



Mission Statement

Impelled by the love of Christ,
we, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth,
offer every loving service in our power
to meet the critical needs
of God's people.

Vision Statement

As Sisters of Charity we commit ourselves here and now to embrace anew the charism given us by Vincent, Louise, Mother Xavier:

- to love the poor,
- to love one another,
- to live simply,
- and to unite the whole of our lives
- in the poor and loving Christ.



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Sister Nancy Bauman,
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Voices of Charity

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From the

Community Director



Sister Maureen Hall

Our Sister Mary Janet McGilley wrote, "There is something essential about November." And don't we experience something similar with the month of December?

November starts with the celebration of All Saints – those proclaimed by the Church, those who have gone before us and those among us – whose holy lives give witness to a loving God. The very next day, we turn to the observance of All Souls as we commemorate transitions of our loved ones into God's embrace.

For our Community, Nov. 11 marks Founders' Day – a time of new beginnings when our first Sisters arrived in Leavenworth by riverboat. We date our historic founding to this landing in 1858 and trace our roots to the pioneer spirit of those early Sisters and before them to Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac.

For our nation, Nov. 11 pays tribute to all veterans who have served our country. The great feast of Thanksgiving follows and gives us pause to be grateful for our many blessings.

As we continue to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life, the Church liturgical calendar highlights new beginnings with the season of Advent and anticipation of Emmanuel, God come to be with us. Pope Francis has graced us with yet another sacred time in his proclamation of a Jubilee Year of Mercy, beginning Dec. 8, the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception. His challenge and his gift to us are time devoted worldwide to forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion.

For Christians, the calendar year culminates with Christmas and prayers and wishes for joy and peace. And then we approach the New Year – reflecting on times past and looking ahead to the good that is yet to come. For SCLs, 2016 will begin with our Chapter of Affairs when we discern future direction for our Community.

In the sacred time and space of these "essentials," our prayer is that your lives be filled with grace, your days be blessed, and your holidays be holy and happy with family and friends.

Thank you.

Lauren Hall

SCL Community Director

Heart of the Matter

Becoming part of the

family extends span

of family

When a young woman becomes a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, it's a life-changing experience not only for her, but for her parents and siblings. The family gains a whole new extended family in the form of members of the religious community.

Parents and siblings of four SCLs share their perspectives about this experience and what it means to them to have a child or sister who is a Sister.

The Cushings Double the trouble and fun!

In the pre-Vatican II days, convent life wasn't as flexible as it is today in terms of staying connected with family. In July 1958, this presented challenges for fraternal twins Martha and Marjorie Cushing. Because of rules in the novitiate, Sister Marjorie understood she couldn't attend her twin's wedding.

Martha, older by 30 minutes and the extrovert of the pair says, "I broke the rules and brought the whole wedding party to the Mother House! I couldn't have a wedding without my twin."

Sister Marjorie remembers the day vividly. She received a call from Mother Mary Ancilla Spoor who said she wanted to see the young SCL. "I was so scared," Sister Marjorie recalls.

Mother Mary Ancilla simply told Sister Marjorie that she had visitors in the parlor. The Mother House dining room buzzed the rest of that day with news that bride and groom, four bridesmaids and four groomsmen had visited Sister Marjorie. In subsequent years, Martha's husband Wally Johnston became a favorite of the SCLs. When Sisters visited the Johnston home, there was a sign that read, "Wally's Convent." Wally died in April 2014, and Martha says with fondness, "The SCLs all knew and loved him."

With Sister Marjorie living in Topeka, Kan., and Martha in Bella Vista, Ark., they talk by telephone quite often. They also share traits unique to twins. They walk into a room and start saying the same things at the same time. They've sent identical birthday cards to family and friends. Sister Marjorie may be worrying about something, and it just happens that Martha calls her. The twins love getting together, and they giggle and laugh a lot.

Now an SCL Associate, Martha says that it's been a privilege to be around the Sisters whom she describes as always joyful. She's known them to mow her lawn when her son begged off because he was just a kid. She appreciates that the SCLs prayed for her and her family through the years.

When Sister Marjorie changed from wearing the long, black habit post Vatican II, Martha took the habits and made six pairs of culottes out of the blessed cloth. That evokes another memory for Sister Marjorie, who says, "I always hated hats. Then I joined the Community with all that stuff – veils and long habits."

Externals aside, Martha summarizes, "Our whole life turned out good." To which Sister Marjorie adds, "We survived through it together!"



Sister Marjorie Cushing (left) and Martha Johnston in September 2015.

The Kehoes All in the family

It was mayhem in the Mother House when the 14 members of the Kehoe family from Leadville, Colo., gathered in Leavenworth, Kan. Two siblings - Kathleen, the oldest, and Maureen, second in birth order, had entered the SCL Community and were receiving their habits in June 1965. The other 10 kids, ages 3-17, and their parents traveled to Kansas in two cars for this special occasion.

The family also had the distinction that their Mother's younger sibling Irene Driscoll was an SCL. As a high school graduate, young Irene helped her sister Ruth care for Kathleen around the time of Maureen's birth. Irene was Maureen's godmother. She studied to be a nurse at Saint Joseph Hospital School of Nursing, Denver, but entered the SCLs before she finished that program. She received the name Sister Mary Rosaleen. In the late 1960s while missioned to St. Vincent's Hospital, Leadville, Colo., she helped babysit the Kehoe children. Today, Sister Mary Rosaleen is missioned to Topeka, Kan.

Erin Kehoe Ahrens, the next to the youngest in the family, visited Leavenworth another time as a grade schooler with a friend who wanted to become a sister. Sister Maureen is Erin's godmother. Erin says, "We loved the Sisters when we were growing up in Leadville, and we had awesome experiences at the Mother House." In later years, Erin traveled to Sister Maureen's mission assignments in Montana.

In the family's history, there were only one or two years when all 12 siblings lived together in the same home with their parents – John, a physician, and Ruth, a nurse and X-ray technician. Eleven of the siblings are living today, scattered across the country from Alaska (where Erin lives) to Colorado (where Sister Maureen lives), Oregon, New York, Texas and South Carolina. Kathleen was an SCL for five years and left the Community; Sister Maureen marked her golden jubilee in 2014.

When Erin and her husband Dave made the trip to Leavenworth for Sister Maureen's 50th anniversary, he, too, was taken with the experience. Dave told Erin that he might just quit his job and help these Sisters.



