



Gratitude of the Heart

2009 - 2010
ANNUAL REPORT

 Sisters of
Mercy of the
Americas

West Midwest Community
www.mercywestmidwest.org

Dear *Friends* of Mercy

Gratitude is the Memory of the Heart
Jean Baptiste Massieu



“Oh that we might learn to see with our heart, to hear and think with our heart as well.”

Catherine McAuley

On the Cover
Sister Patricia Lamb
and Maria Castaneda
at St. Vincent de Paul
Outreach Center,
Holland, MI.

As Sisters of Mercy and as individuals, we all want to make our world a better place.

As we set out to make this difference, we must challenge ourselves to look at the world through the lens of our heart. Through that lens our Foundress, Catherine McAuley, saw the need to treat everyone with dignity and respect no matter who they were or what issues they faced. With you, we continue our charism, reaching out to the poor, uneducated and disenfranchised. We stand in solidarity with immigrants, refugees and trafficked persons seeking fullness of life.

In the coming pages, you will read about sisters, Mercy Associates and others from across the West Midwest Community who are working at the national level for immigration reform that is fair and just, while others minister directly to immigrants and refugees. Our sisters, associates and dedicated staff are helping them learn the English language, develop skills, find employment and attend to their spiritual needs as they face the challenges of living in a different country and for some, the fear of deportation.

In this report, you also will be introduced to some of our aging sisters who are living rich, active lives in their later years. You will meet some of our friends, like yourself, whose support is so critical to the Sisters of Mercy and the work that we do.

FRONT ROW: Judith Frikker, RSM;
Norita Cooney, RSM; Sheila Megley, RSM

BACK ROW: Kathy Thornton, RSM;
Judy Cannon, RSM; Michelle Gorman, RSM

This past year, we mourned the death of several of our sisters, including Sister Stella Neill who died tragically Dec. 7 in a car accident. In July, after 22 years at Anawim Housing in Des Moines, Iowa, she became Director of Development for the West Midwest Community. Many called her the Mother Theresa of Des Moines. It is obvious why she was so loved and respected. Sister Stella had already achieved a great deal in the short time she served as our development director. Her plan was taking shape. We miss her greatly and hold her in our hearts.

As we celebrate February, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for the many ways you make it possible for us to continue the works of Mercy in this world we all share.

In Mercy

West Midwest Community Leadership Team



West Midwest Sisters Find *Ministry* to Immigrants Rewarding

Animated by the Gospel and the charism of Catherine McAuley, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas made a decision in 2005 to focus their spiritual and financial resources on six major areas: the earth, immigration, non-violence, anti-racism, women and poverty.

The Catholic Church and Sisters of Mercy are guided by the belief that all humans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and deserve fullness of life regardless of their legal status. Across the West Midwest Community, Sisters, Mercy Associates and other colleagues minister to the immigrant population with a variety of services that help them assimilate into our country and live productive and happy lives. At the same time, sisters and many others are also working on the national front for comprehensive immigration reform that they hope will end the torture and mistreatment that many of these individuals have undergone. Their witness to inhumane treatment of detainees and the aftermath of seeing families torn apart when their loved ones are arrested, detained and deported have made them resolute in their efforts to stand in solidarity with these individuals.

The 18 years Sister Kathleen Erickson, RSM, spent working at the United States/Mexican border gave her a first-hand perspective on the issue of immigration. Her experiences have fueled her passion for urging comprehensive reform that is just and fair. She knows all too well the realities that immigrants face in the U.S. today. She has tended to the spiritual needs of detainees, has



Sister Kathleen Erickson, center, at a rally in Lincoln, Neb.

 “Attention must be called to the rights of immigrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration.”

Pope John Paul II

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heard their stories of harsh treatment and has seen the sufferings of families who may not even know where their loved ones are.

She is aware of the reality that holding detainees has become a lucrative endeavor for some communities. Daily federal payments paid per detainee make it

more financially rewarding for a county or private facility to slow the deportation process than speed it up. With the number of detainees increasing, detention centers are overflowing. Some private organizations are building detention centers to capture that money. She believes the bill passed in Arizona is one outcome of the financial incentives to detain immigrants.

“The U.S. has always been a country of immigrants, but we have a troubled history of welcoming some groups and not others,” she said. “So many are here because they were invited to take jobs that businesses wanted to fill.”

Sister Kathleen says to truly understand the immigration situation today, it is important to understand how the U.S. immigration policy has changed over the years.

“In the past, being in the United States without papers was treated as an administrative offense,” she said. The immigration landscape changed, however, after September 11, 2001 when Homeland Security was established and closing the borders became a symbol of security. What once was an administrative offense became a felony.

“The system changed on people who didn’t expect it,” she said. “The reality is that many people were originally recruited and invited to come here. Many came with appropriate documents and overstayed their Visas. Others were never asked to prove they had documents. Because it was an expensive, complicated process, and there was no real pressure at the time to get official (continued)

West Midwest Sisters Find *Ministry* to Immigrants Rewarding *Continued*

papers when their Visas ended, they didn't. Now, years later, they are afraid to come forward.

"These people are not a threat to the country. The only crime they have committed is being here without documents, yet they are treated worse than others who are being held for more serious crimes," she said.

As a result, she and others in the Mercy Community are working to change the immigration policy nationally and prevent the passage of other bills like the one in Arizona. They are meeting with senators, writing letters, attending rallies and speaking to groups about the harsh realities of the current policy and reminding them about the contributions immigrants bring to this country.

