

Footprints



Footprints

Footprints reflects the mission, spirit, and values of the Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque, Iowa.

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Cover Photo



Photo by Sister Janet Haverkamp

Footprints

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A message from

Leadership

How appropriate that our issue is creation-centered since it seems we are leaving winter behind and noticing new life springing forth. As early as 1895, a classic fable, Chicken Little, was told to children. As you may recall, Chicken Little was struck on its head by a falling object, perceived by the chick to be the sky. It concluded that the sky was falling and proceeded to tell all the barnyard friends. I discovered there are several endings to this story, but the image which remains in my memory is the chicken on its back with feet in the air, explaining that it was ready to do its little part to hold up the sky.

Are we doing our small part to save creation? Our mother earth? Our lands and seas? You will read in this issue how the Sisters of St. Francis offer many opportunities to form young and old in the care of all living things: events at the Canticle of Creation, the Sister-Water trip, the summer camps for children, and giving service through Franciscan Common Venture. "Nature-deficit disorder", a term coined by Richard Louv, names some problems associated with children spending less time in nature. Research has provided evidence showing that time spent in nature improves motivation, problem-solving and self-esteem.

St. Francis, in a prayer entitled, The Canticle of the Creatures, (or of Creation), referred to creatures and the elements a familial, "brother and sister." In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis quoted Pope Benedict: "humanity...must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology...everything is connected...the care of people and of the ecosystems are inseparable; the forest is not a resource to be exploited; it is a being with which we have to relate."

Meister Eckhart, a 13th Century German theologian and mystic wrote: "Every single creature is full of God ...every single creature is a book about God."

Our reading of the "book" of creation will enable us to honor each creature (even snakes!). Potentially everything becomes an object of contemplation. Richard Rohr speaks of how Creation is a gift which DRAWS us into itself; creation DRAWS us in – if we let it. St. Francis was DRAWN into creation...into caves and forests. Jesus was also DRAWN to the sea, to gardens, to forests and mountains. When they retreated into the world of nature, they emerged re-newed, re-energized, re-focused, re-charged. Didn't they show us the way?

Hopefully this issue will be a CALL for each of us to be as courageous as Chicken Little as we do our small part to protect the gifts of creation.

"There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions..." (Pope Francis/Laudato Si' #211)

--Sister Mary Lechtenberg, OSF

Our Mission

Rooted in the Gospel and in the spirit of Sts. Francis and Clare, the Sisters of St. Francis live in right relationship with all creation.

Focus 2014 - 2020:

In our personal, communal and public life, we commit to ongoing conversion as we: deepen our relationship with Mother Earth and Sister Water | stand with persons who are poor | make peace and practice nonviolence.

This is who we are; this is what the global community can expect of us.

Leadership Team

Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski
President

Sister Marie Cigrand
Vice President

Sister Mary Lechtenberg
Vice President

Sister Kathy Knipper
Vice President





Canticle of Creation Director Lori Apel works on with students from Mater Dei in Sioux City, Iowa. Photo by Mary Fischer.

Canticle of Creation Director Helps Share Sisters' Mission of Caring for Creation

by Jessi Russo

In the middle of the night, Canticle of Creation Center Director Lori Apel emails herself programs she's thinking of implementing.

"I'm not running out of ideas," she said smiling.

The Canticle of Creation Center was implemented in 2017 by the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters as a way to "share our Franciscan legacy of striving to live in right relationship with all creation." It operates out of the auditorium in the basement of Mount St. Francis Center and offers educational presentations and workshops about the environment.

Since beginning her position in August of 2019, Lori has been working to develop programs for adults and children to help share the sisters'

mission of caring for creation.

"I hope to engage people of all backgrounds — a wide representation of Dubuque to care for Mother Earth and recognize that the littlest steps can help preserve her."

Prior to her role with the sisters, Lori served for 27 years as an elementary school principal.

"I love still being part of a faith-based organization," she said. "I spent my life in Catholic schools."

Though at first glance it appears her career may have changed, Lori's work in education continues.

"My skill set is in curricular program designing—being creative to think outside of the box and vision plan."

The Canticle of Creation Hosts Six-Part Series on Climate Change

The Dubuque Franciscans' Canticle of Creation Center is hosting a series of programs about climate change this spring at Mount St. Francis Center, 3390 Windsor Ave. Three parts of the series occurred earlier in February and March.

Join us at 6:30 p.m., Monday, April 13, 2020, as Dubuque Franciscan Sister Nancy Miller, OSF will present, "Intersectionality and Climate Crisis."

At 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 11, Gina Bell, the City of Dubuque's Sustainable Community Coordinator, will present Dubuque's Climate Action Plan.

Information about June's event will be released in April. These programs are free and all are welcome.

For more information, contact Lori Apel at canticle@osfdbq.org or (563) 583-9786.



