ASEC CONTINUES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION EFFORTS FOR AFRICAN SISTERS

In 1999 members of four Pennsylvania women’s congregations (Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia; Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia; Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Scranton; and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus) and their respective colleges established the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) to facilitate access to education for women religious in Africa. To date 4,500 sisters have been served by ASEC. Representative of these charter members provide funding and serve on ASEC’s Members Board and the Board of Directors. Three of the founding universities/colleges provide on-line courses for the African sisters. Currently Sister Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, is executive director of ASEC.

ASEC has also developed partnerships with a number of African colleges and universities where the sisters can attain degrees. Since ASEC’s founding, two additional programs has been initiated, both funded by the Hilton Foundation: the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative and the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa Project.

Ann Marie Slavin, OSF

▲ ASEC sponsors the Bigwa Secondary School which, in addition to educating high school girls, offers opportunities for African sisters to prepare for higher level education.
HEART MONTH: TAKE THE EAT WELL CHALLENGE

February: American Heart Month.
Every year during the month of February, the American Heart Association (AHA) helps focus all of our attention on improving heart health.

Why Is Heart Month Important?
There is a powerful reason why the AHA dedicates an entire month to heart health awareness.

While great progress has been made, heart disease is still the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S. Heart disease and stroke cause 1 in 3 deaths among women each year, killing approximately one woman every 80 seconds. Fortunately, we can change that because 80% of cardiac and stroke may be prevented with education and action. Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. For all of us—no matter how young or old—eating well is a great place to start.

Eating well at home:
• Shake the salt: Try experimenting with spices, herbs, and citrus to enhance the flavor of food. Avoid adding salt and look for lower sodium ingredients.
• Know your numbers: Pick recipes that average 500 calories or less with around 10% saturated fat or less per serving.
• Let produce take center stage: Try filling more of your plate with fruits, vegetables, and leafy greens—one of the most important things to do to eat healthier.
• Make whole grains the rising star: Try making at least half of your grains “wholegrains.” They are healthier than white grains. Try whole-grain pasta, bread, etc.
• Healthy proteins a supporting role: Go for healthy protein like fish, chicken, and beans. Keep portions small—four ounces (about the size of a deck of cards).

Reference: Aramark and American Heart Association flyer, 2013

Anne Dorice DeFebbo, OSF
A driver tucked the following note under the windshield wiper of his automobile: “I’ve circled the block for 20 minutes. I’m late for an appointment and if I don’t park here, I’ll lose my job. Forgive us our trespasses.” When he came back, he found a parking ticket and this note: “I’ve circled the block for 20 years and if I don’t give you a ticket, I’ll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation.”

Mother Nature’s winter weather comes and goes each year. We can’t do much about the snow, ice, and high winds but we can learn to be prepared to make the best choices possible while driving. The short quiz below will get you to think positively and proactively about driving in winter conditions. Good luck!

1. When should you begin preparing for winter?
   a) After the first snowfall
   b) Before the first snowfall
   c) You don’t have to. Just keep doing what you’re doing.
   d) When the authorities say to do so.

2. After it snows, how much of your vehicle should you clear off?
   a) Just enough to see out the front
   b) Only the windows
   c) All of it
   d) None of it—the wind will blow off enough.

3. If the roads are covered in snow and ice and you begin to slide, you should
   a) Do nothing and wait for the vehicle to stop.
   b) Steer where you want to go.
   c) Look and steer where you want to go.
   d) Adjust your speed, look and steer where you want to go.

4. Where does ice form the most in winter weather?
   a) On any road when it’s cold
   b) Shaded areas such as bridges and tunnels
   c) In your kitchen freezer
   d) Intersections

5. When driving in snow you should avoid using your
   a) high beam headlights.
   b) low beam headlights.
   c) emergency flashers.
   d) rear window defroster.