Women: Erin Ahrens, Kathleen Kehoe Day, Peggy Miller, Colleen Laine, Sheilagh McGuirk, Sister Maureen and Joan French; men: Tim, Dan, Mike and Kevin.

"He felt connected to the Sisters," she says. "It helped that everybody knew us and that many had taught one of my brothers and sisters along the way."

Erin and Sister Maureen both reference the staying power of their Mom's faith. Sister Maureen says her Mom took to heart and modeled the Biblical message that "Mary pondered all these things in her heart." Ruth Kehoe led her family in the rosary, made rosaries and always helped other people.

Sister Maureen has assumed that faith mentor role in Erin's life. "She's the one who sent me religious goods and articles every Christmas and who has been a constant inspiration of my faith," Erin says. "Even when I didn't have the faith I should have, Sister Maureen stuck with me. I think she's an amazing woman and a walking saint!"



Sister Mary Rosaleen Driscoll (left) with her niece and goddaughter at Sister Maureen Kehoe's golden jubilee celebration in summer 2014.

The Cytackis Family support abounds

When their daughter Rejane decided to join the SCL Community, Ed and Donna Cytacki had slightly different reactions.

It was spring break 2005, and Rejane called to share her big news with her parents. Ed remembers he wasn't surprised; Rejane had been living in the SCL Xavier House intentional community in Kansas City, Kan. Service had been an important part of her life, including at Shalom House, Kansas City, Kan., where Rejane was working.

It was during this time that the Cytackis first met the SCLs while worshipping at Our Lady and St. Rose Parish. Ed wondered about some practical things related to Rejane's decision: What exactly does this mean? Where will she be living? Will she change her name?

Donna's reaction was tinged with slight apprehension. She'd known women who had been sisters in other communities and had left the convent in post Vatican II days. She saw how agonizing these decisions were for these women.

Two things were certain for both parents: they knew the decision was Rejane's to make and that they would be supportive of her just as they had been throughout her life.

And true to form, the Cytackis have stayed the course. Sister Rejane professed final vows in July 2013. Just as they did before their daughter became an SCL, her parents have helped her set up classrooms where she taught; participated in events and activities in which she's been involved; and joined in observances and celebrations.

"We were introduced to a whole new family of SCLs through Rejane's becoming a Sister," says Ed. "The Sisters



Ed, Sister Rejane and Donna Cytacki in the Founders' Room at the Mother House.

have prayed us through surgeries, health needs and other requests. It's a really powerful feeling to know that all of the Sisters are praying for your intentions."

Donna says, "We've shared lots of enjoyable meals and good times with the Sisters."

Sister Rejane adds, "The SCLs are very welcoming and allow our family to be part of many things. Wherever I've lived, my parents have visited and built relationships with the Sisters."

Still, Donna and Ed recognize that taking religious vows is a road less travelled these days. Ed says he's happy that Sister Rejane is involved with Giving Voice, a peer-led organization that creates spaces for younger women religious to give voice to their hopes, dreams and challenges in religious life. She was on the planning committee of Giving Voice's national conference hosted in Kansas City, Kan., this year.

In her current role as assistant campus minister at the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, and in her environmental interests and other concerns, Sister Rejane knows that she can count on both of her families – the SCLs and the Cytackis – to walk the walk with her.

The Gloeges A roundabout journey

It's been a few years since Louie Gloege has been to the Mother House. Following his Mother's death at the age of 95 in 2008, Louie abided by her wishes and brought her clothing and other items from Montana to Leavenworth for the Sisters' use.

Now, he has reason to return more frequently. His sister, Sister Carolyn Gloege, is pastoral care director for the SCLs in Ross Hall.

"Having a sister who's an SCL connects me with this wonderful Community," Louie says. "They are very caring and sensitive to the needs of others in doing God's work among his people. I am always welcomed as one of the family when in their midst."

The Gloeges know this firsthand from an earlier experience. When Sister Carolyn was about 10 years old, her bathrobe caught fire as she stood in front of a kitchen heater to warm herself. She suffered severe burns on her back and received care at St. John's Hospital, operated by the SCLs in Helena, Mont., the city where the Gloege family lived.

"Mom always said she didn't know what we would have done without the Sisters watching over Carolyn and monitoring her care and needs," Louie says.

Growing up, the siblings weren't raised as Catholics. Independent of each other, they began to think about converting. When they were in their teenage years –

Carolyn a senior in high school and Louie attending Carroll College – they received instructions on becoming Catholic at the Cathedral of St. Helena. (RCIA didn't exist then.) Not long after the siblings joined the Church, their Mom rejoined. That was in 1973 at the Easter Vigil.

In retrospect, Sister Carolyn realizes that she had a yearning for religious life from a young age. Other life intervened, however. After high school, she took a full-time job at a medical clinic filing insurance claims. She remained with the clinic for 21 years, learning many other skills (bookkeeping, medical dictation, payroll, office

> Sister Carolyn Gloege with Louie Gloege, her brother.

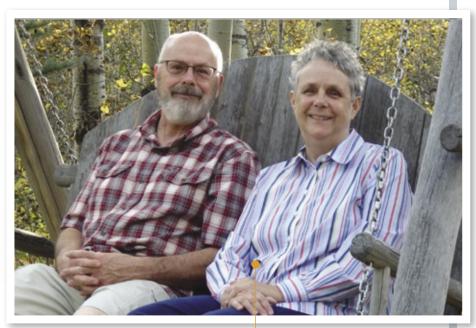
management, etc.). She began to think she was too old to become a Sister, but she received encouragement from Sister Nancy Svetlecic, her good friend who was the pastoral associate at the cathedral in Helena.

Once she made plans to enter the SCL Community, Sister Carolyn couldn't bring herself to share the decision with her Mom, Louie and Terry, her step-brother, in fear of not having their total support, which was very important to her. She was on "pins and needles." As she left for work one day, Sister Carolyn broke the news to her Mom and Louie by leaving a note on the dining room table.

Louie's reaction upon reading the note? "I'm not surprised." Her Mom's response when she called Carolyn at work that morning at Louie's prompting? "I wondered when it was going to happen. Why did it take you so long to decide?"

Sister Carolyn entered the SCLs in 1992. The Gloeges gained a large extended family of new friends. "They treat me like I'm a brother. I now have hundreds of sisters," Louie says.

And he feels connected in some way to all the great work done by the Sisters who were pioneers, concluding, "It's great to be part of all that's been accomplished by the Sisters in Montana and throughout their greater mission area and in what they are still accomplishing today."



