

Trust & Dare

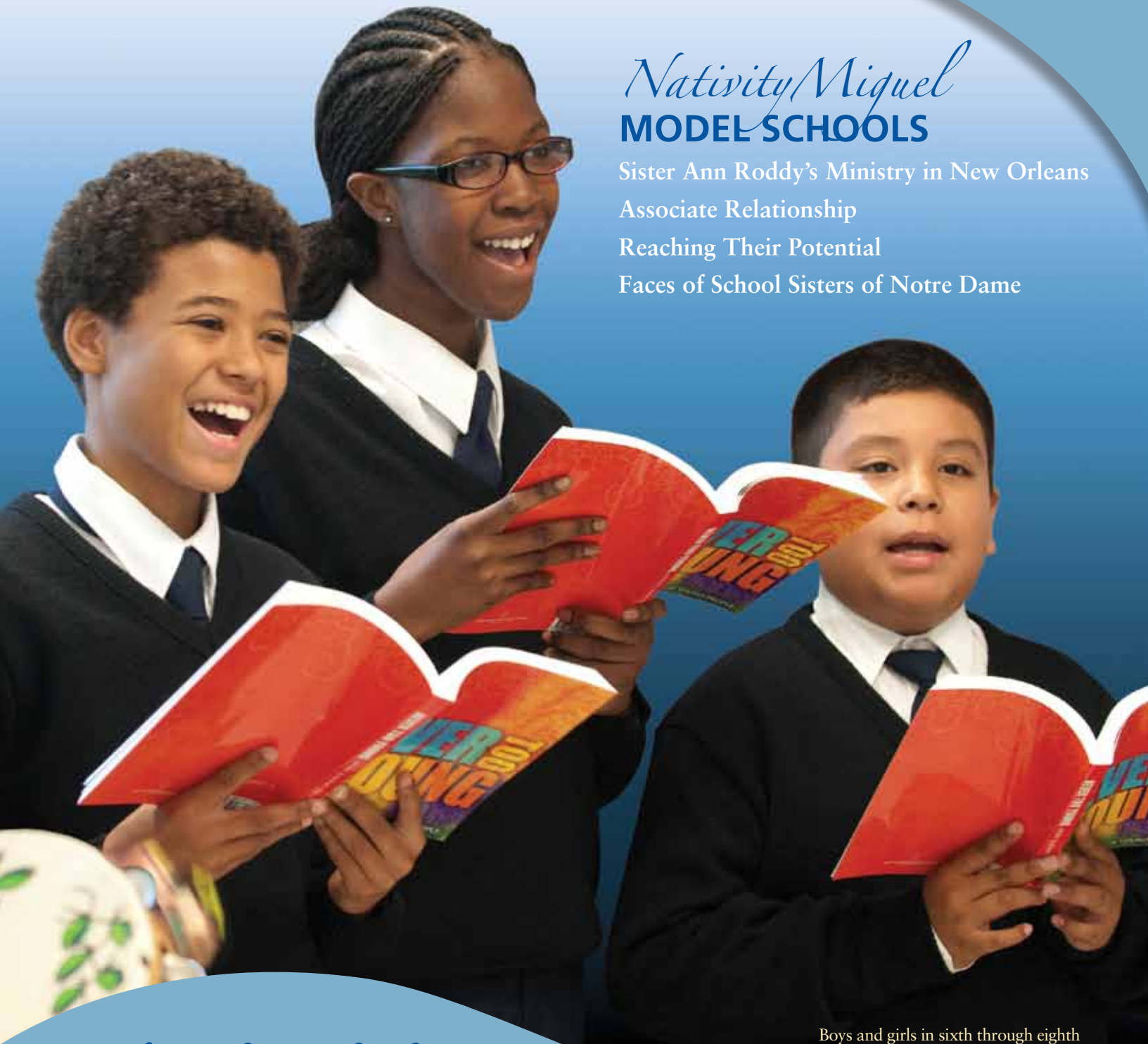
2011



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Nativity Miquel **MODEL SCHOOLS**

Sister Ann Roddy's Ministry in New Orleans
Associate Relationship
Reaching Their Potential
Faces of School Sisters of Notre Dame



Transforming the world through education

Boys and girls in sixth through eighth grades belong to the after-school Choir Club at Mother Seton Academy.

DEAR FRIENDS OF SSND,

It is our joy, once again, to share with you some of the concrete expressions of our proclamation of the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame. We are deeply aware that we do this in collaboration with you, our dear colleagues and friends. Our charism of education that transforms is a sacred trust given to us, and through the gift of your support, we are able, together, to fulfill this sacred trust and dare to find new and creative ways to bring this gift to our world.

We recognize that some of our most precious gifts are our associates. In this magazine, we highlight the integral part they play in our charism of unity and education. Truly, they enable us to carry our charism into the future.

We are proud of all of our sponsored ministries as well as all the ministries in which School Sisters of Notre Dame are involved. We highlight four of our sponsored schools as they embrace our overall vision of the transformative power of education. Our students throughout the world are blessed with a new set of eyes in which to see the realities of our world and the significant and unique role they play in contributing to the building of a more just and sustainable world. Again, we are well aware that we do not do this alone. Our colleagues in our various ministries play a vital role.