Some of her planning so far has included programs on the migration of Monarch butterflies, a feast day program in honor of St. Francis for students, a meditative prayer experience for the season of autumn, and presentations about eco-friendly gift wrapping, mussels in the Mississippi River, and the Fox Indians.

Part of the mission of the Canticle of Creation Center is, "collaborating wherever possible, modeling nature's web of interrelationships" and Lori has been working to make connections locally--with Clarke University, the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, area elementary schools, and St. Mark's Community Center. Lori hopes that some of these partnerships with non-profits in the Dubuque area may help children who might not have access to nature discover all it has to offer.

"Children in low-income households may be limited in transportation, they also may live somewhere surrounded by concrete," said Lori. It's important to help them get their hands in the dirt

Continued on the next page

Children make pine cone bird feeders in the Canticle of Creation Center.

Canticle of Creation's Camps for Kids

The Dubuque Franciscans' Canticle of Creation Center is hosting four camps for kids in June and July at Mount St. Francis Center, 3390 Windsor Ave.

The camps are for children ages 8-12 and the cost is \$100. Scholarships are available. To register, contact Lori Apel at (563) 583-9786.

Nature at Night

June 29 through July 2, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Campers will discover the wonder of nature during the early evening and dusk. What sounds does nature make at night? What sights do we see, and how do animals act? The last evening, Thursday will run until 10:30 p.m. with a bonfire and flashlight-led nature walk through our surrounding campus.

Earth Champions

July 6 through 9, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
This camp focuses on environmental issues and how we can collectively help take care of the environment and all of creation.

Life on the Prairie

July 13-16, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
This camp explores the lives of the early settlers on the prairie — in essence, the culture of that period. It will include puppetry, storytelling, and crafts. We will also explore the 80-acre prairie at Mount St. Francis Center, and in turn, children will immerse themselves in nature practices.

Fox Indians

Age: 8-12

July 20-23, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

This camp will immerse children into the culture of the Fox Indians who inhabited this area years ago. What can we learn from their world and traditions? A large wigwam, drumming, native food, dance, and art will be included.



and feel the beauty of the soil--to improve their emotional well-being, support their brain development, and build their social capital."

This summer, the Canticle of Creation Center will offer four different camps for children: "Nature at Night," "Earth Champions," "Life on the Prairie," and "Fox Indians."

For adults, the Canticle of Creation Center is offering a six-part series on climate change this spring.

"These programs are being offered in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day," noted Lori. The series began in February and will finish in June. (See box on page five for more information.)

While she's created programs for adults and children separately, Lori hopes in the future to bring both groups together by launching an intergenerational environmental club.

"I think the wisdom of the sisters--the experience of an older generation combined with

the energy and enthusiasm of the youth for helping Mother Earth could be powerful,” she said. “To have everyone from ages 14-80 working together for a common cause would be impressive. The youth are our future, and they are hungry to connect to something bigger than they are. There is a beauty in empowering them.”

As far as other goals for the future, Lori has plenty of ideas to email herself in the middle of the night.

“I just have this energy--it’s so important to share gifts of creation, to share the charisma, mission, and values of the sisters.” ■



Children ride a canoe in the Canticle of Creation Center.

Sister Mary Peter talks to children about prairie animals in the Canticle of Creation Center in 2019.





Work begins on the future site of the solar panels that will power Clare House at Mount St. Francis Center.

DBQ Franciscans Begin Work to Install 2,600 Solar Panels

The Dubuque Franciscans are installing more than 2,600 solar panels to power Clare House at Mount St. Francis Center.

“In 1988, we converted about 80 acres of our property to prairie, and in May of 2019, 55 of these acres and 13 acres of woods were put into a conservation easement,” said **Sister Marie Cigrand**. “The installation of solar panels on our property is our next endeavor in doing our part to preserve our planet for future generations.”

Each panel will generate 375 watts of electricity, for a grand total of 990,000 watts; the ground-mounted solar system would reduce Clare House’s energy usage by 80%.

“This will provide some energy independence and cost control as energy costs will continue to rise,” said Sisters of St. Francis Maintenance Director Paul Hayes. “We want to be more environmentally friendly and lessen our reliance on fossil fuels.”

Clare House operates on a geothermal system. Alliant Energy will be able to “bank” excess energy the panels generate during summer months and let us use it again during colder months, said Paul.

The project is slated to be completed in June. ■



From left to right: Sisters Maureen Leach, Kathy Knipper, Brenda Whetstone and Pat Clemen.

Dubuque Franciscans Elect New Leadership Team

The Sisters of St. Francis elected a new Leadership Team for the next six years during the community's Chapter of Elections, which met December 27-31, 2019 at Shalom Retreat Center in Dubuque.

Elected to leadership for the congregation are: Sister Kathy Knipper, president; and Sisters Patricia (Pat) Clemen, Maureen Leach, and Brenda Whetstone, vice presidents.

