



The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes Laudato Si' Action Platform Year Two Plan January 1 – December 31, 2023 ***FINAL REPORT***

Goal 1 Track Changes of CSA Awareness & Action

What will we do?

Assess the awareness and the response to the seven Laudato Si' goals with a goal to increase both awareness and actions year after year.

This addresses portions of the following LSAP/CSA goals:

Response to the cry of the earth; Response to the cry of the poor; Ecological economics; Adoption of sustainable lifestyles; Ecological education; Ecological spirituality; Community resilience and empowerment

How & when will we do it?

Create a brief quantitative survey for each of the seven goals in electronic and written formats to collect and document self-reported information about the changes in awareness and action among Sisters, Associates, and Staff

- Surveys will be conducted in January and analyzed in February.

RESULTS:

Surveys were conducted and analyzed in the first quarter of the year.

- 63 people in total responded to the survey
- 14 Associates of the total responded
- 46 Sisters of the total responded
- 3 Staff of the total responded

A detailed report of results is available upon request (located on Administrative shared drive)

A new format for the 2023 end of year survey has been developed, which will provide the Laudato Si' Action Team more useful information.

Goal 2

Increase Educational Opportunities

What will we do?

Increase educational opportunities for our internal audiences (i.e., sisters, associates, and lay staff)

This addresses portions of the following LSAP goals:

Response to the cry of the earth; Response to the cry of the poor; Ecological economics; Adoption of sustainable lifestyles; Ecological education; Ecological spirituality; Community resilience and empowerment

How & when will we do it?

1. Encourage sisters, associates, and lay staff to submit their reflections on articles or LSAP-related activities for internal blog sites using a provided “What, So What, Now What” template.
2. Request that CSA circle leaders encourage conversation about recent blog reflections during gatherings.
3. Promote Laudato Si’ Animator training, resulting in at least one new trained animator from internal audiences and, provide links to LSAP resources on a regular basis.
 - Promote for 45 days prior to each of the twice per year offerings: fall session (August to October) and spring session (March to May).

RESULTS:

1. A template was created for RC’s and the Director of the Associate Relationship to share with sisters and associates to encourage blog postings, but it was later decided not to introduce this (potentially confusing) form and to instead “shoulder tap” individuals for blog articles and to encourage comments on weekly blog posts and updates. There has been some interaction with this, but we’d like to see more. Sister Trish Weidman wrote six blog posts which were shared with sisters and associates.
2. See action above.
3. Information about spring and fall animator training was shared in Justice Alerts/Bending the Arc newsletters and on social media. We achieved our goal of having at least one new trained animator from our internal audiences – Sister Mary Ann Czaja completed; and Shannon Meagher (Associate) and Kyle Schwibinger (Maintenance Staff/Land Steward) initiated training.

Goal 3

Strengthen and Increase Relationships with Sustainability Partners

What will we do?

Educate external audiences (i.e., civic organizations, educational institutions, and the general public) on Laudato Si' goals, share our achievements, and celebrate theirs.

This addresses portions of the following LSAP goals:

Response to the cry of the earth; Response to the cry of the poor; Ecological economics; Adoption of sustainable lifestyles; Ecological education; Ecological spirituality; Community resilience and empowerment.

How & when will we do it?

1. Encourage sisters, associates, and lay staff to submit their reflections on articles or LSAP-related activities for internal blog sites using a provided "What, So What, Now What" template.
2. Train new tour guides for the solar array and CSA conservancy.
3. Promote solar array and CSA conservancy tour sign up with local civic organizations, educational institutions, and the general public.
4. Create and distribute a pre-packaged presentation for sisters and associates beyond the Fond du Lac area with talking points about Laudato Si' and CSA.
5. Have a presence at community events.
6. Speak to local civic organizations about CSA's Laudato Si' efforts including how to put their own land into a conservancy.
7. Offer an Earth Day Fair in Founders Hall
8. Continue writing letters of support and gratitude to local businesses and groups in response to their environmental/sustainable efforts.
9. Celebrate with Indigenous ceremonies and develop ongoing relationship by inviting to CSA events and attending their events.
 - Determine opportunities open to the public (ongoing).
 - Delegate attendance and ensure CSA presence throughout the year.
 - Reach out to local tribes to invite to CSA events at least 30 days prior to the event.
10. Promote Spiritual opportunities open to the public on CSA grounds.

