Servants of Mary 1000 College Avenue West P.O. Box 389 Ladysmith, Wisconsin 54848-0389

715-532-6153 www.servitesisters.org



Fall 2010

Servite Sisters Today

A Newsletter for Our Families and Friends

Servite Sisters Sell Motherhouse

he Servite Sisters, in a special meeting on February 22, approved the sale of their mother-house in Ladysmith to Indianhead Community Action Agency, which plans to use the building as its administrative headquarters. The Sisters' cemetery and the land adjacent to it were not included in the sale.

The sale of the motherhouse was prompted by a steady decline in the number of Sisters living there, coupled with rising operation and maintenance costs. In 2003, when the Sisters first began exploring possibilities for their Ladysmith property, they committed themselves to pursuing options that would promote stewardship of their mission and enhance the quality of life of people in the area, attentive to those most in need.

Sister Theresa Sandok, president of the Servants of Mary, said, "We couldn't have hoped for a better match than Indianhead Community Action Agency, whose mission of compassionate service is so similar to our own."

Indianhead Community Action Agency is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is "to secure all available resources, local, state, and federal, to enable low-income and disadvantaged persons of all ages in rural areas to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivation that are needed to become self-sufficient." Indianhead's basic service area includes Burnett, Clark, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn counties, with additional programs and services in St. Croix, Douglas, Polk, Barron, and Price counties. The agency employs over 1000 people in Northwestern Wisconsin and

serves over 10,000 people each year.

SERVANTS OF MARY
1000 COLLEGE AVE W

he former motherhouse will provide much needed administrative space all of Indianhead's programs, which include programs offering emergency assistance with food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, rent, and utilities; Head Start and child care programs; home health programs to enable the elderly and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence; programs to address the problems of homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and unemployment; adult literacy programs; skills enhancement and

President's Message

Grief and Gratitude Are Not Incompatible

ne day last June, while attending to the myriad tasks involved in closing a motherhouse, I called Sr. Michaela Hedican to ask: "How do you move a half-ton statue?" Our marble statue of St. Juliana needed to make the short journey from the motherhouse foyer to the chapel, where it will become part of an exhibit telling the story of the Servite Sisters in Ladysmith.

Michaela's community, the Eau Claire Benedictines, recently merged with St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn. Before leaving Eau Claire, the sisters donated their nearly life-size statue of St. Benedict to a local parish where the sisters had served since 1892.

As our conversation turned from moving statues to moving sisters and to reflecting on the transitions our two groups were experiencing, she remarked: "Grief and gratitude are not incompatible." We find ourselves giving thanks even as we mourn the losses. The changes bring both pain and promise, sadness and joy.

When we sold our motherhouse to Indianhead Community Action Agency, we realized how fortunate we were—not just to find a buyer who would preserve and use the building, but to find one whose whole reason for being was to serve the people of the area, especially those most in need. We were also blessed to be able to continue to house our archives and administrative office in the building, and we look forward to the day when a Servite exhibit will grace the former chapel.

Along with these reasons to rejoice, we also feel a deep sense of loss. The 1928 structure was not our first motherhouse, but it was the only one most of us ever knew. Many of us were quite young when we entered the convent, some even teenagers. The motherhouse was where we learned to be Servites. Over the years it was the place to which we returned for retreats, chapters, investitures, professions, jubilees, and funerals.

In its heyday in the 1960s, the building housed our postulants, novices, and junior sisters; the nursing sisters who worked at our hospital and nursing home; the teaching sisters who taught at our college and high school and at the parish school downtown; the mother general, councilors, secretary, and treasurer; the sisters who cooked, cleaned, and took care of the chickens and garden; a few retired sisters; and the Servite friar who served as our chaplain.

By the time we sold the building earlier this year, there were only nine sisters in residence. Those nine have felt the loss of the motherhouse in a special way, since it was home to them for many years, and during that time they became a close-knit community. Today, although they no longer all live under the same roof, they still gather frequently to pray, to share a meal, to enjoy each other's company, and to play a mean game of cards.

