



THE MESSENGER

of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

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OCTOBER 2010



A very special thank you for all your gifts

See inside for our annual recognition of donors

When Sister Generosa Walker, right, celebrated her 100th birthday Sept. 6, she was in the comfort of her home at the Motherhouse, where she has lived in quiet prayer since 1985.

She and the other sisters who have retired from active ministry are

able to live out their lives here, in part because of the generosity of our friends and supporters who give to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

But your gifts go well beyond just care for our elderly sisters. You also help support our existing ministries in nine states and Brazil, while allow-

ing us to serve the dear neighbor in new ways every year.

Included in this issue are special messages from Sister Marcia Allen and Sister Jean Rosemarynoski (*pages 2 and 3*), and the Development Office's "End of Year Report" for July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010 (*pages 16 to 26*).

Bernadine Schieferecke Dickson, left, and Rita Dussault Hisey renew a friendship that began 75 years ago. Although they have written to each other over the years, they had not seen one another since they left St. Joseph Home 65 years ago. They were among about 130 who attended the St. Joseph Home Reunion Oct. 2 in Abilene, Kan.



BRINGING *memories* TO LIFE

For a relatively short span of time beginning 75 years ago, Rita Dussault and Bernadine Schieferecke were the best of friends. The two little girls were among the nearly 80 children who lived among the Sisters of St. Joseph at the orphanage in Abilene, Kan.

Rita, who lived at the home from 1935 to 1945, made sure she wrote to Bernadine at least once a year. But their lives took separate paths. Now 80, Rita and her husband Bill Hisey live in Hurst, Texas, while 82-year-old Bernadine Dickson lives in Mountain View, Calif. And despite those annual updates by mail, the two women had not seen each other since they left the orphanage.

Until earlier this month, that is.

Rita and Bill Hisey were the earliest arrivals at the first-ever St. Joseph Home Re-

See HOME'S HISTORY, page 5.

See LAUGHTER, STORIES, page 4.

Stories from St. Joseph Home begin in 1887

The focus Oct. 2 was the St. Joseph Orphanage, which opened in 1915, but some of the stories of those attending began even earlier.

In 1887, the fledgling Sisters

of St. Joseph of Concordia sent a few sisters to the flourishing cattle town of Abilene to open a school for girls.

But as the state of Kansas was divided into three (and eventu-

ally, four) Catholic dioceses, the sisters' Motherhouse was in one diocese while the Abilene school was in another — and each bishop

WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED AS A GIFT, *give as a gift!*

— MATTHEW 10:8

This command from Jesus, in Matthew 10:8, has been a guide for us for decades! It is a reminder that abundance of attitude and giving is the core of who we are. Our earliest Constitution, written in the 1650s, reminds us that whatever we have has been given to us – to give where there is need.

And we have been gifted with so much that we cannot but give in return.

Until the last two decades we have been able to provide for ourselves and our ministries with our earned income. But today, fewer of us earn an income, more of us volunteer and many of us are of an age where neither earning a living nor volunteering in exchange for a living is possible. Consequently, what earned income we have goes more and more for the care of our elderly sisters and less for our ministries and charities.

That is where you, our friends and benefactors, have come in. You are partnering with us in our ministries and charities in ways that are creating opportunities for working with and for others that we little dreamed of when our community was financially independent.

In this issue of *The Messenger* we wish to publicly thank you for the many ways you have made it possible for us to carry out our mission and ministries. Thanks to you we are able to provide for those in our community who can no longer provide for themselves. Thanks to you we have also been able to create a wider horizon of response to need within the human community.

Some of the ways that your gifts have been

A special message from
SISTER MARCIA ALLEN,
president of the
Sisters of St. Joseph
of Concordia



given in turn include:

▶▶ **NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR**, a storefront drop-in center for women and children in which women are invited to simply come to make friends or to learn a wide array of skills. Artists are encouraged; homemaking skills and child-care skills are re-enforced; basic skills such as reading and math are taught. Basically, whatever the woman or child needs, the three sisters and their volunteers seek to provide. Your gifts helped purchase the building and help provision the center with the materials the services require.

▶▶ **THE COMMUNITY GARDEN OF HOPE**. Long a dream of some of the sisters, this spring it began to take shape — thanks to gifts from many of you that provided for the well, piping to the garden and the various other work needed to get the garden growing. Ultimately, there were 26 plots tended by people from throughout Concordia who harvested vegetables and flowers all summer.

▶▶ **CONCORDIA YEAR OF PEACE**. A committee of local citizens, including Sisters of St. Joseph, initiated an effort that eventually spread citywide. “Year of Peace” projects include weekly studies of non-violent communication, weekly essays in the news-

paper by Concordians from junior high students to ministers of the churches and ordinary citizens and a “Civility Pledge” signed by more than 250 citizens. Your gifts have helped by making materials for the study of nonviolence possible.

▶▶ **POVERTY INITIATIVES**. This project is still in its initial stages. It seems the more we study the problems of poverty, the more complex the solutions become. But your gifts have helped initiate the process that we hope will lessen generational poverty in Cloud County and perhaps serve as a model for neighboring counties. Most recently, your gifts have helped us undertake a survey of persons in poverty in our area, and we are now studying those results and planning how to proceed.

Your gifts have also contributed to sisters in needed ministries that cannot afford to pay us a living wage.

In addition to these works, you have generously contributed to our prayer ministry through support of St. Mary’s Spirituality Center in Silver City, N.M., and Manna House of Prayer in Concordia. You have also most generously continued to support our mission in Brazil. All three of these long-standing ministries grow in importance as more and more people seek to understand life through the lens of spiritual meaning.

