

A publication for friends of the
Congregation of the Humility of Mary



Sisters Keep on Keepin' On

by Joyce Bieber, CHM Development Director

Being an apostolic community with the freedom to choose a career (self-determination), sisters of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary (CHM) enter the workforce just like many women in modern history with occupations that include teachers, nurses, lawyers, social workers and medical doctors. In each case, CHMs incorporate the congregation's mission into their work. Does the dedication to the mission change when a sister retires?

According to 86-year-old Sr. Helen Strohman, God puts you where you need to be at each phase of your life. Sr. Helen was a teacher who spent more than 50 years in the classroom. She spent time teaching in Minnesota and Iowa; however, the majority of her career was in Mississippi. After leaving the traditional classroom,

she found a second career helping county jail inmates prepare to take the General Education Diploma (GED). "I really felt like I was helping people," Sr. Helen commented. "I had a person stop me on the street and ask, 'aren't you Sr. Helen?' I told him I was and he told me that I taught him in jail. I asked if he got his GED and he said yes." Sr. Helen was pleased when he also told her that he now has a job and was turning his life around.

Following her work with jail inmates, Sr. Helen was asked to start an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Sacred Heart Church and to assist the Sisters of Notre Dame with an ESL program at their education center in Canton, Mississippi.

She helps take care of two retired priests who are biological brothers. In addition to this, she helps part

time with a self-storage business and finds that once customers discover she is a woman religious, they often feel called to share their problems with her because she is a good listener. "The work that I have done hasn't always been easy, but I've enjoyed it," she says.

Sr. Sue Sellers doesn't see herself as retired. "I'm a doer," she said as she described all of her current endeavors. She started her career as an elementary teacher in Iowa, Montana and Colorado before accepting positions at Ottumwa Heights and then Marycrest.

Sr. Sue spent a couple years as director of Humility of Mary Center in Davenport before returning permanently to the Des Moines area, which is her hometown, to work at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center (BDRC) in Johnston, IA. Her ministries allowed her to work with people at various stages of life. "I enjoy all ages," she said.

"I didn't think about retiring until I was faced with a cancer diagnosis six years ago," said Sue. Her cancer treatment was successful and she retired as CHM coordinator at BDRC, leaving her time to focus on other activities.

Sr. Sue continues to volunteer at BDRC in the sisters' wing and once a month she is on-call for emergencies. She attends daily Mass and maintains close relationships with the sisters. She is a long-time member of the Johnston Lion's Club and is active in the club's farmers' market, Kidsight program, and book sale. "I don't know how I had time to work," she reflected.

-Keepin' On continued on page 3

Photo: Sr. Virginia Bartholome and Sr. Sue Sellers

Spring 2020 Volume 18 Issue 1

The Flame is published three times a year for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and friends.

Our Mission: We, the members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary, call one another to live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for Earth itself.

God is not unjust, and will not forget your work and the love you have demonstrated by your past and present service to God's holy people.

Hebrews 6: 10

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Sisters Lillian Stevens, Marie Vittetoe and Mary Rehmann (front row) are retired and residing at Humility of Mary Center. Here they join the leadership team (back row) Sisters Mary Ann Vogel, Johanna Rickl, Lynn Mousel and Marcia Eckerman in taking a photo for the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce "Welcome all People" social media campaign.

We, members of the Humility of Mary community are called to listen to the spirit in our changing world and, like Mary, to live the Gospel message in simplicity, humility and joy. Our mission is to work for justice within the human family and to care for Earth itself. This is a lifetime commitment. When we no longer work 40+ hours a week and receive a paycheck, we, like all working people, are considered to be in retirement. However, I would imagine that most of you reading this would agree that "retirement" really is not the correct word to describe this time in one's life.