SSNDs believe that we are educators in all we are and all we do. From teachers to artists – as you will see in the life of Sister Ann Roddy – we draw out the potential of others and assist them in claiming and using that potential for the common good. We recognize that even we need to be open to transform our own government structures in order to more fully respond to our sacred trust.

We continue to be grateful to you for the myriad ways that you enable us, support us and assist us in our mission to proclaim the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame, that all may be one.

Sincerely,



*Sister Mary Kerber, SSND
Co-Chair of the SSND NAMA Leadership Conference*

Our Mission

is to proclaim the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. As He was sent to show the Father's love to the world, we are sent to make Christ visible by our very being, by sharing our love, faith, and hope.

You Are Sent

Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

Trust & Dare

is a publication for family, friends and benefactors of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the North American Major Area (NAMA) and is coordinated by the NAMA Communications Committee.

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ADAPTING TO MEET THE CRIES *of the* WORLD

“The province, canonically established with its own structure of government, is a distinctive and vital unit of the congregation. Each province is formed to facilitate government, relationships, communication, and ministry.”

You Are Sent, Constitution of the
School Sisters of Notre Dame

The School Sisters of Notre Dame in North America and Africa have been engaged during recent years in looking at ways to more effectively carry forward their mission and ministries.

The congregation has a history of adapting to changing needs and circumstances. Since its foundation in 1833 in Bavaria with its mission to educate and minister among poor women and girls, School Sisters of Notre Dame continue to serve in North America and throughout the world to proclaim the Gospel with emphasis on transforming the world through education.

CENTRAL PACIFIC PROVINCE

Recently, the sisters of the former provinces of Dallas, Mankato, Milwaukee and St. Louis became the School Sisters of Notre Dame of the Central Pacific Province. The election of the new provincial leader and eight councilors took place in March and the province's inauguration was held June 12.

Nearly 1,200 sisters are united in this new SSND province. “Central Pacific Province” is a reference to the central United States geographic location of the current campuses, the SSND ministries in the western and Pacific coast areas, and the sisters in Japan and Guam.

The province now has four campuses: Notre Dame of Dallas, which includes St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Miss.; Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato; Notre Dame of Elm Grove in Elm Grove, Wis.; and Sancta Maria in St. Louis, which is the main address.

PROVINCE OF AFRICA

The sisters of the District of Africa formed a new province on Aug. 28 called the Province of Africa. The election of a provincial leader and two councilors – an American sister, a Ghanaian sister and a Nigerian sister – was completed in April.

Nearly 80 sisters are members of this new province. They serve in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The main offices for the province are in Ghana; however, the province's development office is located in St. Louis.

ATLANTIC-MIDWEST PROVINCE AND CANADIAN PROVINCE

On July 14, 2012, the Canadian Province, whose administrative offices are located in Waterdown, Ontario, will integrate with the Atlantic-Midwest Province, bringing together more than 660 sisters.

Currently, the Atlantic-Midwest Province has offices in Baltimore, Md.; Norridge, Ill.; and Wilton, Conn.

The provincial council election for the integrated Atlantic-Midwest Province will take place in March 2012.

More information may be found on our website at www.ssnd.org.

EVENTS

The School Sisters of Notre Dame host days of reflection, come-and-see visits, children's programs, guest speakers and exhibits throughout the year. A few of the upcoming events are listed below. Please check our web site for a more comprehensive and regularly-updated listing, www.ssnd.org. For more information about these events, please contact a communications office at the addresses on page 3.

QUILT AUCTION

11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 29, 2011

*St. Edwards Church
9401 Nesbit Ave. South
Bloomington, Minn.*

Hand and machine quilted items in live and silent auctions. Diane Maidl, 507-389-4213 or dmaidl@ssndmankato.org

EARTH CONFERENCE

8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 5, 2011

*Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus
170 Good Counsel Dr.
Mankato, Minn.*

“Claim the Commons: We're In It Together” is the theme of this year's Earth Conference sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. Lisa Coons, 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndmankato.org

ELM GROVE'S HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

4 p.m.-7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11, 2011

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12, 2011

*Notre Dame of Elm Grove Campus
13105 Watertown Plank Road
Elm Grove, Wis.*

School Sisters of Notre Dame will participate in Elm Grove's Holiday Open House with a beautiful display of hand-sewn items, baked goods and grape jelly from our own arbor. Enjoy complimentary coffee and cookies, a conversation with the sisters and the gift shop. 262-787-1036 or ssndma@ssnd-milw.org.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA PERFORMANCE

11 a.m. or 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12, 2011

*Notre Dame of Maryland University
LeClerc Hall
4701 N. Charles St.,
Baltimore, Md.*

The life of St. Catherine Benincasa of Siena will be brought to life by Sister Nancy Murray, O.P., the sibling of actor Bill Murray. Sister Regis Krusniewski, SSND, 410-377-7774, ext. 1151, or rkrusniewski@amssnd.org.

RUMMAGE SALE

7 a.m. Saturday, April 21, 2012

*Maria Center
336 East Ripa Ave.
St. Louis, Mo.*

The annual rummage sale supports the work of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Africa. For information call Sister Ruth Emke, SSND, 314-633-7050.

Ministering to Meet Unmet Needs **Sister Ann Embraces Marginalized, Art in New Orleans**

While her official ministry titles include Artist Minister, Director of TAU House and Pastoral Minister for Project Lazarus, Sister Ann Roddy's title might well be Minister Who Meets Unmet Needs.