Most recently, we have set up a ministry corporation that will be our “feet in the street” in very practical ways. Called “Neighborhood Initiatives,” it will allow us to sponsor new ministries and support existing ones. Under this banner, we aim to move our sponsored ministries into other areas of the United States and wherever else in the world the need is dire.

So, we thank you for your generosity and continuous beneficence. And we invite you to continue to partner with us. Through your gifts — whether they be prayer or contributions of furniture and appliances, food or labor, money or matching grants — you demonstrate that you are our partners and companions in this Way, which was the Way of Jesus, for whom giving was a way of life. Thanks to you, we can be our best selves and carry out our mission. And if “gratitude is the heart’s memory,” then be assured that you are indeed well-remembered by each and every one of us daily.

With gratitude and affection,
Marcia Allen, csj

Mailing Label Update

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Attach old mailing label here
and print the corrected information below.

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THE MESSENGER
of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

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Development team faces humbling task

It is humbling to see the hundreds

of names of people who partner with us through monetary

gifts (pages 16-26). Add to that the number who volunteer, pray for us and befriend us and it is an abundant blessing! We are grateful for each one of you! Thank you for being part of our lives and mission.

Our Development Office has recently re-organized and we are pleased to introduce the new development team to you.

▶ SISTER MARGARET NACKE is initiating a new guild program. These are women who wish to volunteer with our ministry projects and our fundraising efforts. She will start a "pilot guild" in Concordia with the intention of adding guilds in other geographic areas in coming months.

▶ SISTER REGINA ANN BRUMMEL will use her grant-writing expertise and communication skills to submit more grants to foundations.

▶ SISTER LORETTA JASPER is eager to partner with us as events coordinator. She will oversee the myriad details needed to plan successful events such as the upcoming Christmas Open house.

▶ SISTER ROSEMARY FOREMAN is very computer savvy and enjoys research. She will monitor our online donations and seek ways to find new donors.

▶ SISTER CARMEL GARCIA, who resigned her position for health reasons earlier this year, has graciously offered to be a consultant on an as-needed basis. Her expertise will enhance the work of the office.

▶ SHERI KRAUSE is continuing as administrative assistant in the Development Office.

▶ THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (see page 26) will continue to meet regularly at the Motherhouse, offering direction and assistance with our overall development program.

▶ THE SISTERS LIVING AT THE MOTHERHOUSE generously offer their time helping with mailings and offering hospitality to guests at our events.

And I am serving as director of development.

Our mission in the Development Office is to offer donors opportunities to live out their hopes and dreams through their monetary contributions. Donors' gifts are an investment in making the world a better place. Your contributions help us live out our hope and dreams as well. We are grateful!

If you have questions or would like more information about our development program, please contact me:

By phone — 785/243-2113, ext. 1225

By email — jrose@csjkansas.org

By mail — P.O. Box 279 Concordia KS 66901

A special message from

SISTER JEAN

ROSEMARYNOSKI,

development director



Sister Carmel Garcia decorates the "prayer tree" outside the Sacred Heart Chapel in preparation for the annual Christmas Open House at the Nazareth Motherhouse in December 2009.

'Tis (almost) the season!

Please join us on Saturday, Dec. 11, for our Christmas Open House at the Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. The hours are 2 to 4 p.m., and there will be tours, refreshments and entertainment — plus, of course, a chance to visit with our sisters, renew old friendships and make new ones.

We hope to see you here!

COMING EVENTS

▶ **Oct. 15 & 16** — "Be-Friending God," a retreat for women in their 20s, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia. For information, contact Sister Bev Carlin at 785/220-7996 or srbevc@csjkansas.org

▶ **Oct. 29-30** — "Dare Your Heart's Desire," a retreat for women in their 30s, at Manna House. For information, contact Sister Bev Carlin at srbevc@csjkansas.org or 785/220-7996.

▶ **Oct. 29-31** — "Let's Make Baby Quilts" Quilting Retreat, with Sister Betty Suther, at Manna House. Registration: \$40. Room and Meals: \$100. Noon meals only: \$8.50 each.

▶ **Dec. 4** — 9:30 am-3 pm, "Guided Writing," with Sister Liberata Pellerin, at Manna House. A day of meditative writing to continue your awareness of life's experiences through this process. If you haven't kept a journal, this day will teach you how simple it is. Registration: \$40 (includes lunch).

▶ **Nov. 19-20** — "Beyond Blogs and Black-Berries," a retreat for women in their 40s, at Manna House. For information, contact Sister Bev Carlin at srbevc@csjkansas.org or 785/220-7996

▶ **Nov. 19-21** — "Christmas Quilts" Quilting

Retreat, with Sister Betty Suther, at Manna House. Registration: \$40. Room and Meals: \$100. Noon meals only: \$8.50 each.

▶ **Nov. 27** — 9 am-2 pm, Annual Motherhouse Crafts Sale, with handmade items from Sisters Leah Smith, Jackie Kircher, Susan Stoeber and Cecilia Green.

▶ **Jan. 7-9, 2011** — "Stellar Quilts" Quilting Retreat with Lisa Kobetich, at Manna House. Registration: \$40. Room and Meals: \$100. Noon meals only: \$8.50 each.

▶ **Jan. 7-9** — "Come and See Retreat," a retreat for women discerning religious life, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia. For more information, contact Sister Bev Carlin at 785/220-7996 or srbevc@csjkansas.org

▶ **Jan. 22** — 9:30 am-3:30 pm, "Winter Spirituality: In the Dead of Winter" with Sisters Liberata Pellerin and Janet Lander, at Manna House. In this day of prayer we will explore the life-affirming grace hidden in grieving and emptiness. Registration: \$40 (includes lunch).