Re-Markings

Breaking burritos, becoming whole

by Mary Frances Jaster, co-director, Colorado Vincentian Volunteers, and Sister Jennifer Gordon, system director, mission services, SCL Health



Following Mass on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, guests gathered in Denver in the sandwich line outside the church.

"I sat with joy yesterday. His name was Abali, a refugee from Cameroon."

Sitting, standing, walking, talking, eating with joy happened in Denver on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, Sunday, Sept. 27. The joy of the Gospel, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," resonated with all who attended the liturgy as we moved from the table of the Eucharistic liturgy to the picnic tables outside of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church, singing, "When in our music God is glorified, and

adoration leaves no room for pride, it is as though the whole creation cried Alleluia."

The Denver Vincentian family consists of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian priests and brothers), the Sisters of Charity and their Associates, the Center for Spirituality at Work, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Colorado Vincentian Volunteers. All of us gathered on this special feast day with the St. Elizabeth

community as we celebrated our Vincentian charism through prayer and song, as we connected with and learned from one another, and as we collaborated in seeking to serve the presence of Christ in those who are poor. The day began with liturgy during which all the branches of the family participated. Then we joined the folks who had already lined up in the alley for the daily sandwich line. Together, we went through the line and shared burritos, fruit,



Mary Frances Jaster



Sister Jennifer Gordon

cookies and lemonade. Together, we shared stories.

And it was that simple. It was simply sharing the table of fellowship as the human family.

"Gentleness was nearly a requirement for the day and that's one of the reasons it was so lovely. I think we too often underestimate *the act of gentle ways – but one of* the ways we are reminded is when we come together to break bread (or burritos)."

"Kenny is a chatty young man who said he couldn't shake Denver, no matter where else he tried. Vie is a woman who cannot remove the stamps from her hands as she is a frequent visitor to the women's prison. *In very different ways, the two have* been marked for life – riveted by relationship."

Isn't that what Pope Francis challenges us to do? To pay attention to those in our very midst, to enter into relationship with the immigrant, the widow, the orphan, the one most abandoned, to share our resources and to care for one another and for the earth? Speaking at St. Patrick Parish in Washington, D.C., Pope Francis said, "How good it is for us to pray together. How good it is to encounter one another in this place where we see one another as brothers and sisters, where we realize that we need one another."

And the beauty of the day was in the simplicity of these relationships, if only for an hour. Relationships that we carry with us as we return to our daily life.

"The man with the grey shirt did not say a word. He chose not to share his name. But he stayed. At first it was awkward, but everyone in the circle got used to it. He was part of the circle. We were part of the circle. That was enough."



A large number of SCLs and SCL Associates participated in this year's Vincentian Family Gathering in Denver. Joining them were seven students from the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth.

Vincentian Family Gathering focused on homelessness

Over 200 people, including 60 young adults, participated in the Vincentian Family Gathering in Denver, Oct. 23-25. The theme was "Going Deeper: Building Community and Collaboration for Systemic Change around Homelessness."

SCLs and SCL Associates were well-represented at the gathering; seven Vincentian student leaders from the University of Saint Mary also attended. Sister Rejane Cytacki, who is the Vincentian Family collaborator representing the SCLs, was on the planning committee. She says planners made a concerted effort to involve more young adults. "We had some young adult gatherings to hear what they would like to see for collaboration and involvement from the larger Vincentian Family."

Sister Vickie Perkins was one of the featured speakers at the gathering. She discussed collaborative efforts in Leavenworth to start Welcome Central and the Shelter of Hope.

The day before the conference began, Kaela Allton, a Colorado Vincentian Volunteer, died from injuries suffered during a biking accident. The conference Mass was offered in her memory.

Inside the new Ross Hall

Sister Virginia
Flanick did the
honors at the
July 24 ribbon
cutting for the
new Ross Hall
adjoining the
Mother House,
Leavenworth,
Kan. Sister Mary
Julitta Doerhoff
is pictured next
to Sister Virginia.





Hoffman Planning, Design and Construction donated the fountain in the courtyard to the SCLs.



Each floor of the new Ross Hall features a dining room where Sisters can gather for meals.



A living room on each floor offers good opportunity for community.



Sister Jean Anne Panisko, SCL Community Treasurer who coordinated oversight of construction of the new Ross Hall, points out monitoring of hallways and entrances as one of many security features of the skilled nursing center.



SCLs have access to a kitchen on each floor.



Bedrooms are a good size to accommodate needed equipment and provide ample living space for the Sisters who are Ross Hall residents.



"People of the Cross" by Sister Pam Hinkle is one of many works of art on display throughout the facility.



Sisters will have the chance to be creative in the Activity Room.



A great aerial view of the inner courtyard between the Mother House, Marillac Center and the new Ross Hall.

10 important notes about the new Ross Hall

With Sisters now at home in the new Ross Hall, here are 10 highlights of the new skilled nursing facility for SCLs, described by Sister Jean Anne Panisko, Community Treasurer who coordinated the project.

The committees involved with the design and construction of Ross Hall listened to what the Sisters requested and accommodated as much of the input as was practical.

The new Ross Hall has 45 rooms for Sisters over three floors, one of which is the designated Memory Unit.



There's plenty of space where Sisters can have visitors — including their own rooms or parlors. Everything — sinks, snack areas, etc. — is wheelchair accessible, and Ross Hall residents have secure access to Ross Chapel and the Mother House.



The request by the Sisters that Ross Hall be in the same location as the prior facility and connected to the Mother House created some limitations and problems with licensing due to the number of doors to be monitored. But the Community complied with requirements and secured licensing.



The facility was designed and built so that Sisters can feel like they are in a home environment. Each Sister has her own bedroom. Each floor features a living room, dining room and kitchen.



Simplicity was a key element of design and construction.
The facility is very practical with the goal that it serve the Community well into the future. At the same time, investments were made in furnishings that are durable.



With a courtyard, screened-in porches and all season rooms, Sisters can experience the elements and enjoy the scenery, yet be in a safe setting.



The Memory Unit provides a secure environment for Sisters in need of this level of care while giving them the opportunity to be outdoors with exterior access to the "live" roof.



The new Ross Hall is a place where staff can also feel at home as they work with and among the Sisters. The new building has a large staff break room, a conference room and plenty of storage space.



The building has great west and south views that let in lots of light and allow Sisters to see nature.



Features are built in to catch and recycle rainwater to irrigate the "live" roof on the second floor of Ross Hall.