Quiet and unassuming, though always with flair and a hint of the dramatic in all she does, Sister Ann lives the School Sisters of Notre Dame's call to serve those who are poor, eliminate the root causes of injustice, live simply and to respect the dignity of every person.

A native of St. Louis, Mo., Sister Ann professed her final vows in 1956. Her first assignment was as an elementary school art teacher in East St. Louis, Ill. She went on to teach or serve as a dorm moderator at high schools in Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

At every school she was assigned, Sister Ann encouraged individuality and self expression, while at the same time calling each of her students to work toward justice and to respect one another's gifts and challenges.

"I love art, and I really enjoyed teaching it at any level," Sister Ann said. "Each place was so different from the others. I was enlivened by all my students and was proud of their accomplishments."

After 20 years in the classroom, Sister Ann took a sabbatical. She chose to spend the next year in silence, meditation and prayer at Lebh Shomea House of Prayer in Sarita, Texas.

"Lebh Shomea means listening heart in Hebrew," Sister Ann said. "I listened and prayed."

After leaving Lebh Shomea in 1977, Sister Ann's listening heart led her to New Orleans, La., where she formed community with SSNDs and taught art to secondary school students at Immaculate Conception in Marrero, La.

"After two years at Immaculate Conception, the economy started to have trouble," Sister Ann said. "Schools everywhere were cutting 'unnecessary' classes like art and music. It became more difficult for me to find another teaching position with the environment that had been created."

One day, Sister Ann decided to do what so many artists in New Orleans do. She loaded up her car with an easel, canvases, paint and brushes and headed to the heart of New Orleans – Jackson Square. The square was filled with vendors, street people, street performers and artists of all types. She started to paint the scenery around her, talking to people and making new friends.

In 1978, one of Sister Ann's watercolor pieces brought about a meeting with a Franciscan priest walking through Jackson Square with a friend. The Rev. Bob Powell, OFM, and Art Salway were cutting through Jackson Square one Saturday morning when they stopped to look at one of Sister Ann's abstracts bearing a text from the Acts of the Apostles 22:11,

Sister Ann Roddy is director of TAU House and pastoral minister for Project Lazarus in New Orleans. An artist, Sister Ann is also at home, painting faces on Jackson Square during Mardi Gras (left).

The two men introduced themselves and invited Sister Ann to a Vespers service at their place in the French Quarter called TAU House.

"TAU House was an emerging community whose mission broadened my vision of the world," Sister Ann said. "Its initial goal was to reach out and be present to those who didn't feel included in the ordinary ministry of the Church. In time, it became a presence to people whose life and professional experiences found them in conflict with what the official Church taught, as well as to sexual minorities, the divorced, separated and people who wanted to be a part of a gospel-centered community."

"I did attend Vespers one night," said Sister Ann. "I found it prayerful and meaningful, and I found myself coming back."

She also found a community whose needs were not being met by society or the church, people who experienced discrimination, marginalization and disrespect. She added the feminine, Notre Dame touch to a community she came to care for and people she came to love.



Two of Sister Ann's most recent pieces of art as she begins working with oils.



Sister Ann Roddy is director of TAU House and pastoral minister for Project Lazarus in New Orleans. An artist, Sister Ann is also at home painting faces on Jackson Square during Mardi Gras (left).



In the mid 1980s, TAU House began being associated with AIDS when Father Bob was asked by a doctor at a local hospital to talk about the ethical, spiritual and religious aspects of the disease. The public and many pastoral and medical professionals were uninformed about the disease and misinformation was causing fear and panic.

“There was TAU House before there was the NO/AIDS Task Force and before Project Lazarus was even a thought,” Sister Ann said, “but its location was never advertised for fear of vandalism and violence. Then, the marginalized were those suffering from AIDS. There was no cure and little hope. People were dying alone and uncared for by society.”

Amidst all the struggles, the TAU House community of Franciscan Friars and its supporters continued to minister by offering retreats for caregivers, performing hospital visits and, when needed, memorial services. To this day, the hospitality of the TAU House community lives on in the beautiful backyard gardens that hold bricks on which the names of the many who died of HIV/AIDS are remembered.

Project Lazarus came into being in 1985 when the TAU House community was approached to help a person with AIDS who was leaving the hospital but had nowhere to live. The church, in the name of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and its local bishop at the time, took a great risk. With support from Catholic Charities, as well as dedicated TAU House volunteers and the newly formed NO/AIDS Task Force, the place now called Project Lazarus was created. In 25 years, it has moved from a single French Quarter basement apartment to a former convent and rectory, which has been divided into four “houses” that accommodate 24 people and provide both permanent and transitional housing.

“Who is left on the margins has changed,” Sister Ann said. “Before, all we knew was death, and we cared for people in the dying process. Now, HIV/AIDS is a chronic living condition, and its population is moving from primarily men to both men and women and, in particular, people of color. There are new needs every day, and we must find ways to be brothers and sisters together, accepting one another and respecting one another. We need to move to action.”

Sister Ann is full of action, ministering to the needs of the TAU House and Project Lazarus communities, participating in her neighborhood and her SSND community and making time to travel and to paint.

“This ministry within TAU House and Project Lazarus was passed on to me, and my greatest hope is that there will be someone to pass it on to,” she said. “I hope the great experiences I have had and have shared about will lead others to say ‘yes’ to something unexpected that comes across their path.”