For information for all workshops and retreats at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia, unless otherwise notes, call 785/243-4428 or email retreatcenter@mannahouse.org.



THIS PAGE, ABOVE: Reunion organizer Jan McCormick beams during the Oct. 2 event. **RIGHT:** The weather was beautiful for those who travelled to the orphanage property for a special memorial service.

FACING PAGE, TOP RIGHT: Altha Sears Brewster of Salina entertains the crowd with a story from her years as a child at the orphanage, from 1938 to 1944. **TOP LEFT:** Pauline Weisner Devlin, left, chats with Sister Celestine Ruder. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Sister Mary Jo Thummel and Andy Odell, whose wife's great-grandmother lived at the home when it cared for "the aged" as well as orphans, are engrossed in a DVD capturing the history of the institution and people who lived there.



Laughter, stories fill Parish Hall

Continued from page 1.

union held at the St. Andrew's Catholic Church Parish Hall in Abilene Oct. 2. Rita was eager to meet other children she had known while there.

Bernadine and her son Patrick Wilder were the last to arrive, having suffered through a five-hour delay on their flight from California.

But the wait only seemed to heighten the emotion of their reunion: The two childhood friends were little girls together again as they posed for snapshots and caught each other up on family and fond memories.

And they were only two of the now-grown-up children, with children and grandchildren of their own, at this very special reunion, and they all had similar catching up to do, and all with their own stories of their years at the orphanage.

On hand were 18 former residents — many of whom were not actually orphans, but who were sent to live at the home because of tough econom-

ic times for their families during the Depression and through World War II — as well as a handful of "day students" from the area who attended classes there before a separate Catholic school was built in Abilene. Also in attendance were three "summer staff" employees who had worked there, plus a few townspeople who had a connection with the orphanage.

One guest of honor was Sister Celestine Ruder, the sole surviving Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia who worked at the orphanage. Sister Celestine was a cook at the home in the 1950s.

Sister Xavier Cunningham was one of the original Concordia sisters sent there when the orphanage opened in 1915, and she is credited with founding the award-winning Holstein cattle herd that provided both money for the home and jobs for many of the boys who were lived there. Harold Scanlan was one of those boys, and he and his family eventually took over the Holstein dairy, which one of Harold's sons continues to operate today.

Another son — Tom, the oldest — was on hand at the reunion to share stories about his father and the boys at the orphanage. He also recalled when officials demanded that the main or-

phanage building be demolished in 1959.

"They said the building was unsafe and had to be torn down," he explained. "But I remember the wrecking ball hit it and just bounced off. They had to bring out dynamite and set explosions to take it down — and the cows (in the dairy across the road) didn't like it one bit!"

The dairy no longer takes up the east side of Buckeye Avenue; that property has been developed into the location of the Brookfield Hotel, Holiday Inn Express and other businesses.

And only the red brick pillars, each with a white cross, mark the property line on the west side of the road. The stone grotto — missing its statues for several years now — and the crumbling brick rectory are the only structures that remain on the orphanage site.

But the reunion included a simple memorial service at the orphanage property, and the emptiness of the site seemed to add to the poignant memories. Bishop Paul Coakley of the Salina Diocese walked the property with those attending the memorial service and later celebrated Mass in the Parish Hall at the conclusion of the reunion.

The pressing question as the reunion ended was about the future of the orphanage property,



Home's history spans 7 decades

Continued from page 1.

wanted control of the sisters under his jurisdiction.

So in March 1888, the six sisters at the new Abilene school had to decide whether to remain there and become a separate congregation under the Bishop of Leavenworth, or return to Concordia.

Two returned to the Concordia Motherhouse, but four remained and became the nucleus of what would become the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita.

The Wichita sisters operated Mount St. Joseph's Academy in Abilene until 1912, when they closed the school.

Two women at the reunion — Pat Aker and Rosemary O'Donnell, both of Abilene — were daughters of Estella VanSickel, who attended the academy.

In October 1914, the Bishop of Concordia purchased the building and grounds for \$25,000 and began extensive improvements that ultimately doubled the amount of the investment.

On Sept. 1, 1915, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia again took charge of the property, this time as St. Joseph Home, which would be both an orphanage and a home for the aged. In February 1916, there were 58 people residing there: nine sisters, a chaplain, a half-dozen elderly men and women and 42 children.

One of the reunion attendees, Norma Odell, is the great-granddaughter of a woman who was among those "aged" cared for by the sisters.

By 1924, the diocese had opened the Home of the Little Flower in Concordia for the aged, so from that point on, St. Joseph Home served solely as an orphanage.

There were times when there were as many as 85 children living there, ranging from babies through high school age. But since the home also served as a Catholic school, there were many other "day students" from Abilene and nearby towns there every day.

With new Kansas child care regulations in 1951, the old orphanage concept changed dramatically. Foster home programs were developed and children were no longer put into orphanages. By 1958 there were just 10 children living at St. Joseph Home.

It was then that Bishop F. W. Freking decided to close the orphanage and open a smaller Children's Home in Salina.

In 1959 the orphanage was torn down, and St. Andrew's Catholic School in Abilene opened, to accommodate the students who had been displaced.

For many more photos,
check out our web site
<http://www.csjkansas.org>

On Facebook, look for
St Joseph Orphanage Abilene

which is still owned by the Salina Diocese. And there are no plans to sell it, Father Jerome Morgan, the diocese finance officer, assured the crowd.