The Hoffman
Planning, Design and
Construction team
listened and worked
to provide what the
Sisters requested.
Sister Jean Anne
says the team was
wonderful to work
with and will remain
engaged for a year
to address things
that need fixing.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

In this section, Voices of Charity highlights Sisters, Associates and friends who have earned special honors or been in the news.

Mount Saint Vincent recognizes Sister Amy



Sister Amy Willcott at one of the events honoring her 11 years of service as executive director of Mount Saint Vincent, Denver. More recently, Sister Amy received special recognition at Mount Saint Vincent's Silver Bell Ball.

Sister Amy Willcott was guest of honor during a Mass and farewell brunch recognizing her 11 years as executive director of Mount Saint Vincent, Denver.

Family and friends gathered at Mount Saint Vincent on Sunday, Aug. 16, to acknowledge Sister Amy's service to the 132-year-old organization that provides treatment for children with severe emotional and behavioral challenges due to trauma, mental illness, abuse or neglect. Sister Amy made the decision to move on to the next chapter of her life after 11 years at the helm of the agency.

The morning began with Mass celebrated by Father John Costanzo, SCLA, in the chapel. A short video featuring fond memories, accolades and admiration of Sister Amy's many accomplishments and personal qualities brought cheers and applause. An outdoor brunch followed the Mass. Interim Executive Director/Clinical Director Kirk Ward welcomed everyone and introduced two special guests: Sister Amy's mother, Annabel Willcott, and sister, Della Willcott.

Mount Saint Vincent has a tradition of honoring employees who demonstrate longstanding commitment to the agency's mission by "giving" the employee a tree that is planted on campus. A plaque in front of the tree lists the employee's name and the number of years of service. At the close of the program, Sister Amy was presented with her tree and plague. The plague reads, "With Grateful Hearts for Her 11 Years of Service as Executive Director of Mount Saint Vincent. Sister Amy Willcott."

Sister Susan publishes new book of poetry

This summer, Mammoth Publications published Ireland's Weather, a new book of poetry by **Sister Susan Rieke**. The fine arts edition has 24 pages and two color illustrations. In her poetry, Sister Susan explores a landscape populated with robins, crows, bees and "old demons." The journey will change everything.



Sister Susan is a professor of English, holding the McGilley Chair for Liberal Studies at the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, Kan. She has published two other books of poetry, Small Indulgences and From the Tower (with Sister Mary Janet McGilley and Michael Paul Novak), as well as individual poems in many magazines. She does numerous poetry readings in the greater Kansas City area. Through the Kansas Humanities Council, Sister Susan has given talks on Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman and led book discussions in the state of Kansas.

Ireland's Weather is \$10.00 and can be ordered at mammothpublications.net.

Clinics celebrate mission, people

Debbie Sparks (center) received the first Sister Helen Bristow **Award at Caritas Clinics** Health and Hope Awards Reception. Debbie has worked in the clinics' development department for nearly 13 years. Pictured with Debbie are



(left to right) Pat and John Moulden (Pat is Sister Helen's sister) and Ed and Pam Bristow (Ed is Sister Helen's brother). Sister Helen worked at Duchesne as a patient advocate for 12 years. She died in June 2014. The new award in her memory was established this year.

Saint Vincent and Duchesne Clinics recognized individuals and organizations that represent the clinics' mission at the Health and Hope Awards Reception held Oct. 8 in Mission, Kan.

Stephen L. Reintjes, MD, received the Sister Rosalie Mahoney Award – the highest award given by Saint Vincent and Duchesne. Other award recipients included the Legislative Delegations of Leavenworth and Wyandotte Counties (Caritas Award); Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kan. Commissioner Brian McKiernan (Public Servant of the Year Award); Medical Surgical Eye Care (Business of the Year Award); and **Debbie Sparks**, clinics' development coordinator (Sister Helen Bristow Associate of the Year Award).

"Each awardee lives the mission – to reveal and foster God's healing love by improving the health of the people and communities we serve, especially those who are poor and vulnerable – in his or her own unique way," says Amy Falk, Caritas Clinics executive director.

Sister Maureen Hall, SCL Community Director, gave the invocation at the event.

SCL Photo Gallery





- At this year's Rockin' and Rollin' with the SCLs, University of Saint Mary students and SCLs, like Sister Letitia Lenherr, tested their skill sets with games.
- 2 On Aug. 23, in a rite of acceptance to the novitiate, Sister Mallorie Gerwitz accepted a candle from Sister Kathleen Marie Henscheid, Sister Maureen Hall is at the lectern.
- 3 Enjoying their golden year, 50th anniversary SCLs, left to right, front, Sisters Linda Roth, Mary Jo Anzik, Mary Pat Lenahan, Mary Pat Johnson, Lucy Walter; back, Janet Cashman, Peg Johnson and Rita McGinnis.
- 4 Kansas City and Leavenworth area SCLs caught Royals fever during and after the World Series. Sister Jane Jackson did a television interview at Providence Medical Center where she volunteers.

What's ahead at Marillac Center?

- Feb. 20, 2016 Lenten Day of Prayer with Father Andy Alexander, SJ, Ross Chapel.
- March 19-27, 2016 Holy Week Retreat, "At the Crossroads: Reflections at the Intersection of Death and Life" with Father Joe Nassal, CPPS.
- May 22-28, 2016 "Spirituality of Aging" Retreat with Sister Ann Billard, OLM.

Visit www.marillaccenter.org or call 913-758-6552.

Option for Voices

If you prefer to read the electronic version (pdf file) of Voices of Charity (available on the SCL website, www.scls.org) instead of receiving a paper copy, please email thorvat@scls.org. Thank you.





Chapter 2016 Prayer

Provident and loving God, you call us to live our Baptism fully as consecrated women.

Founded by the river waters of Leavenworth. may we follow the holy streams of our lives to their convergence.

As we move toward Chapter 2016, we gather as a discerning community, willing to wait in silence, yet ever eager to serve.

As you call us forward, help us to listen attentively to the ebb and flow,

the raging floods and the still streams around us. May your mission in all of creation ever flow through our life of Charity. Amen.



Chapter of Affairs – January 3-9, 2016 Chapter of Elections – March 11-13, 2016

History comes alive through work of SCL archivist

Colleen McFarland Rademaker is like a kid in a candy shop as she explores the rich treasure trove of history, stories and artifacts in the SCL archives. Among responsibilities of her new role as head archivist, she is committed to sharing this legacy of service. She has three exhibit programs underway to accomplish this goal.