NativityMiguel MODEL SCHOOLS

At Mother Seton Academy in Baltimore, the school day begins early, with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., and does not end until 5 p.m. The students study a curriculum designed to provide opportunities beyond the usual middle school academic subjects and might include music, art, computer lab, library research, life skills, prayer and public speaking. They take two breaks for recess – one after lunch and a second after a daily schoolwide “cleanup” at 3:15 p.m., in which all students take part. The day ends after time for enrichment activities and a period of supervised homework time.

Such is the schedule of a typical student at a NativityMiguel middle school, the name of a network of schools across the country that are providing high-quality, faith-based education to children in economically deprived communities. The 64 schools that belong to the network hold to nine mission effectiveness standards meant to build moral character and academic success while keeping children in school at their most vulnerable age, the middle school years.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame, too, have championed this model of education, founding alone or as co-sponsors with other congregations four middle schools throughout North America that are members of the NativityMiguel Network of Schools.

Besides Mother Seton, the schools include Sisters Academy of Baltimore, Marian Middle School in St. Louis and Notre Dame Middle School in Milwaukee. All four schools are located in big cities with challenging problems — high crime, low employment, gang warfare, drugs, poverty — all threats to the well-being of adolescent children.

For the SSNDs, the challenge is clear: to break the cycle of poverty among children at risk by helping them to realize their God-given talents while getting a quality education that could ultimately transform their lives. Ideally, success in middle school leads to success in high school and ultimately to a college education and a place of leadership in society.

“This is a present-day expression of why we were founded, of what we are about,” said Sister Delia Dowling, SSND, president of Sisters Academy in Baltimore.

“It’s about teaching children who are most vulnerable.”

NativityMiguel schools seek to offer a holistic education, addressing the spiritual, moral and emotional development of students as well as academic, physical and social needs. For the most part, the schools are community-based, reflecting the racial and cultural makeup of the neighborhoods they serve. Classes are small, allowing for individual attention, and the school day is long, stretching



Sixth-grade girls at Mother Seton Academy in Baltimore work on an in-class assignment in English grammar. Academics are taught in single-sex classes, but elective subjects, such as music, chorus and art, are often co-ed.



Sister Joan DiProspero, SSND, congratulates several of the girls who graduated from Marian Middle School in St. Louis this past May. Sister Joan serves on the school’s board of directors and member board.

a modern-day expression of SSND mission

into the late-afternoon hours, when adolescents left at home alone or on the streets are most vulnerable to getting into trouble. Breakfast, lunch and a snack, which most students qualify for under federal income standards, are served daily. Attendance at summer school is usually required.

Following that model, the four SSND-sponsored schools offer students a tuition-free, Catholic education that meets or exceeds educational standards of the states where they are located. Funding is provided by a combination of sources, including individual and group sponsors, grants from foundations, sponsoring congregations and fundraising events. Parents pay only a nominal fee to cover incidental expenses outside the scope of the tuition, which varies by school. But they play a critical role as partners in their child's education. They meet regularly in conference with teachers and staff and are expected to volunteer several hours a month at the school.

In return for the students' hard work, teachers and administrators make a long-term commitment to the children, tracking them through high school and beyond. Every effort is made to see graduating eighth-graders accepted into college-preparatory high schools. It is a very big commitment for a very select few students in each of the cities.

"These schools are by nature very small," said Sister Delia, whose all-girls Sisters Academy opened in September 2004 and today educates 65 girls in fifth through eighth grades. Its first class of graduates will be entering 12th grade this fall.

In that short time, statistics show it is fulfilling its mission. "Eighty-two percent of our grads are in Catholic or private high schools in the Baltimore area," said Sister Delia. The alternative for the population of girls in the Southwest Baltimore community that Sisters Academy serves would likely be a low-performing public high school or dropping out.

"I'm not sure that we could have done it alone," she said, noting that four religious congregations came together to establish the school for adolescent girls. The SSNDs partner with three congregations with long ties to the Southwest Baltimore community,

"but more importantly, we all have this in common: We educate the most vulnerable," said Sister Delia.

Similarly, Marian Middle School in St. Louis opened in August 2000 with the support of seven congregations of women religious and several lay women who dedicated their resources to provide an alternative for economically disadvantaged girls.

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Students discuss a team project in a fifth-grade social studies class at Sisters Academy in Baltimore.



Notre Dame Middle School fifth-grade students in Milwaukee playfully pose for the camera before entering Sister Judy Fleisner's classroom.

“I believe that our school helps quiet, insecure girls become confident and secure. We provide a sense of belonging to a larger family, for both the girls and their families.”

Sister Doris Jean LeBrun, SSND, Notre Dame Middle School Teacher

Of its 111 alumnae, 90 are still in school – attending high school or college. The school today enrolls 70 girls across four grades. Unlike the other three SSND-sponsored schools, however, the students don't come from one particular area of the city but represent 21 zip codes in the St. Louis area.

“The success of the school is a combination of dedicated faculty and staff, parents, board of directors and its various committees of lay women and men, and the continued support and involvement of the founding congregations,” said Sister Joan DiProspero, SSND, who serves on the board of directors of Marian Middle.

Maureen Herrmann, president of the school, attributes its success to students who want to excel and parents who “recognize that this is a wonderful alternative for their families and a safe environment for their daughters.