"I look to the future by looking to the past, particularly when the past has such a loving heritage attached to it," Father Morgan said. Ideally, he would like to see the property developed as a "memory park," to preserve its history and provide information on the academy and the orphanage.

"Neither the diocese nor the sisters have the money to develop that dream, but we still have it," he said.

With the Oct. 2 event now passed, one dream had already come true — that of Jan McCormick of Chapman, who dreamed up the



This hand-drawn map shows the orphanage property and dairy just north of Abilene, Kan., as they existed in 1956.

idea of an orphanage reunion more than two years ago. McCormick, who is now a candidate for membership in the Concordia congregation, put together a committee of Sisters of St. Joseph and Sisters' Associates in the Abilene area, and hoped that 35 or 40 people might come.

Instead, there were about 130 there — all, like Bernadine Dickson and Rita Hisey, with stories to

tell and memories to share.

"Through all the sharing, there was a lot going on," McCormick said after the reunion ended. Lots of laughter, lots of hugging, lots of remembering when.

"And there was healing, fulfillment, belongingness and understanding," she added. "It was just such a special day."



HELPING PEOPLE breathe sane air

Red Cross 'gig' takes Concordia sister to flooded Rio Grande area

Sister Loretta Jasper has a number of catchy phrases to explain her role as an American Red Cross volunteer:

"I help people who are having a hard time breathing sane air," she says without even a hint of a joke. Or, "I'm a barometer for everyone involved in a disaster." Or even, "Literally and with no pun intended, I play a part in getting people out of the water."

Literally and with no pun intended, her job included all three explanations when she took her first "gig" — her word — in July as a Red Cross "national responder" and certified Disaster Mental Health Counselor.

Her role with the North Central Kansas Chapter of the American Red Cross actually began nearly a year ago, when Sister Loretta and several other members of the Sisters of St. Joseph went to a workshop about how to create an emergency shelter in case of a natural disaster, such as a tornado or flood.

Turns out, there's already such a Red Cross shelter in Concordia — the First United Methodist Church is the designated location for the city — but she learned that what was needed even more were the skills of professional mental health counselors.

During the course of her career, Sister Loretta — who lives in Concordia when not on her job or volunteering — has specialized in helping people

deal with substance abuse and gambling addictions and has more recently focused on play therapy. Late in 2008 she completed the last of three stints in Sri Lanka with Heart to

Heart International, working with children in areas devastated by the 2004 tsunami.

For the past year, she has worked in a government-funded program that provides support for military families where one parent is deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. She returned to that job this fall.

She holds a master's degree in mental health counseling and a post-graduate certificate in play therapy. She is a native of Cawker City, Kan., and has been a Sister of St. Joseph for 46 years.

Together, that meant she had the much-needed skills of a Disaster Mental Health Counselor. So last December, after completing the Red



ABOVE: Some families Sister Loretta Jasper worked with in the Rio Grande area had no belongings and badly damaged homes to return to.

TOP PHOTO: Sister Loretta poses beside the debris-choked Rio Grande while serving as a Red Cross volunteer in July.

Cross training for certification, she became available to help people get through the trauma of tragedy striking their lives.

"A lot of what Loretta does is to help people get out

of the 'trauma' stages and into picking up the pieces," explained Traci Speed, assistant executive director of the Red Cross chapter based in Salina. "She may be the catalyst for them to move forward."

Or, as Sister Loretta put it "getting people out of the water."

That's literally what she did when she was called to respond to flooding in south Texas along the Rio Grande River.

Hurricane Alex, which was the season's first named storm late in June, had already caused widespread flooding throughout northeastern Mexico and southwest Texas. Then a week of continuous rain forced water

to be released from two major dams to prevent them from collapsing.

On Wednesday, July 7, the Red Cross division that includes Laredo, Texas, sent out a call to neighboring divisions for volunteers. By 3 p.m. Saturday Loretta was in San Antonio, Texas, with nine other workers headed by car to Laredo. She is one of only about three "national responders" in the North Central Kansas Chapter who is certified as a Disaster Mental Health Counselor, Speed said.

For 12 days, Sister Loretta says, her job was to "be a barometer for everyone involved — the people staying in the shelter, the nurses and medical staff, the sheriff's officers, the Red Cross coordinators, the people trying to figure out what was needed next...

"Everyone there is affected, and I can be conscious of when they need a little help."

Together there were about 150 Red Cross volunteers, working in four or five towns around Laredo.

Sister Loretta was scheduled to be there for 14 days, but after 12 the need had lessened enough that she was sent home.

Which left time, in August, to look for another "gig."

"I may have time before I go back to the kiddos," she says, referring to the children of military families who are her school-year clients. "If I can help people breathe sane air, I'll go."

During the Information Day in Concordia in late August, Sister Rosemary Foreman, who professed her vow as an agrégée in June 2009, explains what this form of religious life means to her.



agrégée (ah-gre-zhey´) n. a form of religious life

Five women — from Kansas, Missouri and Colorado — came to the Nazareth Motherhouse one Saturday in late August to learn about a new form of religious life offered only by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

They may have already known the definition of the word “agrégée” — from the French for *aggregated with* or *attached to* — but they had to be in Concordia, and with both canonically vowed and agrégée Sisters of St. Joseph, to understand the deeper meaning behind the word.

They were welcomed by the “agrégée team” — Sisters Bette Moslander, Virginia Pearl, Pat McLennon and Rosabel Flax — plus other sisters and two of the four current agrégée candidates.

The agrégée program offers a form of membership in the religious congregation that dates back to our founding in 17th-century France, when Sisters of St. Joseph were either canonically vowed “principal” sisters or so-called agrégée or “country” sisters. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia re-established — and revitalized — this form of religious life in 2006.

