

REFLECTIONS

&
Connections



STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY



CSA

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Promoting Justice, Building Community

Human Right to *Water*

(Part 2 in a 2-part series
on Water Resources)

Although President Kennedy spoke these words 50 years ago, the problem of water has become more severe. Consider these statistics:

- Every second a child in our world dies from contaminated water.
- 3 billion people lack access to safe potable drinking water.
- By 2025, half the world will suffer from water stress.

In calculating all the water used to grow our food, human beings “eat” more water than they drink. It takes 700 gallons of water to make a cheeseburger, e.g., raising/slaughtering cattle, making the cheese, bun, etc.

The average American uses about 150 gallons of water a day while the average African family uses about 5 gallons. Today we use 70% more water than we did 30 years ago.

“Anyone who can solve the problems of water will be worthy to receive two Nobel prizes – one for peace and one for science.”

– John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Through the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) Water Committee, CSA works to “engage and influence companies to adopt practices that are aligned with responsible water stewardship.” The first step is convincing corporations to recognize that water is a human right. Another key element is encouraging them to return water to the watershed from which it was abstracted in environmentally safe and usable condition. Hydraulic fracturing is especially being scrutinized for its impact on water, due to the high levels of methane contamination found in drinking water and the enormous amounts of water used and contaminated in the extraction process.

To examine your water usage, go to
www.waterfootprint.org

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Many Ministries –

One Mission

After decades of ministry as a pediatric nurse and instructor, Sister Susan Stucki continues to center her life on teaching, healing, and caring for others.

“I help the schools by monitoring students’ health records, but more importantly, I am ensuring that the children get at least basic health care,” explained Sister Susan, who provides assistance to 12 schools serving primarily low-income families.

Having spent most of her vowed life as a clinical nurse, Sister Susan cherishes her weekly visits to a neonatal intensive care unit where she cares for premature and ill infants, and the literacy center where she tutors English language learners.

“In the volunteer program, we use a developmental approach,” she noted. “We respond to the individual contact needs of each baby, monitoring breathing and overall response while holding them.”

“My work with the literacy program allows me to share my love of learning and reading with adults who want to learn English.”

In her service on the boards of St. Francis Home and Ripon Medical Center, both CSA sponsored institutions, Sister Susan revealed, “I have learned a great deal about long-term care and the importance of understanding the culture of a small town hospital. As our sponsored ministries expand so too does our mission. We are a part of our sponsored institutions and they are an extension of our mission.”



Doug Trost, president and CEO of St. Francis Home, Sister Susan Stucki, center, and Stephanie Martin, board member.

Come let us celebra

CORE/ EL CENTRO

Left to right:
Sister Madeline Gianforte
and Sister Pat Bogenschuetz



Unfolding

Dreams

When visionaries dream, possibilities are endless. In 2000, CSA leadership invited members to identify current unmet needs and dream of ways in which CSA might respond to those needs.

Sister Madeline Gianforte envisioned a natural healing center accessible to all people, regardless of economic status, ethnicity or spirituality. "World peace will be possible only when all people have the opportunity to go to their core, to heal, and to come back out and give to community," says Sister Madeline.

Together with Jayne Ader, a woman with a similar vision, she opened CORE/El Centro in 2002 with seed money from the Sisters of St. Agnes. This agency offers acupuncture, massage, exercise, yoga, tai chi, nutrition/gardening, and leadership development to people on a sliding fee scale, ensuring access to everyone.

Located in the heart of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's Latino community, 70% of CORE/El Centro's clients are Hispanic, many of whom are immigrants to our country. The agency primarily serves low-income families by providing services



At CORE/El Centro Zumba is a family event. Taught by Teresa Contreras and her three teen daughters, this exciting exercise class has inspired many families in the community to dance and get healthy together!

that promote self-healing and community well-being. Sister Pat Bogenschuetz joined the CORE/El Centro staff in 2004 as its development director; most of the agency’s revenue comes from grants and individual donations. In 2011, CORE/El Centro provided more than 26,000 service hours to 3,900 individuals.

CORE/El Centro collaborates with its two on-site partners, a free clinic for the uninsured and a healing center for those who have been traumatized by sexual abuse. Together they have formed the Healing Collective. In 2012 these three agencies became tenants in Milwaukee’s newest green building, able to then house their healing missions in a space dedicated to healing Earth and the community.

CSA associates and sisters plan to tour CORE/El Centro, seeing first-hand how its mission serves and meets the needs of God’s people. Associate Ellen Swan remarked, “Moving into the new site adds another layer to the good work of CORE/El Centro. There’s a feeling of reverence for all creation in every inch of the building.”

For more information about this CSA ministry go to www.core-elcentro.org.