We know that change is a natural part of life. Without change, nothing new would ever emerge. There would be no new life, nothing to which to look forward, nothing for which to hope. But the flip side of change is death. For everything new that comes into the world, something old must give way. And it's this flip side that makes change such a bittersweet pill to swallow. Someone once said that the only person who really likes change is a wet baby.

When we reflect on the changes in our lives in the light of the Gospel, they take on an even deeper meaning. Kevin O'Brien, commenting on the thought of Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, writes: "In every part of daily life, we experience Christ's own dying and rising, because the mystery of God continues to unfold in our world. According to Rahner, these joys and sorrows make up the 'liturgy of the world,' which he insisted had to be connected to the liturgy or worship of the church. We must bring to the church our own dyings and risings and unite them with Christ's own. In the midst of a broken though grace-filled world, we erect a landmark through our liturgy, which claims the world for God and proclaims the paschal mystery amid the comedy and tragedy of our lives."

What an awesome thought, that every change in our daily lives is a grace-filled moment. Through our everyday experiences of dying and rising, the mystery of God becomes present in ever new ways in our world. Our very own lives become an epiphany, a place where the divine shines through in a way as unique as each person and each situation is unique.

Grief and gratitude, then, are not incompatible. They are the natural consequence of our human condition, in which we find ourselves constantly having to say goodbye to people, places, and things that have become dear to us and welcoming in the new, whose promise is usually still not fully apparent.

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President's Message Continued from page 2

Although our daily dyings are an inescapable part of our participation in the paschal mystery of Christ, they are not the only or even the most important part. The dyings are the door to the risings. We die so that we may have life and have it more abundantly. In the words of St. Augustine: "We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song!"

Let me take this opportunity to say thank you to all who have accompanied us in our journey these last few months. Your continued concern and support mean so very much.



Sister Theresa Sandok, OSM

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any people decide to include charitable gifts in their estate planning. We would deeply appreciate being remembered in your will. Including us in your estate planning is a way of partnering with us into the future.

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UNIFAS in Brazil

isters Mary Alice Willems, Theresa Sandok, Sandra DeGidio, and Doris Ann Samens attended the 6th International Conference of the Servite Family (UNIFAS) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in July. The theme of the Conference was "Servants of Mary and Care of Creation."

And The Award Goes To...

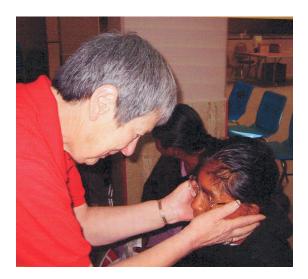
very year the Knights of Columbus Trinity Council #3755 of Annunciata Parish, Chicago, Ill., hold a special dinner at which they give awards based on their four values: unity, fraternity, charity, and patriotism. Last year the awards were open for the first time to persons who are not Knights.

Sister Ann Marie Caporale was the first non-Knight chosen to receive the Charity Award, which was presented at the Awards Night Banquet on November 21, 2009. Master of Ceremonies Darryl Tabernacki, speaking to Sister Ann Marie, said, "Your smile reaches out when you enter a room." He went on to highlight Sister Ann Marie's most recent ministry experiences as chaplain and bereavement coordinator at VNA Hospice Center in Merrillville, Ind., and Metro South Medical Center in Blue Island, Ill.

Attending the awards ceremony with Sister were family members Dorothy and Art Giannini, Jim and Elaine Caporale, Art and Tracey Giannini, and Ann Singles, and Servite Sisters Margaret Valois, Cecilia Fandel, and Mary McDermott.



Father Paul Cullen, OSM, pastor of Annunciata Parish, Sister Ann Marie, and Knight John Pope, who presented the award



Sister Virginia fitting glasses in Mexico

Sister Virginia Schwartz, parish director of St. Ann's Parish, Cable, Wis., was recently presented with the Knight of Sight Fellowship Award by the Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin (LEBW) for her exemplary service in giving the gift of sight to many. This award is the Eye Bank's highest form of recognition to an individual.