RESULTS:

1. See Goal #2 Assessment 1.
2. Three Sisters, one Associate, and one staff person completed training for providing solar and conservancy tours. Total docent count is now seven – Sisters Sue Seeby, Josephine Goebel, Mary Noel Brown, and Julie Ann Krahl; Associate Kelly Robe; and Staff members Dusty Krikau and Kate Harms.
3. Tours offered to 15 school districts and three local colleges. Two private tours occurred plus one easement tour and three solar array tours on Earth Day.
4. A Laudato Si' slide presentation was created along with a written script and saved to 15 jump drives. These were offered at CSA Days in June in which 11 were checked out. Two drives were returned. Email follow-up on the other 9 went largely unanswered, with one admitting misplacing hers. A traveling resource bin was also created.

5. CSA had an informational table at (three) community events – CELEBRATE commUNITY, Juneteenth, and Prairie Fest. Additionally, CSA Motherhouse grounds hosted (four) gatherings: the Audubon Society, Fond du Lac Bird City, the Great Lakes Conservancy (GLC)'s annual fundraising Conservation Connection event, and kestrel banding for GLC.
6. There were no presentations made to civic organizations, but Sister Trish did offer showings of *The Letter* to the Sisters at Nazareth Court and Center.
7. CSA offered a well-attended (124 guests and 16 volunteers) Earth Day event at the Motherhouse on April 22nd and included 40 exhibitors from 19 organizations, a presentation by Jay from Bumble Bee Brigade, solar and easement tours, a raffle, food truck, and showing of the movie, *The Letter*.
8. News stories were monitored throughout the year. Letters to thank and congratulate were written to Meijer for their purchase of a BeBot and Pixie Drone used to clean the shoreline/beaches of the Great Lakes for plastic and to Sadoff Iron and Metal for investing in new recycling technology. An email was sent to students at Horace Mann High School in North Fond du Lac for their composting efforts.
9. Regarding indigenous partnerships/support: Brothertown Indian Nation (BIN) was grateful to be included as an exhibitor for Earth Day. CSA partnered with Pilgrim United Church of Christ to offer a Blanket Exercise, which was attended by approximately 60 people including Sisters, Associates, community members, youth and six blanket technicians from Alliance for Justice/UCC. Brothertown supplied the meal for this. Sisters were active in Pow Wow's and talking circles. Information was shared on the annual Water Walk around Lake Winnebago and BIN's Homecoming. CSA hosts the planning meetings for a new group called, *Winnebago Water Women*, who join monthly for Grandmother Moon ceremonies and our virtual prayer circles. During National Native American Heritage Month (November) Sisters were asked to share their indigenous connections on the RC blog. Two comments were received. Sisters and Associates involved with indigenous groups continue to be encouraged to share their stories. Land acknowledgment signage was installed in three locations around the Motherhouse grounds and CSA's land acknowledgement statement is read at the start of each Justice Hour and other educational opportunities, both in person and virtually.
10. Other spiritual opportunities include adding a brochure rack to the bench at the Labyrinth with instruction. Budget constraints and weather created the need to move the creation of temporary yard signs for events with QR codes for an interactive education experience, to Spring 2024.

Of special note is that CSA received the Catholic Climate Covenant award for Religious Communities. Other publications that picked up the story are NCR and Catholic Herald.

Goal 4

Assess Viability and Work Toward Becoming Net Zero

What will we do?

Benchmark our sustainability performance and create a long-term plan to continue measuring and reducing congregational use of energy, carbon, water, and plastics.

Make short term adjustments to reduce use of energy, carbon, water, and plastics.

This addresses portions of the following LSAP goals:

Response to the cry of the earth; Ecological economics; Adoption of sustainable lifestyles; and Ecological education

How & when will we do it?