Today there are four women who have professed the vow of fidelity to God and to the congregation as “agrégées.” Another four are in varying stages of the process of deciding if this form of

religious life fits them and their spiritual needs.

The August “Agrégée Information Day” was designed to allow the women, all of whom said they felt a call to deepen their spiritual life, to learn about this alternative. The five-hour presentation also provided something of a crash course in the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the mission and ministry of the sisters in Concordia. None of the five women was asked to make a commitment during the day, but they were encouraged to use the information as part of their process in discerning the next steps in their religious life.

Others taking part in the presentations were Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Concordia congregation, a historian who described herself as the “chief educator” for agrégée candidates; Sister Rosabel Flax of Ness City, Kan., who was the first modern agrégée to profess a vow of fidelity in the Concordia congregation; Sister Rosemary Foreman of Topeka, who professed her vow as an agrégée a little over a year ago; and Sister Virginia Pearl of Great Bend, Kan., who is also a member of the agrégée team.

To learn more, contact Sister Bette at bmoslander@mannahouse.org or by phone at 785/243-4428.



Participants reviewed differences in the constitutions for canonically vowed and agrégée sisters.

What are differences for sisters?

In reaching back to our roots in 17th century France, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia have revitalized a type of committed

spiritual life for women known as “agrégées.”

The order, which has grown worldwide over the centuries and now has autonomous congregations in more than 50 countries, began in the French city of LePuy in 1650. Based on research into the original constitution and rules for the congregation, written by founder and Jesuit priest Jean-Pierre Medaille, the sisters now recognize that in addition to vowed members of the order, there were also “agrégées,” from a French word meaning *attached to* or *aggregated with*.

An agrégée did not make vows of poverty, chas-



Walkin' for a cause

Motherhouse team raises \$5,589

Before the first step was taken or the first burger served, the Motherhouse Relay for Life team had surpassed its goal of raising \$5,000 to go toward cancer research.

At the end of the 12-hour event, the Motherhouse team had raised \$5,589.

The team of sisters, employees and friends was one of about a half dozen that took part in the annual American Cancer Society fundraiser Sept. 10 and 11.

In addition to pre-Relay fundraising, the Motherhouse team also served hamburger and hot dog meals throughout the evening.

The event was back at Concordia

2010 Nazareth Motherhouse Relay for Life Team

CO-CHAIRS

Alfreda Maley & Sister Dorothy Marquez

TEAM MEMBERS

Sister Jean Befort	Tryston Jochems
Sister Beverly Carlin	Vikki Jochems
Rita Collette	Sheri Krause
Jesica Collins	Sister Ramona Medina
Rope Dorman	
Mary Jane Gallagher	Sister Shirley Meier
Michelle Gallagher	Marcia Mick
Tina Goff	Kayla Ramsey
Sister Lucille Herman	Sister Judy Stephens
Sister Loretta Jasper	Sister Betty Suther
Eric Jochems	Dottie Vohs

HELPERS

Greg Gallagher Jerry Gallagher Burl Maley

High's Harold Clark Stadium after a one-year move to the city's Sports Center.

As the event began at 6 p.m., Sister Ramona Medina of the Sisters of Concordia gave the opening blessing.

Lining the track were hundreds of luminaria — small white sacks, each containing a votive candle that will be

lit at sunset, and decorated in honor of a cancer survivor or in memory of someone killed by the disease.

Each year, more than 3.5 million people in 5,000 U.S. communities gather to take part in Relay for Life events, raising both money and awareness to save lives from cancer.



ABOVE: Inside the Motherhouse team tent, Sisters Dorothy Marquez, left, and Sylvia Winterscheidt sell hamburgers and hot dogs to feed the walkers, and raise more money for cancer research.

AT RIGHT: As the Concordia Relay for Life begins the evening of Sept. 11, one man pauses to read one of the hundreds of luminaria that line the track at Harold Clark Stadium.

A century of humility & patience



Sister Generosa smiles as sisters and members of her family sing "Happy Birthday" to her during a simple party at the Nazareth Motherhouse Sept. 6.

Sister Generosa Walker would have preferred no fuss be made over her 100th birthday. But, she conceded with a soft chuckle, it is something of a milestone — even though it's something she never anticipated.

"I was sure I wouldn't," she said about turning 100 years old Sept. 6. "No one in my family had ever lived to be 100, and only a very few of our sisters had. So it just wasn't something I thought about."

But now she is, if only because so many people keep bringing up the centennial of her birth.

"I've decided I'm going to be as peaceful and as gracious as I can be, even when everyone asks questions and wants to make a fuss," she said. After a moment, there's that chuckle again: "But it's going to take patience to be as kind as possible."

The humor and humility are part of the fiber of her being; she has had a lifetime of practice being both patient and kind.

Gertrude Cecelia Walker was born Sept. 6, 1910, on her parent's farm about 2 miles outside of Mayetta, Kan. The only girl in a family of seven children, she and her brothers attended a country school about a half-mile north of the farm. And although the family was Catholic, she had little exposure to nuns as she was growing up, and she doesn't re-

Family, congregation make a fuss for Sister Generosa's 100th birthday

Children from all of Sister Generosa Walker's brothers, plus Sisters of St. Joseph from throughout Kansas came to the Nazareth Motherhouse Sept. 6 to help the centenarian celebrate her birthday.

And the Labor Day gathering was a labor of love. "We kind of compete for who gets to come visit," said one niece. "We can't all come at once, so it's something of a 'prize' to be able to be here."

It was a simple party, as Sister Generosa had requested, but it still featured plenty of cake and ice cream along with even more hugs and good wishes.