Sister Kathy Knipper has served as vice president for the Sisters of St. Francis Leadership Team since 2014. Her previous ministries include associate professor of education at Briar Cliff University, Director of Curriculum for the Diocese of Sioux City and teacher in elementary schools in Holy Cross, Iowa; Waterloo, Iowa; and Dubuque. Sister Kathy graduated from Clarke University, Dubuque, has a master's degree from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, and a doctoral degree from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

Sister Pat Clemen currently serves as Catholic Charities' coordinator for Parish Health Ministry in Jackson, Mississippi, and volunteers at Excel Learning Center in Morton, Mississippi, teaching CPR. She has lived in Mississippi since 1978 and previously served in Jackson as the Quality Improvement Director at Sta-Home Health and Hospice and DRE/RCIA Director at the Cathedral Parish. Her nursing experience includes coronary care supervisor, health facility surveyor, and school health consultant. She received her bachelor of science in nursing at

Marycrest College, Davenport, Iowa, and master's degree in theological studies at Springhill College, Mobile, Alabama.

Sister Maureen Leach is a Spanish/English interpreter with international experience. Additionally, she works as a licensed massage therapist specializing in hospice care in San Antonio, Texas. She has more than 35 years of ministry experience in Texas: as a social service worker with the National Farm Worker Ministry, a teacher trainer/adult education instructor, and an education coordinator at Visitation House Transitional Housing. Previously she served in church ministry in rural Guatemala and as activities director at Stonehill Franciscan Services in Dubuque. She edited a book of essays on healing from trauma and co-authored a book on the Psalms. Her bachelor's degree in Spanish is from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.

Sister Brenda Whetstone is a nurse at Lackey Convalescent Home in Forest, Mississippi, and volunteers at EXCEL, Inc. in Morton, Mississippi. She previously served in pastoral care in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras, and in Dubuque as a nurse at Stonehill Franciscan Services, and Holy Family Hall, at Mount St. Francis Center. Sister Brenda received a bachelor's degree in theology from Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa. Following graduation, she served in the United States Army where she received her licensed practical nurse training from St. Philip's College in San Antonio.

Installation of the new leadership team will take place on May 31 at Mount St. Francis Center. ■ *Footprints* 9



Karla Schoen helps a woman carry water for the first time from SWP well #249 at Kinozi village in Tanzania. Contributed photo.

“Tanzania 10” Visit SWP Well Sites

Typically Brian Gilligan, Tanzania Liaison of the Sister Water Project (SWP) Committee, travels alone when he visits well sites in Tanzania, but this past January he had nine companions join him for the week long trip. The “Tanzania 10” as they were called, traveled alongside Brian as he audited 23 wells to ensure they were still in operation and had correct GPS coordinates.

The “Tanzania 10” included Brian’s wife, Linda Gilligan, John Vyverberg, Tim and Diane Wetizel, Jeff Flynn, Peter and Karla Schoen, Emily Vyverberg, and Susan Gilligan.

While there was time on the trip for sightseeing, visiting the wells with Danny, Nova, and James from Safe Water for Life and Dignity was the highlight for Emily Vyverberg.

“There was an immediate feeling of gratitude the moment we walked into these villages. I had some preconceived apprehensions about how a group of 10 white people would be received in a rural African village. However, with the help of Danny, Nova, and James, we were greeted literally and figuratively with open arms. You didn’t need to speak or understand Swahili to appreciate the

gratefulness that these people felt by receiving the gift of clean water. We hugged, sang, danced, and celebrated together hand in hand,” she said.

Diane Wetizel, wife of Sister Water Project Committee Member Tim Weitzel, was also struck by the gratitude of the villagers.

“The people, especially the women showed so much appreciation for such a simple gift of clean water. It was very heart warming. They were so cheerful and joyful to have been given that gift,” said Diane. “Seeing what a hard life the women have in raising their children, cooking and caring for their families under less than ideal circumstances makes me appreciate how strong those women really are. I think it meant a lot to the people to actually see us in person, receive hugs, high fives, and fist bumps. So many of the women and children would have big smiles on their faces,” she added.

The “Tanzania 10” generously donated the funds to sponsor one well and were able to witness its installation.

The first day we were there, we were able to see a ‘traditional well,’ which was nothing more than a big muddy puddle of dirty water,” said Emily.



Buckets line the site of Sister Water Project well #249 in Kinozi. Contributed photo.

“By Friday, the village that was using this dirty well water received the gift of clean water, and it was truly amazing. Seeing the profound impact that the gift of water has on these communities is beyond what I can put into words,” she noted.

During his audit of well #240 in the village of Sechambo, Brian Gilligan spoke to Mama Schomii and asked how the SWP well had changed the life of the villagers.

“This well has assisted us so much, especially for the women. We used to suffer,” she said. “We used to have to walk so far and on top of that, our children want to eat and go to school. The water problem was making life difficult. Now because there is water by our houses, we are relieved. We are very grateful for the SWP donors for remembering us.”

Stories like Mama Schomii remind Brian of why this work is important but also that there are more people like her in need of help.