6. When driving in winter conditions remain at least ____ car lengths behind snowplows.
   a) 3
   b) 5
   c) 6
   d) 8

7. Passing a snowplow is dangerous because
   a) A snowplow creates a ridge of snow to its side that can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
   b) The plow kicks up a snow cloud which causes total white-out conditions.
   c) It may be difficult to see the blade of the plow which can extend several feet ahead of the truck and up to 30 inches beyond the truck’s width.
   d) All of the above

8. Snowplow drivers have good visibility with few blind spots.
   a) True
   b) False

9. In fog you should use only high-beam headlights.
   a) True
   b) False

10. Snow hypnosis occurs when a driver is traveling directly into

(continued on page 4)
Winter Driving Quiz

heavy snow and begins to focus on the falling snow instead of the road ahead.
   a) True  
   b) False

11. Is it more important to reduce speed than to increase following distance when driving on ice?
   a) True  
   b) False

12. How can you prevent your locks from freezing?
   a) Never lock your car.  
   b) WD-40  
   c) Apply a reasonably priced olive oil.  
   d) A match

Gentle Reminders:
- **No sticker** – Cars registered in Pennsylvania will no longer have yearly stickers for the license plates. The state hopes to save one million dollars by this elimination.
- **PA registration** – Pennsylvania car registrations can be renewed for one year or two. Please renew for ONE year only. State inspections and emissions must be done every year.

Karen Pourby, OSF

With Gratitude!

Dear Sisters,

Thank you for your prayers, Masses, letters of sympathy, and personal messages on the death of my sister, Angela O’Donovan. I have shared your sympathy with Angela’s husband and all our siblings, nieces, and nephews. We greatly appreciate the support during this time of loss and grief. Angela is free of suffering and now at peace in God’s care for all eternity.

Gratefully,

Sr. Anne Lupita McNamara
“What have you all been doing these past couple of months?” you ask. Well, allow us to share some of the activities in which we have been involved—or soon will be—while promoting not only vocations, but also companions, volunteers, and our charism in general.

**Busy Person Retreats:** Christopher Marie Wagner has a couple of these coming up. They are held at universities and are open to students—and staff if there are enough directors. They usually run from Sunday through Wednesday or Thursday. For many students this is their first opportunity for spiritual direction. The directors meet daily with each participant for about half an hour. During this time Chris shares our charism, as appropriate, with the participant and offers him/her opportunities for further spiritual growth and interaction with our congregation.

**NFCYM:** Companion Patricia St. Clair and I attended the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers. Over 5,000 youth ministers and catechists from around the nation attended. Our three new banners were on display, our new video was playing, and we handed out hundreds of stickers and prayer cards for grandparents. We met numerous people who had great stories of having worked with or been taught by our sisters from Alaska to New Jersey. Connections were re-established and new ones made.

**School Visits:** Although we are putting an emphasis on presence with young adults, as we have time we visit high schools and grade schools, youth groups, Gift of Mission, and confirmation classes. This is about planting the seeds of vocation as well as sharing our charism, our history, our story, our ministry, our spirituality and theology. It is fun to see the kids connect with the struggles St. Francis went through on his journey or to learn why St. Clare is the patron saint of television. God’s extravagant love is often a new idea for them and many have more questions about this theology.

**Neumann University:** In early November I was at the motherhouse for meetings and time with NU students. We celebrated National Vocations Awareness Week with Mass together followed by an ice cream social. A group came to the motherhouse for pizza and another tour and then we gathered the night before the elections for a prayer service at the grotto. One day we made sandwiches for the homeless and on another we had adoration and prayer for NU family and alumni who have died. Throughout the week we had a lot of good and fun-filled conversation.

**The Catholic High School of Baltimore:** TCHS visited the motherhouse in early November. Several sisters from Assisi House and the nearby area who are graduates came over and shared with the students. They had a tour and an opportunity for Q&A. I participated and will be visiting TCHS in March.