Most of us in that time of "retirement" enter a new work force known as volunteers. Our sisters have shared many stories about their volunteer activities. The sisters who are no longer able to actively get involved provide another valuable ministry through their prayer life. You, our friends and donors, are also quite involved with volunteer activities. I know Humility Homes and Services, Inc. is very dependent on volunteers for operations of the Fresh Start Donation Center. We also seek you out to help fill positions on advisory committees of CHM and Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat and board positions of Humility Homes and Services, Inc. I frequently hear people say they are busier as volunteers than they were when working full time.

We appreciate all that you do to support our mission as volunteers and as donors. We all are companions on this journey in life.

Blessings on each one of you,

*Sr. Mary Ann Vogel
CHM President*

-Keepin' On continued from page 1

Answering the call to serve where needed has been significant in Sr. Kathleen Henneberry's ministries throughout her career and retirement. She was an elementary school teacher before choosing pastoral and parish ministry positions in Iowa and Minnesota. She served as CHM coordinator at BDR. She relished a sabbatical before she became an assistant at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat.

In retirement, Sr. Kathleen serves as one of the sacristans at Humility of Mary Center in Davenport. On her assigned days, she prepares the Magnificat Chapel for Mass, including care of the vestments and purificators and assisting with seasonal liturgical decor. "I take the ministry of prayer seriously," notes Sr. Kathleen. She pays close attention to the prayer board outside of the Magnificat Chapel and makes time everyday to reflect on these requests.



Sr. Kathleen Henneberry prepares for Mass in the Magnificat Chapel at Humility of Mary Center.

Walking in the beautiful surroundings of Humility of Mary Center gives her opportunities to enjoy nature. Her love of creation is consistent with her volunteer work with Progressive



Sr. Helen Strohmman, on left, is pictured following Mass with Mass attendee Terry Striegel, Fr. Bernie Farrell and Msgr. Patrick Farrell.

She

Action for the Common Good, a citizens' group with core values of social justice, empowerment, sustainability and community. Sr. Kathleen participates in the environmental forum for this group. "I love being outdoors and hearing the sounds of the birds, and the wind lifts my spirits," she said. "It's a way that I touch base with Jesus."

Relationships are important to Sr. Kathleen. "I want to be there for my family, friends, sisters and employees at Humility of Mary Center. I'm just as busy as I always have been. I enjoy the freedom of being able to choose how to spend my time based on my values," she stated.

Sr. Catherine Talarico stressed that retired people need to stay engaged with activities. "Being part of something and keeping connections is important to staying happy and healthy," she said. Sr. Catherine retired in 2015 after a fulfilling and varied career. She started as a junior high teacher and moved on to positions in pastoral ministry, housing and mental health programs in the Des Moines area.

Like most sisters, she was involved in volunteer work before retirement. She became involved in an art program at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville with Sr. Donna Schmitt in the 1980s.

continues to volunteer there once a week. "I enjoy being with the women and getting to know them. The activities we do bring out their creativity—even for those who think they aren't creative." According to Sr. Catherine, the program includes an opportunity for reflection.

Her ministry working with the homeless also connected her with the Des Moines Veterans Stand Down. This three-day event connects veterans and non-veterans experiencing homelessness or near homelessness with services, assistance and necessities like clothing. Sr. Catherine is responsible for recruiting and coordinating volunteers for haircuts and massages for attendees who would like these services. Throughout the year she helps raise money for this program.

In addition to these volunteer roles, having coffee with others and taking care of her big garden provide opportunities for spiritual therapy. "As part of my prayer time, I reflect on our CHM charism, mission and vision statements to remind me of what is important in my life," she noted. Sr. Catherine's advice to anyone entering retirement is to take a few months before making commitments. "Wait and see what pulls at you."

-Keepin' On continued on page 4



-Keepin' On continued from page 3

Some of our donors may have a strong connection to a CHM sister because of the ministries that particular sister was involved in many years ago. Perhaps a CHM was a former teacher, or a coworker at a hospital, or counselor during a difficult patch of life. Often Sisters of Humility find a second or even third career calling and continue to make an impact on lives well beyond traditional retirement.