Other Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates and staff are involved in work that directly impacts the lives of immigrants. They are teaching English, helping them find employment, providing food and clothing and attending to their spiritual needs.

One of the major challenges that immigrants face when they come to the United States is learning the language.

Staff at Catherine McAuley Center in Cedar Rapids help immigrants from 49 different countries learn English. Wendy Arnold-Rodriguez, Adult Basic Education Coordinator, said initially the center offered GED preparation, but changed that focus in the mid 90s when the needs of the people in the Cedar Rapids area changed. Now their major work is teaching English as a Second Language to immigrants and refugees, and preparing them for citizenship through a class offered twice a year.



"These people are not a threat to the country. The only crime they have committed is being here without documents, yet they are treated worse than others who are being held for more serious crimes." Sister Kathleen Erickson



*Hien Le and tutor
Sheri Albrecht*

"We are an immigrant nation," she said. "We must welcome them. They come looking for a better life for their children; the same things that drew our ancestors here."

The tutoring is provided by volunteers from the Cedar Rapids community, she said. During 2010, for example, 186 volunteer

tutors, 83 college service learning students and staff gave over 84,000 hours of individual instruction to 261 students.

"The individuals we work with have some basic goals," she said. "They want to be able to communicate with their son's teachers, pay their bills and talk with someone on the phone to make appointments."

Sometimes volunteers and tutors remain together for a number of years. That is the case with Sheri Albrecht and Hien Le. Together, they have worked on Hien's English language skills for six years. "While that may seem like a long time," Wendy said, "people from Vietnam have a difficult time learning English because it is so different from their language."

Before joining the Catherine McAuley Center five years ago, Wendy spent many years teaching English in Asia. She said her job at the center, however, has been the most rewarding. "I had always worked for well educated people who could pay good money to learn English. Here, people are so grateful for the small things you teach them. For example, once they complete four hours of study, we give them a book. The people have such pride in ownership. It gives them their dignity to own something which they consider so precious."

Two of the Sisters of Mercy in California have found providing immigrants with vocational training has led to successful micro-businesses and co-ops.

Sister Cora Salazar, RSM, is the executive director of Families in Self Help Inc. (F.I.S.H.). In 1995, Sister Cora was looking for a new challenge when she was hired part-time by the Washington Unified School District to teach English to Southeast Asia refugees. It was part of a three-year federal grant, Family English Literacy Program (F.E.L.P.), and focused on Hmong, Mien, Cambodian and Laotian families. Many were women who were wives and widows of Vietnam War soldiers who relocated there in 1990s.



Sister Cora Salazar, center, gardens with F.I.S.H. families and staff.

Sister Cora quickly learned that the refugees struggled with learning the English language because they had no written language themselves. However, she also discovered that they were very adept at doing things that were hands on, such as sewing, farming, landscaping and housekeeping. As a result, in 2000, F.I.S.H. became a 501©3 with its focus on moving sponsored families toward self-reliance and economic independence through classes in English and health, and vocational training.

What began as a part-time job turned into 16 years of making a difference in the lives of these immigrants and refugees. Today, Sister Cora said F.I.S.H. has three sites: Two located in affordable housing developments and the third in an elementary school, which has access to an acre-and-a-half community garden.

The garden has been very successful for the families and individuals participating. Sister Cora's current plan is to take it from a garden to a co-op on that third site. "And then I can retire," she laughed.

Nurturing people and watching them grow has been tremendously rewarding for Sister Cora. "These are very grateful people and I see Christ in

 "Today, F.I.S.H. has three sites: Two located in affordable housing developments and the third in an elementary school, which has access to an acre-and-a-half community garden."

Sister Cora Salazar

them," she said. "They are poor and suffering, and they are still smiling. Education is a priority for them and they have achieved many successes."

For example, one Hmong mother started a uniform business at Washington Unified School District and opened a clothing store in South Sacramento. An Afghani father joined a big landscaping corporation. A Hispanic mother started her own cleaning and baby-sitting business. "This year, we are holding an apprenticeship program to empower three to six parents to become site managers and eventually board members of F.I.S.H. helping them be self-sustaining," Sister Cora said.

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Sister Petra Chavez, RSM, also is helping immigrants become self-supporting through vocational training. Her ministry, CAMINOS, is located in San Francisco. Her area of focus is computers and technology.

After 14 years working to increase access to services for refugees and immigrants in San Francisco Bay area, Sister Petra decided to expand her efforts. During those years of ministry, she noted that a major challenge for immigrants was the cultural and educational gap they faced with their children who were being educated in United States schools.



Sister Petra Chavez observes students in one of three CAMINOS classrooms.

The children not only had basic reading and math skills, they also had a mastery of the computer that widened the gap with their parents.

Sister Petra also knew that immigrant women faced even greater challenges. Men took classes, found day laborer jobs and began to learn English. But women were reluctant to do so. As a result, she established a class to teach basic computer skills and decided to offer it to Latina women.

The women not only received job training and learned how to use the computer, they learned how to repair them as well. "Once they got into it, they didn't want to stop," Sister Petra said. "I kept adding courses and before long we were teaching them how to repair computers." Like her colleague Sister Cora, Sister Petra's goal is for the women to be self-sustaining. Some of the women also are learning how to manage the repair shop, keep records and do accounting. Others are learning the social media and graphic design.

