

Sisters of Notre Dame
of the United States

SND USA

WINTER 2023



An **Evolving**
Expression *of* **Mission**

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On the cover: artist Sister Megan Dull created this ceramic wall sculpture titled "The Face in the Waters Is My Own." It speaks to our profound inseparability and kinship with the entire earth community. Also, the art incorporated in the section "An Evolving Expression of Mission" is one of her silkscreen prints, "Micah 6." As a faculty member of Notre Dame College, Sister Megan primarily taught Ceramics, 3-D Design, Basic Design, and Professional Practices. In 2000, she was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council.



LETTER FROM **SND USA PROVINCIAL TEAM**

Dear Friends,

This issue of *SND USA* magazine explores how the expression of the SND mission has evolved over time. Educating children and caring for the poor and marginalized continue to be mission priorities with many new programs and services added as needs arise. We strive to serve the new needs of the 21st century through emerging ministries such as social justice advocacy, caring for refugees at the borders, and reaching out to young adults seeking meaning and life direction. Additionally, healthcare institutions founded by Sisters of Notre Dame continue to reflect our charism and mission, and invite students and lay persons to join us in sharing God's goodness and love with others.

We are humbled to learn how former students appreciate the foundation they received at SND-sponsored schools across the country. It is exciting to hear how they are furthering the charism and mission of the sisters in their personal lives and careers. To that end, we say "AMEN! May God continue to bless your work and hearts."

We invite you to consider a passion in your own life in which you could get involved, or join with us as a volunteer through one of our national ministries. There is a unique service waiting for everyone!

Thank you for your faithful support, and God bless you.

Gratefully,

The SND USA Provincial Team



An Evolving Expression of Mission

The congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame began with a humble, shared dream, which became its enduring mission.

Girded with strength, patience, and an unquenchable desire to help in their hometown of Coesfeld, Germany, teachers Hilligonde Wolbring and Elisabeth Kühling rolled up their sleeves and went to work – educating, feeding, housing, and loving children who were orphaned or whose parents were unable to provide for them. Soon, at the invitation of Rev. Theodor Elting, these passionate women continued their good work, their mission, as vowed religious.

Through many decades of societal changes, growth, even moves to new countries, the SND mission remained constant: to proclaim God’s goodness and compassionate love, particularly to women, children and the marginalized. In fact, the legacy of providing education and health care across the U.S. by Sisters of Notre Dame and other religious congregations is astonishing. Nearly 500 hospitals were established by various congregations of sisters in the 1900s. Sisters of many congregations opened finishing schools for

the well-to-do and free schools for immigrants and the poor. St. Elizabeth Seton opened the nation’s first parish school in 1810 and, by the turn of 20th century, women religious operated 3,800 parochial schools and 600 girls’ academies. These schools all feature a distinguishing characteristic of Catholic education: the mission to educate young people to engage with our world to bring about positive change, following the mission of Jesus. It is a holistic education that values the development of the whole person.

Then as now, Catholic schools faced various challenges. Today, the number of women entering religious life has declined. For many Catholic schools founded by religious orders, the evolving partnership between religious and lay staff has been central to the Catholic education model. This is very evident in SND-sponsored schools, where all but two ministries are led by lay people. The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) reports that many Catholic schools have closed due to declining enrollment over the last several decades. In 2020 alone, nearly 200 schools closed across the country – due to declining enrollment and financial instability exacerbated by the Covid



“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”

– Harriet Tubman

pandemic. On a positive note, the NCEA also reports that Catholic schools are excelling, post pandemic, especially due to the dedication of their teachers, both religious and lay. During the pandemic, more than 90% of Catholic schools opened safely, in person, five days a week, with hybrid options. According to a report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on post-pandemic academic achievement, released in October 2022, Catholic school

students performed at or near the top in reading and math compared to public school students.

Despite these challenges, the value of Catholic education is as relevant as ever. In their article, “On the Catholic Identity of Students and Schools: Value Propositions for Catholic Education”, Daniel Lapsley and Katheryn Kelley describe the importance of Catholic education to moral-character formation, arguing that a Catholic school education offers an essential foundation for the development of religious-spiritual identity in the context of understanding and living the Catholic faith. Indeed, Catholic identity in SND schools

embraces these values in developing the whole person through religious instruction, sacramental and prayer experiences, service learning and the pursuit of academic excellence. And at the foundation of an SND education is the sisters’ charism and mission.

The charism and mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame have not changed since the congregation’s founding; what has changed is the way the charism and mission are expressed through the work of the sponsored ministries.

“Simply put, SND ministries have continued to grow to meet the needs of the times. The sisters have responded to the social, cultural, economic, and demographic changes in the United States while consistently serving the mission of the Church. For example, SND schools have evolved in welcoming students and teachers from many diverse backgrounds, including students who are not raised Catholic,” describes Laura Koehl, Executive Director, SND USA National Sponsorship and Network Office. “And the sisters and their lay partners continue to work with people on the margins: those challenged by the circumstances they are in, whether it be hardships related to their income and living situation, their race and ethnicity, their sexual identity, their learning difference, or their mental health.”

Let’s consider how the SND mission has evolved.

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- Laura Koehl, Executive Director, SND USA National Sponsorship and Network Office



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Transformative Education

Today's SND education is transformative.

Academic excellence remains a primary goal in SND-sponsored and affiliated schools. "Our schools seek to educate the whole person and to encourage students to use their God-given gifts to the fullest," Koehl emphatically states. "An SND education is an education for transformation: to become who God intends them to be and use those gifts to bring about positive change in our world."

An SND education includes the following:

Academic Development – developing critical thinking skills; offering college preparatory courses and college credit courses, individualized programs, hands-on experiences, and 21st century resources

Spiritual Development – exploring the meaning of life and one's place in God's world; understanding and growing in the Catholic faith and how it calls all to holiness; developing moral character and respect for the dignity of others

Social & Emotional Development – developing meaningful and life-giving relationships with God, self and others; increasing self-awareness and confidence, leadership skills, good mental health and emotional balance

Physical & Aesthetic Development – developing strong habits for a healthy mind and body; developing talents in athletics, the visual and performing arts; respecting the sanctity of life in all its forms as God's creation

Ethic of Service – understanding the tenets of Catholic social teaching; recognizing the importance of serving others and our community; developing respect for the dignity of each person and our responsibility to one another in building just and peaceful communities

With a strong focus on sharing the SND educational model with lay professionals within SND-sponsored or affiliated schools, many programs and workshops are offered to individuals working within SND ministries. For example, professionals from nine SND-sponsored and affiliated ministries, representing all four SND regions, gathered in Chardon, OH in April 2022 for the annual Charism Experience. According to facilitators, Sisters Lisa Novak and Donna Paluf, the Charism Experience provides a formative opportunity for participants to reflect on the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame by becoming aware of their own personal goodness and experiences of provident care. The three-day experience featured stories of St. Julie Billiart and SND founder, Hilligonde Wolbring. Time was also dedicated to discussion, prayer, and reflection. The Charism Experience concluded with small group discussions on ways to bring the fruits of the experience back to their individual ministries.

"SNDs put great value on educating not only students, but also those who serve as teachers and administrators."

*- Laura Koehl, Executive Director,
SND USA National Sponsorship and Network Office*

"SNDs put great value on educating not only students, but also those who serve as teachers and administrators. This is evidenced by the legacy of the sisters and the many lay persons who teach and lead in SND-sponsored schools today. Many Sisters of Notre Dame have master's and doctoral degrees themselves, demonstrating their own pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the world," Koehl states.

"Over the years, the sisters' commitment to Catholic education has expanded into all levels from pre-K to college," Koehl says. "In fact, SNDs were involved in the founding of two colleges, Notre Dame College in Cleveland, OH and Thomas More University (formerly Villa Madonna College) in Crestview Hills, KY."

Catholic Social Teaching

Today an education at SND-sponsored schools includes Catholic social teaching.

This fall, Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin (NDCL) students in Chardon, OH, learned how the values of Catholic Social Teaching can impact the world. Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Judge Michael Shaughnessy and NDCL English Department Chairperson Victoria Frabotta, a 1986 graduate of NDCL, arranged a variety of experiences ranging from direct service to the poor to efforts to transform societal systems. As part of this semester-long class, titled, "Faith and Justice through Life and Literature," students spearheaded a collection of food, personal hygiene items, and grocery and gas gift cards for Project Hope, a homeless shelter in Lake County, OH. Students visited with shelter staff to explore the complex factors that lead to homelessness. Class guest speakers included Andrea Pollock, with Next Step, a home that helps young adults transition



to stabilized independence after experiencing hardships such as abuse, neglect, and homelessness. Students interacted with a panel of prosecutors and defense attorneys to explore the criminal justice system and its impact on individuals and families. Students visited Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Hollie Gallagher's mental health court where Judge Gallagher works with a team of social workers, parole officers, and mental health providers to provide effective alternatives to incarceration. During the last week of class, students visited with social entrepreneur Brandon Chrostowski, who in 2013 founded EDWINS Restaurant and Leadership Institute in Cleveland, OH, designed to train formerly incarcerated people in the culinary and hospitality industry. EDWINS program boasts a 95% employment rate with a less than 1% recidivism rate for participants.