In the letter to Sister Virginia announcing the award, LEBW executive director David C. Butters said, "The Board of Directors commends you for your unselfish dedication, service, and commitment to Lionism." Sister's name will be prominently and permanently displayed on the LEBW Knight of Sight Wall of Honor.

Sister has been a member of the Cable Lions Club for 14 years and has participated in the Wisconsin Lions Eye Mission to Mexico eight years. Each year the Eye Mission travels to remote areas of Mexico to examine thousands of individuals and distribute donated eyeglasses free of charge to those who need them. This year she traveled with 40 others to Papantla, where they examined 4,000 people and distributed 3,800 pairs of glasses.

Commenting on these trips, Sister said, "The Mission experiences are always so rewarding for me. The poor come in their very best clean clothes. They stand in line for hours waiting to get glasses. Many hugs are given. One does not have to speak the language to receive their thanks. They see better when they leave us, but for all of us working there, we leave better people because of them."

Sister Virginia was also the recipient of the 2010 Spirit of Stewardship Award, presented each year by the Diocese of Superior to recognize outstanding contributions and efforts in promoting and modeling stewardship. She was nominated for the award by Servite president Sister Theresa Sandok, who wrote: "Over the course of her 61 years as a Servite Sister, Virginia Schwartz has given freely and joyfully of her time and talents wherever she could be of service. And while it's true that 'gold and silver she has none,' the priceless treasure she brings to every encounter is her own welcoming, loving, delightful person. She is the treasure she shares." The award was presented at the annual Stewardship Day meeting on May 4 in Hudson, Wis.

And The Award Goes To... Continued from page 4

Sister Mary Damian Powers was named a Hidden Hero by the Codman Square Neighborhood Council in Dorchester, Mass. She received the award at a banquet on November 20, 2009.

The award letter said: "This historic event will give the community an opportunity to thank you for the life you are living to improve the quality of life in the Greater Codman Square and Greater Four Corners communities."

Sister has ministered at St. Matthew's, an inner city parish in the Codman Square Neighborhood, for 24 years. She has served as pastoral associate and coordinator of the parish food pantry.

In a letter to Rev. Dr. Bill Loesch, Coordinator of the 2009 Hidden Heroes Celebration, Servite president Sister Theresa Sandok wrote: "We are delighted that our own Sister Mary Damian Powers will be honored this year as a Hidden Hero. She will turn 79 on November



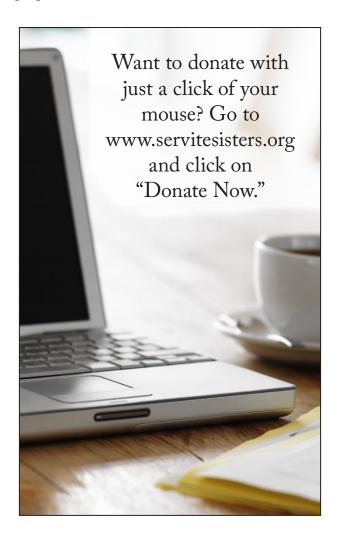
Sister Mary Damian in the food pantry she manages

13. Not too many people her age are still working full time, and she could retire if she wanted to, but she told me that they can't find a replacement for her at the food pantry, and she can't leave the people in need."



Sister Rosemary Fandel (left) and OLS School principal Tami Stewart

One of the ways that Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School in Ladysmith celebrated Catholic Schools Week this year was by presenting the Distinguished Graduate Award. The award honors someone who exemplifies the high qualities of Catholic education and has been active in the parish, school, and community. **Sister Rosemary Fandel**, a 1949 graduate of Our Lady of Sorrows, was this year's award recipient. Sister ministers at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish as a lector and an extraordinary minister of Eucharist. She also helps with design and implementation of seasonal liturgical environment.



Seven Sisters—395 Years of Service

Seven Servite Sisters celebrated jubilees of religious profession this year: Sister Mary Camillus Cote (75 years), Sisters Mary Dominica Effertz and Margaret Valois (60 years), and Sisters Sean Fox, Kateri Guske, Jeannine Percy, and Anita Swansen (50 years).