“The majority of our students are not Catholic. But our faith-based environment is the extra ingredient to our students' success. We start and end each day with prayer. The students attend Mass and take a religion class. We focus social justice issues and service to the community.”

With an enrollment of 132 girls, Notre Dame Middle School (NDMS) on Milwaukee's Near South Side is nearly twice the size of the other schools. Five SSNDs and 13 lay people serve on the teaching staff. SSND is the sole religious sponsor of Notre Dame Middle, but the school receives about half the cost of tuition for most students from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which offers tuition assistance to low-income families.

Following the NativityMiguel model, most NDMS students live within a two-mile radius of their school, and 99 percent of them are of Hispanic heritage. For many, English is their second language. NDMS students are educated in a bilingual setting in preparation for admittance to a college-preparatory high school. Integral to the mission of NDMS is the development of leadership and service to the community.

Statistics in the Milwaukee area have shown a 65 percent dropout rate among Hispanic girls, and more than half of the students are performing below grade level when they enter NDMS. Still, 98 percent of the NDMS students go on to graduate from high schools in the Milwaukee area, and 70 percent of NDMS graduates continue on to college.

The transformation is equally impressive at Mother Seton Academy, which educates about 70 boys and girls a year

from Northeast Baltimore in grades six through eight. While many students enter the academy with below-grade-level skills, they demonstrate substantial growth in their performance on standardized tests during their tenure at the school, often progressing 1½ to two academic years in a single calendar year, said Sister Charmaine Krohe, SSND, president of the academy.

In each of the past five years, 100 percent of Mother Seton eighth-graders have matriculated into private or selective public high schools in the area, with the intention of going on to college in four years.

Although Mother Seton Academy is co-ed, students are taught in single-sex classes in all three grades. Six religious congregations sponsor the school.

Every sister at a NativityMiguel school might give a different reason why her model of the school succeeds. They credit the individualized attention students receive; small classes; faith-based education; a sense of belonging and responsibility imbued in the children; classes in life skills, values and social justice; and the secure and safe environment that surrounds them. All promote feelings of self-respect.

Sister Doris Jean LeBrun, SSND, longtime teacher at Notre Dame Middle, said, “I believe that our school helps quiet, insecure girls become confident and secure. We provide a sense of belonging to a larger family, for both the girls and their families.”



Sixth-grade boys study general science in their new, fully-equipped lab at Mother Seton Academy.



Sister Delia Dowling, SSND, confers a stole on an incoming fifth-grader, an autumn tradition at Sisters Academy in Baltimore.

Advancing the SSND Mission

“In and with God, everything is possible; this is my consolation, my comfort, my joy, and my only hope.”

*Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, SSND,
Foundress of the SSND*

When Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger founded the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1833, she immediately turned to generous friends and family for support. Since then, generations of faithful donors have helped carry forward the mission, which the SSNDs choose to express through ministries directed toward education.

There are a number of ways you can help support our SSND mission. Some of our donors make monthly or annual cash gifts. Others choose to provide contributions of stock and appreciated assets. And, a number of our patrons – such as the benefactor whose bequest included the rare Honus Wagner baseball card described to the right – include the SSNDs in their estate plans.

You can leave a legacy for your family and for the School Sisters of Notre Dame through a will, an annuity or an insurance policy. Named as a beneficiary in your will, the SSNDs will receive the bequest you specify upon your death. An insurance policy in your name which names the SSNDs as a full or partial beneficiary will also benefit our sisters in the future.

Contact your financial or legal adviser for assistance with making an estate plan. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the mission advancement or development office in your area (please see page 2 for addresses).

Your prayerful support, financial contributions and encouragement help us to carry forward the mission that Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger started nearly 180 years ago. Together, we are making a difference.



A rare Honus Wagner baseball card similar to this one was bequeathed to the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Baseball Card an Unexpected Home Run for SSND

In 2010, an extremely rare, century-old Honus Wagner baseball card was discovered in the estate of a Pennsylvania man who had died that year. He had bequeathed the card to the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

The benefactor was the devoted brother of an SSND who had died a decade earlier. Grateful for the loving care and concern shown to his sister by her community over many years, he had included SSND in his will. The baseball card was auctioned in November 2010, bringing a generous gift of \$220,000 to the sisters.

Bequests – gifts made through a will like the Honus Wagner card – are a source of long-term support for the mission and ministries of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Your decision to include SSND in your estate plan reflects your belief in our call to support God’s work and to ensure that our educational and other ministries continue to enable individuals to reach the fullness of their potential.

FACES

of School Sisters of Notre Dame in Prayer, Ministry and Community



Sisters from the former St. Louis Province bestow a blessing during a Mass to celebrate the outgoing council members. St. Louis is now part of the new Central Pacific Province.

Sister Mary Loretta Murakami, SSND, teaches calligraphy to students in Japan.



Darla Frost (back) and Sister Mary Tacheny, SSND, check out the geraniums Darla has started under the grow lights in her workshop on the Good Counsel Campus in Mankato, Minn.



Seniors at St. Dominic Church in Baltimore, led by the parish's pastoral associate, Sister Catherine Manning, SSND, (front), participate in a session of the Christian-based Sign Chi Do, which is offered as part of the community outreach programs developed by Good Samaritan Hospital. Sister Catherine is delighted by "the positive and very Christian" effects Sign Chi Do has had on her parish's participants.