Asked well in to the party if all the activity and visiting was wearing her out, Sister Generosa had a quick smile and response: "Oh no, everything today has just been wonderful!"

call as a girl ever seriously considering religious life.

After high school, she attended Wayland Baptist College in Texas for a year and then returned to Kansas to attend Marymount College in Salina, operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

"They were so pleasant and kind to us," Generosa recalled of the sisters at Marymount. "I liked the spiritual possibilities in their lives; that appealed to me."

But not enough to keep her from family and home.

With a teaching certificate from Marymount in hand, she returned to the Mayetta area and taught for the

next three years at "country schools" on the Potawatomi Indian Reservation.

The Marymount sisters had made a lasting impression, though, so in 1933 the almost-23-year-old Gertrude Cecelia became a postulant in the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. She became a novice — or "took the habit," as it was referred to then — in March 1934. It was also then that she was given her religious name: Sister Mary Generosa.

She was one of 13 novices received into the congregation in that ceremony, and is one of only three surviving "band" members: Sister Jane Guenette, who was 18 when she became a novice, and Sister Redemp-

ta Eilert, who was 20. Sisters Jane and Redemta also live at the Motherhouse in Concordia today.

Sister Generosa would return to teaching a year later, just days after professing her final vows in March 1935. Her first assignment was at the Catholic high school in Aurora, Kan., and she would spend the next 37 years in Catholic school classrooms in the Kansas towns of Concordia, Tipton, Leoville, Beloit and Park; plus Boonville, Mo., and St. George, Ill. Her specialty was mathematics, including algebra and geometry, but small schools required versatility so she taught whatever was needed.

During the last few years of her teaching, many sisters used the freedom given them by the Second Vatican Council to stop wearing religious habits and change to secular clothing. Many of them also returned to their birth names in favor of the religious names they had been given when they entered the congregation.

Sister Generosa didn't feel a need to do either.

"I never had any reason to stop wearing the habit," she explains simply. "I just never saw a real need for me to change it."

And that same simplicity applied

Many alums remember Sister Mary Julia's years

DEAR MARYMOUNT ALUMNI, You may recall seeing in the last issue of The Messenger the eulogy for Sister Mary Julia Stegeman. When I sent out Sister Mary Julia's death notice to the alum whose email addresses I have, the responses were overwhelming and precious. What a positive effect this dear woman had on so many of the students — men and women alike — during the 29 years she ministered at Marymount. Thanks to all who shared their memories of Sister. We now have a saint interceding for us in Heaven.



WHO IS THE OLDEST LIVING Marymount alum? Is it Sister Generosa Walker, MC '38, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Sept. 6? Or do you know of an alum who surpasses that age? If so, let me know.

Sister Mary Julia, had she lived, would also have reached her 100th birthday on Sept. 6.

IT SEEMS THAT THE MARYMOUNT drama department is still active in Salina. Recently, a goodly number of Marymount alum returned to the Salina Community Theatre to enjoy the superb acting of Tyrees Allen, MC '78, and Kim Hassler Grimaldi, MC '77, in "Driving Miss Daisy." A reception was held for them at the home of Betsy Green Wearing, MC '84.

SPEAKING OF THE DRAMA department... Photos from most of the Marymount College productions from 1968 to 1989 have been digitally scanned and are available for purchase.

Photo CDs of a single school year, a summer season, or four individual shows are \$10 each.

You may order by contacting:

Barbara Evans Nichols at jcbe@sbcglobal.net; 9621 Meadow Lane, Leawood KS 66206; 913/341-3285.

Checks should be made out to Barbara Evans Nichols. The money will cover the cost of the CD and shipping, and any amount over the actual cost will be donated to the Marymount Alumni Association.

IF YOU HAVE ANY NEWS you wish to share, please send it to the alumni office. It can be put on the Marymount link of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia web site.

AS SUMMER CAME TO AN END and fall began, we have said with Henry David Thoreau, "Happily we bask in this warm September sun, which illuminates all creatures..." May you have a grace-filled October and fall.

SISTER LUCILLE HERMAN
Marymount Alumni Director

Marymount Alumni Office • P.O. Box 2485 • Salina KS 67402
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Posing at the Huckleberry Tea House in Concordia are, from left, Sister Christella Buser, '46, Concordia; Marilyn Pfeiffer Hake, '49A, Tipton; Adele Kelly Hassenstab, '48A, Humphry, Neb.; Cleone Heinen Seidel, '49, Atlanta, Ga.; and Rosemary Hake Joselyn, '49A, Beloit.

Alums' gathering features lunch, lots of laughter and reminiscing about the '40s

It is becoming a yearly event for these Marymount College alumni to meet in Concordia.

This summer Sister Christella Buser hosted the group at the Huckleberry Tea House, where they donned the Tea House fancy hats and scarves and enjoyed reminiscing over lunch.

During the tea that followed, they fed coins to the 25-cent nickelodeon, playing music of their col-

lege era —the 1940s.

After lunch, the group visited the newly constructed Whole Wall Mural, at the Cloud County Museum Annex at Highway 81 and Sixth Street, for a lecture about the project and a tour.

Back at the Motherhouse, the group enjoyed more tea with cookies before saying their "good-byes" but not before planning the next reunion for 2011 back in Concordia.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O God!