For more information about CHM sisters, check out "Sister Stories" on the congregation's website...

www.chmiowa.org



Sr. Catherine above and below volunteering at the Des Moines Veterans Stand Down.

In 2019 The CHM Leadership approved funding requests as they fit with the CHM mission for:

Pax Christi Int. Peace and Non-violence Programs

Catholic Peace Ministry

River Bend Food Bank

Crudem Foundatoin

Sister Water Project

United with Migrants, Inc.

Peaslee Neighborhood Center

Diversity Services of Iowa

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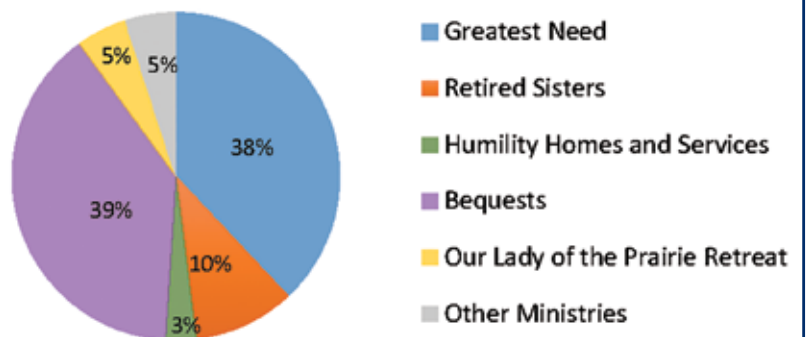
Oblate School of Theology African American Program

Bread for the World

Living Lands and Waters

Mary's Pence

Calendar Year 2019 Development Income Designation



Preparing for the New

by Sister Margaret Kruse, OSF

As we anticipate the arrival of spring and the rebirth it brings to the landscape at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat (OLPR), we are filled with excitement for a different kind of new beginning on the property this year. In the next month, the old barn will be taken down to make room for a maintenance shop.

The maintenance shop will reflect the Congregation of the Humility of Mary's commitment to care for Earth by making it energy efficient and using renewable energy with solar panels. Events are planned to help finance this endeavor, including the Birdies for Charity fund-raiser in April and a Harvest Festival at The Prairie in the fall.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, and the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. To commemorate both, we will offer a variety of opportunities to experience and explore God's sacred creation, Our Common Home, with the following offerings:

- Join us for a fun day of gardening on 4/23/20...



We will work on flower beds and in the garden planting: weeding and mulching. Food and drink provided. Come for any amount of time...give an hour, two hours or the whole day. Let us know you are coming! Contact Sr. Margaret at 414-640-1491 or smkruse@lakeosfs.org

- Kathleen Collins will lead us in learning techniques to heal Earth in her retreat on May 30 called "Medicine for the Earth."
- Pat Shea gives us the opportunity on May 5 (and each month thereafter) for quiet and reflection as she incorporates different blessings for Earth.
- Gwen Deming will explore the energy of trees and how they nurture us in our daily lives on August 1.
- Spend an evening under the sky on September 24 with Steve Spangler as he describes the autumn skies through the stars, planets and solar systems.

For more information about these and other retreats or to register, go to www.theprairieretreat.org or call 563-336-8414.

Volunteers on The Prairie

The sisters of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary continue to minister in retirement. This is true for Sr. Lillian Stevens and Sr. Rosie Restelli who, because of their love and involvement at The Prairie Retreat, have agreed to serve on the advisory committee as well as the spirituality and programing subcommittee.



Sr. Lillian said she grew up with The Prairie. She was out there when Fr. Vincent Fabula and Sr. Joann Kuebrich were preparing the land and buildings to be a retreat center. She remembered the chicken house and many items needing to be cleared out of the valley. She was one

of the volunteers cleaning indoors and out, putting down the small rocks on the labyrinth and weeding it for many summers. Sr. Lillian also prepared the flower boxes and was thrilled when a robin made its nest in one!



