

# Blessings

CONGREGATION OF SISTERS OF ST. AGNES

SPRING 2011

a newsletter for benefactors and friends of the Sisters of St. Agnes

*Dear Friends...*



*Above, Sister Rose Clare Ehrlich counsels residents at the Rose Home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a substance abuse rehabilitation facility founded and funded by CSA.*



*Right, Sister Celia Fernández, CSA, cares for a patient at Casa Materna, a birthing center in Nicaragua offering both pre- and post-natal care.*

Threatened by violence, struggling to survive, battling addiction, searching for meaning—those who come to the Sisters of St. Agnes for help know that they will not be turned away.

Thanks to the generous donors who believe in and support the mission and ministries of CSA...

...women fleeing from abusive relationships can seek shelter and assistance at Sojourner Truth House in Gary, IN

...parents who have lost their jobs can find food and clothing for their families at the People's Resource Center in Wheaton, IL

...children who have suffered the loss of a loved one can be lovingly guided through the grieving process through Grief Relief in Fond du Lac, WI

...mothers living in impoverished villages in Latin America can receive quality healthcare with dignity and compassion at Casa Materna

Inside this newsletter are stories from people whose lives have been transformed by the work of the Sisters of St. Agnes. Your support of CSA ministries has truly helped to leave the indelible fingerprint of God upon the lives of those in need.

## *Places We Have Loved... Indiana, Here We Come!*

Supporters of the CSA community include lay people, friends, former students, donors, and anyone who has been touched by the work of the sisters and shares in their mission.

Efforts are currently underway to reconnect with people in the communities where the sisters have ministered, with the goal of arranging mutual visits.

This summer, nearly 20 sisters will travel to Indiana for a reunion celebrating their many years of service in the areas of Decatur, Muncie, Fort Wayne, and New Haven.

The Sisters of St. Agnes have also served in New York, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Alabama, Arizona, New

Mexico, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Mississippi, Florida, Texas, and Wisconsin. Reconnecting with people in these communities and sharing the wonderful ministry stories will help to strengthen bonds and build relationships.

If you are interested in being a part of this wonderful opportunity this summer or would like to know more information about a reunion in your area, please contact the Development Ministry Office at 920-907-2311 or [tletvinchuck@csasisters.org](mailto:tletvinchuck@csasisters.org).



## *Cancer Survivor Finds Support and Healing*

Facing her third recurrence of cancer, Hilda Aranda came to CORE/El Centro, where she discovered support and healing.

“From my very first appointment, I found that I could breathe easier,” noted Hilda. “My shoulder pain lessened and I had less fatigue. I found myself less anxious and depressed and I have a more positive outlook.”

Serving primarily low income clients who have little or no health insurance and offering holistic health services and alternative healing to the poor on the south side of Milwaukee, CORE/El Centro was established by Sister Madeline Gianforte, CSA, and Jayne Ader in 2002, with financial support from the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.

“We began as a healthcare center and have evolved into a community center,” explained Sister Madeline. “We are a safe place for people to come and to be a part of a thriving network of mutual support.”

The center has become an important part of the neighborhood, including the addition of a community garden, where volunteers from the neighborhood grow fresh produce throughout the summer.

“Sister Madeline has given my mother something more than relief from her physical pain,” shared Hilda’s daughter, Elizabeth. “She has provided my mother with a very different way to heal and has given both of us a precious gift from her heart.”



*Hilda Aranda receives support and alternative healing methods at CORE/El Centro in Milwaukee from Sister Madeline Gianforte, CSA, who provides care for patients with little or no health insurance.*

*“Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness, to pull another hand into the light.” ~ Norman B. Rice*

## *The Gift of Confidence: A Ministry of Empowerment*



*Yahaira Saballos learned both life skills and self-confidence to carry on with her education in Nicaragua, where she is now studying to be a teacher.*

“They told me that I was mentally retarded. I didn’t understand what those words meant, but I knew they hurt me.”

At the age of ten, Yahaira Saballos was unable to read or even hold a pencil correctly. The teachers at her school in Nicaragua told her mother to take her home—that she was incapable of learning.

“Then, Sister Katie took me into the school of the sisters, and I learned that I could be successful in my studies. The sisters were very patient and helped me to realize that I could do it, that I could learn.”

Along with basic skills and academic material, Yahaira learned to believe in herself and her abilities.

“Now I am studying to be a teacher, and I want to help others the way that the sisters helped me.”

The work of the Sisters of St. Agnes in Latin America empowers students to succeed in one of the poorest nations in the region, where low literacy rates and a lack of steady employment opportunities are constant challenges. CSA ministries offer hope, training, guidance, and vital services to those in need.

“I think that every practicing teacher should spend time at this school to learn what I have learned from the sisters,” concluded Yahaira. “If it weren’t for their school, I wouldn’t have learned that I could do it, that I could succeed.”

## *Giving a Lifetime of Service—Never Truly Retiring*

"When people tell me that God must be getting me ready for heaven, I tell them that I have it right here!" exclaimed Sister Cecile Marie Kees, CSA who devoted her life to teaching and then volunteer work, before coming to live at Nazareth Court and Center in Fond du Lac in 2010.