“At one point during the visit I asked Dan from SWLD approximately how many letters from



The Tanzania 10: Back row left to right: John Vyverberg, Tim and Diane Wetzel, Jeff Flynn, and Brian Gilligan. Front row left to right: Peter and Karla Schoen, Emily Vyverberg, Linda Gilligan and Susan Gilligan.



The sign on Sister Water Project #250 in the village of Msuvisi, which was funded by the “Tanzania 10.” Contributed photo.

villages they currently had waiting for funding. He estimated it was 300,” said Brian. “In every village we visited we were greeted with much love and thanks for the gift of clean water, but also met with the acute need for more wells in other areas. There is much work left to do,” he said.

Though the Tanzania 10 traveled to Africa to witness how SWP has helped others, they came back with their own lives altered.

“I have one picture of a well celebration, where there are about 12 buckets of all different colors and sizes lined up one after the other, with people waiting for the first time to collect clean water,” said Emily. “This was a symbolic experience. We might not all have the same color bucket, some of our buckets might be full, some may be empty, they might be different sizes, but in the end, they all accomplish the same thing, and they all have the ability to help others. Thank you SWP for helping our brothers and sisters around the world! You changed the lives of many Tanzanian people, but you changed mine as well.” ■

Employee Appreciation

The annual Mount St. Francis Employee Appreciation and Recognition dinner was held Tuesday, March 4 at Shalom Spirituality Center. Special recognition was given to employees who completed 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years of service.

"We value your devotion, your dependability, your optimism and look forward to seeing you tomorrow, ready and eager to add more years of service with the Sisters of St. Francis." said Sister Kathy Knipper in her remarks at the dinner. ■

35 Years

30 Years



Stephanie Viertel and Sister Mary Colleen Hoversten

Martha Garcia and Bonnie Gourley

25 Years

Not pictured: Sue Coohy

20 Years

Not pictured: Jennifer Hammerand

15 Years



Wanda Dossey, Tracy Tath, and Dixie McGovern

Mary Gilligan and Tiffany Weipert

Not pictured: Patty Valentine

10 Years

5 Years



Back row: Char Schmitt and Mark Sheldon. Front row: Amy Gillespie, Dave Schroeder, and Beth Ann Tabor. Not pictured: Stacey Cooper and Flor Gomez.

Front row: Andrea Peterson, Sister Michelle Balek, Tina Leibold, Kristen Churchill, and Rich Hingtgen. Back row: Ejmi Samuel, Calee Parker, Abby Hoffmann, Tyler Winders, Missy Tarnutzer, Chris Varley, and Patty Bodnar. Not pictured: Barb Coyle and Dory Weidenbacher.

Along the way...

BCU Students Give Service in the Dominican Republic

Sister Janet May, Director of Campus Ministry at Briar Cliff

University (BCU), in Sioux City, Iowa, traveled to the Dominican Republic with students from BCU in January to give service at St. Francis Boarding School. BCU students worked to put screens on the



Sister Janet May (front row, second from right) with BCU students and St. Francis Boarding school students in the Dominican Republic. Contributed photo.

boys' dormitory windows as they had been struggling with contacting illnesses from mosquitos.

"We put screens over 60 windows," said Sister Janet. "We worked with the young boys on the screens so it really was a team project of building relationships with the people." ■

Sister Carol Besch Receives Special Thank You

Sister Carol Besch received a special thank you from the Pediatrics Department at Medical Associates in Dubuque for her work translating for their Spanish-speaking patients. At a staff celebration in January, Dr. Douglas Olk, MD presented Sister Carol with a small plaque that reads in Spanish, "Sister Carol Besch, friend of the Pediatric Doctors. Thank you for all you have done." ■



Sister Carol Besch with Dr. Douglas Olk, MD.

Franciscan Common Venture Seeks Volunteers

The Franciscan Common Venture program, sponsored by the Sisters of Saint Francis of Dubuque, is seeking volunteers for its service sites beginning in April.

The 2020 Common Venture sites include Dubuque, Waterloo, Sioux City, and Des Moines in Iowa; Winnebago, Nebraska; South Bend, Indiana; Busby, Montana; and Morton and Okolona, Mississippi. Volunteer opportunities range from working in a community garden to tutoring children over the course of a week. There are also one-day service opportunities available in Dubuque, Sioux City, and Waterloo.

"It was heartwarming to feel the passion of the staff and volunteers at the Mission," said volunteer Denise Hawker about her time volunteering at the Dubuque Rescue Mission. "It leaves me hope-filled and my heart is in a better place than when I arrived."

Franciscan Common Venture is a volunteer program that provides the opportunity for men and women 20 years and older to contribute their time, talents, and commitment in service among people who are poor. Volunteers are asked to contribute a stipend to help cover food and housing costs and are also responsible for their own costs traveling to and from the volunteer sites.