"Mission of the Month" debuted in November. First to be featured was Saint Mary's Academy for Young Ladies founded in Leavenworth in March 1859 (see sidebar article). One side of each tabletop display holder has brief, interesting points about the ministry; the other side, historic photos. The display holders are in public places around the Mother House and Ross Hall and in areas to be enjoyed by the Sisters and their guests. Information will change monthly and will highlight different ministries of the SCLs. Sisters Jean Martin Dawson and Marie Damian Glatt are assisting with this exhibit.

In addition, Colleen will be showcasing artifacts and historic documents in two display cases. These will be located in the dining rooms of the Mother House and Ross Hall.

Early in 2016, Colleen plans to introduce a changing exhibit in the SCL Heritage Room. First on the agenda will be photos and memorabilia in observance of the 100th anniversary of Annunciation Chapel.

Extensive background

Colleen joined the SCL staff in May as the first lay person to hold the head archivist role.

"With the SCLs, I'm charged with caring for records not only of a number of remarkable individuals but also of a community of women who have strived to live differently," she adds. "And it's very interesting to have archives that are full of information about women since archival collections documenting the activities of men far outnumber those of women, particularly during the frontier days."

Originally from Milwaukee, Wis., Colleen has her undergraduate degrees in German and history from the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. She completed a master's in history at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., then transitioned to library science. Colleen earned her master's in library and information science from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. She later interned and took classes for an additional year to learn archival skills.

She began her career as a reference librarian first with Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Ill., and then at Carleton College, Northfield, Minn. Colleen transitioned to Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington state where she was responsible for a large manuscript collection and select college records. From there, she went to the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire where Colleen served as head of special collections and university archivist.

Her first experience with religious archives came with employment by the Mennonite Church USA, Goshen, Ind. Colleen was the first non-Mennonite to hold the archivist title. It was in this role that she grew to respect the relationships people and communities have with those who came before them and who continue to form a living community.

New to the SCL staff, but right at home is Colleen McFarland Rademaker, head archivist.



In Leavenworth, Colleen works with Sister Peg Johnson, the religious Community's Secretary, and Sister Kathleen Mary Connelly, digital archivist. The team is currently working on digitizing photos in the archives to make them more accessible to the Sisters and researchers. They also are active in the archivists' group representing communities that are members of the Charity Federation. In November, the SCLs hosted this group on the Mother House campus.

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LADIES (EWING COTTAGE), LEAVENWORTH, KAN., FAST FACTS

- > The academy opened on March 8, 1859, just weeks after Mother Xavier Ross and Sister Joanna Bruner arrived in Leavenworth.
- > The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth rented the cottage. Earlier, it served as the home of William Tecumseh Sherman and his wife, Ellen Ewing Sherman.
- > Early records show that room, board, laundry, bedding and tuition cost between \$67 and \$79 (about \$2,000 today) per five-month session, depending on the student's grade level.
- > At this time, the Sisters also staffed a boys' school on Kiowa Street, north of the bishop's residence.

> St. Mary's Academy remained in Ewing Cottage until the

summer of 1860, when a new building was constructed to serve as school and Mother House.



The Thomas and Carroll families in front of the Ewing Cottage, circa 1883.

SCLs offer volunteer opportunities

The SCL Community offers opportunities for young people to experience the Vincentian charism in action by serving in ministries associated with the Sisters. Volunteer opportunities are available to individuals and groups. They range from weekend or week-long service experiences to longer term live-in experiences. Customized placement of volunteers is a priority. Former volunteers with the SCLs say the experience transforms hearts and changes lives.

For more information, contact Sister Vicki Lichtenauer, vickiL@scls.org or 816-718-2660.



A trip to New Orleans as part of her SCL volunteer experience involved Grace Geiger in work related to Hurricane Katrina restoration.

Re-Markings

Case in point: Grace Geiger

Grace Geiger, Gladstone, Mo., had a whirlwind volunteer experience with SCLs in the Kansas City area for six weeks in August and September.

"I really enjoyed the experiences," she says. "I saw another half of the city I didn't know and learned about organizations and their good works. I appreciated being able to be of service

to people through these ministries."

The 20-year-old had completed her freshman year at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kan., where she's enrolled in the school of public health. Based on a positive experience with a spring mission trip, Grace felt called to take a time out from course work for a semester of extended service. This began in summer 2015 with volunteer service at a camp for middle school students and working with youth in her parish, St. Charles Borromeo, Kansas City, Mo.

In her research for other volunteer service, Grace discovered that the SCLs have a volunteer program, and she pursued it. Among her assignments with the SCLs, Grace spent time at the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, Kan.; Duchesne Clinic and Providence Medical Center, Kansas City, Kan.; and Cristo Rey High School and Seton Center, Kansas City, Mo. Her range of service included organizing donations in a thrift shop, tutoring high school students in math, making copies and



While volunteering through the SCLs, Grace Geiger stayed in Xavier Community, Kansas City, Kan., where Sister Mary Rachel Flynn is part of the core community.

praying with patients. The experiences were diverse, fast-paced and just what Grace wanted.

From Kansas City, Grace traveled to McAllen, Texas, for a volunteer assignment through ARISE. There, she spent two months in an after-school program for kids living near the border between Texas and Mexico. She helped new citizens settling in and getting used to life in the United States. Grace will return to Pitt State to resume studies in January.

While volunteering through the SCLs, Grace lived with the Xavier Community, Kansas City, Kan. She felt welcomed and right at home. She found the community and prayer support somewhat like a family.

"Especially as I began this semester of all new opportunities, Xavier Community was my home away from home," Grace says. "It was good to return each day to a community environment. I feel very blessed to have had the entire opportunity very blessed and thankful."

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If we've overlooked an item of importance, please email (thorvat@scls.org) or mail information to Communications, Cantwell Hall, 4200 South Fourth Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048-5054.



Music: her gift, her ministry

As she reflects on her life, Sister Mary Willoughby says the biggest decision she ever made came toward the end of a retreat as a freshman at Saint Mary College (now the University of Saint Mary), Leavenworth. She remembers asking God, "What do you want me to do?"

ister said she recognized that the SCLs at the college had something that she didn't have and she wanted: a relationship with God. On Aug. 14, 1946, she was the last of her novitiate class to arrive at the Mother House. She recalls the day she entered the SCL religious Community as the happiest day of her life.

For seven years, Sister Mary taught second, third and fifth grades. "I humbly acknowledge that I didn't have the discipline to do this," Sister Mary says. "Teaching grade school is much harder than it looks. With 32 kids and one teacher, I knew I was not going to be a howling success by howling!"