1. Develop eco-friendly purchasing guidelines for CSA.
2. Whenever individual sisters are willing, transition to alternative products and packaging such as shampoo bars, bamboo paper products and clothing, and 100% eco-friendly cleaning products.
 - Ongoing as products are used up and replaced.
3. Evaluate the need for additional rain barrels and add where needed.
4. Evaluate the ability to reduce or phase out gas-powered maintenance equipment and fleet vehicles and leaf blowers of all varieties.
 - Audit during quarter 3 and as vehicles reach end of life.
5. Research best practices in calculating our carbon footprint and potentially hire a consultant if determined appropriate and financially feasible for this budget year.

RESULTS:

1. A subcommittee was formed to create purchasing guidelines. They met regularly throughout the year and did start by creating a resource sheet of recommended Earth-friendly products that was first handed out at the Earth Day event. Items in the Earth Day raffle were mostly samples of such products as well. Copies of this resource sheet are included in the traveling resource bin.
2. Households and Administrative offices at the Motherhouse began phasing out some plastics and paper products and replacing them with biodegradable trash bags and bamboo toilet paper and paper toweling, as well as use of shampoo bars. Members of the LSAT offered to form a purchasing co-op for some products and meet with households to discuss their purchasing habits.
3. Three rain barrels were purchased and installed at the end of summer. Collected rainwater was used to water the vegetable garden and outdoor plants. In preparation for the winter, Motherhouse Sisters collected excess rainwater to store for inside plant watering during the cold months.
4. Two members of the Maintenance staff joined the Laudato Si' Action Team (LSAT) late in the year and conversations about gas-powered equipment and vehicles will resume in 2024. As of May 2023, CSA owned a fleet of 16 Prius vehicles.
5. CSA joined the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council and receives information and consultation from our rep. Sister Peg has also attended some of their webinars. We will renew

this membership for at least one more year. CSA also became a “Green Team” with Faith in Place, an organization partnering with other communities of faith in the states of Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana.

Goal 5

Develop a Land Management Plan

Exploring our Unfolding Future

We face the future with courage and hope, embracing our journey of transformation so that the unimagined can emerge

What will we do?

Benchmark current conditions of the CSA property and determine goals to preserve and/or improve the conservation values on the property, noting that action on goal activities will be necessarily modified based on available budget each year.

This addresses portions of the following LSAP goals:

Response to the cry of the earth; Response to the cry of the poor; Ecological economics; Adoption of sustainable lifestyles; Ecological education; Ecological spirituality; Community resilience and empowerment

How & when will we do it?

1. Work with Glacial Lakes Conservancy & Fond du Lac County Land & Water Conservation to determine the best land management planning method for our needs and implement a plan.
2. Explore county farming experiments and/or hemp farming.
3. Audit our current land management processes for maintaining the property.
4. Explore gardening capacity and potential to support a community garden or composting.

ASSESSMENT:

1. CSA hired its first Land Steward (thanks to a referral from GLC) who will carry out any future land management plans.
2. Maintenance provided a brief report of the farming practices by the farmer who uses CSA land. No advancements in hemp farming idea.
3. A land management plan is underway with a company called Green Fire. They have performed drone and walk-around assessments and writing up their findings over the winter.
4. CSA joined other community groups (such as Sustain Fond du Lac's Recycling Committee, Fond du Lac Master Gardener Association, Gottfried Prairie and Arboretum, and others) in the promotion of sales of outdoor compost bins. Some local Sisters and Associates purchased a bin for their home, but composting at the Motherhouse was deemed unfeasible so members of the LSAT were introduced to a biodigester at UW Oshkosh that was able to convert food and paper waste into bioenergy. A trial was underway when the Oshkosh program was abruptly discontinued, leaving us having to investigate other landfill diversion efforts. We met with City Manager, Joe Moore, to explore some ideas and continue to be in conversation with him and his staff. Additionally, we are continuing to explore other companies that will pick up food waste not only at the Motherhouse, but possibly other locations throughout the city.

Additionally, “No Mow May” was successfully implemented at eight properties, though not all made it to the end of the month before requesting their lawn mowed. A native plant made a special appearance in May, which would not have likely happened had the area been mowed as usual. Maintenance reports they are now only mowing 15 acres of land instead of the previous 20. They are also mulching leaves instead of bagging.