For more information about the service opportunities and sites and also how to apply, visit www.osfdbq.org/commonventure. Contact Common Venture Coordinator Sister Michelle Balek, OSF, at balekm@osfdbq.org or (563) 583-9786.

DBQ County Recognizes Work of Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking

The Dubuque, Iowa, County Board recognized the work of the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Slavery at its meeting January 2 with a proclamation.

The proclamation reads, “The County of Dubuque wishes to acknowledge the following organizations for their work to combat human trafficking: Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Set Free Dubuque. Human trafficking is both a national and local issue, we invite all civic leaders and city leaders to support the efforts of the Tri-State Coalition to train all local hotel/motel staff in recognizing the signs of trafficking.”

The coalition includes both Dubuque Franciscan Sisters and Associates. ■



DBQ Franciscans Offer Summer Camps for Girls

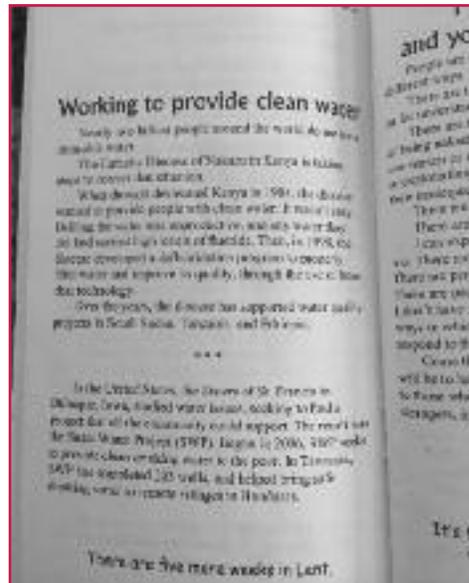
The Dubuque Franciscan Sisters are offering two summer camps for girls in June at Mount St. Francis Center.

Surfin’ the C’s (Compassionate, Confident, Courageous, Christian!) is a two-night leadership camp available to girls who will finish 6th, 7th, or 8th grade at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. The camp begins at 7:00 p.m. Friday, June 5, and finishes at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 7. Girls will join the sisters for spiritual and creative activities highlighting leadership and the four C’s! The cost for Surfin’ the C’s is \$65, which includes all meals, housing, activities and a T-shirt

Best Franciscan Friends (BFF) Camp is a day camp for girls who will finish 4th or 5th grade at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. BFF Camp will be held from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 10, through Friday, June 12. Girls will participate in activities with the sisters including creating crafts, playing outdoor games, and much more. The cost for BFF Camp is \$50 and includes all meals, activities, and a T-shirt.

Camps have limited spaces and registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information contact Julie Tebbe at tebbej@osfdbq.org. ■

SWP Mentioned in National Lenten Devotional Book



The Sister Water Project was mentioned in the national Lenten devotional book titled “The Little Black Book.” On March 8, 2020 the reflection titled “Working to provide clean water” reads:

“In the United States, the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, studied water issues, seeking to find a project that all the community could support. The result was the Sister Water Project (SWP). Begun in 2006, SWP seeks to provide clean drinking water to the poor. In Tanzania, SWP has completed 203 wells, and helped bring safe drinking water to remote villages in Honduras.” ■

2019 Statement of Accountability

Dear Friends,

Listed below is our report of donations for 2019, showing how you our donors designated your donations, and how the Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Francis then assigned your generosity.

“Gratitude” is the foundation of all we do to stay in touch with you. We are most grateful for your support of our life and ministry. We promise you a remembrance in our prayers.

*Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF
For the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, IA*

DONOR DESIGNATION OF GIFT INCOME

For the needs of retired sisters	\$ 116,006.60
For ministry among poor people	\$ 6,372.00
For wherever our need is greatest	\$ 202,348.68
Birdies for Charity	\$ 18,692.02
Estate Gifts	\$ 314,317.92
Sister Water Project	\$ 230,166.76
	<u>\$ 887,903.38</u>

HOW YOUR GIFTS WERE DISTRIBUTED

By the Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque

Ministry Fund	\$ 6,372.00
Operations	\$ 394,617.87
Birdies purchases	\$ 18,692.02
Sister Water Projects	\$ 230,166.76
Investments for Capital Projects	\$ 238,054.73
	<u>\$ 887,903.38</u>

Over the last 15 years, many of you have received a card in memory of your lost family member, or celebrating a birthday or anniversary from the Sister of St. Francis signed by Sister Helen Huewe, OSF. Sister Helen died January 11, 2020, after a short illness with a rare form of pneumonia (see “Remembrances” section on page 17). We are most grateful for her years of service in our Development Office and for all she did in the City of Dubuque to spearhead and raise funds for numerous charitable organizations. ■



In Remembrance

Sister Mary Gregoria Rush January 21, 1931 - November 16, 2019



Mary Catherine

Rush was born January 21, 1931 at seven months gestation to John and Mary (Enright) Rush in

Sioux City, Iowa. Because she was so premature, she was baptized on the day she was born. Music was an interest from her earliest years. After having rheumatic fever when she was young, she was unable to take part in strenuous games, so she spent her childhood on the piano bench and took lessons to play the double bass. She was educated by the Sinsinawa Dominicans at Blessed Sacrament School and the BVM Sisters at Cathedral High School until her sophomore year at which time she transferred to East High School. It

was here that she experienced a cultural shock, because the school was co-ed and had hundreds of students.