Music was among Sister Mary's special gifts. After all, she had begun piano lessons at age 5. In eighth-grade, she took clarinet lessons; in high school, she directed and helped with band programs and taught clarinet lessons to 14 students when their instructor was drafted into the Army. She taught herself to play the saxophone and the oboe. To this day, Sister Mary considers making music with wind instruments a spiritual experience. "I enjoy breathing out to make music – the music doesn't happen unless a person breathes correctly," she says.

Sister Mary was able to follow her heart and teach music, primarily to elementary students. "Getting kids to love music was my object," she says. And she did this for many years.

In 1974, Sister Mary took a leap of faith and changed ministries. She joined the medical records department of Saint John's Health Center, Santa Monica, Calif., and subsequently took classes to become a coder and was a medical records technician for 20 years.

Since her return to the Mother House in 1996, Sister Mary has been involved in outreach to the elderly in parishes and nursing homes; worked in the former post office on the USM campus; and helped staff the Mother House switchboard.

Sister counts teaching music and seeing how much music means to people who hear it among her greatest rewards. And music has remained important to her. She's been a second soprano in the Mother House choir; if the notes get too high, she switches to a lower pitch! She likes to listen to music, particularly instrumental and classic.

"If I don't have music," Sister Mary concludes, "something's missing!"

Book Review

Riveting, compelling ministry and witness

McCoy, J. A. (2015). A Still and Quiet Conscience: The Archbishop Who Challenged a Pope, a President, and a Church; A Life of Raymond G. Hunthausen. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

> (Editor's note: Archbishop Hunthausen is the brother of Sister Edna Hunthausen, Helena, Mont.)

"I feel within me a peace above all earthly dignities, a still and quiet conscience." Author John McCoy begins with this quote from Shakespeare's "Henry VIII" and immediately captures the consistent response of Archbishop Raymond "Dutch" Hunthausen throughout his life and ministry. The author draws on his knowledge of and his relationship with Dutch from the time of the archbishop's appointment to Seattle in 1975 through his retirement, and from serving as spokesman for the archdiocese through some of those years (p.xiii).

McCoy concedes in the prologue that Pope Francis reminds him of Hunthausen, and that their similarities of deep humility and pastoral compassion are threaded throughout their lived spirituality and ministerial journey. From there, the reader embarks on a riveting and compelling journey impacted by global and political events in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council.

Courageous stance

Beginning with Hunthausen's personal commitment to peace and anti-war movements, the author highlights the close proximity of the presence of the Trident missile in Seattle. Archbishop Hunthausen responded by his support of the officers and crew through prayer

while rejecting the capabilities and threat of the devastation that could be inflicted by the vessel and its armaments.

The author writes, "Hunthausen's ecclesial jurisdiction was one of the most militarized regions in the nation" (p. 7), yet he had the courage to protest, in the name of disarmament and peace. Influenced by the writings and witness of other people standing for peace, Hunthausen decided to "withhold his taxes in protest of nuclear weapons" (p. 26). As word spread, Hunthausen began to feel the farreaching impact of his courageous decision with reactions from people within the diocese, members of the military and government, and even from the Vatican. Little did the humble priest from a small town in Montana envision that following his conscience and encouraged by the documents of Vatican II, and taking a stance to protect and respect life would threaten so many.

Vatican II impact

This courageous stance most likely developed gradually from the strong German, Catholic roots of his parents and his six siblings among whom he was the first born. Under the guidance and drawn by the witness of Father, and later Bishop Bernard Topel, Hunthausen felt called to the priesthood during his time at Carroll College. "Topel modeled the ascetic life for which



by Sister Mary Pat Lenahan

he would later become well known" (p. 57). Graduating from Carroll with a degree in chemistry, Hunthausen attended seminary to become a Catholic priest for pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Helena, Mont. However, after ordination, he was assigned to Carroll College to teach chemistry and math as well as to coach, eventually becoming athletic director, dean of men and college president.

In April 1962, Hunthausen was appointed bishop of the Helena Diocese by the Vatican. Within weeks, Bishop Hunthausen "was at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to participate in the Second Vatican Council, the most significant event in the life of the Roman Catholic Church since the Protestant Reformation"(p. 85). At 41, he was the youngest of the American bishops and "the last U.S. bishop appointed before the Council began on October 11, 1962" (p. 85). So many significant changes evolved in regard to the role of laity, shared responsibility, scripture, liturgy, ecumenism, religious freedom and the Church in the modern world.

Hunthausen listened and learned, taking all in, exchanging insights, discussing implications and pondering in prayer. He grasped the spirit and the impact of Pope John XXIII's opening the window for breathing in a new Spirit of life and transformation. "For me to have attempted to be a bishop

without the Council would have been a disaster," Hunthausen said. "My goodness, the spirit and theology of the Council turned my head around" (p. 105). With a new vision for his ministry, Hunthausen immersed himself in sharing the mandate of the Council with the people of God through listening, collegiality and shared decision-making.

Champion for justice

During these years, his style of leadership continued to evolve. His vision for the diocese was illustrated in the process that [James] Provost (a priest with whom he worked) and Hunthausen pioneered in Helena. This became a model for a national Parish Leadership Development Program that spread across the country. They instituted many external changes to bring the Church into the modern world that indicated a transformation of thought and process. However, during that time, demographic shifts dictated the closure of many Catholic schools, which was difficult for bishops, pastors and parishioners.

Dreams and difficulties followed Hunthausen as he was appointed archbishop of Seattle in 1975. Being neither politically-driven nor calculating in his relationships, his compassionate and gentle style were often misjudged and misunderstood. While he fought for Catholic social justice, often some were coerced by what others might think or fearful of consequences of a particular stance taken. More necessary closings were not favorably met, and blame was placed on the archbishop. As he fought for more involvement of women in leadership roles, not all agreed with his positions as he also spoke on ministering to members of

the gay community and reaching out in ecumenical dialogue.

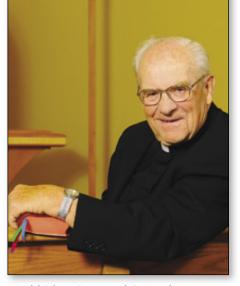
Criticism of Hunthausen spread, making its way to Washington, D.C., as well as to the Vatican, where he came under scrutiny without being provided with specific instances of accusations. Transparency was lacking throughout the papal examination with endless meetings and questions, while Hunthausen was under investigation for his "extremist viewpoints" (p.187).