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Frabotta says, “Having students look at society through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching has challenged them to question and examine current laws in society. This hands-on approach has been instrumental as students experience different perspectives, empowering them to be the change in the world.”

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, serving individuals and families in Covington and Northern Kentucky, is another sterling example of transformative education experienced at SND-sponsored ministries. The work of the Center has been modeled around best practices in education, including programs in early learning, homework support, summer academics and family support. Established in 2009, the Center offers children individualized tutoring and cultural enrichment including art, music, dance, theater, and supervised

indoor physical education. The Center’s Family Support Program provides information and teaches immediately applicable life skills to improve family functioning that will also support the academic success of their children.

Notre Dame Academy in Covington, KY, provides a year-long course on Catholic Social Teaching to juniors. The first semester is presented seminar style, bringing in guest speakers from the community. Topics tackled include immigration, human trafficking, abortion, care for the elderly, educational justice, and more. “We dive into what the Catholic Church teaches, root causes of the problems, and how students can get involved,” describes Bridget Price, campus minister and service coordinator at NDA. “We also try to bring in agencies that provide services to support the families and individuals facing these problems.”



“Students come away from their experiences with a sense of joy and accomplishment at having served the community.”

- Josh Mocek, co-director of Campus Ministry for Retreats and Service Learning

Price, a 2000 graduate of NDA, recently invited Detective Mary Braun to discuss human trafficking with the students. “Some of the information was new. Other information enabled students to look at the issue from a new perspective. Students are very

engaged with all our speakers. Many ask for contact information because they want to get involved.”

During the second semester, instead of inviting a speaker to class, NDA students leave school at 8:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and serve in the community. “Students choose their top three topics of interest, and I do my best to get them serving in either their first or second choice,” Price says. “This is no small feat with 120 students participating in this class.”

Perhaps most significant is how long this class has been offered. According to Jack VonHandorf, Principal/Interim President of NDA, the program began 48 years ago. “Sisters Lea Paolucci and Rita Geoppinger began the class,” Jack VonHandorf states. “The sisters recognized the need and acted on it. I don’t know a lot of schools where students leave to serve in the community during class time. Catholic Social Teaching is vital and a part of our holistic curriculum. I believe when students are introduced to service, it becomes part of their lifestyle.”

Service Engagement

Today, service is a component at all SND-sponsored schools.

Whether it’s organizing food drives, participating in beach clean-ups, raking leaves or shoveling snow at senior citizens’ homes, serving as pall bearers at funerals, building wheelchair ramps, singing Christmas carols at senior-living facilities, or simply spending time with the ill or home-bound, students in SND-sponsored schools are engaged within their communities, demonstrating God’s goodness and loving care for all.

“Our students get excited about becoming living examples of their faith,” asserts Koehl.

“Through service and service-learning programs, our students learn about the need to address issues and injustices in the world: socio-economic challenges, racial inequalities and discrimination, climate crisis and ecological degradation, human trafficking, and immigration. In this way, the commitment to those at the margins of society is carried forward in the lives of students after graduation,” Koehl considers. “Through family, professional, and community responsibilities, our students experience and engage in ways they can bring about positive change in the world.”

Students at Notre Dame Academy in Toledo, OH, are required to complete 70 hours of service learning by the end of the first semester of senior year in order to graduate. “Our students tend to volunteer in areas concerning education or working with children, senior living, and persons with disabilities,” says Josh Mocek, co-director of Campus Ministry for Retreats and Service Learning. “Students come away from their experiences with a sense of joy and accomplishment at having served the community.”

Mocek reflects, “The sisters have a charisma for uplifting the dignity of the human person with a focus on women, children, and the most vulnerable. Our service-learning program seeks to form young women to be socially responsible servant leaders who are cognizant of the power their words and actions have on others.”



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An Evolving Expression of Mission

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Diversity Initiative

Today's SND-sponsored schools embrace diversity.

While the Sisters of Notre Dame originally arrived in the U.S. to help educate the children of German Catholic immigrants, SND-sponsored schools welcome students from increasingly diverse communities.

“As our founders intended, SND-sponsored schools have expanded on the commitment to welcome those from many diverse backgrounds, including students not raised Catholic,” states Koehl. “In today’s world, our SND ministries embrace people of many backgrounds and circumstances. We live in a diverse world. Not only do SND-sponsored ministries respond to the needs of others but they also recognize the value of learning in diverse communities that reflect the realities of our world.

Students learn from those who have different backgrounds and traditions. They learn how to respect others who are different from themselves and recognize that building community requires care and encounters with others from all walks of life.”

Notre Dame Academy in Los Angeles, CA has done a great deal of work in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This year the school launched the Office of Women, Culture, and Community to lead the diversity initiative. The office includes the Affinity Group program, diversity council, honor code, service learning, and an adult team of leaders and teachers.

The goal of Affinity Groups is to help students develop healthy self-identity and build networks both within and beyond the group through sharing experiences and strategies. Affinity Groups include the Asian Pacific Island Desi American (APIDA), Black Student Union (BSU), Latin American



“NDA’s goal is to lead all diversity and inclusion efforts through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.”

- Lilliam Paetzold, Head of School/President, Notre Dame Academy Schools of Los Angeles

Hispanic Student Organization (LAHSO), and Middle Eastern North African (MENA)

Past events and activities included a LAHSO-sponsored First-Generation College Night (presentation in both English and

Spanish); a BSU-hosted field trip to visit the Black Colleges Fair; APIDA-sponsored presentation on Lunar New Year and a presentation for Symposium Day entitled, “Colorism vs. Racism in the Media.” In addition, Affinity Group leaders hosted a panel on “Culturally Inclusive Language and Behavior.” Leaders also hosted and organized 2022 Heritage Week.

“NDA’s goal is to lead all diversity and inclusion efforts through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching,” Lilliam Paetzold, Head of School/President, Notre Dame Academy Schools of Los Angeles, explains. “Under the Office of Women, Culture, and Community, our goal is to move from individual initiatives to one comprehensive and focused initiative that serves as the foundation for all of the work on campus.”

The office mission statement reads: “The Office of Women, Culture, and Community builds and develops the NDA community through innovative, intentional, and thoughtful approaches that grow awareness and build understanding of our rich Catholic identity and diverse cultures. We also seek to guide and nurture young women to realize and live out fully their feminine genius: their unique dignity, identity, and gifts as women created in the image of God with compassion, empathy, and integrity.”

During the program’s launch, students watched “With This Light,” a documentary about Sor Maria Rosa Leggol, who worked tirelessly throughout her life for orphaned and abandoned children in Honduras. Afterward the students observed a



Education at SND-sponsored ministries is grounded in the four educational principles of the Sisters of Notre Dame:

1. The centrality of our good and provident God. Students are taught that God is good and present in all of us. They learn to look for and find God and God’s goodness in all things, even in life’s hardships and in those with whom they disagree. Understanding God’s goodness in the world is transformative in finding hope in times of desperation, confidence in times of self-doubt, and forgiveness in times of pain and hurt. Students find grace in embracing the virtues of faith, hope, and love.
2. The human dignity of each person as an image of God. All persons, no matter how much they are similar to or different from us, deserve respect. This is transformative in that it can help students understand where others are coming from, even if they disagree – finding a way to work with and care for those who are different.
3. The SND educator as a gospel witness. SND educators model the gospel in the way they care for their students, respect their own profession and role, and encourage an inclusive and welcoming environment. Their example is transformative for their students.
4. An education for transformation. The ultimate goal of an SND education today is to provide learning experiences and opportunities that support the holistic development of their students.

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panel discussion about Sor Maria with the film's executive producer and an NDA alumna who helped make the documentary. "Our students have a special connection to this cause because over the past few years, our girls at NDA worked to raise money and support for one of the schools started by Sor Maria Rosa for teen girls in Honduras," Paetzold states.

Paetzold says, "The girls have truly embraced this office and have come together as one community to support and lift one another. It has inspired them to think beyond themselves in their individual affinity groups and friendship groups to consider ways to serve other women around the world and in their community."

Mental Health Awareness

Today's SND-sponsored schools are deft, responding to student needs as they arise.


One example of this responsiveness is happening at NDCL. Principal Joseph Waler recognized an increased need for mental health services among his high school students during COVID. "I noticed that the pandemic exposed, created, and magnified a range of mental health struggles in our students. Some of students' struggles have always been present, but the intensity increased because of the fear and isolation induced by efforts to control the pandemic," describes Waler, who is in his 43rd year in the ministry of Catholic education, his 27th year as a school administrator, and 17th as principal of NDCL.