**Candidates:** The applications for entrance for Pat Platt and Ann Dutrow were completed and they have since entered our congregation. We continue to be in conversation with a couple of other women interested in vowed membership. Theresa Marie Elitz and Elise Betz have been involved—along with Chris, Elaine Thaden, and me—in answering inquiries that come to us through Vocation Match and our website.

**Vocation Summit, Lake Placid**—Chris and companion Sandy Ben gardino attended this with about (continued on page 6)
4,000 participants. Again, our banners and stickers were there.

**Maryland Catholic Women’s Conference:** Chris attended this in Emmitsburg.

**Twilight Retreat:** Elaine hosted and coordinated this activity. Young adults from the Spokane area gathered for an evening of prayer and reflection following a simple dinner. The last one had a Franciscan focus with the FSPAs and Poor Clares assisting.

**Mannequin Challenge:** Several of our sisters and NU students participated in this in the front hallway of the motherhouse. It was posted on social media.

**Young Adult Gatherings:** Mass Consumption, Eastside Disciples, St. Michael’s, and St. Patrick’s are just a few of the young adult groups that I meet with sporadically in western Washington. We meet for Bible study, faith-sharing, adoration, and socializing. A youth ministers’ gathering was held at the Bay House to help support them and build relationship.

These are just some of the activities we are involved in. Coming up we have more school visits, retreats, NU activities, etc. In addition, we have meetings to plan the retreats and activities. And then there is the charism promotion that includes anti-trafficking presence, assisting with food banks, companions gatherings, and the like.

What are ways you can help share our charism? Be present at diocesan events, young adult gatherings, university activities. Bake some cookies or brownies and take them to a youth group. Sit and talk with them during snack time. Share our story of Francis creating the crèche. Hang out in the campus ministry gathering space at the local university and enter into conversation about God’s extravagant love versus a judgmental God. Take some chips and dip with you. Offer an evening of reflection with a Franciscan emphasis once a month or once each liturgical season for the young adults at your parish. Provide coffee and doughnuts. It is great if you can attend gatherings in pairs because it represents community. Feel free to invite companions to accompany you. If you need materials, supplies, reimbursement, etc., contact Chris, Elaine, or me—or Florence Hee if you can’t reach one of us. We have banners that are very easy to set up and there are two new brochures—one specifically for vocations and one for ways to be in relationship with us. We also have stickers, prayer cards, and bookmarks.

Allow me to reassure you that you can do this. We have heard from some sisters that they don’t know what to say or do. Be yourself. You know our story. You know our charism. Build relationship—introduce yourself to the campus minister or the leader of the young adult group. Agree on a couple of initial ways to get involved every so often. Do they need candy at the front desk? How about cupcakes for RCIA? Stick around and serve punch and cookies following Mass. This way the young adults get to put a name and face together with something good. Pretty soon they will be chatting with you about all sorts of things. I encourage you to make the effort and take the risk. Age isn’t a factor. Showing interest in them, their classes, their careers, their well-being does matter. You are all able to do this.

*Christine Still, OSF*
Who is Jessica Morgan Adams?

Over recent months you might have noticed the young woman pictured here hurrying through the motherhouse corridors or enjoying lunch in the dining room. Jessica Adams is a junior at Neumann University where she studies communications and digital imaging. She has been making her mark both for and about the Sisters of St. Francis since September when Sara Marks recruited her as an intern to help support and promote the Franciscan Volunteers program. Jessica was also loaned out to help the foundation office with two video projects, both of which you may have seen on the congregation’s Facebook page—one for the 2016 Holiday Craft Fair and the other for Anna’s Place for the Giving Tuesday appeal. If you haven’t seen her work, please keep tuned into Facebook because Jessica truly has talent and her videos are making a difference in the way the public perceives the congregation.

Advantages to adding Jessica to the staff. As a result, Jessica joined the foundation in January on a part-time basis and is altering the kind of promotion that goes out for online appeals and events. Check out the video and photos Jessica put together about the Guest Bartender event on January 19. You can find the video on our website, www.osfphila.org, under “Event Success” on the foundation’s event page. The photos are on the Facebook page under “Photos.”