Members of the Marymount family we've lost

Geraldine Vap Lane '56A March 23, 2010	Nancy Glatter Hittner '92A July 4, 2010
Kathy A. Bergin Schiltz '80 June 29, 2010	Cecilia Giroux Fassfinder '64A July 7, 2010
Juliana Jacobs Adams '59A July 1, 2010	Eldean Reinert Cahoj '53A July 11, 2010
Sister Marie Coleman '55 July 3, 2010	Donald B. Hanson '84 July 12, 2010

Beth Maze Hamel '59A
Aug. 29, 2010



During an Aug. 15 ceremony, Veraluce Alves Rocha, left, asks Sister Donna Otter to be received as a postulant.

A religious commitment

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.”

— LUKE 1:38

By SISTER ELEUTÉRIA SOUSA DA COSTA

A 25-year-old Brazilian woman is the newest postulant with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Veraluce Alves Rocha first met the sisters five years ago in her hometown of Guaribas, in the southern part of the state of Piauí, in northwest Brazil. The sisters were beginning a number of pastoral groups and Veraluce began helping with religious education.

In 2008, she and 10 other women took part in a monthlong program to consider making a commitment to the community of sisters. Veraluce was the only one to make that decision and so she entered the congregation as an “aspirant” in February 2009.

As one of four aspirants, she continued her school work and studied with aspirants from other congregations in the Conference for Men and Women Religious, while living with Sisters Alexandra da Silva and Lúcia Lima in the Parque Mão Santa community in Teresina. She has also had the opportu-

nity to share our mission with sisters in the cities of Picos, Piauí, and Graça Aranha, Maranhão.

On Aug. 15 — the Day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary — Sister Donna Otter, regional coordinator for the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brazil, received Veraluce into the postulancy during a celebration and Mass at the parish church in Parque Mão Santa.

She will be accompanied by Sister Rita de Cássia Alves during this phase of formation.

Generally, the postulancy is about nine to 12 months. The next stage in formation is the novitiate, which is generally about two years. After that, the sister will decide whether to take her vows as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia.

The Concordia sisters have served in Brazil since the early 1960s. Today there are 13 Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia serving in four Brazilian missions.

The three other aspirants in Brazil are Iracélia Alves da Rocha, Mariana Alves da Rocha and Naira Regina da Silva Ribeiro.

Sisters, U.S. donors make a dream come true

By SISTER JANIRA LINDOSO DINIZ

As a tiny girl, Maria Lúcia was a happy child — running and jumping and being ornery with her little friends in her hometown of Picos, Brazil.

But beginning when she was only 1½ years old, her parents knew there was something wrong. The local doctors eventually told her family to take her north to the state capital, Teresina, where she was diagnosed with infantile paralysis.

She was too young to understand what this meant, but she knew that the only way she could get around was by crawling on the floor.

When she was 3 or 4 years old, Lúcia’s father bought her a crutch, but she couldn’t get used to it and she fell a lot. When she was about 9, her father got her a bigger crutch. The result was the same; she fell over and over again. It was then that she told her father

she preferred to walk on her hands and feet, with her bottom up. It was also then that her father realized she did not have movement in her left leg.

At 15, she wrote to a well known Brazilian comedy team asking them for a wheelchair that she would not have to push. And on July 9, 1992, the comedians sent her a simple manual wheelchair.

When she began going to school, she was embarrassed that she had to depend on others, and that everyone viewed her as handicapped. At the bus stop one day, a man said, “Let the cripples go first,” and he gave her a coin.

Lúcia reacted, saying that she didn’t need his coin, then she threw her chair down and climbed into the bus.

When she arrived home, she told her parents what had happened and said she didn’t



Maria Lúcia poses at her home in Picos, Brazil, in the electric wheelchair she received through the efforts of the Sisters of St. Joseph and American benefactors.

See WOMAN’S WISH, page 13.

RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC YOUTH



Jessica Ann Thompson

SCHOOL: Kansas State University, majoring in psychology and criminology

YEAR: Senior

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: I have worked at Harvesters and several food pantries, served, cantored, and lectured at Mass, co-directed a children's Christmas choir, worked at the Special Olympics in Kansas City several years back, have worked the past two summers with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia Discover Camp (one year as a college counselor, the

next as a co-director), peer-tutored on campus, and I have been a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for a year now and have really loved it!

WHAT MOTIVATES ME: I much prefer to be out working with others than by myself behind a desk! I have really enjoyed working with youth and teenagers in several of my volunteer activities and jobs in both an educational and rehabilitating environment; regardless of the situation, I seem to learn just as much. Finding joy in what I do is perhaps the best motivator I have... that, and never having a dull moment!

PARENTS: Steven and Deborah Thompson of Kansas City, Mo.



Maggie Zody

SCHOOL: Ellis (Kan.) High School

YEAR: Senior

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: I have volunteered within my church by song-leading at Mass, and being a counselor for the Sisters of St. Joseph Discover Camp every summer. God has blessed me with my musical talents, so I also volunteer in my local community concert and jazz band. I hope I can become a missionary and I would love to travel to a nation in need of serious help.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME: I am motivated to do what I do because I know no matter how hard the struggle we go through, it amounts to nothing as to what Jesus endured to carry the cross and ultimately give his life for us.

PARENTS: John and Andrea Zody of Ellis, Kan.

In each issue of The Messenger, the Sisters of St. Joseph recognize the achievements of young people who have made a difference in their churches and communities.

If you know a young person — either male or female — you'd recommend for this recognition, please contact Sister Beverly Carlin at 785/220-7996 or srbevcc@csjkansas.org.

Bulletin Board

30-somethings seeking spirituality

Interested in making a retreat with other single women your age? Want to get more spiritually grounded? Friday evening, Oct. 29, to Saturday afternoon, Oct. 30, in Concordia, Kan..

...

Can women in their 40s slow down?