East High was also where Mary Catherine's love of the Spanish language began. She took every opportunity to develop her Spanish skills beyond her school classes. She had the habit of frequently stopping at a local restaurant to see if they had any bones for her dog. This gave her several occasions to practice her conversational Spanish with the staff.

Mary Catherine entered the Dubuque Franciscans on August 24, 1952. The following year on August 12, she was received into the community and given the name Sister Mary Gregoria. Sister's first missions were teaching music to students at St. Mary's, Cascade, St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville, and Briar Cliff College from 1964 to 1970.

Mary Gregoria spent 1970 to 2012 in several Florida cities assisting the elderly. In 1982 she also began working for the diocese of Petersburg, FL ministering in the Chancery's Office of Respect Life. In 1986 Sister Mary Gregoria became interested in Public Access Television, and within three months she became certified in technical skills such as camera operations and computer graphics. Sometime in 1986 Sister merged her hobby of TV production with her apostolic work as an advocate for the elderly into a prize-winning video. The film received the Silver Cassette Award.

Toward the end of 2012, Mary Gregoria came to Dubuque to retire at Clare House.

Sister is survived by her Franciscan sisters. ■

Sister Mary Merici Oehrlein January 28, 1913 - December 7, 2019



Sister Mary Merici (Elizabeth)

Oehrlein, OSF, 106, died December 7, 2019.

Michael Anton Oehrlein came

to America from Bavaria, Germany, in 1900 to become a tool and die maker in Aurora, Illinois. He married Mary Weber in 1908 and together they had five children, Joseph, Albert, Elizabeth (Sister Merici), Robert, and Roseanne. Elizabeth Suzanne, was born in 1913 and was called "Elsie."

While she thought of being a religious, she began nurse's training

in Aurora before she finally entered Mount St. Francis on September 8, 1935. At reception the following year, she was given the name Sister Mary Merici.

Upon entering the convent, Elsie had asked to be a teacher rather than a nurse, and her request was granted. She attended Loras and Briar Cliff Colleges, and obtained a Masters in English from the Catholic University in Washington D.C. Sister Merici taught in Iowa at St. Mary's, Waterloo, LaMotte, Alton, Ashton, and Granville and in Illinois at Midlothian. While she taught English for many years, she also taught Latin and French, and was a very successful debate coach.

At the recommendation of Sister Loyola Meuret, Sister Merici was hired as campus nurse by the Foreign Study League of Salt Lake City during the summers of 1967, 1969, and 1970. In 1972 she attended summer school at the Sorbonne in Paris and studied with Alliance Francaise in Antibes.

Sister retired from teaching high school in 1983 and went on to teach remedial reading at Hazel Crest in Illinois for five years before retiring to Mount St. Francis in 1988. In 2004 she moved to Holy Family Hall and in 2011 Sister Merici moved to Clare House,

Sister is survived by her nieces, nephews, and Franciscan sisters. ■

In Remembrance

Sister Helen Huewe October 1, 1935- January 11, 2020



On October 1, 1935 Helen was born to Gerland and Celeste (Freymann) Huewe in Remsen, Iowa.

Helen attended St. Mary's in Remsen for grade school and high school.

After graduating from high school in 1953, Helen followed in her mother's footsteps and went to nurses' training for two years at Mercy in Sioux City, Iowa. On August 25, 1955, she entered the Franciscan community and the following year on August 11 was received and given the name Sister Mary Gerland.

Sister Helen's nursing profession began in 1958 as a nurse aide at Xavier Hospital in Dubuque. She then earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, and continued her education graduating

with a master's degree in hospital administration from St. Louis University. Sister ministered in healthcare for 40 years in the Dubuque area. She held various positions at Xavier Hospital including being a registered nurse and the Administrator. Later she was named CEO of Mercy Health Center. Other health care experiences were at St. Joseph Hospital, Fort Worth, Texas; the University of Iowa; and the Visiting Nurses Association in Dubuque.

Sister Helen was the Project Initiator representing the women religious congregations in the tri-state area to establish Opening Doors, the legal corporation for Maria House and Teresa Shelter.

Helen assisted in the development and fund raising for Step by Step, a housing project in Dubuque for persons with disabilities. She was involved in the development of Crescent Community Health Center, serving as Chair of the Board and on other committees. She also served on the Stonehill Franciscan Services

Board; the Boards of Briar Cliff University and Loras College Board of Regents; the Iowa Hospital Association as chair; the state Hawkeye Board to establish the health insurance program for children living in families with low income; and in 1993 she served on Governor Branstad's Reform Council.

