



Women of
Spirit

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes

CSA Associate, Joan Schilke

Where can you find a group of people who have the same values as yourself? Joan Schilke has found the CSA Associates to be such a group. "I like being affiliated with the values of CSA," said Joan. "It is refreshing to have a group who cares about the same issues and aligns with the values I care about."

"As an Associate of CSA I have participated in a ministry site visit to the Southwest. I met CSA members who minister on the Navajo Indian Reservation in northern Arizona and other members who live and work along the border of Mexico. Witnessing the gospel values through CSA ministries was a powerful experience for me," shared Joan.

For the past five years, Joan Schilke has been a member of CSA Sponsorship Ministry (CSASM), the board that is entrusted by congregational leadership with oversight of CSA sponsored ministries. Joan currently serves as chair of CSASM.

"In my work life I am a Certified Financial Planner," continued Joan. "I feel I carry out the CSA mission in my work by helping my clients use their money according to their values. Another area in which Joan believes her commitment to the Gospel values has been important is in the raising of her daughters."



Joan Schilke at the CSA Motherhouse in Fond du Lac.

Volunteering - Sister Annette Herr



Mattie Lloyd and Sister Annette Herr.

Ask to meet with Sister Annette Herr and you may have to wait. Or you may find yourself being squeezed in between her daily volunteer commitments. You most likely can catch up with her as she volunteers for the Senior Companion Program located at the Lapham Park Apartments in Milwaukee. With her is Mattie Lloyd who has been a volunteer senior companion for the past thirteen years. It is like sitting in on a conversation between two good friends and watching them enjoy each other's company.

"Mattie and I have worked together for the past three years," shares Sister Annette. "Lapham Park Apartments is made up of many apartments. Many of the people that live here are elderly. The Senior Companion Program goal is to help seniors stay in their own home or apartment for as long as possible. Our 'companions' provide friendship and support to the frail elderly. These friendships break down the isolation that a person can experience and become a benefit to both the volunteer and the receiver."

"As a senior companion volunteer I get out of my apartment and meet people. Everybody here knows me. I like to be around people and to help them if I can," smiled Mattie. "Over the years I have companioned many people doing simple things for them. It really is about caring for each other and having a friend who will check in on you. Sometimes we share a meal together or attend a social function in the building together."

As expressed by Sister Annette, "What better way to spend your time?"

The Quest for Social Justice

"God chooses the weak to confound the strong," is a scripture quote Sister Judith Smits exhibits in her daily work as director of the not-for-profit named The Quest for Social Justice, Inc., which makes connections between faith and social justice.

"Throughout my life as a Sister of St. Agnes, social justice issues have been at the core of my ministries; this is what I care about," shared Sister Judith. "As a member of the founding board and the director of The Quest I am able to work in an ecumenical environment with people who are committed to creating real change in social justice issues affecting the poor in Mobile, Alabama."

A recent initiative co-sponsored by The Quest was interracial Dinner Dialogues. The table topic horrified the 80 participants. At issue is a high school dropout rate of 48%. "This is what I am involved in, working with different faith communities, creating conversations that raise awareness and then cofacilitating solutions to create real change," continued Sister Judith.

The process is to invite participants to sit at round tables with trained facilitators and predetermined questions, giving each participant time to speak. In the case of the dropout rate, changing the conversation



Sister Judith Smits (right), in Mobile, Alabama.

from a dropout crisis to a graduation overabundance resulted in a plan. Quest members are partners in the plan created which is titled "Mobile Graduates: Blueprint for Multiple Pathways to High School Graduation."

"I am the type of person who cannot go with the flow. I want to swim against the tide and use my life's energy in creating positive social change for those most in need," concluded Sister Judith.

Embracing the Spirit of Mother Agnes

Embracing the spirit of Mother Agnes Hazotte and Sister Vera Naber is how Sister Deborah Golias, Ph.D., explains the energy she brings to her work of forty-one years at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. "These women were giants in their vision and commitment to education. Mother Agnes was adamant about educating young women who were entering CSA. Sister Vera carried on this commitment to education as dean of Marian College's development and accrediting process," shared Sister Deborah. "I believe I have the best possible ministry as I serve others helping them to reach their full potential."

"Becoming a member of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes has meant everything to me," continued Sister Deborah. "The mission of CSA is such a part of who I am. One of the legacies of CSA is their 150 years plus in the field of education. The women with whom I live in community have a deep respect for each other's ministries, and that affirmation supports me in the work I do. Though very busy, my life is full and rich," concluded Sister Deborah.



Sister Deb Golias (left) with Marian University students in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Look for...

A new and exciting newsletter combining *Women of Spirit* and other CSA publications is in process. This new publication, *CSA Reflections & Connections*, will be expanded to include even more inspiring stories of the Sisters of St. Agnes and their ministry. This is the final issue of *Women of Spirit*.

Save the Date!

ITALY IN SPRING!



APRIL 19-28, 2012

Visit Rome, Assisi, Siena, Bologna, and Venice!

Join CSA on a trip to Italy in spring 2012! Cost for ten days of travel will include top notch English speaking guides, all entrance fees to designated sites, airfare, all ground transportation, tips, daily breakfast buffet, and farewell dinner.

For complete information and reservation form, please go to www.somedaytravel.com or call 920-539-0195 to have these mailed to you. Tour leaders are Sister Diane Bauknecht, and Valerie and Wayne Graczyk of Someday Travel.

The Cover Photo: Photo on the front cover is by Sister Doris Klein, CSA, taken in the CSA prairie on the grounds of the motherhouse.
– Valerie Graczyk, CSA Communications Director



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call 920.907.2321 or email vgraczyk@csasisters.org

Renewal of Vows



Sister Joann Sambs, CSA general superior, joined in the renewal of vows of Sister Guadalupe Aguilar in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, on May 7, 2011.