Since the program began, Sister Petra estimates they have trained more than 3,000 women and have promoted many of those women into leadership positions, giving the Latina women *(continued)*

West Midwest Sisters Find *Ministry* to Immigrants Rewarding *Continued*

the opportunity to have careers. "They change dramatically after they come here," she said. The women support and help each other. All of the instructors are former students. "Our current program manager is a woman who came from Mexico with a 9th grade education," she said.

It appears the success breeds success, CAMINOS recently joined forces with the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) and a national network of Latino Economic Development Agencies. They applied for and received a \$3.7 million stimulus grant to initiate The Latino Microenterprise Tech Net (LMTN). This project will serve 15,000 low income persons in 17 community technology centers being established in 10 states. It will incorporate 13 organizations nationwide to serve as hub for Latino microenterprise development.

This project has already created 730 new jobs nationwide for low or moderate income Latinos. It will create 2,190 jobs over the three-year life of the grant. CAMINOS is responsible for all technical aspects of the project, including developing the curriculum, building and maintaining a data center at its San Francisco site, supervising technicians, training the trainers, providing national technical support and purchasing materials and equipment for all sites. "We are proud that CAMINOS has been deemed worthy of duplication throughout the country and truly grateful to the Sisters of Mercy Ministries Fund for continued support to our organization," Sister Petra said.

In March, CAMINOS moved to a larger location and expanded classrooms. They now teach six sessions a day with 30 in each class.



The St. Vincent de Paul Outreach Center in Holland, Mich., provides clothing, food and support to families in need. Open three days a week, the Center serves 10 to 12 families each day.



Sister Patricia Lamb and Maria Castaneda rely on donations to support families in Holland, Mich.

In Holland, Mich., Sister Patricia Lamb, RSM, has spent the past 15 years ministering to families in the St. Francis de Sales Parish and operating the St. Vincent de Paul Outreach Center there. "We are a multi-ethnic parish," she said. Just over half of the families are Hispanic with a variety of other cultures, including Vietnamese and Polish, represented."

The St. Vincent de Paul Outreach Center provides clothing, food and support to families in need. Open three days a week, the center serves 10 to 12 families each day. With Michigan's troubled economy,

Sister Patricia said they provide important support to those who are out of work or who are left behind when one of their family members are deported. As the number of immigrants detained has increased, so has the need for clothing. Often arrest is sudden and the individual does not have time to get their clothing, she said. "We make sure they have clothing before they are deported."

The community support for the center's work has been phenomenal, she said. "Although people are strapped for funds, they have been very generous."

Before coming to St. Francis de Sales Parish, Sister Patricia taught for 25 years in urban schools

in Michigan. She spent eight years in an inner city Hispanic parish and was with Mercy Migrant Ministry for a year. She said that of her past work, this ministry has been the most fulfilling. She is hopeful that the country will address the immigration situation and provide fair and just reform. “The gospel calls us to follow in the Lord’s footsteps,” she said. “He embraced everyone. These are sincere and humble people. They have a deep faith. There has to be a way to make it better.”

Giving compassionate healthcare can be challenging when the patient and healthcare providers don't speak the same language. Sister Sheila Lyne, RSM, president and CEO of Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, worked with others in the community for the past 20 years to increase the number of bilingual nurses in Chicago.

An inner city hospital, Mercy Hospital and Medical Center serves a large number of Hispanic patients, who are referred there by the Alivio Medical Center, which serves a large Hispanic population. It made sense to partner with them on this effort. The result was the founding in 1990 of the Chicago Bilingual Nurse Consortium. “There is a tremendous need for nurses who were bilingual,” she said. However, she admitted their first attempt to do this was a failure.

“The interest in the program was tremendous and we had no idea of what we were getting into,” she said. Although most of the women selected to participate had received their nursing license in Mexico, “we underestimated the work it would take to help them break the language barrier and then learn the required material to pass the licensing exam in the United States,” she said.

They didn’t let that first attempt defeat them. In 2002, armed with lessons learned, they began again. This time, they hired the former dean of the School of Nursing at Saint Xavier University, Dr. Mary Lebold, to be the executive director of the program. She brought critical experience to the program that enabled it to be successful. For example, she divided the students into sections based on their needs, some women had mastered language skills and just needed additional education to pass the test; some needed both. “The second time around, we also had more money and support,” she said.

Through the program, they have since worked with over 450 immigrant nurses and to date, over 50 of these nurses have obtained their nursing license. While the number sounds small, Sister Sheila said it is a major accomplishment. These nurses are working in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, home health and community centers and clinics. Several are employed at Mercy and are making a difference in the care patients receive. In the past four years, the program has expanded to serve immigrant nurses from all countries and continues to help them gain the knowledge and skills to pass the registered nurse (RN) licensing exam. The Consortium has served immigrant nurses from over 52 countries.

With the help of board members, such as Carmen Velásquez, Executive Director of Alivio Medical Center, Sister Sheila expects the program will grow even more. “She is bilingual and very connected in the community. We are committed to continuing this important effort, and appreciate all of the support we receive from our board members and our partner organizations,” Sister Sheila said.



Sister Sheila Lyne

“How can we teach the love of God if our own hearts are cold?”

Catherine McAuley

Mercy Sisters Inspire *Donor* Tributes



Let charity be our badge of honor...so that it may be truly said that there is in us but one heart and one soul in God.