"Our school counselors continue to provide support for our students, especially regarding how their emotional health affects school performance. They routinely work with

outside counselors, therapists, and other health professionals to coordinate care for our students," Waler adds. In fact, in October 2022, Waler invited Dr. Lisa Damour, a nationally recognized expert on teen stress, to present a talk to all NDCL students.

"When you look at young people today, many are at the margins, not just economically, but isolated, anxious, with mental health issues. Young adults are struggling, particularly since the pandemic," Koehl concurs. "Many were isolated with only social media as their contact with the outside world. We continue to respond to needs as they arise, whether it be academic, emotional, social, or physical support needed."

While the expression of the SND mission has evolved, the congregation remains united in one heart, one hope, and one mission, namely the transformation of the world in Jesus Christ. Certainly, the history of the SND congregation demonstrates the transformative power of a few individuals willing to dream big and reach for the stars.

*If you would like to learn more about enrolling your child at a Catholic school sponsored by or affiliated with the Sisters of Notre Dame, please visit sndusa.org for a list of schools near you. 

"Our school counselors continue to provide support for our students, especially regarding how their emotional health affects school performance.."

- Joseph Waler, Principal,
Notre Dame-Cathedral
Latin School

La Reina Grad Grateful for SND Education and Foundation

Jacy Bessolo fondly remembers her years at La Reina High School in Thousand Oaks, California. While a student there, she learned the school's core values of compassion, critical and creative thinking, friendship, and love. "Service to others was also a key part of the La Reina experience," Jacy states. "I volunteered at Los Robles Hospital for several years throughout high school."

Today, the proud La Reina alumna mirrors these same core values while serving as a member of a medical mission team in Rwanda, East Africa. Jacy, a nurse anesthetist, provides care for patients undergoing urogynecologic surgeries.

"The Sisters of Notre Dame helped create the foundation through my high school experience which strongly influenced my career path, compassionate approach, and core values."

- Jacy Bessolo

Jacy attended Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts for both her undergraduate nursing degree and master's degree in Nurse Anesthesia. She currently works as a Nurse Anesthetist at Massachusetts General Hospital. "I first became involved in medical missions when one of my Northeastern University professors invited me and another classmate on a mission trip as an elective experience in global health," she explains.

Jacy says her patients in Rwanda are all female, ranging in age from early 20s to late 50s, and suffer from obstetric fistulas or other urogynecologic problems. Most women live in the rural countryside with limited access to medical care.

"When the team arrives at the hospital, the women -- who have traveled to be evaluated and, hopefully, undergo surgery -- dance and sing in celebration," describes the sympathetic nurse. "As a woman, it's incredibly touching to help other women restore their dignity and provide them with a chance to return to their normal lives. These medical mission trips have strengthened my passion for international volunteer work as well as my passion to advocate for women's gynecologic and reproductive health care."

"I would have to say I definitely adopted the SND mission of caring for others in love, particularly the poor and marginalized, in my work as a nurse anesthetist," Jacy says. "The Sisters of Notre Dame helped create the foundation through my high school experience which strongly influenced my career path, compassionate approach, and core values."

"I would like to say a huge thank you to the sisters!" exclaims Jacy. "I have so much gratitude for my teachers and La Reina sisters for providing a strong foundation for me to grow from, and for challenging me to be my best self."



ENRICHED BY CREATIVE



*The charism of our congregation,
a deep experience
of God's goodness
and provident care,
continues to be enriched
by the **creative fidelity**
of each Sister of Notre Dame.*

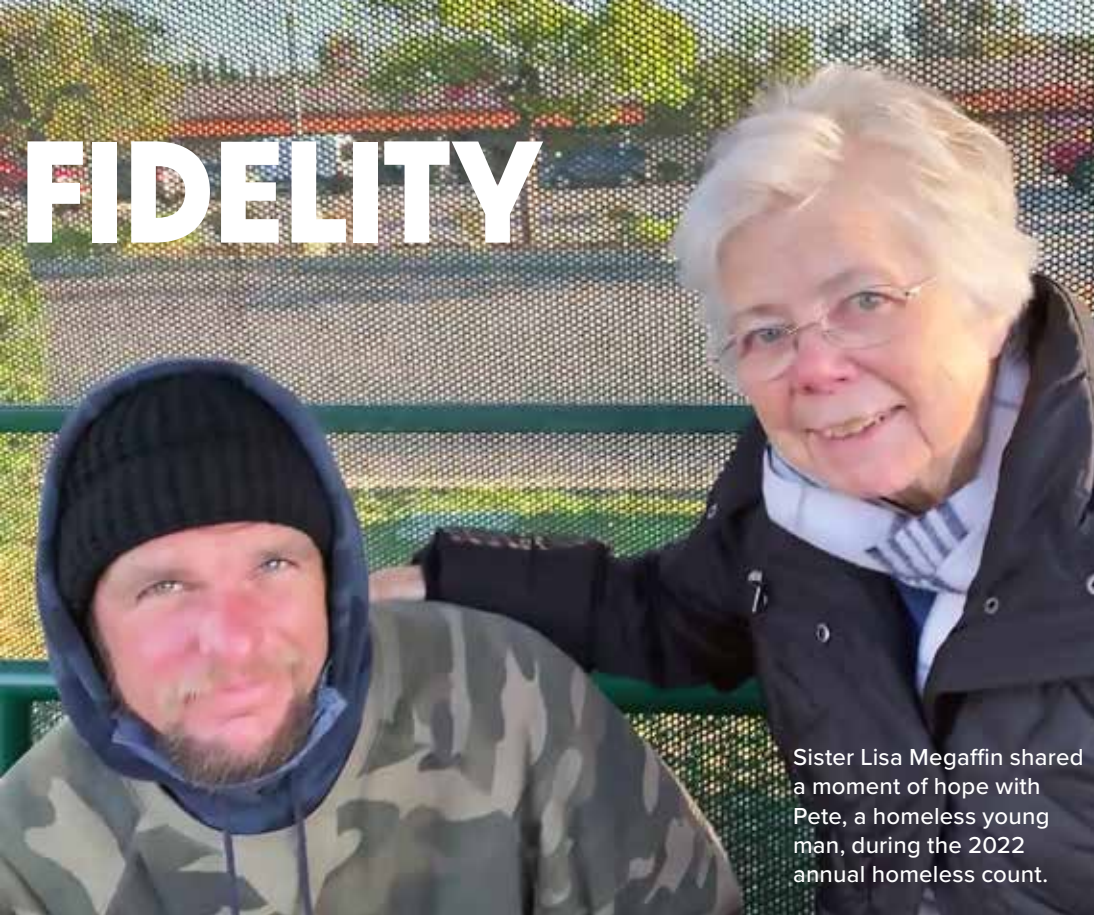
*Constitutions of the
Sisters of Notre Dame, Article 1*

Now I've often heard the comment, "I thought you were a teaching order." Well, yes. I remember drilling phonics as a first-grade teacher. Wearily, I started daydreaming and wondered, "Is this all there is?" (Don't get me wrong—my sister and niece have been devoted primary teachers for many decades, and we all owe immense gratitude to those who patiently taught us the basic skills.) Today, a lot of phonics drills probably happen through digital devices. Perhaps my restless pondering was a nudge of the Holy Spirit to expand my ministry horizons through new and creative ways.

Over the years, I have been privileged to serve the people of God beyond a traditional classroom. My ventures into photography started with a nudge of the Holy Spirit to volunteer to serve as a yearbook adviser many years ago. As a photographer, it is thrilling to capture the uniqueness of the human personality and the beauties of nature. It has also been an awesome grace to collaborate with non-profit organizations that provide affordable housing and give hope through education and supportive services.

Our Constitutions include the call and responsibility to enrich our congregation's charism by creative fidelity. Throughout our history, as individuals and as a community, we have discovered many ways to live this "creative fidelity." By the graces of the Holy Spirit, we recognize that our charism and its expression are dynamic and ever-evolving, rather than static. They are part of our spiritual DNA.

FIDELITY



Sister Lisa Megaffin shared a moment of hope with Pete, a homeless young man, during the 2022 annual homeless count.

Sister Lisa Megaffin

Born in Los Angeles and claiming Bell, California as her hometown, Sister Lisa Megaffin joined the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1966. She completed her undergraduate studies in history at Mt. St. Mary's College in Los Angeles and also holds master's degrees in mathematics and private school administration. Most recently, she became a certificated spiritual director through Mercy Center in Burlingame, California.

Sister Lisa has ministered primarily as a secondary educator. For the Sisters of Notre Dame in the California region, she is currently the Director of Mission Advancement Services and the Director of the SND Associates.