Aside from her work at OLA and her student activities, Jessica is blessed with a loving mother and brother. Sadly her father passed away a little over a year ago and she still misses him. She talks about him openly, saying that he was very creative and imaginative—yet with a quirk or two. For instance, when he was in college he learned the entire dictionary! In addition, he designed toys and has several patents. Her mother retired a few years ago from the Philadelphia School District and did substitute teaching for the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District in New Jersey. Jessica’s brother is a director at a sports complex organization in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Upon graduation, Jessica plans to work in public relations.

As far as Jessica’s input into foundation communications, Sr. Debbie is thrilled. “She brings a whole new flavor to the promotions we are doing,” she said. “I can’t wait to see what she does for the foundation’s May event—Franciscan Night.”

For however long Jessica spends at OLA before she sails off to find her future career, she will certainly make her presence felt through her imaginative videos and photographs both for the foundation and for the sisters.

Sharon Tracy
Recognizing our 2017 Jubilarians

DIAMOND Celebrating 75 Years

Sister Theodore Klingseisen

DIAMOND Celebrating 70 Years

Sister Anna Mae Coll

Sister Doretta Egan

Sister Bernadette Gardiner

Sister Geralda Meskill

Sister Margaret Mary O'Reilly

As vowed women of the Church, we respond with diverse gifts in a spirit of collaboration and of mutual service to the needs of others, especially the economically poor, the marginal, and the oppressed. Seeking to participate in the Spirit’s action in the world, we direct our personal and corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Mission Statement— General Chapter 1986
(continued from page 8)
Yours to Claim!

Yes, this is another example of where one Sister of St. Francis is, all the Sisters of St. Francis are. Although you might feel that you have not done much to influence people about climate change, other environmental issues, and Pope Francis’ wonderful encyclical on care of creation—Laudato Si, through the Sisters of St. Francis Social Justice Fund you, indeed, have accomplished a lot. As you can see in the thank you letter from Sr. Jane Remson, O Carm, the grant that the Carmelite NGO received from our Social Justice Fund enabled them to develop a curriculum which will be shared with the New Orleans Archdiocesan schools, some secondary schools in Tucson, and the International Congress of Carmelite Schools in Rome, Italy. Surely this curriculum will have a ripple effect of touching many other people. P. Raul Maravi Cabrera, O Carm, explains that “The curriculum offers a progressive and experiential learning design so that the students—guided by the environmental sciences, the Word of God, and the richness of the Carmelite spirituality—will be able to integrate into their lives a comprehensive ecological awareness of responsible care of the Earth—unique home for everyone.”

Albertus Dougherty, OSF
January 28, 2017
This week we welcomed board members from around the world to our Summit Meeting. This included representatives from four of our international boards and from our Kenyan board. Their presence was a very visible sign of how well we are supported by our boards. My ministry this week was hospitality. I began by making sure that all of our accommodations were clean, supplied with all needed items, and ready when our guests arrived. Then I had the pleasure of welcoming everyone at the airport. In fact, one day I was at the airport three times! I also became part of the kitchen staff to help cater the summit. Family, do not worry! I was not cooking. I was using my car as the catering mobile and helping to set up. They say in catering that the presentation is very important so I have gotten very good at setting up a nice presentation for our tea breaks and meals and being sure to get everything ready to serve on time.

Our children are doing well. Eric has gone back to his school wearing his cast. I gave him some slippers from the Tribe Hotel that are big enough to fit over his cast. Wearing them protects his cast and enables him to walk without crutches or a cane. Wambua went to the hospital for orthopedic surgery on both knees. He has a problem with his legs that causes him to be very badly knock-kneed and in lots of pain. All of his services were donated by an Indian doctor. Wambua is doing well and is staying in Cottage C for now because he cannot climb the steps in H without a lot of difficulty.