Catherine McAuley

The work of our sisters touches many lives as these lives touch the Sisters of Mercy. We are so grateful that individuals find so many ways to recognize sisters who have had an impact on them. Some give back by volunteering their time and talents. Others give financially, through gifts of stock and of insurance, through matching gifts, tribute gifts, planned or legacy gifts and even vehicle donations. Some like the convenience of online giving. Others use traditional mail. Our sisters believe no gift to help others is too small. No matter how it is given, each gift is received with deep appreciation and used as the donor specifies.

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Known affectionately by sisters and staff as "Bingo Alice," **Alice Neumann of Omaha** visits Mercy Villa every Monday to call Bingo. She has been doing so for 25 years. "It's a great way for me to start my week," says the mother of nine.

Alice said she first started calling Bingo in the mid-80s at the urging of her sister, Sister Lois Morrissey who was the retirement director at Mercy Villa at the time. "I've been doing it ever since," she said, "I really love it – they are all such precious ladies."

Each week, Alice brings with her the prizes, little items the sisters can use such as soap, cards, hand lotion and even \$2 bills. The prizes most often are donated to a ministry and Alice marvels at how many sisters say that their prize will go to someone who needs it more.

"The sisters are always so appreciative," she said. "Volunteering is so very rewarding!"



"Bingo Alice" spends Mondays with sisters at Mercy Villa in Omaha, Neb.

Marilyn Panelli of Burlingame, Calif., began giving to the Sisters of Mercy because of the positive impact of two special sisters.

Sister Regina (Eloise Bailey) was a year ahead of Marilyn at St. Peter's, while Sister Deborah Watson was on the Holy Name faculty with her in the early 1970s. "Second to my family, St. Peter's was my foundation and joy," she said. A retired teacher, Marilyn's first and only teaching job was at Holy Name School thanks to Sister Deborah. Over her years of teaching, she came to know many of the sisters who taught at Holy Name. When Marilyn's husband died suddenly in 1997, just short of his sixth-third birthday, she learned that by using part of his pension she could "give back" to Mercy on a regular basis. She makes her "chapel donation" to the sisters online. She likes the convenience of using a computer and that her donation is verified each month.

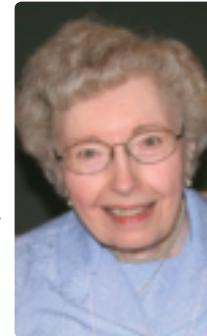
Marilyn has been contributing monthly to Sisters of Mercy and several Catholic organizations. "I'd like to add Catherine's Center/St. Vincent de Paul

San Mateo to my list as well," she said.

Asked about the sisters, she fondly said, "All joyful, dedicated – a band of 'sisters' in every sense!"

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Jane Dorman of Iowa City, Iowa, came to know the Sisters of Mercy growing up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. As a child, Jane recalls visiting family members whenever they were sick at Mercy Hospital in Cedar Rapids. She liked visiting the hospital where many of the sisters ministered and at the early age of seven thought that one day she would like to become a nurse. Upon hearing Jane's desire to become a nurse, one of the sisters at Mercy Hospital placed a nurse's cap on her head. The moment and desire to become a nurse stayed with Jane throughout her life as she had more interactions with the Sisters of Mercy.



Before Jane knew her as a Sister of Mercy, she met Sister Maurita Ferreter at St. Patrick's Church in Cedar Rapids. "She was older than I was and I always looked up to her," said Jane.

The presence of the Sisters of Mercy in Jane's life continued as she enrolled in Mount Mercy Academy as a day student and later attended Mercy Hospital School of Nursing to begin to fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse. Throughout her career, the Sisters of Mercy had remained a part of Jane's life as she provided care to others as a nurse and taught nursing classes.

Today, Jane is retired and continues her connection with the Sisters of Mercy as a Mercy Associate. Although Jane is unable to help the sisters as much physically as in her earlier years, she has found a way to contribute to the life of Mercy financially and has also designated the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community as a beneficiary of her estate. "I am happy to be able to help the sisters in this way and plan to do so as long as I am able," said Jane.

 Raised in a devout Catholic family, Norbert took his role of being the eldest seriously. He attended Holy Trinity School, but upon finishing eighth grade, he eagerly returned home to help out on the family dairy farm. There he made sure all of his younger siblings received their education.

The late **Norbert Pohl of Folwer, Mich.**, was the oldest of nine children. He saw five of his siblings called to religious vocations. His sister Addie entered the Sisters of Mercy and became Sister Adeline. Three of his sisters became Adrian Dominicans and a brother became a priest.

Described as "a generous, humble man who took great joy in serving his family and community," Norbert left a \$13,000 estate gift to the Sisters of Mercy. His life story illustrates just how generous and humble he was.

Raised in a devout Catholic family, he took his role of being the eldest seriously. He attended Holy Trinity School, but upon finishing eighth grade, he

eagerly returned home to help out on the family dairy farm. There he made sure all of his younger siblings received their education.

In 1947 he married Marian and, after building a home for his parents in town, the newlyweds moved into the family farmhouse. They were blessed with 10 children and every Sunday the family attended 8:30 a.m. Mass at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Norbert set a good example for his children and community by living a life of service. *(continued)*



Mercy Sisters Inspire *Donor* Tributes *Continued*



“By collaborating with others in works of Mercy, we continually learn from them how to be more merciful.”

Catherine McAuley

Besides being an active parishioner at his church, he was an honorary member of the Fourth Degree and a Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus.