Courtesy of The Catholic Review, Baltimore



Texas County (Missouri) Food Pantry Executive Director Sister Claire Reinert, SSND, moves a box of onions destined for Plato, Mo., into position in the staging area of the company's warehouse. Sister Claire came to Houston, Mo., seven years ago to head up the pantry after working for bishop's offices in Columbia, S.C., and Los Angeles, Calif.

Courtesy Doug Davison, Houston Herald

Sister Barbara Simek, SSND, (on left) directs the baking workshop during Summer Splash on Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus, Mankato, Minn. The overnight event for girls completing sixth, seventh or eighth grades and a significant female adult included a blend of activities designed to strengthen the mother-daughter connection and provide an inside look at the sisters' lives.



A delegation from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, including students from SSND-sponsored Notre Dame of Maryland University, attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York as the 2011 CSW addressed the issue of "access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology." Pictured from left are Sister Eileen Reilly, SSND, director of the SSND UN-NGO office; Glenance Green, DePaul University graduate student from Chicago; Sister Sharon Kamis, SSND, Notre Dame professor of religious studies; Sister Miriam Jansen, SSND, Notre Dame director of international programs; and Adaku Ihekwe, Notre Dame student from Nigeria.

Sister Barbara Paleczny, SSND, talks with two children in South Sudan. Sister Barbara and Sister Cathy Arata, SSND, work with Solidarity with South Sudan, a consortium of more than 170 religious congregations. Participants train teachers, nurses and pastoral personnel in several locations throughout South Sudan. This initiative was inspired by the 2004 Rome Congress on Consecrated Life, Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity.



Sisters Gloria Adoga, Magdaline Akpan, Merceline Anyega, Judith Cheptoo Sambu celebrate their first professions of vows at the SSND District of Africa Novitiate, Sunyani, Ghana.



Sisters Jean Dietrich, SSND, and Barbara Neist, SSND, (top row left and center) worked with students from high schools during their mission trip to Whole Kids Outreach in Ellington, Mo. Whole Kids Outreach is a faith-based, not-for-profit organization committed to addressing the unmet wellness and developmental needs of children within their family structures.



Sister Betty Uchtyl, SSND, offers words of welcome to participants at a Peace Day prayer service in Elm Grove, Wis.



Sister Jeanne Barasha, SSND, center, talks with parishioners from St. Ann Parish in Baltimore during a tribute banquet. Sister Jeanne, who has a 25-year connection to St. Ann, has left her position as pastoral administrator to volunteer at a school in Nigeria.

Photo courtesy of the Catholic Review, Baltimore

Shelley Schultz

A CONNECTION THAT FELT LIKE 'COMING HOME'

It was the “loving nudging” of Sister Mary Donald Miller, SSND, that led Shelley Schultz on her journey to become an associate in 2007 in Mankato, Minn. Shelley had been the principal of Loyola High School, which is located on the SSND campus in Mankato, and Sister Mary Donald was the principal at the neighboring middle school.

“As I was discerning, we would gather on Sunday in the late afternoon,” Shelley said. “We would focus on different topics. We talked about our prayer life and different kinds of prayer.

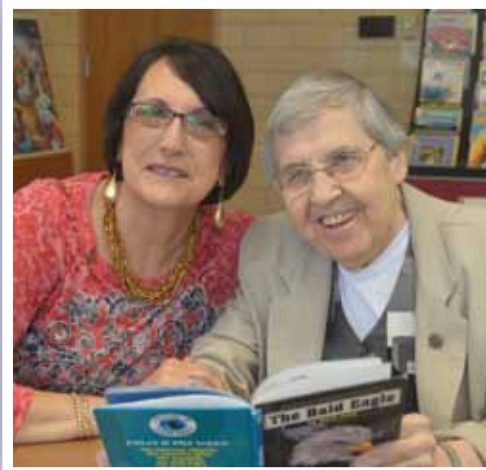
“We learned about the SSND foundress and her journey. I realized at that time I really connected with the School Sisters of Notre Dame because of their focus on education. Because of my lifelong involvement in education, it was important for me to discover the education connection.”

The journey nurtured Shelley’s deeply-rooted faith. She was inspired to act on her commitment to the SSND vision and mission by helping establish Eucharistic adoration in her small community of about 300 families in Janesville, Minn. Since 2005, she and her husband have coordinated the team that enables the adoration around the clock from 8 a.m. on Monday through midnight Thursday each week.

“I think this is a beautiful story because this is an instrument of the Holy Spirit,” Shelley said. “That all connects to who I am and what I believe in. I never say that I did it alone but that it was the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.”

Shelley serves as associate co-director in Mankato.

Associate Shelley Schultz (left) and Sister Mary Donald Miller



SSND Charism Continues to Develop Through *Associates*

“Because others are inspired by the same charism and spirituality as we, provinces, regions, and mission extensions may establish associations by which individuals enter into a special relationship with our congregation.”

You Are Sent, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

To be an associate of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is to be in relationship with others and to walk a journey of faith together in the spirit of Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, SSND foundress. These communities of non-vowed women and men strive to emulate the gift of SSND spirit in a way unique to them in the midst of their daily experience.

A few years ago, Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND, told a gathering of associates that they were “carriers of the vision” of Blessed Theresa. Those are life-changing words, said Associate Suzanne Blackburn, an English teacher at St. Mary’s High School in Annapolis, Md.