Within the civic community, Sister Lisa has served on various non-profit boards, including Many Mansions, an organization that provides affordable housing with life-enriching services. Her hobbies include photography, walking, reading and socializing.

But what exactly IS a charism (pronounced care-ism)? It is a unique gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed on individuals and groups, for the good of others and the needs of the world, making Christ present. The SND charismatic gift to the Church and to the world is a deep experience of God's goodness and provident care.


We live our charism through mission—we are sent to share the love of our good and provident God. To use the words of the theologian Meister Eckhart, "God's goodness is revealed in human goodness..."

As a dynamic grace and spiritual energy, charism extends into many hearts—Associates, colleagues, current and former students, friends, volunteers, donors, all entrusted to our care. We sometimes refer to these individuals as members of our charism family. Sharing our spiritual DNA, they radiate God's goodness and provident care.

Sister Mary Kristin Battles recently completed 12 years of service as Superior General of our congregation.

In one of her inspirational communiques, she listed many ways that we can share the love of our good and provident God. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is nudging each of us to enrich our common SND charism through creative fidelity. Here are a few ideas:

Befriend the unknown... Call someone who needs encouragement... Collaborate across boundaries... Draw outsiders into the group... Encourage others to use their gifts... Focus on unity... Listen to the lonely... Move from problem solving to creativity... Protect the planet... Radiate the joy of contentment... Usher in hope...

So in those moments when we wonder if "this" is all there is, we can find many opportunities to express our creative fidelity. The ever-changing realities of our contemporary world offer nudges to expand our ministry horizons. And since our congregation was founded in 1850, what awesome horizons we have crossed—thank you for being part of that journey! 



Students Experience Rural Health Care Firsthand

The Sisters of Notre Dame's founding mission of educating children and young adults and caring for the poor and marginalized took a creative, combined twist as students from three SND-sponsored high schools learned firsthand about rural health care in the inaugural Rural Healthcare Student Experience (RHSE) at St. Claire HealthCare in June 2022 in Morehead, Kentucky.

St. Claire HealthCare (SCH) is the largest employer in the region with more than 1,260 medical staff members including more than 125 physicians and 70 advance-practice professionals. SCH is the largest rural hospital in Northeastern Kentucky with 159 beds, seven primary care locations within five counties, a multi-specialty medical pavilion,

an outpatient care center, and homecare services. Additionally, SCH operates three retail services including family medical supply, pharmacy, and aesthetics. SCH staff provide 1.25 million patient encounters annually.

Students from Notre Dame Academy in Park Hills, KY; Notre Dame Academy in Toledo, OH; and Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School in Chardon, OH, spent one week shadowing health care providers in multiple areas at St. Claire as well as accompanying home health and hospice caregivers throughout the Morehead, KY, area. Students also joined the Northeast Kentucky Rural Health Scholars, high school students who live within the northeastern Kentucky service area and who are interested in

pursuing a health care career after high school, for presentations on nursing and physician assistant programs as well as many hands-on labs including suturing, laparoscopic skills, CPR skills, heart dissection, labor and delivery, and tying surgical knots.

“Our goal was to introduce these students to the unique challenges and rewards in health care.”

- Sister Judine Lambert,
Vice President of
Mission Integration at
St. Claire HealthCare

On the last day, after learning the importance of good nutrition, the students put their knowledge to the test with a smoothie contest. The week concluded with dinner at the home of Don Lloyd, CEO of St. Claire HealthCare, and his wife Monti, where students and chaperones were presented with custom jackets embroidered with the SCH and SND logos.

Sister Judine Lambert, Vice President of Mission Integration at St. Claire HealthCare, says this experience demonstrates how the SND mission has evolved over the decades. “The 11 students who participated in the program are all seriously considering a career in health care. Our goal was to introduce these students to the unique challenges and rewards in health care. Students also had the opportunity to share in fellowship with one another and experience multiple connections in the far reaches of the SND USA network. Our hope is that a service component can be included for next and subsequent years.”

Students shadowed in the areas of hospice, social work, pharmacy, physical therapy, dietetics, neurology, cardiology, pediatrics, and internal medicine. Sister Judine admits that arranging the logistics to connect all of the students with health care providers in the various fields they had requested was a challenging process.

“The SND mission and charism is alive in all our health care providers,” Sister Judine exclaims. “They are passionate about helping people in rural Eastern Kentucky communities and providing the best possible care. It is a shared mission of our hospital and health care network staff to teach future generations about health care, especially rural health care, and share their passion for their jobs and patients.”

“Students experienced a very different environment than where they live,” explains Lisa Fredrickson, Programs and Services Manager of the SND National Sponsorship and Network Office. “The population served by St. Claire HealthCare is among the poorest in the nation. St. Claire has a robust home healthcare program as well, where home care providers work with primary doctors to deliver compassionate care in patients’ homes. Students rode to these Morehead patients’ homes where they encountered some primitive housing.”

“I was touched by the caregivers’ compassion and respect for the dignity of the patients they treated,” exclaimed one student.

Another says, “I liked talking to the home health providers, visiting the houses, and gaining a clear perspective on the lives of people in the Appalachian area.”

Joining the students were Joseph Waler, principal at NDCL; Patty Mueller, science teacher at Notre Dame Academy (NDA), Kentucky; Tolani Afolabi, Vice President of Advancement at NDA, Toledo; and Josh Mocek, Co-Director of Campus Ministry at NDA, Toledo.

“Our students loved it. They valued both the home health visits and the opportunity to shadow a health professional. This experience gave them

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Students Experience Rural Health Care Firsthand

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a chance to stretch outside of their comfort zone. They are making career decisions as a result of participating in this program,” Mueller says.

“This program was able to meet the needs of both students and clients. The home visit was

eye opening for my students. Students witnessed a compassionate caregiver in action,” Mueller states. “They were able to have a conversation with the caregivers who were willing to share their personal experiences and life choices that led the caregiver to go into home health care. Clients loved being with our young adults. Although our students did not provide medical care for the clients, they did provide their stories.”

“As a former student and now teacher at Notre Dame Academy in Kentucky, I am very much aware of the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame. To see the charism in action at St. Claire’s was amazing. I had no idea the SND charism is so far reaching,” Mueller insists.

Fellow chaperone Mocek concurs. “This Rural Healthcare Student Experience flows directly from the SND mission and could be seen as an effort to ensure the continuation of that mission through the students that the sisters have dedicated so much to educating. It speaks to educating students in the area of social justice and expands one’s understanding of where the dignity of the human person needs to be loved, respected and spoken to.”

Mocek muses, “While on this trip, I came to understand the efforts the sisters are making to ensure the continuation of their mission through

lay people. This program helps expose and connect students to an area within the sisters’ ministry they did not know existed and, hopefully, draws a few back to St. Claire’s to help support that mission in the future. I experienced a profound sense of peace and joy regarding my work and association with the Sisters of Notre Dame while on the trip. I am most impacted in my work by what I have seen as the sisters’ pastoral approach -- seeing people as persons with dignity and loved by God without labels, biases, or stigma; meeting people where they are in the moment and offering to journey with them by nourishing them physically, spiritually, and intellectually.”

When not immersed in health care, students enjoyed participating in Mass at Jesus Our Savior Parish, a barbecue picnic, a presentation at Cave Run Spillway, a movie, and tour at Morehead State University’s Space & Science Center. They also attended the SND USA National Network Awards presentation in Covington, KY.

“I am optimistic that RHSE will be an annual program. I would love for more schools to have an opportunity to participate,” Fredrickson concludes.





SHINE EVENT FOCUSES ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Sisters of Notre Dame's mission has always focused on women and children, and education has been the primary driver to effect change for those vulnerable populations. The expression of that SND mission has evolved along with the ever-changing circumstances in the world. The sisters' focus on women's empowerment is just one of many examples of how the SND mission has expanded to embrace the needs of the times.

The sisters in Toledo, OH, decided that the best way to spread the message of women's empowerment was through an annual event with a coalition connecting women who might not otherwise get the chance to network with other women.

"We wanted to create an event to raise women up. We made the theme specifically for this inaugural event 'Lift up your voice' to emphasize this sentiment," says Sister Carol Gregory, SND, Mission Advancement Advisor of Toledo. "We came up with the idea of 'SHINE': Support, Honor, Inspire, Nurture, and Empower women."

The Sisters of Notre Dame of the Toledo region hosted their inaugural SHINE Women's Summit on September 29 at the Valentine Theatre in downtown Toledo. The event brought women from all faiths and backgrounds together to SHINE. The event kicked off with a welcome expo, allowing women to mingle and network while also speaking

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SHINE EVENT FOCUSES ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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with representatives of several women's empowerment organizations in the Toledo area, such as YWCA, Mom's House, Women of Toledo, and more. The 250 women who attended the SHINE Women's Summit heard from a guest speaker and a panel of local women.