February 3, 2017
This Saturday we canceled all of our activities so we could prepare for our board celebration. As a result our participation in our Sunday Mass was really spirit-filled. Our drummers drummed, our dancers danced, our singers sang, and our readers read. Mass was followed by our cake cutting ceremony with a lovely cake prepared by Maureen. After that it was time to go back to Father Dag Hall for the entertainment. You should have seen the wonderful costumes and the number of Masai warriors we had dancing on the stage. We even had one warrior named Ndolo who flipped himself over and was dancing on his hands as he crossed the stage.

February 10, 2017
Each morning I greet each of our children as they get on the bus to go to school. Then I head into the sister’s chapel where the preschool children gather with all of the sisters for Mass. This week as the celebrant was raising the Body of Christ at the altar, I was directly across from Bravin and I noticed something that he was doing that
put a smile on my face. Bravin had noticed that he could see his reflection in the chalice as it sat on the altar in front of him and he also noticed how distorted his face was in the chalice. So…Bravin started making faces and kept doing so until the priest moved the chalice from in front of him. I realized that Bravin had brought a smile not only to my face, but also to my heart. God’s love was flowing through him to me. I hope as you celebrate Valentine’s Day this week that none of you miss the many ways that God’s love is shared with us through others.

On Sunday Purity threw a birthday party for Sr. Mary in the dining hall. She made her a beautiful, delicious carrot cake. All of the young adults sang “Happy Birthday.” Then Sr. Mary cut the cake and shared it with all.

On Tuesday I did more work on the application for my Mission Fund stipend and program grant. I met with Sr. Mary to be sure what program was most needed. We settled on the Nyumbani Preparation for Life Training Program for our Form 4 students and those completing their college courses in 2017. We realized from past experience with our young adults that we need to reinforce the life skills that had been shared with them over the years and give them a crash course in how to apply what they had learned to their new living situations outside Nyumbani. What else can we teach them that would empower them to live independently? What can we do to make them believe in their ability to succeed in Kenyan society?

Finally on Friday morning I caught up with Father Selvam and we finalized all the details I needed for my program grant. I spent most of Friday morning finishing the program grant and completing the summary sheet. Then I reread all three forms until I was sure there were no mistakes on any of them. After saying a little prayer, I finally submitted them hoping that they would be approved by the Mission Fund Committee. It is through this Mission Fund grant that the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia have supported me and my ministry in Nyumbani Children’s Home for the last 13 years. I am deeply appreciative of the loving support that I receive from my Franciscan sisters.

Please pray for us and we will pray for you.

Julie Mulvihill, OSF

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On the death of my 86 year old sister, Dorothy A. Mooney, her family and I thank you for your prayers, Masses, cards of sympathy, phone calls, and visits. We appreciated so many of you attending her burial liturgy in Reading. All my nieces and nephews, especially her seven married children and friends, “loved” our singing the Blessing of St. Francis after the petitions. Dorothy joined her beloved Frank who died 25 years ago on February 4.

Blessings!
Sr. Corda Marie
Portland Companions
Year-end Retreat:
January 21, 2017

On January 21 seven Portland, Oregon companions as well as Srs. Theresa Lamkin, Celeste Clavel, and I participated in the year-end retreat provided by the community based on the “Prayer Before the Crucifix.” The sisters hosted the retreat at their home. After listening to the song “Prayer for Guidance” by John Michael Talbot, each person shared a reflection on the part of the prayer that was relevant in his or her personal life. I gave an explanation of the San Damiano Cross as an icon for reflection and contemplation. During some personal reflection time, they pondered the meaning of “right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity” as these concepts are expressed in the “Prayer Before the Crucifix.” They enjoyed a potluck lunch and then formed small groups for faith sharing followed by the whole group sharing insights and reflections on the prayer. The retreat ended with the prayer centered on the figures in the icon. It was an opportunity to pray, reflect, and be together as the group discerned what is already in their hearts.

