sponsor for the homeless, immigrants, single mothers, and children who are marginalized in our society. “It is a privilege for me to work with the sisters who are the true ministers of fund-raising. The work they do is inspiring and humbling to me.”

Anne Marie is a Seton Associate of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth and is on their Advisory Board. She also serves on the board for St. Augustine Elementary School in Union City, NJ. She lives with her husband, Tom, who will become an Associate in January, and their son, Matt, in New Jersey.

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Congregation Members Honored

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Colleges for Teacher Education on October 16 in Saratoga Springs, NY. Sister Margaret, Professor of Teacher Education at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, has been an educator for 56 years. In recommending Sr. Margaret for the award, former student Mary Ellen Sullivan, PhD, wrote, "While the motto 'Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge' might adorn the walls of the Mount, these words and virtues are best exemplified in the life of Margaret Egan and her calling to fulfill the mission of our profession. It has been an ongoing learning experience working side by side with Sr. Margaret. With humor and humility, she continues to exemplify the best we can be as educators."

On October 25, beneath bright blue skies, the late Sr. Thomas Collins was honored by her beloved people of the



Sister Thomas Collins was well-known for her kindness, fighting spirit, and her earrings.

South Bronx by naming Tiffany Street and Southern Boulevard "Sister Thomas, SC Way." Among the dignitaries who spoke about Sr. Thomas and her devotion were her family and three Sisters of Charity: Grace Ann Troisi, who spoke on behalf of the Congregation, Mary Sugrue, and Rita Nowatzki. Father Louis Gigante unveiled the street sign and balloons filled the sky, indicating the presence of Sr. Thomas: "calling to say I love you," as many

there remembered her singing her signature song.

The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center paid tribute to Sr. Carol Barnes at the First Annual Fall Festival on October

26, which was held at the John A. Coleman School's White Plains campus. Amidst the festive setting of games, food, arts and crafts, live music, and a petting zoo, the Pediatric Center recognized Sr. Carol for her service as chairperson of the Children's Rehabilitation Center's Board of Trustees, and member on the St. Elizabeth Seton Children's Foundation Board, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center Board, and the John



Sister Carol Barnes at the Pediatric Center Fall Festival

A. Coleman School Board, and for the nearly three decades of service that she has dedicated to the children. "Sister Carol Barnes has been an inspiration to our staff, our children, and their families, and, of course, her fellow trustees," said Adrienne J. Arkontaky, Esq., chairperson of the John A. Coleman School's Board of Trustees. "Sister Carol has done everything we've asked of her and more because she believes in our mission and she believes that our organizations transform lives."

The Sisters of Charity are grateful for the recognition bestowed upon our members and the Congregation. The work accomplished by individuals and by the whole is born simply and humbly from the love that exists in the family of charity but we are grateful for honors and are proud of all who serve in the name of the Sisters of Charity.

Contributors to the article include:

Chris Donohue, *The Catholic Spirit*
Sarrah Young, Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center

Le Gras Bulletin