The speaker, Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, pediatrician, professor, and author of the book *What The Eyes Don't See*, shared her local and national experience exposing the Flint, MI water crisis.

Dr. Mona, as she likes to be called by her patients, described setbacks she encountered in the discovery and handling of the water crisis, and how she continued to push local and statewide agencies until her voice was heard and the issue received national attention. Dr. Mona believes a lack of both racial and gender diversity within public health delivery played a role in the slow response to this crisis, and she shared from her experiences about how women can help resolve similar issues in their own lives and communities.

Dr. Mona's talk was followed by a panel discussion led by moderator Chrys Peterson, former Toledo broadcast news anchor and leader in the community. The four-woman panel included Wendi Huntley, the executive director of Connecting Kids to Meals; Sister Suzette Fisher, SND, who has spent 30 years working both locally and internationally to support mothers and children affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders; Allison Armstrong, the first female fire chief for the city of Toledo, OH; and Amy Remer, a three-time cancer survivor, amputee advocate, and motivational speaker. These inspiring women shared their stories of the perseverance, dedication, and strength it took to get



“The SHINE event was an excellent opportunity to bring women of Northwest Ohio and beyond together.”

- Kendra Smith, Vice President of Community Health in Ohio & Kentucky for Bon Secours Mercy and volunteer of the SHINE committee

where they are today. All agreed God and their faith helped them on their journey. When outcomes are unknown, faith serves as a driving force to power through and achieve goals.

“The SHINE event was an excellent opportunity to bring women of Northwest Ohio and beyond together,” said Kendra Smith, vice president of Community Health in Ohio & Kentucky for Bon Secours Mercy, and volunteer of the SHINE committee. “Hearing from keynote speaker Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha and our local leaders panel was a great motivator and reminder that we are all called to support and nurture not just our own communities but women around us, while being intentional about caring for ourselves as well. It was a wonderful day of learning and fellowship. I look forward to next year’s event.”


“SHINE stood out as an empowering event for women through depth of conversation, a rich spectrum of topic, and a lovely experience for all,” Jessica Hover, a SHINE attendee, stated.

Proceeds raised through this event will help fund the creation of a coalition to enable the Sisters of Notre Dame to collaborate with other organizations that support, honor, inspire, nurture, and empower women to maximize their impact across Toledo and the northwest Ohio region.

The SND Toledo Region Mission Advancement team hopes that this coalition will bring together women who want to help each other through shared connections, resources, and collaboration. They expect groups like those at the SHINE welcome expo to be involved but will welcome individual women, business owners, or entrepreneurs to join as well.

“Too often, we work in silos. Let’s bring our work together to create something new and something big,” Sister Carol encourages.

The Sisters of Notre Dame are proud of the success of this inaugural event and are excited for what is to come for SHINE in the future.

If you wish to be part of the Sisters of Notre Dame mission of women’s empowerment or other ministries, you can find ways to get involved by visiting the SND website. 

Doors of Hope Geauga Cares for Homeless Families



Across the United States, thousands of families with young children will have no safe place to sleep tonight. Despite the cold, wet and snow, they will be forced to sleep outdoors in makeshift tents, doorways, or corn fields, usually on empty stomachs. While many think homelessness is an urban problem, the National Alliance to End Homelessness states that America's small towns and communities are not immune to the problem of homelessness.

Advocates and researchers often refer to people who experience rural homelessness as the "hidden homeless." In fact, the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness reports that the growth rate for child homelessness in rural areas is almost four times the national average. Without shelter, these rural families end up living in dangerous, filthy conditions while exposed to the elements. In its 2020 Virtual Needs Assessment of Geauga

County, Ohio, the United Way reported over 28 percent of adults aged 18-64 identified housing as one of the top five needs in the community. Thankfully, when Doors of Hope opened in the summer of 2022 in Geauga County, the future looked brighter for rural, local families in need.

This story began at a book study where discussion group members Sister Susan Javorek, SND, Pamela Reisinger, and Renee Castrigano discovered they shared a passion to assist families experiencing housing insecurity. For Pam and Renee, this passion was rooted in their love and concern for their own families. Pam wanted to honor the memories of her daughter and granddaughter, both of whom have experienced housing insecurity firsthand. Renee dreamed repeatedly about "what ifs": What if her own daughter's family were homeless? What if they were in need with no one to help them and nowhere to

go? Both women knew the need for help can arise at any time in anyone's life.

For Sister Susan Javorek, this passion was rooted in her religious congregation's long history. The Sisters of Notre Dame began in Coesfeld, Germany, in 1850 when two teachers, Hilligonde Wolbring and Elisabeth Kühling, cared for poor, neglected or orphaned children whose families were unable to provide for them. Today, the thriving international congregation spans five continents, 14 time zones, and 17 countries with a ministry priority of serving those living on the fringes of society, particularly women and children. While implementation may look a bit different than in the 1850s, the mission and charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame continues to grow throughout the United States and beyond. Sister Susan considers herself just one of thousands of SNDs committed to caring for women, children, and those on the margins. "I saw a need, as did Pam and Renee, and we were excited to move forward," she says.

The three women decided to bring their unique skills to the table to help the homeless. Having worked for 20 years at a preschool, Pam had an intimate knowledge of local families' needs. Renee, a certified public accountant, brought serious business acumen. Sister Susan served for many years in parish ministries



and brought deep spiritual understanding. They met weekly to share their thoughts, dreams, resources, and connections, eventually transforming their passion into a plan of action.

The women had conversations with local agencies to better grasp the specific needs of families in the area. Soon the women began to envision a place where families could receive temporary shelter as well as access services tailored to each family's needs to ensure long-term stability.

"We wanted a place where families could have their privacy but live in community with other families," Sister Susan explains. "We wanted the place to feel like a home."

Today, Doors of Hope Geauga provides a sanctuary of hope for homeless families of Geauga

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Doors of Hope Geauga Cares for Homeless Families

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County, OH, by providing shelter and supportive services, thereby empowering families toward healthy, independent living. Doors of Hope Geauga works in partnership with each family to understand their individual journey and develop a roadmap out of homelessness into independence. Critical to this effort is an assessment of each family to identify services needed, including the review of benefits. Doors

OUR CORE VALUES

- Welcome Community
- Expect Accountability
- Serve with Integrity
- Faithful Stewardship
- Leave with Dignity

of Hope helps with housing searches, employment, and/or education. They also promote educational enrichment for children and connections with community partners.

“We believe shelter is a basic need of every human being, and good housing conditions are essential, not only for one’s physical


well-being, but for one’s mental health as well. To that end, the shelter is secure, clean, and provides space for families to grow in all aspects of family life,” says Pam, Founder and President, Board of Directors.

“We are still pinching ourselves,” concurs Sister Susan, Founder and Board of Directors Secretary, with a broad smile. “Needs led to answers, and problems led to solutions. We had a vision, but God made it a reality.”

“Families of any composition are eligible, but they must include a child under the age of 18,” says Renee, Founder and Board of Directors Treasurer. “Self-referrals are welcome as well as referrals from schools, churches, social service providers, childcare centers and United Way.” Renee says the house is now a home, and families may stay up to one year. “Since each family is unique, services are tailored to the specific needs of each one. To help facilitate the services, Program Director Michelle Maneage is on site,” she adds.

“Generous private donations and significant funding by United Way of Geauga County have allowed Doors of Hope to become a reality,” credits Sister Susan.

Nine months after the three founders first brainstormed, a spacious home was purchased; labor, supplies, and furnishings came in; and a beautiful, clean, safe home was established, complete with individual family bedrooms and bathrooms, a light-filled kitchen with new appliances, a spacious dining room for community meals, a cozy reading nook for children, and two living rooms to foster friendly conversations. Desks, computer terminals, and office space accommodate job searches and children’s homework. Outdoors are flower gardens, plenty of room for a vegetable garden, playground equipment and acres of scenic, bucolic spaces.

To learn more about how to support Doors of Hope, please email dohgeauga.org. 

Teacher's Dedication Reflects God's Perfect Love

Olga Hernandez sees the SND mission today as one of social justice, compassion, and love for one another. As a SND Associate, she personally embraces this mission by giving a voice to young adults with autism, intellectual disabilities, and severe handicaps.

Hernandez earned an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Development from California State University Northridge and a master's degree in special education from California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, CA. She taught at Hueneme High School and currently teaches post-secondary at Anacapa Adult Transition.

"I am grateful that God gives me good health so I can go to work and help my students be the best they can be."

- Olga Hernandez

"I began as a para educator in a special education program," she describes. "The students were severely handicapped, ages 9 to 11 years old. Soon after, I worked with middle schoolers and eventually in a post-secondary program with students with autism, intellectual disabilities, and severe physical handicaps. I fell in love with the 18- to 22-year-old age group."