Mary Jo Chaves, OSF

Aston and Philadelphia Companions Merge

Something new is happening in Aston! In February the Companions in Faith from Philadelphia became part of the Aston Companions in Faith group. Although many members already knew one another, we took time during lunch to get better acquainted. The afternoon’s session began with coordinator Marge Mikulski’s announcements and updates, particularly about the upcoming retreat—Hope for the Flowers—which will be helpful for any companions who will attend the assembly in June. The heart of our afternoon sharing, however, was the chapter directive on dynamic engagement. Our sharing was truly enriching! At our next meeting in March, we will continue our sharing on the “God’s Extravagant Love” material.

Ann Marie Slavin, OSF
“There was a cave near the city where they often went and talked together about the treasure. The man of God, who was already holy because of his holy intention, was accustomed to enter the cave while his companion waited outside and, inspired by a new and extraordinary spirit, he would pray to his Father in secret.” (1 Celano 3)

These words began the Franciscan Volunteers Winter Retreat. These words called us into the silence, wrapped us in God’s loving embrace, and invited us to sit in our own caves listening to the voice of God alive in our lives. Mandee, Rachel, and Theresa are halfway through their service term as Franciscan Volunteers. This time away offers them time and space to discern “what’s next” while at the same time focusing on the present—a dichotomous time that focuses on both self and community within the Franciscan call present in each of our hearts.

Our time in the “cave” was time spent reflecting upon where we find ourselves today. What have the past few months taught us about ourselves, about our spirituality, about who we are called to be. With readings by Murray Bodo from *Francis, the Journey and the Dream*, and G.K. Chesterton’s *Saint Francis of Assisi*, the volunteers reflected on the experience of Francis and how the man who went into the cave was not the man who came out. How has each of us changed so far throughout the experience of this year?

Saturday—with the sun shining high in the sky and ocean waves gently hugging the shoreline—we shifted from self to community. We spent time with the story of Francis asking Brother Silvester and St. Clare to pray for him as he discerned his call—“whether to give himself entirely to prayer, or now and then to preach the Word.” It was moving how deeply the volunteers embraced this story as their own. Throughout the weekend much conversation and sharing revolved around bigger life questions in the realm of vocation. What is our call? What is God saying in our lives and through our relationships?

Saturday evening we watched the movie, *Of Gods and Men*—the story of a group of Trappist Monks who communally discerned staying in Algeria during a time of great violence which made them ask the question “Am I willing to stay for the people I serve in the face of my own life being threatened?” We know from Chapter 2014 how powerful the experience of communal discernment can be. The Franciscan Volunteers felt this call to implement this level of discernment into their own. They openly asked one another for prayers and prayed together as they begin to discern what comes after their volunteer service term.

Sunday—another beautiful day in which we barely needed more than

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a sweatshirt—we spent time praying about “the call.” What is it that God asks of each of us and where do we see ourselves best living out that call. Together as a community, we spent time at Sunset Beach enjoying God’s beautiful creation and listening to the rhythm of the waves as if they were the very heart beat of God reminding us of patience and peace.

Waking to a beautiful blanket of snow on Monday morning, we departed, knowing that we were going forth refreshed and supported by community. We are grateful for Sr. Ann David Strohminger who spent the weekend with us. The Franciscan Volunteers expressed their love and commitment to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. For all of you who have personally touched the lives of the volunteers, thank you for your continued support and commitment to them! For those near or far who commit to praying for them, thank you for the love and peace you send their way. If you have not had the chance yet to spend time with the volunteers, consider inviting them to dinner and prayer. If there is one thing they greatly appreciate, it’s a free meal and quality time with sisters! Please do not hesitate to contact me in my office, (610) 558-7709 or by email, smarks@osfphila.org, and I will be sure to put you in touch with the young women who have said “yes” to us for this year.

Sara Marks

The Franciscan Volunteers left their mark and their message in Cape May!

Many Thanks!

Thank you for your many expressions of sympathy at the time of my brother Thomas' death. My family and I are very grateful for your prayers and support.