In retirement, he served as a volunteer at Carson City Hospital and also helped transport inmates at Clinton County Jail. Shortly after Marian died in 2005, Norbert's health began to fail and he died on Nov. 2, 2010. Survivors include 10 children and spouses, 47 grandchildren and 61 great-grandchildren.

Corporations that were blessed by the contributions of Sisters of Mercy frequently recognize that work with a donation. A recent \$10,000 gift to the Sisters of Mercy in Auburn came in with this accompanying note:

“Mercy Medical Group recognizes the humble and selfless work of the Sisters of Mercy that has helped many thousands in the region since their (the Sisters’) arrival from Ireland over 150 years ago. Their mission of altruism and service to the underserved has remained steadfast ever since. We are thankful to be able to work with the Sisters and make our donation to ensure that they have a well-deserved place to live after a lifetime of service.” –

Dr. Gregory Cooper, Chief Medical Officer for Mercy Medical Group, Sacramento, Calif.

Tribute gifts are made in honor of any special milestone, occasion, jubilee, ministry or remembrance. Each year, the Community receives donations sent in memory of sisters who have died. During this past fiscal year (June 30, 2009 to July 1, 2010), 21 of our beloved sisters were called to new life. We appreciate the tribute gifts given during this time period, including those made in honor of many of the following sisters.

Sister Honorata McNamara, 10/2/1911- 7/11/2009
Sister Mary Patricia Nolan, 4/30/1918 - 7/20/2009
Sister Mary Rosellen Mortimore, 3/28/1924 - 8/8/2009
Sister Sharon Krenn, 6/28/1934 - 8/25/2009
Sister Mary Denise Thias, 12/10/1923 - 9/8/2009
Sister Marie Shefchik, 9/29/1922 - 10/11/2009
Sister Mary Honore Quinn, 12/31/1911 - 10/11/2009
Sister Juanita Jansen, 8/1/1913 - 10/22/2009
Sister Mary Estelle Graf, 3/11/1915 - 11/3/2009
Sister Janet Mangold, 1/26/1912 - 11/10/2009
Sister Mary Carol Cramer, 4/5/1931 - 11/11/2009
Sister Quentin Smyth, 6/8/1926 - 11/12/2009
Sister Beatrice Marie Costello, 9/19/1914 - 2/1/2010
Sister Mary Julia McKee, 12/16/1915 - 2/18/2010
Sister Agneda Lamb, 3/9/1927- 2/24/2010
Sister Rosalie Steinmiller, 9/2/1912 - 3/7/2010
Sister Mary Kateri Vojir, 7/30/1922 - 3/9/2010
Sister Eva Dohman, 2/6/1915 - 4/15/2010
Sister Marie Therese Poulin, 2/5/1926 - 5/15/2010
Sister Norella Hartnett, 6/6/1915 - 5/30/2010
Sister Mary Kilian Clinton, 12/28/1919 - 6/13/2010

Sisters live the Mercy *Charism* all the days of their lives

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT SISTERS OF MERCY DON'T RETIRE, THEY REWIRE.

Even when Sisters of Mercy reach the age when many Americans are retiring, they are still on the go, often starting new ministries, serving on boards, volunteering, focusing their prayer on others, and discovering new ways to continue the Mercy charism of service. These women who have founded hospitals and colleges, taught thousands of students, ministered to the homeless, the sick and the poor, served in parishes and built successful ministries have difficulty slowing down.

"Ministry is a life-long commitment," said **Sister Anne Murphy, RSM**, director of New Membership Ministry for the West Midwest Community. "It is an integral part of our vowed life of service to the poor, sick and uneducated." The identity of a Sister of Mercy is rooted in the gospels, especially the beatitudes: the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy.

 "We've gathered gifts, toys and personal items to be put into backpacks for over 600 foster children from newborns to teens."

Sister Mary Regis Leahy

"I'm busier now than I ever was," said Sister **Mary Regis Leahy, RSM**, of Frederick, Colo. She officially "retired" from ministries of teaching, religious education and housing seven years ago at age 75. She has found new needs to fill. "I

joined forces with a friend in 2004 to start My Very Own Bags of Love, a project for children in foster care," she said. "We've gathered gifts, toys and personal items to be put into backpacks for over 600 foster children from newborns to teens."

Although her eyesight is failing, Sister Mary Regis has found a new creative outlet in learning to spin wool into yarn. On her spinning wheel she makes wool from alpaca, sheep and llamas into what she calls "lumpy" or uneven yarn. She does a lot of the work by touch, yielding yarn which her friends crochet into gifts.

In addition to collecting backpacks for children and spinning yarn, Sister Mary Regis belongs to a neighborhood prayer group. "We study the readings for the following Sunday and we make lists of the people in our community who have asked for prayer," she said. "People who are ill, those who



Sister Mary Regis Leahy

 Once a week, Sister **Emily Devine** goes to the county jail in Mason City where she visits and prays with the women inmates and also visits the shelters for homeless women.

have died, and those who are traveling, have special intentions. We have decided to pray for each other as everyone in the prayer group has a physical, financial or personal problem, all 12 of us. It helps people to have the attitude of accepting what they have."

Sister Carolyn Coffey, RSM, may welcome not being in charge, as she was during leadership of three ministries over 20 years, but she still has a strong sense of purpose. She creates and distributes a calendar listing events in the Omaha area which focus on the five Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. She arranges for showing of DVDs on current events, such as "Iraq for Sale" about war profiteers. She schedules other events that help the sisters stay abreast of current news related to the Critical Concerns of the Community.