"Beyond Blogs & BlackBerries" is a retreat about finding yourself — and God — in a techno-crazy world. Friday evening, Nov. 19, to Saturday afternoon, Nov. 20, in Concordia, Kan.

...

January offers the warmth of 'Come & See'

A weekend retreat for women who want to learn more about the religious life of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. Friday, Jan. 7, to Sunday, Jan. 9, 2011.

...

We're here — to talk or just to listen

Young adults: Just need somebody to talk to? Want to visit with a sister? Wish you could learn more about faith or vocations?

Sister Beverly Carlin is in the student union on the K-State campus in Manhattan several times a week during the fall semester. Stop by and visit with her.

And if you would like her to come to your campus in Kansas or neighboring states, let her know!

...

To find out more

about any of these, check our website: www.csjkansas.org or contact Sister Beverly Carlin at 785/220-7996 or srbevcc@csjkansas.org.



Just days before her 100th birthday, Sister Generosa Walker reflects on her life as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia — and the view from her window on the second floor of the Nazareth Motherhouse.

Birthday offers a time to reflect on long life

Continued from page 9.

to her religious name: “It wasn’t that different from my family name, and that’s how people knew me.”

In 1972, she decided to leave teaching and take on the challenge of becoming the bookkeeper for St. Mary’s Convent, what was then a nursing facility for older sisters in Concordia. She remained there for a dozen years.

But Catholic schools beckoned one more time, and she spent the 1984-85 year in Junction City, Kan., serving as an assistant principal.

In 1985, Sister Generosa returned to Concordia and the Motherhouse for good.

Today Sister Generosa, now the eldest member of the congregation, spends her days quietly praying in a small chapel tucked well away from the public areas of the historic building, playing “team Scrabble” with Sister Margaret Schreck, maintaining correspondence with family and friends — including several students from 70 years ago in Park, Kan. — and watching the world from her second-floor windows that face south from the Motherhouse.

From there she can see the parking lot and beyond it, the vegetable garden and the congregation’s tree-lined cemetery.

“There were only 70 graves there when I entered the community,” she said. “Now there are, what? More than 600.”

But, she added with another soft chuckle, she doesn’t spend a lot of time looking to the cemetery: “I like to watch the garden, and the cars in the parking lot.”

She was also practicing the patience to endure the fuss on her birthday, and the standard questions that are a part of it — such as, What is her secret for such a long life?

“Put God in all things in your life, and keep in touch with him through daily prayer,” she said. “Then surround yourself with kind and loving people like our sisters.”

Four women are now agrégées

Continued from page 5.

tity and obedience. But she lived according to the rules of the sisters and was recognized by the people and the local churches as a Sister of St. Joseph.

In the past decades, the modern Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia studied their origins and their original spirituality, and have now revived that early practice based on what they learned. The Senate of the Concordia congregation approved agrégée membership in 2006.

Since then, four women have taken vows as agrégées and another four are currently agrégée candidates.

Agrégées are defined as those persons who commit themselves to active and inclusive love of God and the dear neighbor as expressed in the spirit and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. In almost every aspect, they are viewed as full members of the congregation, meaning they have a voice and a vote on congregational issues.

There are three significant differences:

► “Vowed sisters” profess the canonical — meaning governed by Church law — vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. As part of the vow of poverty, an individual sister relinquishes all personal wealth and income; at the same time, the congregation assumes responsibility for her economic well being for the rest of her life.

► “Agrégée sisters” profess a vow of

fidelity to the congregation, but it is non-canonical, meaning that it is not part of Church law and is instead a private vow between that sister and the Concordia congregation. It also means that the agrégée does not relinquish her finances to the congregation, and the congregation assumes no financial responsibility for her.

► Also, vowed sisters begin their religious life with a formal “formation” that includes a postulancy and novitiate that are, together, about three years. During this time, they have left their previous life, but haven’t yet taken up their works as a Sister of St. Joseph. For agrégées, the time period of being a candidate may be about the same, but they do not leave behind their outside lives. Instead, they meet with mentors and study around their regular work and life schedules. And once they have professed their vows, they return to that work and life schedule.

Other congregations of St. Joseph have developed similar definitions or are doing their own studies, but the Concordia congregation is the first to recognize agrégées as full members of the community.

In Concordia, the definition of who may be an agrégée will be refined as individuals feel called to the community, explained Sister Marcia Allen, president of the congregation.

“This opens up our charism to people who might not have traditionally given thought to religious life,” Sister Marcia said. “We haven’t answered all the questions, but we will — as they’re asked.”

Woman’s wish fulfilled

Continued from page 11.

want a chair that required someone to help her. She went back to walking on her hands and feet.

But from that day on she began to dream of an electric wheelchair.

The dream continued as Lúcia took a hair dressing course and began to cut hair. She had many customers in the Exposition Park neighborhood of Picos, and she began to be known as Lúcia Hairdresser.

Eventually one of our sisters invited her to join the Christian Fraternity, a group for people with disabilities. Sister Janira Lindosa Diniz is now coordinator of the group.

When Bishop Plínio José Luz da Silva, accompanied by Sister Janira, visited Exposition Park, he went to Lúcia’s house and admired her spirit.

Moved with compassion, he asked her, “What do you need most urgently?”

Lúcia replied, “Bishop Plínio, to take my clients off the floor!”

Sister Janira kept Lúcia’s petition in her heart, and brought up the dream with the congregation’s coordination team.

The American sisters began work on the project, and through U.S. benefactors were able to obtain an electric wheelchair for Lúcia.

When Lúcia received the gift, she was overtaken with emotion and happiness. She called her neighbors together to share her joy: “I received my legs back!”