Hernandez was first introduced to this population in high school, working as a student aide in a special education class. "The student office aide position was taken so I was placed as a student aide in the special ed class. I was not too thrilled," she admits. "But as the semester went on, I learned to like my classmates who were not like my regular friends. I developed compassion for them, and I knew in my heart I wanted to work with that population again."

The enthusiastic teacher says many of the adults she currently works with have skills similar to those of a third grader. Their disabilities range from physical limitations and challenging social behaviors to intellectual disabilities. Many require support counting money, shopping, and ordering at a restaurant.

Hernandez sees her job as a vocation. "I truly love what I do, and I feel God placed me here to be an instrument to help my students in the best way I know how. I have a student who is partially blind and in a wheelchair. Anyone who doesn't know Andrew would feel sorry for



him at first glance. Every day he has the biggest laugh and says the funniest things. I see past his disability and see him probably as God sees him – as a young man who brings me joy with his laughter and funny sayings," says the compassionate teacher.

"I share and model my faith by deeply caring for the students I teach," Hernandez says. "When students are having a challenging day, I focus on how these individuals are God's precious gifts despite their physical and intellectual challenges. I express to my co-workers that the job we have is to help students become as independent as possible. Most of the time, my students really need someone to care and understand them – just as Jesus does with us."

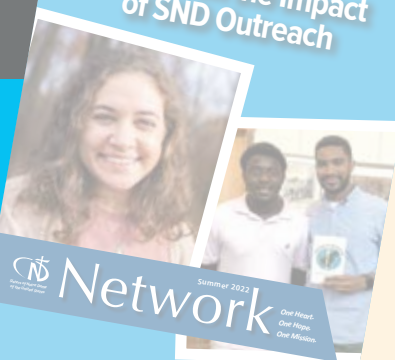
"We have seen so much injustice in the last few years," exclaims Hernandez. "I won't list examples, but we can certainly read about them each day. California is a melting pot of so many cultures. I feel the SND mission has evolved right along with the social issues in our communities and outside to neighboring states, reaching out to our marginalized brothers and sisters. In some way, I feel my work is similar, working with my students who don't have a voice."

"I am grateful that God gives me good health so I can go to work and help my students be the best they can be," Hernandez describes. "In return, my students show me that my challenges are nothing compared to theirs. That makes me want to do more for them. Each day is different – some challenging but most extremely rewarding."

*If you are interested in learning more about the SND Associates, please contact your nearest regional office.



Local Young Adults
Reflect on the Impact
of SND Outreach



SND USA Sister Chosen as 11th Superior General



The Sisters of Notre Dame are pleased to announce a U.S. sister was chosen to be the 11th Superior General at the congregation's international meeting in Germany this fall. Sister Mary Ann Culpert will lead the congregation for the next six years. In accepting her appointment, Sister Mary Ann said, "I am so grateful to walk in the footsteps of the many sisters who have laid the strong foundation for our congregation."

Sister Mary Ann served in various roles on the SND General Council in Rome from 2016 to 2022. Prior to these roles, she ministered at Notre Dame Academy in Toledo, Ohio for 14 years as dean of academics, principal, and president. Sister Mary Ann earned a bachelor's degree in education from Bowling Green State University in 1981 and a master's in education/school counseling from the University of Dayton in 1993.

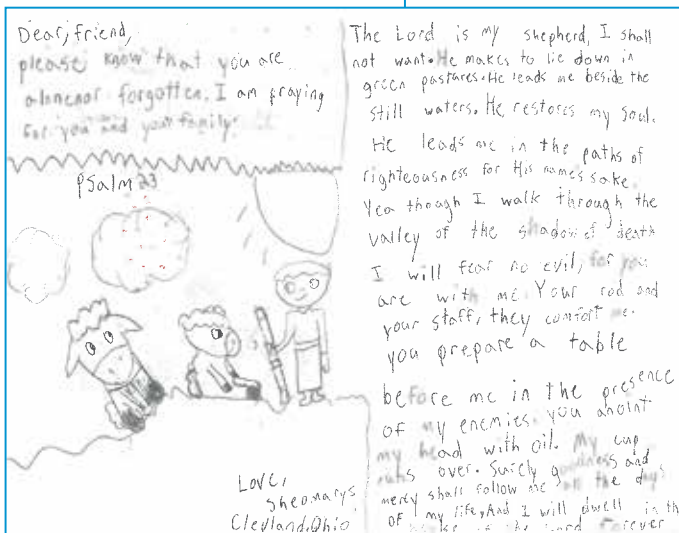
Also elected as an Assistant General is Sister Mary Kathleen Burns, from Simi Valley, California. Sister Kathleen has served as a member of the General Council since 2016, and before that as novice director for SND USA.



(l-r) Sister Mary Karuna Matthew (*India*), Sister Maria Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra (*Brazil*), Sister Mary Kathleen Burns (*United States*), Sister Marie So-Wha Kwak (*South Korea*), Sister Mary Prabha Jesudhason (*India*), and Sister Mary Ann Culpert (*United States*). These sisters reside in Rome during their six-year terms.

Hope for the Holidays

Bringing hope and light to thousands of migrants in the United States, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) launched its eighth annual Hope for the Holidays campaign. Sisters of Notre Dame and SND Associates within all four regions were happy to participate. The program collects cards for distribution at migrant detention centers across the U.S. and at shelters along the border, reminding individuals and families that they are not forgotten during the holiday season. A flyer was distributed to those willing to write a card with Spanish translations of holiday greetings.



JPIC Office received Most Outstanding Website Award by Web Marketing Association



jpik.sndusa.org

purpose of creating awareness, identifying opportunities, and developing inspiration for direct-service outreach, and empowering people to consider the unique ways they can participate within their own lives and communities. In addition, the website offers educational resources and opportunities for advocacy on current and pressing social issues. "It has been great working with WRIS on SND USA's national websites. Our main priority has been unified, national messaging, and the consistent themes and branding of our award-winning websites emphasize just that!" states William Jelenic, SND USA web content and design manager.

SND USA's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office received the "Most Outstanding Website" award by the Web Marketing Association, in the nonprofit industry category. The site was designed by WRIS Web Services.

This website, as a member of the sndusa.org family of websites, was designed to target external audiences (donors, Associates, volunteers, community partners, friends, neighbors, and interested individuals) for the



Thousand Oaks, CA

“The spirit of encounter will break down walls. It reaches out to those different from ourselves and gives us the opportunity to show the dignity of difference....it moves us to form alliances and networks. When we see ourselves as one universal sisterhood and brotherhood working for a common mission, we will become a powerful force for good in our world with the ability to cross many more boundaries.”

- Opening address to the 2022 General Chapter by Sr. Kristin Battles



SNDs participating in the 2022 General Chapter from the California region included Sr. Valerie Roxburgh, Sr. Kristin Battles and Sr. Kathleen Burns.

Mission Advancement E-gram

The monthly Mission Advancement E-gram provides updates about the life and ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame in the California region, as well as our Associates and ministry colleagues. Readers can learn more about the impact of their spiritual and financial support for the SND mission.



REGIONAL UPDATE

Notre Dame Academy Los Angeles Celebrates International Day of the Girl With Acclaimed Filmmaker and Human Rights Activist



As part of its month-long celebration of the International Day of the Girl, Notre Dame Academy Los Angeles hosted an advance screening of the moving documentary film, *With This Light*, featuring Sister Maria Rosa Leggol, a Franciscan nun who dedicated her 70 years in religious life to the orphaned and abandoned children of Honduras. The film was produced by billionaire Latinx philanthropist Jessica Sarowitz, who recently founded the first Latina-built film studio Stocker Street Creative.

Bonnie Abaunza, NDA Class of 1982, is an impact campaign strategist and human rights activist who worked on the film. Using long-established relationships with top filmmakers, corporations, cable and streaming companies, brands,

foundations and non-governmental organizations, her impact campaigns have raised international awareness and moved the needle on critical issues and initiatives. She has worked on over 50 film campaigns tackling human rights issues including *Blood Diamond*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *The Constant Gardener*, *Cries from Syria*, *FOOD Inc.*, *The Breadwinner*, *The Hunting Ground*, *ROMA*, and *When They See Us*.

Ms. Sarowitz and Ms. Abaunza’s work highlighting Sor Maria Rosa’s life has garnered international acclaim; Pope Francis has initiated the canonization process in response to their film. NDA students were blessed to have both Ms. Abaunza and Ms. Sarowitz on hand to discuss the making of the documentary as well as the specific challenges faced by females in the film industry. During their conversation with students in October, Ms. Sarowitz underscored the impact women can make: “Everyone has the ability to be of service, within your own community or in foreign lands. You can make a difference.”