After two heart surgeries, former hospital chaplain **Sister Emily Devine, RSM**, of Mason City, Iowa, admits to having slowed down; but she acts on her deep personal interest in spiritual care for *(continued)*



Sister Norena Gawronski prays in solidarity with immigrants held at Broadview Detention Center in Chicago, Ill.

people on the margins. Once a week, she goes to the county jail in Mason City, where she visits and prays with the women inmates and also visits the shelters for homeless women in that city. Sister Emily uses her expertise as a spiritual director, is involved in the Mercy Associates in Mason City, and is a 10-year member of a Centering Prayer group.

THE GROWING GRACE OF INNER LIFE

Underlying the activity of life is prayer, as one might expect of women religious. They continue to pray in community and individually. They reflect an inner grace as their lives gain a depth made possible by time and commitment.

Former teacher **Sister Norena Gawronski, RSM**, who left active ministry 20 years ago, now has time to

 “My religious life is much deeper. The sisters at Hallmar have helped me. We have shared with each other.” *Sister Charlene Chase*

spend on her concern for immigrants in Chicago, Ill., who are being deported. She began with an active role. Last year she joined **Sister JoAnn Persch, RSM**, and **Sister Pat Murphy, RSM**, in praying the rosary at 6 a.m. at the Broadway Detention Center. “It was important because I was very interested in Pat and Joann’s ministry,” she said. “I wanted to assure them that I supported them and all those families who are being separated from their dear ones. I have been interested for some time.”

After a few months, Sister Norena, 85, found that going to Broadview became too difficult, but she’s still part of the prayer power. She now prays her rosary at the convent at 7:15 a.m. in solidarity with the vigil. “Every week we ask the men and women in the jail if they have any prayer requests,” said Sister Joann Persch. “We started passing the requests to the sisters at Mercy Convent who take their part in our ministry by praying for those named on the list and their loved ones. For us, Sister Norena is a gift who is always ‘the wind beneath our wings.’ We thank God for her.”

REDISCOVERING DEEPER COMPANIONSHIP

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, **Sister Mary Charlene Chase, RSM**, 72, leads sisters at Hallmar Care Center in prayer three times a week. Sister Charlene is also a companion to one of the elder sisters, Sister Mary Irene Burns. The two have known each other since Sister Charlene was a student at St. Nicholas School in Evansville and Irene was a young teacher there. They have lived together several times and taught together. Now as Sister Charlene helps her friend get around with a walker or mails her letters, they both know that their long standing friendship is a gift for both of them.

As a result of praying with her long-time friend and the other sisters, sister Charlene feels inner growth. “My prayer has changed,” she said. “My faith has become deeper. I understand the vows much more. I have time to think. My religious life is much deeper. The sisters at Hallmar have helped me. We have shared with each other.”

Sister Charlene said she thinks it is a matter of sitting back and going over some of the gifts that God has given and that you have developed. “You



Sister Charlene Chase, right, enjoys cards with Sister Irene Burns.

have grown in a lot of ways that you don't realize unless you think about it. The relationships with God, with others and with nature have developed, changed and are deeper than before. This time is like putting the capstone on your life."

As sisters move into retirement centers because of physical or health challenges, they often find a new sense of community which in turn affects their prayer as well. **Sister Virgina Clark, RSM**, lived by herself or with one other sister in Milwaukee, Wis., for a number of years while she was director of religious education for several parishes. Sister Virgina came to Mercy Convent in Chicago two years ago after she suffered a stroke.

"Now at Mercy Convent, I'm getting to know the sisters that I didn't know before," said Sister Virgina. "I hadn't taught with them, or lived with them. In this phase of my life, I am working with others in a theological reflection group. Trusting them, allowing them to also reflect enables us to become closer."

Now well recovered from her stroke, she helps another sister who has trouble with vision and

 "A Sister of Mercy is both active and contemplative. I loved what I did throughout my active life. All I've done is to change the focus from ministry to prayer. Now I feel even more fulfilled as a sister." *Sister Anita Iddings*

hearing. Sister Virgina reads the scripture with her before the prayer service, which has proved to be a valuable time for both. "We don't just read it," said Virgina. "She responds to me. That has really helped me plunge myself deeply into scripture, wanting to know more."

GRATITUDE FOR THIS TIME OF PRAYER

The deepening relationship to God is a theme of later life for many sisters. After years "doing what needed to be done" in community leadership and pastoral care, **Sister Generose Kubesh, RSM**, age 86, now lives at McAuley Center in Farmington Hills, Mich.

"I have more time for prayer for which I am grateful," she said. "It used to be that I was 'getting prayer in' whenever I could. I know now when I can pray. The whole pace is somewhat slower. I'm keeping very busy. I can't walk down the hallway without meeting someone who needs help of some kind – a push in a wheelchair or a listening ear, or help with an activity. I am not bored."



Sister Generose Kubesh



Sister Anita Iddings, left, and Sister Kathy Thill, Director of Ministry for the West Midwest Community.

As their lives become quieter, other sisters echo Sister Generose's reflections on the value of this time of life. **Sister Mary Michael Murphy, RSM**, of Auburn, Calif., found inspiration for a transition from her busy ministries while on retreat to the Trappist Monastery in Vina, Calif. "I learned there that this prayer ministry is a life to be lived," she said. "I've changed from active ministry to prayer ministry. I have far more time now. When I came back from retreat, I saw that my ministry is not to do anything. It is to live a lifestyle."