“We don’t just sit on the sidelines and cheer as the sisters we love and admire live the charism,” Suzanne said. “In the words of the well-worn metaphor, ‘the ball is in our hands.’ The SSND charism is ours to ponder, to embrace, and ultimately to embody.”

SHARED VALUES

Some associates can hardly remember not knowing the sisters. For Mary Joan Vito and Mary Olert-Sharp, both graduates of Baltimore’s Institute of Notre Dame (IND), being an associate is a natural progression of these early years.

“I’ve always tried to live by the principles that the nuns taught me since grade one and follow their devotion to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist,” said Mary Joan, a 1949 graduate of IND. “The values I learned from 12 years of SSND education have guided me throughout my life, and being an associate has afforded me the opportunity to be with others who share those same values.”

Some associates came into contact with SSND later in their lives. Peg Smith taught with the sisters at Seton Keough High School in Baltimore and St. Mary’s in Annapolis. Although no longer involved in formal education, Peg continues to further the SSND commitment to women, education and global vision through the women’s Solidarity Group that she initiated in the Annapolis area. These women, not all associates, meet monthly to educate themselves, pray, and discuss the issues presented in the SSND International Solidarity Reflections.



Associates participate in a recovenanting ceremony at Notre Dame of Elm Grove.



Jim Gill

AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND HIS WORLD VISION

For Jim Gill, being an associate of the School Sisters of Notre Dame offers the sense of being a part of something with a great history and the opportunity to grow intellectually and spiritually.

“I’ve worked in religious education ever since I graduated from school,” Jim said. “The education aspect of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is very important to me. The Augustinian aspect of emphasis on community and growth in community also speaks to me. I find the worldwide connection very interesting and challenging. Association has given me the opportunity to meet other people serving in other parts of the world. It has expanded my world vision.”

Jim became an associate 22 years ago after meeting Sister Barbara Linke, SSND, at the former Mundelein College in Chicago, where they both were graduate students in religious studies. He did not realize at the time that the connection really was not his first with the SSNDs.

In college, he had been a member of a group led by his pastor that went to Rome. While there, they had dinner at the SSND Generalate. Much later, as an SSND associate, he organized an associates trip to Germany and Rome, where they stayed at the Generalate. It was on that second visit that the earlier tie became clear.

As an associate, Jim meets in a small, faith community with sisters and other associates every four to six weeks. Those gatherings might include time to share happenings in their lives, a meal, an organized program, readings and reflection, videos, and other reflection processes.

Jim is director of Child Ministry at St. Mary’s in Waukesha, Wis.



Associate Jim Gill

Associates also play a special role in community-sponsored institutions. Susan Muth, who teaches at Notre Dame Preparatory School in Towson, Md., makes sure that the SSND commitment to social justice is reflected in her religious studies classes and extracurricular involvements, such as the annual SSND-sponsored service trip to New Orleans.

Debra Franklin, dean of arts and sciences at SSND-sponsored Notre Dame of Maryland University, is mindful of the centrality of the vision of Blessed Theresa to the college’s mission.

“In the spirit of Mother Theresa, we minister to our students of diverse backgrounds and academic interests, knowing that education frees each one to change the world for good. It is a privilege to support the SSND educational vision and advance the SSND commitment to higher education.”

FOUNDATION

After Vatican II encouraged the laity to take a more active role in the life and mission of the Church, establishment of special relationships between religious and laity received new impetus.

In 1969, the SSND 13th General Chapter received a report about the Daughters of Mary, lay women in the Polish Province engaged in ministry with sisters. In 1970, the chapter accepted the concept of affiliation, as it was called, and approved it for further study.

Two proposals for lay associations were made to the 15th General Chapter in 1974 from the Polish and the St. Louis provinces. A proposal was approved, and St. Louis received its first associates in 1976. Other SSND units established associations over the ensuing decades.

A unique feature of SSND associate membership is the fact that not all are Catholic; yet, all have a personal connection with SSNDs and have a desire to live and to serve in the spirit of Blessed Theresa.

Associate guidelines emphasize spiritual relationship and mutuality in the associate commitment to prayer, community and ministry with SSND. As such, associates may attend regular gatherings; share prayer and perspectives on mission in gatherings or a one-to-one basis; connect regularly with a companion; work or volunteer in sponsored ministries; and participate in province committees or boards, jubilees, retreats, days of reflection, social activities or social justice actions with SSNDs.

Reaching Their Potential

Thanks to School Sisters of Notre Dame

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have educated, inspired, mentored and motivated people of all ages, races and backgrounds. The following people who have been inspired by the School Sisters of Notre Dame share their stories on how they have achieved their potential, thanks to their former SSND teachers.



LISA LAFLAMME

Lisa LaFlamme, newly appointed CTV National News anchor, graduated in 1982 from St. Mary's high school, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

When Lisa LaFlamme was a student at St. Mary's High School, her exasperated math teacher, Sister Vivian Zoller, SSND, exclaimed, "Lisa LaFlamme, you could earn a living just by talking." This proved prophetic.

Lisa, a Canadian television journalist, was until recently national affairs correspondent. In September 2011, she became chief anchor and senior editor replacing retiring anchor Lloyd Robertson.

As one of Canada's top award-winning journalists, Lisa has travelled the world, reporting on events such as the immediate aftereffects of the 9/11 attacks in New York City; the Canadian mission in Afghanistan and the humanitarian crisis facing the Afghan people; the death of Pope John Paul II in Rome; the impact of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans; the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan; and the recent royal wedding in England. The list goes on.