Living the CSA Mission

Finding a new job can be difficult; finding a job that embraces the CSA mission of “creating systemic change for the quality of life” can be harder. Sister Ann Koerner found the perfect match through a position posting on the Internet. “I applied and was hired as project assistant for The Alliance for Children and Families. The Alliance is comprised of 330 human service organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada. They do not do direct services. Rather they focus support of their members on leadership and board development, advocacy through public policy, providing grant opportunities, networking opportunities, research producing intellectual capital and more. Through its membership the Alliance serves thousands of children and families each year with an emphasis on systemic change in the human services sector.”

“My position is part of a new initiative called Strategy Counts, which was begun in March 2011 through a \$5.4 million grant from The Kresge Foundation,” continued Sister Ann. “Strategic planning and its implementation frequently take a back seat in a human services non-profit agency. This initiative is a pilot project to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic planning and its impact on children, families, and the community being served. This is a program creating a forward movement that strengthens non-profits to be high-performing organizations, reducing poverty, increasing access to healthcare, and creating meaningful employment opportunities.”

Sister Ann Koerner with
Emily Putnam, Evaluation
and Research Associate



Giving Back in Gratitude for Education, Compassion, and *Inspiration*

Friends, teachers, leaders, and role models – for Joe and Kathy Schumacher of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, the Sisters of St. Agnes have been all of the above. Educated by the sisters from elementary through higher education, both recognize the impact of the sisters on so many lives and the importance of giving back through financial support to CSA.

“The sisters didn’t just provide an education for us and for our children,” shared Kathy. “They impressed upon us Christian morals and values for our everyday living. They don’t share just their mission; they share their compassion, talents, and lives.”

“So many of the sisters have done little things that make a big difference, in a quiet way, without looking for recognition,” added Joe. “I think many don’t always understand all that they have done, how many lives they have touched, and how much they now need our support to help them to continue their ministries and to care for their elderly members.”

“The sisters have heightened awareness of social issues and helped others to understand how they can become involved as lay persons,” continued Kathy. “With the guidance of the sisters, we can help them to continue their mission through supporting them financially or by volunteering our services.”

“Many people assumed that education and healthcare were the ‘jobs’ of the sisters and that they would always be there. Now it is time for us to give back,” concluded Joe. “We need to help them, just as they continue to help so many others.”



Kathy and Joe Schumacher



Sister Rose and Sister Esperanza

Sister Esperanza Rico with first graders in class.

They are a team – they live together, eat their meals together, pray and work together.

They live at the convent across from St. Agnes School in Waspam which is located on the Río Coco in Nicaragua.

“My hope is to work as long as my health is good. I enjoy teaching the kindergartners, all 35 of them. Our school has a total of 450 children. I am now a teacher’s aide rather than the teacher. My prayer for these children is that they will grow into being good Christians and they will become peacemakers,” said Sister Esperanza Rico who has been a member of CSA for the past 55 years. “Every day I thank God for being a member of the congregation.”

“This is the second time living and working together; we really do enjoy each other’s company. Sister Esperanza has taught me many songs and games in Spanish so I can play with the children,” shared Sister Rose Kowalski, principal of St. Agnes School.



Sister Rose Kowalski with children in church.



Sentinel

of Wisdom

On the day of Judgment God will only ask one question: "Did you enjoy my world?"

(Traditional Jewish Saying)

She stands sentineled near the water's edge, surrounded by birch, ash, and maple companions with vines entwined between her exposed ground roots. This white oak remains upright and almost motionless as the whispers of the lake breezes float through her branches. Gentle winds seem to tease her leaves as if prompting them to stir with laughter. Her sapwood continues to produce leaves that encircle her like a crown, while her center's heartwood is now completely spent. This is the prized wood sought after for special wood artistry. Yet she thrives. She becomes our teacher and speaks these wisdoms to us:

- Live life by giving your heart-center away.
- Always provide shade and shelter for those who seek refuge from this world's storms.

- Be sure to have friends stand by you when struggles find you.
- Seek nourishment from the waters of laughter, prayer, love, and solitude.
- Enjoy the beauty of creation and let butterflies teach you about transformation.
- Dream often and reach beyond the possible.
- Practice speaking words of comfort, mercy, and forgiveness.
- Don't be afraid to bend and risk a new perspective.
- Always be a learner and trust in your talents.
- Be curious and chance walking to the edge.
- Be content when your growth is steady and slow, for that is what makes you of value.



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Ways to connect with CSA:

CSA web site:

<http://www.csasisters.org/>

What's Happening at the UN:

<http://whatshappeningattheun.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Some Call Me Sis:

<http://somecallmesis.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Streams 'N Stirrings, Sister Jean:

(in the front page of our web site)

Vocation E-Newsletter

(in the front page of our web site)



<http://www.facebook.com/sasisters?sk=wall>

(in the front page of our web site)



[http://www.youtube.com/user/](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCSAChannel1)

TheCSAChannel1

(in the front page of our web site)



CSA STATEMENT OF MISSION

WE, THE SISTERS OF ST. AGNES, are committed to transformation of the world, the church, and ourselves through promoting:

- systemic change for the quality of life;
- justice for the economically poor;
- furtherance of the role of women in church and society;
- mutuality, inclusivity, and collaboration.