Sister Mary Camillus was born in Beaverville, Ill., one of seven children. She entered the Servants of Mary as a postulant in 1933 and professed first vows in 1935. She ministered as a teacher for 12 years in



elementary schools in Minnesota, Illinois, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. She had studied to be a nurse before entering the convent and preferred nursing to teaching. She worked as a nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in Ladysmith and at nursing homes in St.

Paul, Minn. Prior to retiring, she served as a cook for the priests at St. Rose of Lima Parish in St. Paul. At age 98 she is the oldest living Servite Sister.

Sister Mary Dominica was born on a farm near Weyerhaeuser, Wis., the sixth of 13 children. She entered the Servants of Mary as an aspirant in 1945 and professed first vows in 1950. She ministered as an educator for 50 years, teaching in elementary schools in West Virginia and Wisconsin. She also taught music and directed the children's choir at most of the schools where she taught. Her last 30 years as a teacher were spent teaching first and second grade at St. Francis de Sales School in Spooner, Wis. When she retired from teaching in 2000, she joined the pastoral ministry staff at St. Francis de Sales Parish, and she now visits and takes communion to the sick, elderly, and homebound. She also serves as a hospice volunteer and is involved in parish music ministry.

Also an educator most of her religious life, **Sister Margaret** taught for 47 years in elementary schools in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, West Virginia, and New Jersey. She was born on the south side of Chicago, one of seven children. She entered the Servants of Mary as a postulant in 1948 and professed

first vows in 1950. She spent two years as vocation director for the Servants of Mary. She retired in 1999 and moved to Mayslake Village, a retirement community in Oak Brook, Ill., where for the next ten years she

prepared small groups of children from a local parish for the sacraments. At Mayslake she started a Red Hats Society Chapter and reigned as its Queen

Mother. She conducts Advent and Lenten reflections for the seniors, puts on plays and musicals with the Kast and Krew Club, and participates in a variety of other activities.

Sister Sean was born in Chicago, Ill., the second of five children. She entered the Servants of Mary as an aspirant in 1955 and professed first vows in 1960. She earned a bachelor of science degree in education from Mount Senario College, a masters in education from Loyola University Chicago, and a law degree from Northern Illinois University. She taught for 16 years in elementary schools in Minnesota, New Jersey, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Illinois. Since 1980 she has been engaged in the practice of law, providing legal service to the elderly, bereaved, and parents of disabled children. She also currently serves on the Servants of Mary Leadership Team.

Sister Kateri was born in Washburn, Wis., the eldest of seven children. She joined the

Servite Sisters as an aspirant in 1955 and professed first vows in 1960. She earned a bachelor of arts degree from Mount Senario College, where she majored in education with an emphasis in language arts. Now in



her 49th year of teaching, she has taught in elementary schools in Illinois, West Virginia, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Presently she teaches first grade at Holy Rosary School in Medford, Wis., where she has served for the past 31 years. In 2005 she received the Bishop George A. Hammes Award for Outstanding Service to Catholic Schools. The award is given annually by the Diocese of Superior to a person who demonstrates distinguished leadership in Catholic education.

Sister Jeannine, the oldest of three children, was born in Chicago, Ill. She entered the Servants of Mary as a postulant in 1958 and professed first vows in 1960. She graduated from Loyola University Chicago with a bachelors degree in psychology. She received a master of arts degree from Loyola University's Institute of Pastoral Studies and earned a second masters in public ad-

Continued on page 7



From left: Sisters Mary Dominica Effertz, Anita Swansen, Kateri Guske, Jeannine Percy, Sean Fox, Margaret Valois

In Memoriam

Sister Mary Eileen McGing 1921–2010



Sister Mary Eileen McGing, 88, died peacefully on January 15, 2010, at Addolorata Villa, Wheeling, Ill. She was born on June 5, 1921, in the village of Derreendafderg, County Mayo, Ireland, and baptized Sarah. She had four sisters and eight brothers. When she was 20 years old, she moved to Chicago to live with an aunt. In Chicago she met Servite Father Clarence Brissette and joined the Servite