Gratefully,
Sr. Nora McCarthy
Sr. Mary Smith and the Pastoral Services Staff

Sr. Mary Smith’s connection with the Sisters of St. Francis began in her grade school years at Immaculate Conception School in Towson, Maryland, and continued through her high school years at Towson Catholic. “I admired our sisters as faith-filled and joyful women and will always be grateful for their influence in my life and their witness that inspired me to follow a call to Franciscan life,” she said.

Although Mary’s early years in ministry were spent in education, most of her years in the congregation have been spent in counseling and social work—a fitting preparation for her current ministry as director of the congregation’s pastoral services office. For Mary and the five sisters on her staff, pastoral services involves “supporting our sisters in maintaining optimum health and well-being so as to be all the more available to live and witness our Gospel life. Responding to the call to be ‘sister to one another’ is the heart of our ministry.” On any given day, a member of the team might be assisting a sister who is making plans for surgery or recuperation at Assisi House, seeking a consult about a health issue, visiting the hospital, meeting with a sister about a major life transition, supporting a sister dealing with the death of a loved one, or planning an educational program. Each team member, however, has a specific role in the overall department plan.

- Associate director Sr. Anne Dorice DeFebbo, works with sisters who are caregivers, coordinates health assessments for sisters over 80, holds annual workshops for sisters who do the assessments, serves on the Wellness Committee and the Senior Sisters Advisory Board, and writes a column for Community News.
- Sr. Doris Johnson coordinates information on the deaths of sisters and family members. Volunteers Srs Catherine Ginther, Patricia Kane, and Betty Kane communicate this information via voicemail. Volun-

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teer Sr. JoAnn McPolin sends sympathy and get-well cards.

• Administrative assistant Sr. Theresa Yanda works on specific projects and helps with planning the annual health assessments, caregiving activities, workshops, and committee meetings.

• Srs. Theresa Elitz and Jane LaManna provide clinical nursing services and serve on the Wellness Community of Interest Group.

Sr. Mary herself sees her work with the pastoral services team—and with the sisters they serve—as a blessing. “I am inspired by the depth of faith and courage of our sisters as they encounter the challenges of life circumstance,” she explained. “I enjoy being with our sisters—offering support and affirmation, benefitting from their wisdom, exploring ways to enhance health and well-being, and listening to the movement of God’s grace in their lives.” she explained. On a daily basis, Mary’s work is a reminder of the fragility of our humanity and the need for utter dependency on God’s goodness and loving care. It is also a reminder to give back what she has received. “I think of how generously our sisters have lovingly supported me throughout my life,” she explained. “I’m grateful for the opportunity to return in a small way what has already been shared with me.”

Ann Marie Slavin, OSF

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Sister Theresa Kane, OSF 1929-2017

Sr. Theresa Kane, 87, died in Assisi House on February 3. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis for 66 years. Theresa was born in Philadelphia where she was a member of St. Boniface Parish and a graduate of Hallahan High School. She entered the congregation in 1949 and professed her first vows in 1951. Theresa ministered primarily in elementary education. Her love of teaching and of the children she taught was evident to all who knew her. Her retirement from teaching was difficult for her. She said, “I don’t want to go but the dear Lord said it was time.” Her ability as an educator was also evident in the awards she merited. For example, she was named “Teacher of the Year” in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and also received the Sr. Rose Anita IHM Award from the National Catholic Educational Conference. Sr. Jean Margaret captured Theresa’s giftedness when she wrote, “Parents signed their children up years ahead of time to try to get her as teacher. She taught the school material as well as helped to develop self-esteem, kindness, consideration, the need to follow rules, and—above all—love of God.” But perhaps the most concise description of Theresa’s gifts as a teacher came from a former student who said simply, “She was every kid’s dream teacher!”

Theresa’s friend, Sr. Dolora Taylor, described what it was like to shop with Theresa. “We’d go into a store and people just kept coming up to her,” she recalled with a laugh. “It made sense to leave her and pick her up when we were finished.”