SND Spirituality Bridges California and East Africa



Sr. Mary Leanne Hubbard, Associate Professor of Pastoral Studies at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, CA, spent two months offering retreats and theological instruction to SNDs from Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. Her offerings included retreats and mini courses in Ignatian Spirituality, the history of

religious life, spiritual discernment, and Marian theology. Sr. Leanne remarked, "They are so eager to witness to their own relationship with Mary in our discussions, and their grasp of the theology is quite natural and articulate. It is the air that they breathe...It was my wish to get to know the reality of the Sisters of Notre Dame outside of the USA during my sabbatical. As usual, God and the community have provided more than I could imagine!"

Fostering Hearts as Wide as the Universe

A 30+ year tradition is promoting international understanding! Students from SND schools in Germany spend time in an SND school in the United States. Recently, Ms. Maria Drahmman, a teacher at Liebfrauenshule, Vechta, Germany, visited her students spending the fall semester at La Reina High School and Notre Dame Academy.

The photo shows those involved at La Reina: Sr. Regina Robbins, Sr. Colette Theobald, Julia Fischer, Ms. Maria Drahmman, Jette Meerpohl, Caroline Thole, and Ms. Dana Ballaban Coppa. In reviewing the value of this venture, Ms. Coppa commented: "Although only six to ten students are actively involved in attending school at Notre Dame Academy or La Reina each year, all of the students at the host school have a multicultural and global experience. While the German students are visiting, they discuss their dreams and culture, an interchange that opens new horizons. What we definitely have in common is the tradition of the Sisters of Notre Dame, although we are a continent and oceans apart. Our shared sisterhood will influence our lives for years to come! As St. Julie encouraged us, we are fostering hearts as wide as the universe."



The Sandwich Story Lives On

The SNDs recently received "paper sandwiches" from the students at Notre Dame Academy Elementary in Los Angeles. This activity was part of their Founders' Day celebration:

As a school family we reflect on the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame and our founders. In many years we have made sandwiches to follow Hilligonde, better known as Sister Maria Aloysia's, example. Sr. Aloysia shared her sandwich with a child in need. In the past we have donated sandwiches, hygiene kits and canned food to the less fortunate to honor her service. This year we would like to send a note to say thank you for all that you do for so many, including us here at Notre Dame Academy. We are so grateful to be a part of the Sisters of Notre Dame family. With love, NDAE

Each "paper sandwich" included bread, cheese, a slice of tomato, lettuce, and lunch meat, with students' comments about their experience written on each piece. Here is an example:

One thing I love about NDA is the feeling of that you are home. – Teddy



Modeling Empathy and Generosity Begins Young

"Every child needs food to eat." This is the simple sentiment expressed in the book *For Every Child a Better World* which introduced Notre Dame Learning Center preschoolers to the concepts of empathy and generosity during the holiday season. Children decorated a "sharing box" and were asked to bring in their favorite boxed or canned food to share with hungry children in their local community. Many kids chose to bring in mac and cheese and peanut butter. The food was donated to Manna Conejo Valley Food Bank, serving the neighborhood around Notre Dame Center. Through donations from schools and organizations, Manna feeds 20,000 people per year... and the Notre Dame Learning Center preschoolers were a part of this larger impact.





Covington, KY

Frenchburg Trip

Each year in the late summer or early fall, the Sisters of Notre Dame from the Covington region offer a service opportunity in Eastern Kentucky. Sister Ruth Lubbers, the volunteer coordinator for the region and for the Vocation & Young Adult Ministry Team, works with Sue Brown who organizes service opportunities in the name of the Glenmary Sisters. This year's trip was the fourth one for volunteers from Covington or other areas to assist in Eastern Kentucky. The group, which included Margie Schnelle from our Advancement Office, Sisters Nance Hehman and Ruth Lubbers, went to Frenchburg, Kentucky from August 15 – 17 and painted three rooms for Karen, a woman with health issues. The painting was done in two bedrooms and a living room area. Karen's rooms were transformed into brighter and airier spaces. She was delighted with how it all turned out. The group was happy to make such an impact on Karen's life.



REGIONAL UPDATE

Sr. Nance Hehman Working with Food for Friends



Families were served on November 1, 2022, at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington's first mobile food pantry stop in Mason County. "Food for Friends" Mason County will be held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Maysville Lions Club to assist low-income residents by providing healthy food for their families. "Food for Friends" has already served families in four other counties in KY and is expanding again in the near future.

Sr. Nance Hehman, SND resides in Augusta, KY, not far from Maysville. She volunteers with Catholic Charities "Food for Friends" by helping bag groceries for nearly 100 families. The food items are provided by the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). They include canned goods, rice, pasta, meat, and fresh produce.

Women's Weekend Retreat

Life's Transitions – What is Saving Your Life Right Now?



Join us for a Women's Weekend Retreat.

The weekend will include:

- Guest speaker Nancy Bloemer
- Morning Mass
- Individual spiritual direction
- Individual prayer time
- Reconciliation
- Group activities

Date: March 24-26, 2023

Location: Sisters of Notre Dame, 1601 Dixie Highway, Covington, KY 41011

Fee: \$100 Includes 2-night stay, all meals and activities

Register: Call Margie Schnelle at 859-392-8229 or email: mschnelle@sndusa.org, or find the registration form online at: www.sndusa.org/regions/retreat

Ash Wednesday – Day of Recollection

Journey with us for a day of spiritual inspiration and personal reflection

What better time to pause, gather on the beautiful SND grounds, and spend time at the beginning of the holy season taking stock of where our lives are going. Sometimes we are very focused and at other times we feel like life has “run away” from us. On this Ash Wednesday, we will listen, pray, and share ways we nurture a life that is reflective amidst the many demands and obligations of every day. Our time together will fill us with new hope and a growing desire to deepen our relationship with Jesus, those we love, and our world. Journey with us for a day of spiritual inspiration and personal reflection.

Date and Time: February 22, 2023 | 9 am – 2 pm (*Registration begins at 8:30 am*)

Location: Sisters of Notre Dame Provincial House, 1601 Dixie Highway, Covington, KY 41011

Entrance is through the glass doors in back of the Provincial Center across the parking lot from NDA

Speaker: Sr. Mary Rita Geoppinger, SND

Prepaid reservations only please. Deadline is February 15, 2023.

Register by mail: Send the following to Sisters of Notre Dame, ATTN: Margie Schnelle, 1601 Dixie Highway, Covington, KY 41011:

- Complete the form by following link below
- Check payable to “Sisters of Notre Dame” at \$20 per participant
- Name (include all names if registering multiple participants)
- Phone number and/or email address at which you can be reached in case inclement weather delays or cancels event
- Lunch choice: egg salad or tuna salad

In addition to the presentations by Sr. Rita Geoppinger, SND the day will include personal reflection time, lunch, opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Mass, and Distribution of Ashes.

Link to register:
<https://sndusa.org/ashwednesday/>

"Train up a child in the way they should go; even when they are old they will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6

Inside:
Sisters Chat
About
Experiences with
Youth and
Young Adults

Toledo, OH

Welcome New Associates

Associates are men and women, married and single, who share in the mission of Jesus Christ through the charism, spirituality, and ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Associates make a non-vowed commitment to serve as partners with the sisters and extend the Notre Dame mission in their own life circumstances.

The Toledo Region was blessed to welcome four new Associates who made their covenant this fall.

Congratulations to Michael Christie, Brenda Degener, Nancy Mayo, and Linda Rence.



Our current Associates renewed their covenant this fall as well. With the new Associates, the Toledo program has grown to include more than 80 Associates.

To learn more about the Associate Program visit www.sndusa.org.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Check out Sister C.H.A.T.

The sisters in the Toledo Region have launched a monthly video series that brings women together to connect with, honor, advocate for, and teach each other. Each month a different sister hosts two guests and they discuss issues that impact women. The videos are posted on the SND USA Facebook page and YouTube Channel. Log on to catch up on what the sisters have been chatting about.



SHINE Coalition – Coming together to Support, Honor, Inspire, Nurture, and Empower Women

With funds raised through the SHINE Women’s Summit, the Sisters of Notre Dame are establishing the SHINE Coalition. The SHINE Coalition will bring together organizations whose missions—at least in part—focus on improving the lives of women and their families. Representation to the coalition is open to groups of any faith whose values align with those of SND and have programs that will support, honor, inspire, nurture, and/or empower women in the Northwest Ohio region and beyond.

“The Sisters of Notre Dame are valuable resources of wisdom and experience. Bringing organizations together to share ideas, resources, and skills, paired with guidance from these sisters with lifetimes of experience leading ministries that serve the marginalized, will only enhance the work that these groups are doing individually,” said Kerri Rose-Rochelle, Regional Mission Advancement Director for the Sisters of Notre Dame. Examples of issues the coalition will address include human trafficking, food insecurity, abuse, homelessness, education, mentorship, professional development, parenting skills, mental and physical health, and self-esteem.