Third Order. Father Brissette knew she wanted to be a sister. He introduced her to Mother Mary Alphonse Bradley, who invited her to visit the sisters in Ladysmith. She accepted the invitation and entered the convent in 1942. Her first assignment was to teach at St. Paul School in Weirton, W.Va., where the Irish pastor had requested an Irish sister for his school. She also taught in schools in Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. She was academic dean at Mount Senario College in Ladysmith for two years. She served as principal of St. Domitilla School in Hillside, Ill., for 20 consecutive years, from 1972 to 1992. In 1993, with semi-retirement in mind, she accepted a position as assistant principal at St. Eulalia School in Maywood, Ill. She was appointed principal the following year and served for another five years. In June 2007 she moved to Addolorata Villa, where she spent her final days.

Jubilee! Continued from page 6

ministration from the University of Colorado. She ministered as a teacher in elementary schools in Minnesota and Chicago for 9 years, served in diocesan ministry in the Dioceses of Superior and Colorado Springs for 17 years, and worked in healthcare ministry with Catholic Health Corporation and Catholic Healthcare West in California for 19 years. Since 2005 she has served hospitals, health systems, and religious congregations as a governance consultant.

Sister Anita was born in Almena, Wis., the youngest of six children. She entered the Servants of Mary as a postulant in 1958 and professed first vows in 1960. She ministered as an elementary school teacher and principal for 31 years. She served as a parish religious education coordinator and created the "Values and Action" program. She initiated "Liturgy of the Word for Children" at St. Thomas Parish in St. Paul, Minn. Her recent ministries include serving as a driver for Metro Mobility, assistant in the Pastoral Care Department of St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Paul, Minn., president of the Servants of Mary, board member of Servite Center for Life, and member of the Servite Coalition for Justice.

Sister Mary Helen Conley 1916–2010



Sister Mary Helen Conley, 94, died at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights, Ill., on March 20, 2010, following a brief illness. She was born on February 10, 1916, in Soldiers Grove, Wis., the second of six children, and baptized Mary Ellen. She grew up on a dairy farm in Crawford County, Wis., where she preferred working outside to inside and loved riding horses bareback.

She entered the Servants of Mary in 1931 at age 15 and finished high school in the convent. Following her profession in 1933, she worked for six years at the motherhouse and then served as a cook for the teaching sisters at Hillside, Ill., and Carteret, N.J. She attended St. Mary's School of Nursing, LaSalle, Ill., and became a licensed practical nurse. In 1942 she was sent to help out at Addolorata Villa, Wheeling, Ill. From then on, with the exception of nine years teaching in elementary schools in St. Paul, Minn., and Weirton, W.Va., she worked in healthcare at the Villa and at St. Mary's Hospital, Ladysmith. When she retired at Addolorata Villa in the 1980s, she took on the ministry of visiting the nursing home residents and sitting with the dying in their final hours.

Sister Mary Roberta Prince 1917–2010



Sister Mary Roberta Prince, 92, died peacefully on April 1, 2010, at Addolorata Villa in Wheeling, Ill. She was born on September 7, 1917, in Cooks Valley, Wis., the fifth of seven children, and baptized Margaret Dorothy. She entered the Servants of Mary in 1935. She received a bachelors degree from DePaul University, Chicago, where she majored in French and history, and a masters in educational

administration from Loyola University Chicago. She studied French at the University of Laval in Quebec, Canada, and at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. She spent much of her religious life as a teacher and administrator in elementary and secondary schools in New Jersey, West Virginia, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. She was principal of Servite High School in Ladysmith from 1960 until it closed in 1967. She was a member of the Servants of Mary Leadership Team from 1971 to 1980. She served as administrator at Addolorata Villa from 1981 to 1990, and she was the last Servite sister to serve in that capacity. As Villa administrator, she oversaw the expansion of the campus from a 94-bed nursing home to a 300-unit continuing care retirement community. She retired in 1990 and continued to serve the Villa as a volunteer.