Strong moral leader

It appears that a "perfect storm" was converging within the context of pre-Vatican II attitudes which clashed with Vatican II mandates for a new vision of Church. Resistance to change after centuries of perceived Church stability collided with fears of nuclear arms' build up, global unrest and strong political forces. In the midst of the turmoil, Rev. Dale Turner, a leader in the Protestant establishment, described Hunthausen as one of America's strongest moral leaders. "It is precisely because Hunthausen is willing to risk alienation and misunderstanding by his involvement in controversial issues that I admire him so highly," Turner wrote. "He has humility without timidity, competence without arrogance, and he exercises authority without being authoritarian" (p. 233).

At one point, in the throes of an angry anti-war demonstration, Hunthausen was called to calm the crowd, and he said, "We need to admit that in each of us there is some violence. We need to make sure we do not become part of what we are here to protest" (p. 283), and the crowd dispersed.

In 1991, on his 70th birthday, Hunthausen announced his decision to resign as bishop. With his decision, he admitted, "Yes, I'm hurting...



Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen

Photo credit:

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen
in Carroll's Trinity Hall change

in Carroll's Trinity Hall chapel. Photo by Kevin Hudson, Helena Photography. Photo courtesy of Carroll College, Helena, Mont.

but I feel in the depths of my soul I'm at peace" (p. 293). These words and this deep peace are threaded throughout his life of ministry and witness.

I found this review of Hunthausen's life by McCoy riveting and compelling. I was overcome with a deep sense of sadness as I was also buoyed by a profound sense of the holy. Having entered religious life shortly after Vatican II and having recently reread the Vatican II documents provided me with a rich context for the background and events provoking this "perfect storm" in which Archbishop Hunthausen found himself hurled by saying, "Yes, Lord," and following his conscience. As the heading for the last chapter, the author quotes Anthony de Mello by saying, "There's only one evil in the world, fear. There's only one good in the world, love" (p. 278). In my humble opinion, Archbishop Raymond "Dutch" Hunthausen's life and witness proclaim and embody this deep peace and abiding love to which the Gospel of Jesus calls each of us. This book is well worth one's time and careful attention for a rich opportunity in deeper reflection, provocative discussion and contemplative prayer.

SCL Associates

SCL Associates adopt new mission, values statements

Process inclusive; statements clarifying

hrough an inclusive and engaging process, the SCLA Advisory
Board has developed new mission and values statements of the
Associates that the SCL Community Council has affirmed.
Previously, the Associates had adopted the SCL mission statement.
"The time was right for us to clarify and distinguish our mission as closely
aligned with the Sisters' statement yet also unique," explains Terri Butel,
SCLA, director of Associates. "Associate life is a distinct response to the
Holy Spirit's invitation to animate the same charism that enlivens our
Sisters of Charity, and we live it within our vocations, at all times and in all
places. Our mission helps define why the SCL Associates exist; our values
describe how we 'walk the talk.'

"Through our baptismal call, we do this 'impelled by the love of Christ' – the first words of both the SCL and SCL Associates' mission statements," Terri continues. "Our relationship with the SCLs and the Vincentian charism are foundational ties that inspire and motivate us. We believe that our new mission and values capture, convey and communicate this spirit."

The Advisory Board invited Associates to respond to a survey to identify defining characteristics and the purpose of the SCL Associate program. With survey responses collected and synthesized, the Advisory Board brainstormed, discerned and wordsmithed the mission and values during its Sept. 26 meeting. The new mission and values evolved from that process.

"Thanks to everyone who contributed their thoughts through the survey," Terri says. "And thank you to the SCL Associates for living and breathing our mission and values in support of the mission of the SCL Community."

Drum roll, please. Introducing:

SCL Associate Mission

Impelled by the love of Christ, we strive to make a difference as we

pray, serve with joy, act with justice, build community and care for all creation.

SCL Associate Values

Vincentian spirit – We live and act with humility, simplicity and charity.

Service – We strive to meet the critical needs of God's people and the Earth.

Collaboration – We work with others in support of Jesus' mission.

Courage – We act boldly and with integrity.

Compassion – We respond to others with mercy and love.

During a commitment prayer service at the Mother House on Oct. 31, Mandy Mroszczak (right) received her SCL Associate pin from Sister Mary Jane Schmitz, her sponsor. Mandy is a teacher at Xavier Elementary School, Leavenworth, Kan.



Treasures of the



ose Naputano says, "I'm going to rock and roll until I can't rock and roll anymore!" That positive attitude and great relationships nourish and sustain the SCL Associate who has spent most of her life in and around Chicago. Add to that her commitment to simplicity, and Rose lives the Vincentian charism in her circles of influence.

Retired for the past three years and facing some physical limitations and vision challenges, Rose spends half the year at a resort campground in Woodhaven, 100 miles from Chicago. There in a mobile home, she's happy to experience quiet time or entertain family and friends who visit. Rose is working to divest herself of clutter to make room and space for God's loving grace.

In her retirement, life is all about relationships: with God, family and friends, people she meets and the earth. Rose's physical limitations challenge her to find creative opportunities to serve people. She's aware that she can help in small ways – listening, reflecting people's thoughts back to them, and sorting through their thoughts with them.

Rose's background as a high school counselor for 30 years equips her well for this role. With a master's in education and a concentration in counseling, Rose loved her work with young women attending Catholic high schools in the Chicago area. She became an "enlightened

listener" whether counseling in academics, about careers or on personal matters.

Friends challenged Rose about accumulating so few funds through employment in Catholic schools. She told them she was "accumulating treasures of the heart." She adds that she always considered her work as ministry, and, yes, Rose managed to pay her bills!

Born and raised in Chicago, Rose is the oldest of three daughters of a strong Italian family. She met the SCLs at St. Daniel the Prophet School where Sister Rose Leo O'Donnell was her mentor. Rose sang with Sister in the grade school girls' choir for three years and spent four years under Sister's direction in the Marian Singers, the parish high school girls' choir. Following

graduation, Rose entered the SCL Community; she left after five years, but she retains a strong "heart connection" to the Community, Leavenworth, Sisters and Associates. Becoming an Associate on Nov. 10, 2012 formalized that connection for Rose.

Rose values this link with men and women committed to living lives of service. When she's able, she attends meetings at the SCL Mother House or travels to Leavenworth to visit friends. Rose's phone and her computer help keep her connected as do Voices of Charity and live-streaming of events at the Mother House.

"The SCLs and Associates are my second family," Rose says. "I hold them in my thoughts, prayers and heart every day."