Sr. Rosie's history at The Prairie also included the labyrinth. She was one of those to form the labyrinth with the bigger rocks, even doing it a second time when it eroded away. Her first drive into The Prairie was overwhelming, seeing its

beauty and knowing it was a gift given the sisters to steward for years to come. Six years ago Sr. Kathleen Tomlonovic asked her to be on the advisory committee to represent CHMs. This has given her the opportunity to see the dedication of the people on the advisory committee and their generosity to share their time and talent.

"In this age of technology where everything is moving faster and faster, there is a need for peace to feed one's soul. We have lost a sense of who we are and need to touch the ground of our being. Come to the Prairie. Come to the Prairie."

-Sr. Rosie Restelli

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Sr. Johanna Rickl and Sr. Lynn Mousel rallied for peace in downtown Davenport, Iowa.

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Sr. Bea Snyder and Sr. Maggie Bennett (at left) spent many hours collecting, wrapping and delivering Christmas gifts for children in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, whose families have been broken by immigration raids.

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l-r: Sr. Elaine Hagedorn, CHM, Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS, and Sr. Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM reunited during caucus season in Des Moines.

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This spring issue of *The Flame* contains a listing of friends who have made contributions to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary from January 1 through December 31, 2019. Every effort has been made to provide a complete and accurate listing. If there are errors, omissions, or questions, please contact the development office at 563-336-8401.

Thank you for your
generosity and support.

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Joyce Bieber

CHM Development Director

563-336-8401 or jbieber@chmiowa.org

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 Sherrill Custer
 Mary Alice Daly
 Barbara Detaeye-Dvorak
 Donna Dobbels
 Kathleen Dooley

Eunice Fong
 Rosemary J. Fraune
 Linda Frear-Eli
 Jim Freeman
 Mary Gauthier
 Annabelle Gergely Keith
 Raymond P. German
 Rev. Robert Harness
 Dr. Lyle Hellyer
 Rosemary Hendricks
 Msgr. Francis Henricksen
 Mary Hittner
 Dick Inman
 Shiela D. Kielly
 Betty and William Klodt
 Jerri Leinen Moeller
 Gayle Lovejoy
 Kathleen and Glenn Medhus
 Evalee Mickey
 Benita Moore
 Jane O'Donnell
 Barbara Pierzynski
 John and Kathy Prochaska
 Francis and Sandra Raucci
 Margaret Real
 Donna Riedel
 Janet Rossmiller-Dolan
 Gary and Rose Marie Schmedding
 Jonella and Richard Schwaller
 Sarah K. Sedgwick
 Joseph Simons
 Billie Smith-Uitermarkt
 Dr. Richard W Thiede
 Kenneth Vandersnick
 Carol Vogel
 Janet M. Walther
 Sue Witte



Sr. Rosie Restelli and Sr. Rachel Beeson sending up prayers with the beat of a drum.

A Humility Woman

A humility woman is happily seen spreading her gifts and talents throughout the community. She is humbly going about life's work in obedience to God's will. She is merrily sprinkling love and joy on those she meets and gently soothing the cares and concerns of those around her. A humility woman is seeking God's wisdom in prayer and at Mass and choosing a life missioned in helping others.

-Diana Gray, CHM Associate

Sister Muñoz Wins Lifetime Achievement Award



The Emerge Iowa DAWN Awards, held on March 8, 2020, recognized exceptional women in Iowa for their community involvement and public service. The Barbara Boatwright Lifetime Achievement Award honored CHM Sister Irene Muñoz, a social justice advocate fighting for the rights of migrants. Congratulations Sr. Irene !

Resting in Heavenly Peace



Associate Trini Velasquez
May 22, 1932 -
November 21, 2019



Sister Carla Takes, CHM
July 16, 1925 -
December 21, 2019



Associate Carol Parr
June 8, 1947 -
January 22, 2020

Loving tributes to our departed sisters can be found in "Sister Stories" at www.chmiowa.org