Sisters Sell Motherhouse Continued from page 1

job training programs; nutrition programs for children and families; programs providing affordable transportation and vehicle repair; and more.

n addition to administrative space for these many programs, the 28,651-square-foot facility will provide space for public use and community functions. The Sisters' archives and administrative secretary's office will remain in the building, as well.

Indianhead plans to maintain the integrity and historical significance of the 1928 structure and the surrounding landscaping, grounds, and gardens. The former chapel, which will be used as an auditorium, will house an historical dis-

play telling the story of the Servite Sisters in Ladysmith since their arrival nearly a century ago. The Rusk County Historical Society Museum is assisting with this project.

"The Servite Sisters' decision to approve the sale of their home to Indianhead Community Action Agency is yet another selfless demonstration in their long,

rich history in giving of themselves for the benefit of the community," said Indianhead's chief executive officer Brett Gerber. "This gift to the community from the Sisters will allow us to carry forth the same mission of serving people that they started here in 1912."

In the Ladysmith area, the Servite Sisters were involved in developing, constructing, and operating what are now the Rusk County Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home, as well as the former Mount Senario College, Servite High School, and St. Mary's School of Nursing. They also staffed Our Lady of

Sorrows Grade School from the time it opened in 1912 until the mid 1970s, and they have served the parish in a variety of other ways throughout the years.

Indianhead assumed occupancy of the building on July 1. The nine sisters who were living at the motherhouse have found housing in Ladysmith. Two moved into Care Partners Assisted Living, joining another sister already in residence. Five moved into Pine Bend Townhomes, across the street from Care Partners. And two moved into a house overlooking the Flambeau River, about a mile west of the former motherhouse.



Bishop and Sisters Celebrate Farewell Mass

ishop Peter Christensen joined the Servite Sisters in Ladysmith on June 3 to celebrate a mass of farewell to their motherhouse. In February the sisters made the decision to sell the motherhouse to Indianhead Community Action Agency, which will use the building as its administrative headquarters.

In his homily, the Bishop acknowledged that the day was one of "mixed emotions." The building had been home to the sisters since 1928. "But this is all part of our journey in the life of faith," he said.

The motherhouse is situated on the banks of the Flambeau River, and Bishop Christensen used the image of the river as a comparison to the sisters' move. "The river keeps moving," he said, "it doesn't put down roots."

He alluded to Scripture, pointing out that where people dwelt with the Lord was often in a tent, which is not the most permanent of structures. "But it's not about the bricks and mortar," he said, "it's about the memories that dwell in your hearts. Those you take with you as you continue your journey."

At dinner following the mass, the sisters presented the Bishop with a gift from their archives—a cast iron host press that was once used to make altar breads.



Bishop Christensen with host press



Bishop Christensen and Servite Sisters



Kennedy in Ladysmith March 17, 1960

50 Years Ago

On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy made an unscheduled stop at the Servite Sisters Motherhouse during a Democratic Presidential Primary campaign swing through northern Wisconsin. The sisters and postulants, aware that Kennedy's motorcade would be passing by, were standing at the side of the road to wave to the Senator. When Kennedy saw the sisters he stopped the motorcade and got out to visit with them. The sisters then invited him to the convent, where he prayed briefly in the chapel before continuing on to Ladysmith High School where he spoke to about 400 students and 200 adults.

We are deeply grateful to you, our donors, and hold you in our prayer. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or misspelled, please notify us.

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hen you send a donation and request prayer, every Servite Sister becomes aware of your request. Each week Mary Heintz, our administrative secretary, and Sister Mary Joan LeBlanc send emails to all our sisters with lists of your intentions. We thought you'd like to know that we are all praying for your intentions and giving thanks for your generosity.



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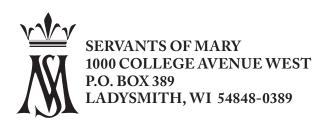
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