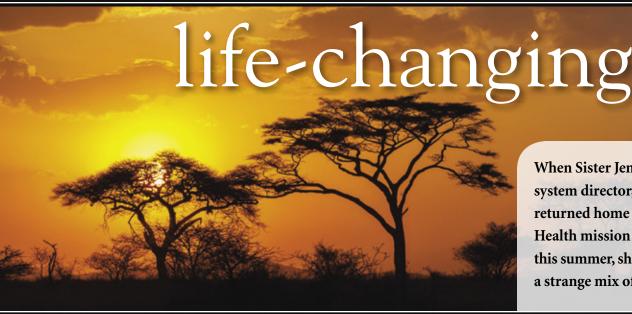
Rose Naputano received her SCL Associate pin from Sister Judith Jackson, her sponsor, on Nov. 10, 2012.



Friends from grade school and high school, Rose Naputano, SCLA (left), and Carol Sutton, who was an SCL postulant in same novitiate class as Rose.

Beyond All Borders

MISSION TRIP



When Sister Jennifer Gordon, system director, mission services, returned home from the SCL Health mission trip to Tanzania this summer, she admits to feeling a strange mix of emotions.

felt like God took my life and upended it," she recalls, "took everything I thought I knew and turned it upside down. It was amazing and quite daunting."

She had been to developing countries before but had never experienced such culture shock. She saw tremendous need and heartbreaking poverty, and at the same time sensed a deep faith and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. She discovered that it is "very African" to ask for help when needed, but also to move forward with whatever needs to be done even before assistance arrives.

Mostly, she witnessed graciousness, hospitality, passion and diligence among her Tanzanian colleagues. As for the SCL Health team that made the trip and did the work, Sister Jennifer says, "We absolutely had the right team and the right mix of talents and skills."

On mission, on task

Tanzania is located on the east coast of Africa and is one of the world's poorest countries. SCL Health and before it Exempla Healthcare have had a relationship with the Lutheran health ministry in Tanzania since January 2005.

Coordinating through Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson, missionaries from Minnesota who have spent 30 years in Tanzania, SCL Health began its outreach with Selian Lutheran Hospital in a small rural community outside Arusha, a city of 1.5 million. Subsequently in 2008, Arusha

Lutheran Medical Centre opened in the city's downtown.

Seventeen people, primarily employees of SCL Health and its hospitals, made the mission trip this year. More than 100 persons submitted applications to be considered for the trip.

In response to needs identified by the Tanzanian hospitals, SCL Health sent staff with expertise in adult and neonatal intensive care, biomedical engineering and information technology. Team members represented five of the SCL Health hospitals and system services staff. In the Tanzanian hospitals, they changed out all monitors in the adult intensive care unit; installed an air compressor that allowed babies in the NICU to be ventilated; upgraded the IT servers and achieved

SCL HEALTH HAS SUPPORTED THIS HEALTH MINISTRY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- · An annual cash donation.
- Supplies and equipment. For example, when Denver's Saint Joseph Hospital transitioned to its new facility, the health system sent a large shipping container to Tanzania with supplies, equipment, computer monitors, warming lights for newborns, two almost-new operating room tables and more.
- · Clinical team mission trips to Tanzania.
- Exchange trips for Tanzanians to come to the United States.



These words describe the spirit of Shaanga House where people with disabilities live and earn their living making crafts and doing art, sewing and beadwork.

increased storage; installed a new endoscopy suite; and provided education for doctors and nurses.

Ingenuity among the people

Team members also had the opportunity to visit what Sister Jennifer describes as an amazing hospice and palliative care program focused on holistic care. With 25 staff and almost 300 community volunteers, the program serves 5,000 people, many of whom are HIV or TB positive, in their homes. SCL Health representatives also visited Plaster House where kids recover from surgery and toured two girls' schools and a nursing school.

The nursing school is a good example of the ingenuity of the Tanzanians. Sister Jennifer explains that there were no computers and few modern books; even the anatomical model skeleton had bones missing. But determination spurred the people to action to develop the nursing school. The second class has begun the program that is currently located in temporary buildings. They have land for the construction site and are raising funds to build the school and for books and equipment.

Safari and debriefing

Following their two weeks of work, SCL Health team members had the chance to go on safari to several national parks, including the Serengeti, whose name means "endless plain." They saw all kinds of beauty and wildlife, including wildebeests, lions, cheetahs, elephants, countless birds and, Sister Jennifer's favorite, giraffes.

From her perspective, Sister Jennifer has vowed to be even more grateful for the many blessings of her life and to find ways to stay connected to her new friends in Arusha. Team members have had several opportunities to debrief and make recommendations about improvements to their mission experience – for the next group to make the life-changing, intercontinental journey.



Dr. Pat Sato teaching about airway maintenance to nurses at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre during a skills fair.



Playtime at Plaster House which provides pre- and post-op care for kids in need of surgeries (often orthopedic surgeries).



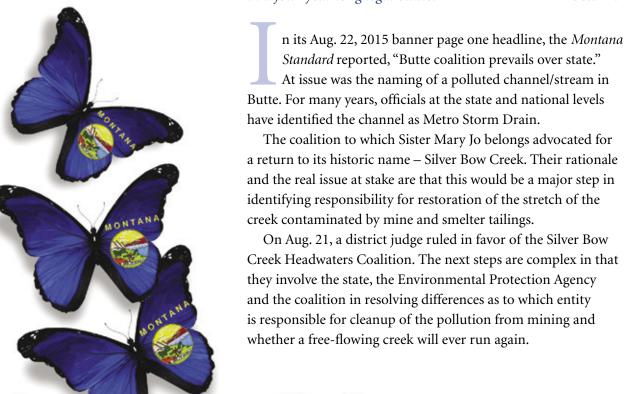
Group (with drivers) on last night in Africa.

Victory of words and more in Montana

Words are important, and names are important. Ask Sister Mary Jo McDonald, Butte, Mont., and she'll agree from experience and recent victory in a four-year long legal battle.



Sister Mary Jo McDonald





Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

Spirit behind the Year of Mercy

On April 11, Pope Francis proclaimed a Holy Year of Mercy, beginning Dec. 8, 2015 and culminating on the Solemnity of Christ the King on Nov. 20, 2016. Here are some excerpts from Pope Francis' Papal Bull announcing this special year.

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness....

... I have chosen the date of 8 December because of its rich meaning in the recent history of the Church. In fact, I will open the Holy Door on the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive....

... How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst! ...

... As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other.







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