In 2012, Sister Helen moved to Mount St. Francis where she continued her volunteer work in the Development Office and on committees for Shalom Spirituality Center. Sister was also active in serving on committees promoting social justice issues, especially immigration reform, and on the Friends of St. Mary's to revitalize and develop the campus into Steeple Square.

In 2018, Sister Helen began working with and for the Marshallese community in Dubuque.

Sister is survived by her brother, Phil Huewe; sister-in-law, Margy Huewe; nieces and nephews; and her Franciscan sisters. ■

Sister Blanche Marie Haag January 4, 1923 - January 31, 2020



Blanche Marie was born to Cyril and Catherine (Boever) Haag on a farm in Ledyard, Iowa on January 4, 1923.

She was the fifth of 15 children.

There was no Catholic school in Ledyard, so Blanche Marie attended grade and high school in the Ledyard Consolidated School System. She graduated in May of 1942. On August 24 of that same year Blanche Marie entered the Sisters of St. Francis in Dubuque. The following year on August 12, 1943 Blanche

Marie was received into the community and given the name Sister Mary Claude.

Sister began her teaching career in 1945. She taught in Iowa at Sacred Heart Schools in Dubuque, Meyer, and Templeton; St. Mary's Home in Dubuque; St. Mary's, Alton; St. Anthony's, Hospers; St. Augustine's, Halbur; and St. John's in Bancroft. Sister Blanche Marie loved teaching children, especially kindergarten to fourth grade.

In 1991, after years of teaching, Sister Blanche Marie moved to Mount St. Francis in Dubuque. Sister joined the Right to Life organization in 2007 where she was very active, attending meetings every month, was

present at Right to Life luncheons, and attending the annual dinners. When Planned Parenthood moved to Dubuque, Sister Blanche Marie took her turn as an "Educational Picketeer". She was very excited because she was able to attend the Right to Life Conference held in Dubuque June 5, 2010. These are the memories Sister so loved to share with others.

Sister is survived by her brothers: Vernon Haag, Frank (Margaret) Haag, and Lyle Haag; her sisters: Pearl Irmiter, Mary Ann Reilly, and Rita Schmalen; her sister-in law, Mildred Haag; her brother-in-law, Harold Hatten; and her Franciscan sisters. ■

In Remembrance

Sister Pat Heuer July 29, 1916 - March 11, 2020



On July 29, 1916 a girl was born to Benjamin and Susan (Frisch) Heuer in Sturgis, South Dakota. On August 13, 1916, she was baptized at St. Aloysius Church in Sturgis and given the name Helen Julia.

Helen attended both grade and high school at Farrar Consolidated School.

Helen entered the Franciscan Community in Dubuque on August 12, 1933, the same day her sister, Mary, who had entered the previous year, was received as a novice. On August 12, 1934

Helen was received into the community and given the name Sister Patricia.

After the novitiate years, Sister taught at St. Mary's School in Waterloo, Iowa, followed by schools in Midlothian, Melrose Park, and North Riverside, all in Illinois. Sister Pat also taught in Crescent City, California, and Dyersville, Iowa. While in Sioux City, Iowa Sister was the home director at the Villa Maria.

In the summer of 1972, Sister responded to the call of serving again in Midlothian as Minister of Care to the sick and elderly. Along with this assignment she became the Spiritual Director of the Pius X Secular Franciscans. It was here that she helped to

organize the Coffee House, a recreational program for handicapped adults; served on the Ecumenical Council; worked with Renew and bible study groups; was a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and taught a religious education program to special needs children, ages 6-11.

In 1996 Sister Pat retired to Mount St. Francis where she volunteered in the Liturgy Office. Sister lived in Holy Family Hall from 2008 to 2011 at which time she moved to Clare House.

Sister is survived by her sister-in-law Berniece Heuer, her nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters. ■

Rest in Peace

William (Bill) Halbach
Brother of Sister Edith Halbach

Ann Donlon
Sister of Sister Amelia Thole

Joe Lang
Brother of Sister Madonna Lang

Bernard Hoversten
Brother of Sister Mary Colleen Hoversten

Margaret Douglas-Beck
Franciscan Associate

Mary Groetken
Sister-in-law of Sister Ella Groetken

Robert Jennings
Brother of Sister Virginia Jennings

Donald Banowetz
Brother of Sister Dolores Banowetz

Dick Berning
Brother-in-law of Sister Dorothy Heiderscheit

Catherine DeLucia
Sister of Sister Gwen Hennessey

Allan Hosch
Brother of Sisters Joan and Margie Hosch

Clarence Ginder
Brother of Sister Edna Ginder

Vivian Zalaznik
Sister of Sister Jeanine McDermott

Daniel (Dan) Hefel,
Brother of Sister Laurinda Hefel

William (Bill) Podvin
Brother-in-law of Sister Rebecca Rosemeyer

Helen (Sheely) Rolling
Sister-in-law of Sister Theresa Rolling

DBQ Franciscan Associate Honored with Governor's Award

Dubuque Franciscan Associate Father George Karnik received the Iowa Governor's Volunteer Award for his ministry to those imprisoned or jailed on October 31, 2019.