In Burlingame, **Sister Anita Iddings, RSM**, clearly remembers her entry into the Sisters of Mercy in 1944. "Sister Eleanor, my novice mistress, said, 'A Sister of Mercy is both active and contemplative.' I loved what I did throughout my active life. All I've done is to change the focus from ministry to prayer. Now I feel even more fulfilled as a sister."

At 87, Sister Anita expresses great peace with her ministry of prayer. "I take it seriously. I'm so grateful to have this time, the most important part of my journey, to focus on prayer."

Fund *Explanations* for Fiscal Year 2009 – 2010

Unrestricted/General Fund

Gifts made to the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community where the need is greatest, or without any restrictions. This includes the general operating costs of the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community including support for sisters' working in non-compensated ministries, sisters' general living expenses and for the West Midwest Community's facility operations.

Sisters' Retirement Fund

Supports retired or infirm sisters in the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community residing in facilities that offer independent, assisted living and skilled care. Most retired sisters reside in the seven facilities operated by the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community.

Mercy Ministries Fund

The Mercy Ministries Fund supports the ministries in which a Sister of Mercy from the West Midwest Community is actively involved. Each year, the West Midwest Community awards grants to ensure that sisters' ministries continue to touch the lives of thousands of individuals. In the recent grant cycle, 66 Mercy ministries were awarded funds totaling \$1.9 million.

Other

Funds given to the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community restricted for use other than for the Community's general, retirement, ministries or capital campaign funds.

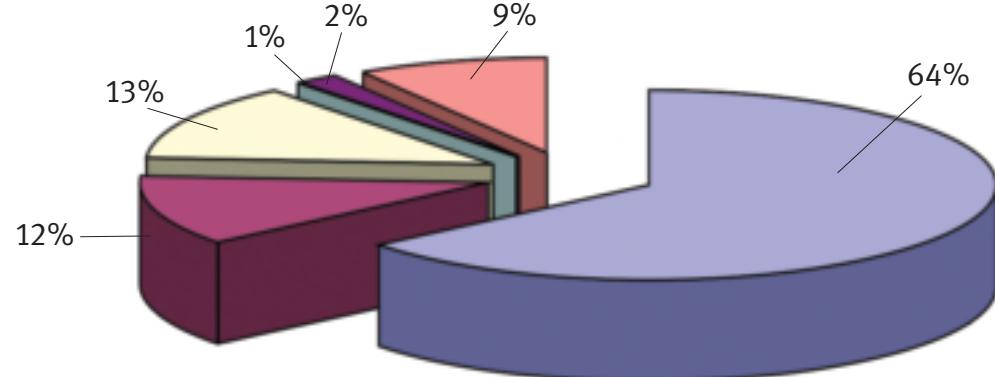
Capital Campaigns – Marian Oaks Renovation

Marian Oaks, a retirement facility in Burlingame, Calif. owned and operated by the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community was renovated in 2010. The renovation was designed and implemented with a goal of creating a "person-centered care," designed to keep retired sisters active, healthy and independent. The renovation included many "green" features such as energy efficient windows and roofing, bamboo flooring and energy efficient lighting. New additions included a new coffee room, library, and craft room, all within the footprint of the original building. Twenty-four sisters reside at Marian Oaks.

Restricted Bequests

These planned, or "Legacy" gifts were given to the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community as part of an estate distribution and were restricted to specific use as defined by the trust, will, or other planned giving instrument.

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community Fiscal Year July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 • Total Gifts Received



Unrestricted/General Fund.....	\$1,391,323
Sisters' Retirement Fund.....	\$256,361
Mercy Ministries.....	\$280,177
Other.....	\$4,345
Other Restricted.....	\$36,327
Capital Campaign.....	\$195,310
Total of all Donations.....	\$2,166,843

Burlingame Donor *Honor Roll*

It is only with your prayers, commitment and continuous support that lives will be touched.

The names listed are benefactors who supported the works of Mercy with a charitable gift to the **Burlingame** development office of the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community from July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010. Benefactors are listed in alphabetical order by fund of support.

Every effort has been made to include all benefactors for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year in this list. We regret any omissions or errors that have been made in producing this list.



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Detroit Donor *Honor Roll*

It is only with your prayers, commitment and continuous support that individual lives will be mercifully touched.

The names listed are benefactors who supported the works of Mercy with a charitable gift to the **Detroit** development office of the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community from July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010. Benefactors are listed in alphabetical order by fund of support.

Every effort has been made to include all benefactors for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year in this list. We regret any omissions or errors that have been made in producing this list.



Detroit Donor Names For Gifts Received July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

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It is only with your prayers, commitment and continuous support that individual lives will be mercifully touched.

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Joe and Ida Selna
Kevin Thill
Robert and Ardyth Weisshaar

Other

Cheri Cody
Jill Mrsny
Ms. Gertrude Shattuck

Ministries of the West Midwest Community

Ministry is the heart of the Sisters of Mercy. They are committed to following Jesus of the Gospel by living the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. They teach the uneducated, care for the sick, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and help the poor.

Today, you will find our Sisters ministering in a variety of areas including parishes, schools, hospitals, administration and social services. They are working for change in areas like healthcare, immigration and the environment.

Mercy ministries represent the many ways the Sisters and the West Midwest Community carry out the charism of Catherine McAuley.