Never truly retiring, the Sisters of St. Agnes continue to share their time and talents well into their aging years. "Each day we spend time praying for special intentions. It's a very important and rewarding ministry that we take very seriously, and an important part of living in community."

An increasingly important ministry, supporting the care of the elderly sisters provides the sisters who have given so much in service to others, while expecting nothing in return, quality healthcare, community living, and the opportunity to continue to live their mission through volunteering and prayer ministry.



*Sisters living at Nazareth Court and Center enjoyed a special Valentine's Day celebration from the generous donation of a former student in Indiana.*

## *Opening Young Minds to the Wonders of Science*



*Students at Gallup Catholic High School in New Mexico complete a science activity with Sister Christi Ann Laudolf, using equipment through a CSA ACTS grant.*

The students who attend classes at Gallup Catholic High School in New Mexico come from the poorest diocese in the United States, with more than 16 percent of its population living below the national poverty level. Opening these young minds to the wonders of science, Sister Christi Ann Laudolf, CSA, engages students in active learning processes, empowering them to think creatively and solve problems.

"Learning is a lifelong process, building on what we learn and then applying that to general problem solving," she explained. "Education is so essential to being successful." Never assuming that her students have access to electricity, running water, or a computer, Sister Christi Ann helps them to discover knowledge and practice scientific techniques.

"We have more hands-on learning, which makes learning easier," shared Patrick Diaz and Kevin Long, students from one of Sister Christi Ann's science classes, where CSA ACTS grant funds were used to purchase new equipment.

CSA ministries throughout the United States in education, healthcare, spiritual guidance, advocacy, and social services provide vital services to people of all ages, ethnicities, and faith backgrounds.

## *Partners in CSA Ministries*



*Longtime CSA supporters, Dr. John and Barbara Lent with their daughter, Dr. Anne Monaghan Lent.*

"We are always encountering the footprints of the Sisters of St. Agnes, particularly in Nicaragua," shared Dr. John and Barbara Lent, long-time supporters of CSA ministries and members of United Hearts for Health. "They truly see the face of Jesus Christ in the people that they serve."

Citing the impact on both their personal and professional lives, the Lents shared their reasons for supporting CSA ministries and collaborating on community projects.

"We see the Sisters of St. Agnes operating as a conscience for our community, constantly reminding us of our responsibilities. They have taught us that what we do to make a difference is incremental and small, but so very important. You need to do the little things, because the Lord takes those little things and makes them big things."

# THE BEST OF ITALY: APRIL 19-28, 2012



The Development Ministry of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes exists to broaden awareness of and gain additional resources for furthering the mission and ministries of the congregation.



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Join *Someday Travel* for the trip of a lifetime and experience and explore Rome, including a visit to the tomb of St. Agnes, Assisi, Bologna, and Venice, Italy.

Tour leaders are Valerie and Wayne Graczyk of *Someday Travel*, and Sister Diane Bauknecht, CSA. Visit [somedaytravel.com](http://somedaytravel.com) for all trip information, including a detailed itinerary and the reservation form.

## INFORMATION NIGHT:

**Tuesday, May 24, 2011 • 6:00-7:00 p.m.**  
Founders Hall • 320 County Road K

Come meet the travel leaders and learn about "The Best of Italy."



AND YouTube

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920.907.2311

## *In Memoriam... walking with God*



### **Sister Regis LePine (Genevieve Mary)**

October 21, 2010

*Sharing her love of music for almost 60 years with students in New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Illinois, Sister Regis inspired multiple generations in their love for and ministry in liturgical music.*



### **Sister Audrey Pfannenstiel (Bertha)**

November 17, 2010

*Dedicated to her ministry of education, Sister Audrey enthusiastically taught middle and junior high students for over 50 years in Wisconsin, New York, Indiana, and Kansas.*



### **Sister Louise Griebel (Roberta)**

November 26, 2010

*Sister Louise was a teacher, principal, organist, and choir director, serving in Wisconsin, New York, Kansas, and Indiana for more than 40 years. She completed her active ministry as an administrator of a HUD housing project for the elderly in Pennsylvania.*



### **Sister Mary Edmund Scherer (Mary Elizabeth)**

December 1, 2010

*After teaching in elementary schools in Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois, Sister Mary Edmund spent 25 years as a high school business teacher and administrator in New York, Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Wisconsin.*



### **Sister Mary Monica Kutch (Frances)**

December 30, 2010

*Sister Mary Monica taught both elementary and high school for 40 years, before volunteering in a Hospice office and then as a tax aide for the elderly. Her ministries took her to Wisconsin, New York, Kansas, and Arizona, always seeking training and education to serve others better.*



### **Sister Thecla Simon (Mary Alphonsus)**

January 8, 2011

*Sister Thecla taught elementary, middle, and junior high for more than 20 years before serving as a librarian in high schools in New York, Illinois, Kansas, and Wisconsin.*

For full obituaries go to [www.csasisters.org](http://www.csasisters.org). Memorials can be sent to the CSA Development Office or through the website.