Lisa reflects fondly on her time at St. Mary's High School, then an all-girl school. "I loved it, the school spirit, the energy, what it gave me," Lisa said. "I truly valued not having the boy-girl dynamic in the mix. It helped me grow and be stronger as a woman, as a leader and to be more self-reliant."

Lisa remembered School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Mary's, including Sisters Barbara Frank, Gemma Golino, Mary Heather MacKinnon and Vivian Zoller. "Sister Vivian was the shining light of my years at St. Mary's," Lisa said. "She saved me from failing math."

Lisa also remembered the World Religions Class. "What I learned laid the foundation for what has become a big part of my life," said Lisa, noting her passion as a reporter to raise awareness of the world around us, build understanding among peoples and motivate action. "Only through knowledge can we be more empathetic." Her SSND teachers would agree.



JUDGE AUDREY J.S. CARRION

Honorable Audrey Carrion, the first Hispanic woman elected to the Circuit Court of Baltimore City, graduated from Notre Dame of Maryland University.

The Honorable Audrey J.S. Carrion remembers her days at the College of Notre Dame (CND) as challenging and rewarding. She remembers the School Sisters of Notre Dame as very generous, especially to a young Puerto Rican freshman living away from home for the first time.

"They opened doors to young women who were leaving the comfort of their small island to attend college," she said of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. "It was a very welcoming environment."

Born in New York City, Audrey moved to Puerto Rico, her parents' homeland, when she was 5. It was there that she learned about CND in Baltimore. In 1981, the history major graduated cum laude from CND. Three years after that, she earned a law degree from the University of Baltimore (UB), and a year later she was admitted to the Maryland bar.

Her career in law flourished. By 1995, she was named a judge in the District Court of Maryland, and in 1999, she was made an associate judge of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, becoming the first female Hispanic Circuit Court judge in the state of Maryland.

“For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God’s image and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth... We educate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.”

You Are Sent, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

“One of the biggest influences on my life was my philosophy professor at the College of Notre Dame – Sister Virginia Geiger,” she said, noting that the late sister made her a better lawyer. “She really opened your eyes to the truth of arguments and the morality of arguing your point and making the difficult choices you have to make as an attorney.”

Honors have been bestowed on the judge since her early days as an attorney: Presidential Award from the Bar Association of Baltimore City; Alumna of the Year from the UB School of Law; Distinguished Service Award from the Public Justice Center; Maryland’s Top 100 Women in 2000 and 2003; and the Excellence in Leadership award from the UB Women’s Bar Association.

Since joining the Circuit Court, she has spent six years as judge in charge of the family division and has emerged as an advocate for women and children’s issues, a cause close to the heart of SSNDs. Today she sits on the board of Caroline Center, the SSND-sponsored life and jobs skills training center for low-income women in Baltimore, and the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services.



CAROLE NOLAN

Carole Nolan, alumna of the Academy of Our Lady in Chicago, helped establish Public Radio Educational Broadcasting in Chicago and was inducted into the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame for her work in education.

With a commitment to learning that she attributes to her School Sisters of Notre Dame biology, chemistry and Latin teachers, Carole Nolan has dedicated her talents toward promoting education, using that lifelong passion to help establish Public Radio Educational Broadcasting in Chicago.

“The sisters gave me such a well-rounded education,” said Carole, a 1950 graduate of Academy of Our Lady in Chicago. “They inspired me to do something no woman had ever done before – run a radio station as a manager in a big city. I was curious, and they taught us to follow that curiosity and find the answers to things in life. The sisters taught me that you could do anything if you put your mind to it.”

At the time, there was no public radio, just educational radio and educational television. In 1967, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPS) was formed, and the U.S. Congress appropriated money to promote public broadcasting. Ninety educational stations, including Carole’s WBEZ in Chicago, banded together to develop National Public Radio.

Under Carole’s leadership, WBEZ thrived. She was influential in establishing its premier location on Navy Pier and negotiating a 99-year, rent-free lease. Inspired by the mission parties of her school days, she worked to raise millions of dollars for public radio. She has since retired, but the station continues to flourish.

“It is like a little seed that was planted – starting with the sisters,” she said. “They had given us the background, and it was up to us to take that and put it into action. I am fortunate to have that education and the influence of the wonderful women who gave us the good spiritual foundation, as well as intellectual preparation and the tools for living in the world.”

In 2007, Carole was inducted into the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, which honors Illinoisans age 65 and older who excel in one of four categories: community service, education, performance and/or graphic arts and the labor force. Carole was inducted in the education category in recognition of her lifelong dedication to transform Illinois through education.



Sculpture Depicts SSND Foundress

The sculpture of Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, is located in the Peace Garden near the main entrance to the Sancta Maria in Ripa campus in St. Louis. Sculpted by Sister Marie Henderson, RSM, the bronze figure depicts Blessed Theresa as a young woman of her time, radiant in her call, steadfastly and courageously stepping into the future with hope and joy.

The sculpture includes significant detail that presents Blessed Theresa holding a Bible, indicating her love of scripture. She also holds a feather pen, depicting her as a prolific writer of letters to her sisters, benefactors, and political and government figures. At her feet are items related to education and her belief of infusing the curriculum with the arts.