Mercy Sponsored/Co-Sponsored Ministries:

Education

Cristo Rey High School Sacramento, Sacramento, CA
Mercy Education Resource Center, Sacramento, CA
Mercy Education Project, Detroit, MI
Mercy High School, Burlingame, CA
Mercy High School San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI
Mercy High School, Omaha, NE
Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School, Chicago, IL
Catherine McAuley Center, Cedar Rapids, IA

Housing

Catherine McAuley Center, Cedar Rapids, IA
Mercy Housing, Inc., Denver, CO
St. Catherine Residence, Milwaukee, WI
Unity Square, Waterloo, IA

Higher Education

College of Saint Mary, Omaha, NE
Mount Mercy University, Cedar Rapids, IA
Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL
University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, MI

Healthcare

Catholic Health Initiatives, Denver, CO
Catholic Health Ministries / Trinity Health, Novi, MI
Catholic Healthcare West, San Francisco, CA
Mercy Health System of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Mercy Hospital & Medical Center, Chicago, IL
Mercy Hospital, Iowa City, IA
Mercy Medical Center, Cedar Rapids, IA
Provena Health, Mokena, IL
Scripps Mercy Hospitals, Burlingame, CA

Long-term Care

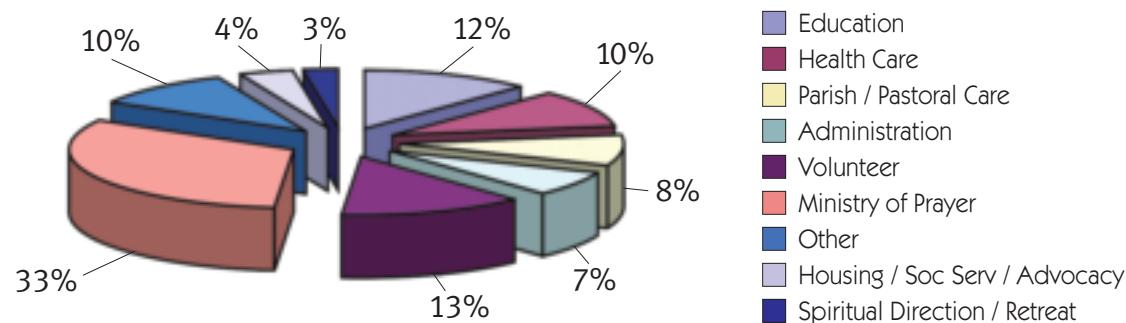
Elder Care Alliance, Alameda, CA
Mercy Retirement and Care Center, Burlingame, CA

Spirituality/Retreat Centers

Knowles Mercy Spirituality Center, Omaha, NE
Mercy Center, Auburn, CA.
Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA

Note: Some ministries, such as healthcare systems, may have multiple locations. The city listed is the site of the headquarters or executive offices of the ministries.

Percentages of West Midwest Sisters Serving in Ministries 2010



Ways to Give

There are several ways you can make a gift to the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community and realize a charitable tax contribution.

Gifts of Cash

Gifts of cash are best conveyed by check made payable to the Sisters of Mercy. Please mail it in the enclosed envelope after filling in the requested information.

Tribute Gifts

Tribute gifts offer an opportunity to honor a relative, friend, Sister of Mercy or special occasion. Memorial gifts provide a thoughtful way to express sympathy at the time of death. Please include the name of the honoree or deceased along with your gift and the name of the person to receive an acknowledgement.

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

Giving stock may provide great tax advantages depending on the length of time you have held it. You will receive a tax deduction based on the current market value and avoid capital gains on the appreciated amount.

Matching Gifts

Many corporations have matching gift programs for their employees and retirees. Ask your Human Resources office if your company will match your gift to the Sisters of Mercy. Your office will provide you with the appropriate forms to send us along with your gift.

Planned or Legacy Gifts

Planned gifts are usually made in the context of the donor's estate plans. These gifts include charitable bequests, trust, insurance policies, charitable remainder trusts, and gift annuities. Donors who make such provisions are recognized as members of our legacy society. We encourage you to discuss these options with your attorney, tax professional or accountant.



West Midwest Community
www.mercywestmidwest.org

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Omaha, NE 68124-2389

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Vehicle Donations

Donate your Vehicle for Charity

By donating your vehicle to Sisters of Mercy, you can:

- Help us maintain and expand our efforts in the community.
- Receive the wholesale value of your vehicle as a tax deduction.
- Avoid the possibility of receiving a low trade-in value from a dealer, or the anxiety and hassle of selling to a private party.

If you decide to donate your vehicle:

- It will be picked up free of charge.
- It will be sold at auction.
- Proceeds go to Sisters of Mercy West Midwest.
- You will receive a receipt entitling you to a tax deduction.

Call Donate for Charity toll-free (866) 392-4483.

Don't forget to choose Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community when asked for the name of the charity to benefit from the donation of your vehicle.

On-Line Donations

You can easily and safely make a one time or recurring donation on our website using your credit card. Visit

<http://www.mercywestmidwest.org> and select

Donate from the top menu bar.

Questions about donating?

Auburn, CA • David Hohl • (530) 887-2000
dhohl@mercywmw.org

Burlingame, CA • David Hohl • (650) 340-7408
dhohl@mercywmw.org

Cedar Rapids, IA • Melissa L. Pence, CFRE • (319) 364-5196
mpence@mercywmw.org

Chicago, IL • Melissa L. Pence, CFRE • (773) 779-6011
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