Following its first meeting in December 2022, the coalition will continue to meet every other month in order to identify gaps in service in the community and work together to find solutions. The outcomes of the coalition’s work this year will be highlighted at the SHINE Women’s Summit on November 2, 2023.

If you’d like to get involved with the SHINE Coalition or the Women’s Summit, please contact Kerri Rose-Rochelle at krochelle@sndusa.org or 419.214.0837.

THANK YOU TO THE SHINE WOMEN'S SUMMIT SPONSORS AND MAJOR DONORS

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FOOD DRIVE

IN CELEBRATION OF CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK, SND HAS PARTNERED WITH WALT CHURCHILL'S MARKET TO HOST THE 3RD ANNUAL STUFF THE TRUCK FOOD DRIVE TO SUPPORT SEAGATE FOOD BANK.



DONATION

Walt Churchill's Market, 3320 Briarfield, Maumee

Friday, March 10 | 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

A LASTING TRIBUTE

Chardon Region



**SISTER MARY VERONICA
BLASKO, SND**

(Formerly Sister Mary Thaddea)

May 22, 1937 – Dec. 5, 2022

Veronica was the fourth of six children of Emery and Mary Anna (Mudri) Blasko. At St. Mary Parish in Chardon, Ohio, and later at St. Helen's in Newbury, she attended catechism classes taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame. After high school at Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland, Veronica entered the novitiate on February 2, 1955, together with her older sister, Sr. Mary Anne, a nurse. At investment, Veronica was given the name Sister Mary Thaddea. Sister's 33-year ministry of Food Service took her to large communities: the Provincial Center in Cleveland and Chardon; Notre Dame College and Regina High School, South Euclid; St. Michael School, Cleveland; and Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, VA which served both day students and boarders. From 1989 to 2010, Sister Veronica ministered as a teacher aide or office staff member at St. Peter's Canton, St. Jude Elyria, Our Lady of Lourdes in Dunedin, Florida, and ND Elementary School, Chardon. Upon her return to the Chardon Provincial Center in 2002, she made rosaries and crafts for the Boutique. She also sewed and donated articles of clothing for children living in shelters. Sister Veronica teamed up with Sister Theresa Gebura to bake cookies and pastries for the Country Kitchen at the annual Barbecue.



**SISTER EILEEN MARIE
REARDON, SND**

(Formerly Sister Mary Noraterice)

Jun. 26, 1938 – Aug. 12, 2022

Eileen was the first of five children born to Roger and Mary (Halloran) Reardon. She attended St. Jerome Parish Elementary School in Cleveland and then St. Peter High School where she first met the Sisters of Notre Dame. At the end of her sophomore year Eileen began to consider religious life. She entered Notre Dame as a postulant on September 8, 1956. At investment she received the name Sister Mary Noraterice.

Sister Eileen Marie then began a 45-year ministry of service to her sisters in community. She provided delicious meals for the sisters in convents in Ohio and Virginia, including

16 years at Notre Dame College in South Euclid, Ohio, where she served as kitchen assistant. In recent years as a resident of the Health Care Center, Sister enjoyed the NDES rabbit and the therapy dog. Her love and respect for nature, and her interest in daily events and people, whether near or far, kept her connected to God's world. Throughout life, visits and gatherings with her family members were especially treasured.



**SISTER MARY ELLENANN
MACH, SND**

Oct. 22, 1946 – Aug. 31, 2022

The oldest of 10 children born to Frank George and Rosemary (Schmitz) Mach, Carol learned to love small children, and helped to keep the household running smoothly. Carol's high school days at Nazareth Academy brought thoughts of becoming a religious. Sister Mary Priscilla Freidel, her great aunt, encouraged and guided Carol to pursue her dream with the Sisters of Notre Dame. She entered as a postulant on August 16, 1964, and was welcomed by her cousin, Sister Melannie Svoboda, a second-year novice. At investment Carol received the name Sister Mary Ellenann.

Sister Mary Ellenann's ministry stayed constant. For over 50 years Sister Mary Ellenann served in a variety of larger convent kitchens in Chardon and Cleveland, Ohio. At Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, Virginia, she oversaw preparing the noon meal for the day students, boarders, sisters and staff. In 1994 Sister Mary Ellenann returned to the Chardon provincial center as co-director of food service. In 2006, she became the administrative assistant for Aladdin and then for the SND Food Services. She loved family gatherings, traveling, scrapbooking, and writing poetry. All who knew her were blessed by her kindness, prayerfulness, and courage in facing a debilitating illness.

May our deceased sisters rejoice in God's everlasting love.



SISTER DONNA GALETOVICH, SND

(Formerly Sister Mary Rachel)

Nov. 17, 1931 – Sep. 28, 2022

Donna Katherine was the third child of Frances and Justo Galetovich. In 1950 Donna began college at Ohio University in Athens, but soon transferred to Notre Dame College

in South Euclid, where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology. In September of 1954, Donna became a postulant. At investment she received the name Sister Mary Rachel.

Her career in elementary education began when she was a postulant. She spent 27 years teaching grades 6, 7, and 8 in Greater Cleveland, Lorain, Youngstown, Amherst, and Arlington, Virginia. With her master's degree in educational administration from St. John College, Cleveland, Sister Donna ministered for 15 years as an elementary school principal at Holy Trinity in Avon, St. Margaret Mary, St. Anselm, and St. Paul in Euclid. She spent nine years as a teacher assessor with the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Cleveland, sharing her wisdom and experience with beginning teachers, and nine years preparing adult learners to earn their GEDs. Sister Donna's enthusiasm for life was unmistakable; all creation was a sign of God's loving presence. Dancing and jazzercise, family picnics and celebrations gave her energy. Her friends treasure her joyful spirit and patient courage in times of suffering.

Covington Region



SISTER MARY ELAINE KREBS, SND

(Formerly Sr. Mary de Angelo)

Jun. 6, 1930 – Dec. 6, 2022

Elaine Ruth was the third in a family of five children. She received her elementary education at St. Stephen School, Newport, Kentucky, and graduated from Notre Dame Academy, Covington, Kentucky.

After high school, Elaine studied cosmetology and became a successful beautician. Aware of God's call over several years, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame community in September 1956. She celebrated her profession of vows on August 16, 1959.

Sister Elaine received her Bachelor of Arts at Villa Madonna College (Thomas More University), and Master of Education

at the University of Kentucky. Her classroom teaching ministry spanned over 45 years, starting with first grade at St. John, Covington, Kentucky. She taught primary grades in the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition, her ministry took her as far as Our Lady of Fatima School, Birmingham, Alabama, and Holy Trinity School, in Harlan, Kentucky. Sister was instrumental in helping children who needed a bit more help to overcome reading difficulties. Her longest and final ministry was at St. Therese School, Southgate, Kentucky, where she served for 18 years. When Sister Elaine was diagnosed with dementia, she moved to St. Joseph Heights in 2006. Though some days were harder than others, she was always delighted by visits from her sister Bernice, to whom she was especially close. Visits with other family members also brought her much joy.

Toledo Region



SISTER MARY CYRILLA HELLMAN, SND

Dec. 11, 1922 – Dec. 12, 2022

Mary Ann Hellman was the fourth child of six born to Otto and Cecilia (Elwer) Hellman. Graduating from Delphos St. John's High School in 1940, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1941. Sister Mary

Cyrilla attained a master's degree in Special Education from Catholic University of America. She was a particularly skilled teacher of younger children, kindergarten through grade 5. Recognizing her expertise, the Diocese of Toledo appointed her supervisor for schools from 1965 to 1970. She also served as community consultant for the Sisters of Notre Dame and became the founding principal of the newly established Lial School in Whitehouse, Ohio in 1975.

Besides her assigned teaching, she became a speech therapist, an advocate at Kinder CASA Board, and a member of Mayor's Committee for Spanish Services in Norwalk. While teaching at St. Paul Elementary School in Norwalk (1984-2002), she performed pastoral ministry for the sick in the parish, which eventually became full-time parish ministry in 2002. Sister was a GED instructor as part of her ministry to inmates at Huron County Jail. Volunteer work in hospital and prison ministry continued in Toledo. Celebrating her 100th birthday with a small party, Sister claimed she was ready for her last journey, which occurred that very night. A century of generous community spirit, creative work to benefit others, and life-giving friendships proved her dynamic, evangelizing spirit.



Sisters of Notre Dame
of the United States

One Heart. One Hope. One Mission.

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The Personal Estate Planning Kit is available to you as a complimentary resource on the Sisters of Notre Dame planned giving website. Visit us at www.sndusa.org/donate then select the gift planning button to download your copy.