From 1974-1999, Father George annually led a team in conducting a Christian Experience Weekend at the State Reformatory in Anamosa. Since retirement in 2002 he goes monthly to Anamosa to hear confessions. He also celebrates Mass and visits with prisoners.

Father George has long been active in social justice ministries and education in the Cedar Valley in Iowa. He is co-founder of the Discipleship Experience Weekend and Getting Ahead in the Cedar Valley.

The Governor's Volunteer Award program "honors the dedicated people who volunteer their time and talent to help an agency or organization deliver its mission." ■



Dubuque Franciscans Receive New Novice in Honduras



On Friday, December 13, in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras, the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque received **Katy Meylin Orellana Deras**, of El Salvador, as a novice to the congregation.

During the ceremony Sister Pat Farrell, who has directed the formation process in Honduras, expressed the support of the entire community to the new novice. “We are called to fruitful love, to service, to love in action. We have seen that in you, Katy. We recognize the many gifts that you have and the ways you have placed them at the service of those around you. We give you a big welcome and ask that you continue to love and serve in this congregation, walking with us,” said Sister Pat.

“We are all inspired by the faith and trust that Sister Katy has placed in our congregation and in God who calls her forward into community and ministry,” said Sister Kate.

Sister Katy will spend a year in Dubuque sharing community life and participating in ministry with Dubuque Franciscan Sisters. ■

Katy Meylin Orellana Deras signs the reception book while Sister Kate Katoski looks on. Contributed photo.

Below is an excerpt from Sister Pat Farrell’s reflection at the reception into novitiate for Katy Meylin Orellana Deras:

“There is mystery here. Not only Katy but each one of us can look back over our lives and see something of how God has led us to this present moment. We can identify events, persons, moments that have been of influence. Beyond what we can see, however, the presence and movement of God in us has also been leading in ways that are unseen in the silent drawing of our hearts. We also recognize and celebrate the hidden process that has brought Katy to this moment.

Today’s Gospel tells us that God calls, invites, attracts, and chooses us. “It is not you who have chosen me. It is I who have chosen you.” It is the grace and movement of the God who has called Katy that we celebrate today. The call is at times subtle, our responses somewhat ambiguous, but Katy, here you are. There is an Irish saying: “Your feet will take you to where your heart is.” Your

feet are planted here. We recognize and celebrate with you your decision, the decision of the congregation, and the mysterious movement of the God who calls.

Our first reading declares that God, the potter, also molds us. Not only has God given a certain shape to who we are, to the essence at the core of each of us. God also, through the relationships, events and circumstances of our lives, continues to mold us, to re-shape, to transform, to set us in new directions, over and over again. The call, then, is continuous: the invitation to allow ourselves to be shaped and re-shaped, and to let go of control.

Your presence here today, Katy, declares together with the rest of us Franciscans, that we have come to the conclusion that religious life, in this congregation, helps us to surrender to God’s continual re-shaping. A life of deep prayer, both personal and communal, helps to keep the clay of our hearts and our lives moist so that God can form us into what is needed now.”

Footprints



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Sister Water Project Seeks Volunteers for Service Trip to Honduras

The Sisters of St. Francis are seeking volunteers for a service trip to Honduras with the Sister Water Project July 17-25, 2020. Sister Water Project service team members will help make potable water



Members of the 2018 Sister Water Project service trip to Mejocote.

accessible to people in the rural village of Mejocote, near the town of Gracias in Lempira, Honduras.

Team members must be 18 years old (16 years old if accompanied by a parent/guardian) and physically healthy and strong enough to perform strenuous activity at higher altitudes. Fees for the trip are \$1,100 which includes ground/air travel from the USA to Honduras, food, and lodging.

To participate in the 2020 Sister Water Project service trip, visit www.osfdbq.org to download the application or email Stacy Francois at francoiss@osfdbq.org for a copy. Applications are due by April 10, 2020. For more information, contact Sister Kathy Knipper at (563) 583-9786 or knipperk@osfdbq.org. ■

Calendar of Events

APRIL 13

Sister Nancy Miller, OSF will present, "Intersectionality and Climate Crisis" at 6:30 p.m. at the Canticle of Creation Center, 3390 Windsor Ave.

MAY 11

The City of Dubuque's Sustainable Community Coordinator Gina Bell will present Dubuque's Climate Action Plan at 6:30 p.m. at the Canticle of Creation Center, 3390 Windsor Ave.

MAY 31

Installation of the new leadership team

JUNE 5-6

Surfin' the C's Camp

JUNE 10-12

BFF Camp

JUNE 20-21

Jubilee