Dolora went on to describe Theresa as a “wonderfully simple soul, always warm, sweet, and loving.” That same spirit followed Theresa to Assisi House where Sr. Jean Margaret McDevitt recalled that she was loved for her fun-loving ways and sense of humor, her spirit and tenacity to keep going even as her abilities lessened, and her amazing smile. As Jean explained, “We felt better for being with this Franciscan woman without guile.”

“Phyllis’ spiritual life showed itself in a spirit of generosity, kindness, and a desire to help anyone in need.”

Sister Phyllis Ann Greco, OSF 1931-2017

Sr. Phyllis Ann Greco, 85, (formerly Sr. Mary Coronata), died in Assisi House on January 24. She had been professed for 60 years. Phyllis was born in Stoneham, Massachusetts. Prior to her entrance into the congregation in 1955, she was a member of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Newton, Massachusetts, and a graduate of the parish high school. During her years in ministry, Phyllis served in education, social work, and parish ministry.

Sr. Albertus Dougherty recalled Phyllis’ outgoing personality. “She

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and I went to Ireland for our golden jubilee. Everyone on the bus knew Phyllis,” Albertus said. “She even had the bus driver change the itinerary a bit—to include a trip to a casino which she noted was not really out of the way!” Albertus also noted Phyllis’ courage in suffering. When she initially had radical tongue surgery for cancer, Phyllis was determined that she would speak and eat again—and she did! When she received the same diagnosis five years later, she again took it in stride.

In her written reflection, Sr. Jean Margaret McDevitt described Phyllis’ deep spirituality and her ongoing search for deeper truth and meanings. “Phyllis’ spiritual life showed itself in a spirit of generosity, kindness, and a desire to help anyone in need,” Jean recalled. Some years ago that desire to help led Phyllis and her friend, Sr. Ann Veronica Unkelbach, to find a somewhat different recipient for their Rice Bowl offerings. Having read in Good News about a young girl trying to help people in Nicaragua in a variety of ways—including purchasing cows—Phyllis and Ann sent their Lenten offering to purchase a cow that they named Angel. Jean Margaret concluded her reflection by saying, “Unassuming and plain-spoken, Phyllis was simply a beautiful woman who managed to go through a very difficult and painful illness without complaining and without feeling sorry for herself. Phyllis, God has a glorious feast prepared for you. You have waited so long to be well enough to enjoy it—now you will!”

Sr. Marie Joseph Kerr died in Assisi House on February 7. She was born Catherine Mary Kerr in Trenton, New Jersey, where she was a member of Blessed Sacrament Parish and a graduate of St. Mary Cathedral School. She entered the congregation in 1947 and professed her first vows in 1951. She had been professed for 66 years and ministered primarily in nursing and nursing instruction. Marie had a strong sense of justice and was particularly concerned about people whom society overlooked. In addition to her work with the Zambian people, this concern led her to care for migrants in Trenton, to volunteer at Anna’s Place in Chester and at the Catholic Workers Free Care Clinic in Philadelphia. A 1997 issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer carried a photo of her protesting weapons production at Lockheed Martin’s plant in King of Prussia.

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Sr. Jean Margaret described Marie Joseph as “honest in sharing her feelings and opinions, very humorous, always prayerful, and deeply spiritual.” Commenting on Marie’s love of nature, Jean said, “She could sit by a window for hours, just thanking God for creation and she would call out, ‘Did you see that bird…the beautiful clouds…those trees blowing?’ She desired to share what she appreciated. Her spirit of contemplation and deep commitment to the vow of poverty was related to this recognition and reference of creation.” That sharing sometimes found its way into poetic expression—poetry whose expression often found utterance in image as well as in words. In closing her sharing on Marie Joseph, Jean reflected on both Marie’s love of nature and the physical issues that limited her in recent years: “As you go to your God in eternity where there are no limits, God will have soft chairs and a huge picture window waiting for you so that all of creation will dance before you!”

Ann Marie Slavin, OSF