

STUFFED *with* SUCCESS



In early May 2010, when three Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia opened the doors for the first time at Neighbor to Neighbor, we had no idea what to expect.

We knew there were women in Concordia

and Cloud County who felt isolated and alone. We knew there were women living on the streets. We knew there were women feeling the increasing pressure of parenthood, a tough economy and an inability to make changes in their lives. We knew there were women who just needed the friendship of other women. Simply put, we knew there were women who needed the neighborly hand we were stretching out. But would those women take our hand?

Some eight months later, the answer is a resounding Yes!

From May through December 2010, women and their young children have made more than 2,500 visits to the storefront center at 103 E. Sixth St. The three sisters have been there to meet the needs of nearly 100 individual women.

In addition 10 women have completed or are completing their community service commitments at the center, and another 17 women from throughout the community have stepped forward as volunteers.

But such success has a downside: The center that opened with community fanfare in May is proving too small to contain the growing array of programs offered and women taking part.

So beginning Dec. 1, Neighbor to Neighbor is growing up — literally.

That's when construction began to double the size of the 8-month-old center by renovating the second story into usable space.

When Greg Gallagher, facilities manager for



Sister Pat McLennon, right, watches as women at Neighbor to Neighbor try their hands at a number of craft projects one morning this winter. The downtown center in Concordia is often packed, as women and their young children from throughout the Cloud County area take advantage of services and workshops.



Volunteer Maureen Sullivan hosts a tea party with children at Neighbor to Neighbor. A major part of the expansion plans is to add a large play area on the second floor of the center at 103 E. Sixth St.

HELP US GROW!

Each gift of \$24³³ will pay for one square foot of additional space in the Neighbor to Neighbor center.

Donations may be mailed to:

**Neighbor to Neighbor, Sisters of St. Joseph,
PO Box 279, Concordia KS 66901**

Or, make an online donation with a credit card at
www.csjkansas.org/donations

the Sisters of St. Joseph, began planning work on the two-story building not quite two years ago, he knew that the project would be more resurrection than renovation — particularly on the second floor, which had not been used for anything other than storage for decades.

So when the first floor was cleaned out and the lath and plastic removed from the walls, that work was done on the second floor, too. The only other work upstairs was to remove the boards that had filled the three large windows facing Sixth Street and replace them with new vinyl windows.

Then the work upstairs stopped.

Downstairs, on the main floor, Nazareth Motherhouse employees completely refinished the 122-year-old structure, adding new plumbing, lighting, a heating and cooling system, interior walls, a complete kitchen, bathroom facilities, a laundry room, flooring and all the finishings.

When the center opened in May, it featured soft colors throughout — except for the vibrant paint of the children's playroom.

It also seemed to offer ample space for the women who would be welcomed there by Sisters Jean Befort, Pat McLennon and Ramona Medina, the Sisters of St. Joseph who founded the center and now staff it every day.

RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC YOUTH



Katy Davis

SCHOOL: A senior at Manhattan (Kan.) High School

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: At school, National Honor Society, food drives, usher at performances at Kansas State University, MHS Fellowship of Christian Athletes secretary, Student Council representative from freshman through junior year. At church, co-president of Seven Dolors Catholic Church Catholic Youth Organization (helping to organize and prepare meals for the Emergency Shelter in Manhattan, cleaning the church grounds, collecting items for soldiers, working in the parish budget shop and leading music at Mass—one of my very favorite things to do!). In the community, Prayer and Action summer missions.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME: At first it was my parents, youth leaders and my elementary through middle school education at Manhattan

Catholic School that got me involved in my community and church, and I am infinitely thankful for them. The jump start these factors gave me laid a solid faith foundation and eagerness to help others. It became a personal desire to give time and talents to the community and grow closer to God and who he intended me to be. He calls us to share time and talents with those around us for his glory.

A daily challenge for me is that of completely loving everyone and maintaining an open mind about those around me. By volunteering, I open my heart and mind. Even when it is most challenging to be selfless and understanding, my family and friends and the quiet time I spend in adoration remind me how powerful love and grace are. Love is so powerful in everyday life, and I wish to share it with everyone. If everyone loved as Jesus did, the world would be so very different.

PARENTS: Gregory and Sharon Davis of Manhattan, Kan.

Janet Peak

SCHOOL: A senior at Kansas State University, majoring in Family & Consumer Sciences Education

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: At church, Pathways Retreat staff member, Cardinal Newman CATS president, liturgical minister at Mass, participant in Spring Break Alternative, Summer Mission Trip, Teens Encounter Christ Retreat and the Washington, D.C., and Topeka March for Life, and St. Isidore's student ambassador, freshman retreat director and part-time office staff. At school, K-State Family & Consumer Sciences president, committee member for Human Ecology Open House and Relay For Life, and a member of Students for the Right to Life and Kansas National Education Association Student Program. In the community, Girl Scout troop leader and Kansas FCCLA Alumni treasurer.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME: We know that God calls each of us to be holy people — but he also calls us to put our faith into action. It is at that line — where our faith and our actions intersect — that we are fulfilling God's will for us. When we take the abundance of blessings he has placed in our lives and share them

with those around us, we experience true works of faith. My inspiration comes from the Gospel, Matthew 25:35-40:

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. The righteous will answer him and say, "Lord, when did we

see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and visit you?" And the King will say to them in reply, "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me."

I base my volunteering on Scripture and examples of the great leaders of our Church,

especially Mother Teresa. She once said, "Give yourself fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in his love than in your own weakness. Let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of your greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don't only give your care, but give your heart as well."

PARENTS: Darrell and Gina Peak of Scammon, 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 like to recommend for this quarterly recognition, please let us know by contacting:

Sister Beverly Carlin
785/220-7996
srbevc@csjkansas.org



The four women entering the agrégée candidacy process join in the Mass on Nov. 13 in the Sacred Heart Chapel at the Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. They are, from left, pre-candidate Dee Morris and candidates Susan Klepper, Dian Hall and Beth Weddle. Standing behind them is Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

Four women join process to become agrégée sisters

The Sisters of St. Joseph have welcomed three candidates and one pre-candidate into the process of becoming agrégée sisters.

The four women were received at a special Mass in the Sacred Heart Chapel at the Nazareth Motherhouse on Nov. 13, at the end of the congregation's annual Assembly.

Three of the women are now agrégée candidates, beginning what is expected to be a three-year process of study and spiritual discernment with mentors from the Concordia congregation. Those three are:

- ▶ Dian Hall of Cartersville, Ga.
- ▶ Susan Klepper of St. Louis, Mo.
- ▶ Beth Weddle of Concordia

Dee Morris of Fort Collins, Colo., is a "pre-candidate," who will spend another year deciding whether she is called to become an agrégée candidate.

The term agrégée — pronounced *ah-gre-ZHEY* — comes from the French for "attached to" or "aggregated with." It is a form of membership in the religious congregation that dates back to our founding in 17th-cen-

tury 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 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. Two of those four are expected to profess their vows in June.

Each of the four new candidates has a mentor or mentors from within the congregation to help with her spiritual discernment. Those mentors are Sisters Helen Mick and Jodi Creten from Atlanta, Sisters Sylvia Winterscheidt and Loretta Jasper of Concordia and Sister Rosabel Flax of Ness City, Kan.

To learn more about the agrégée form of membership, contact Sister Bette Moslander at 785/243-4428 or by email at bmoslander@mannahouse.org.

A 17th-century concept is revitalized as a 21st-century form of religious life

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, the sisters now recognize that in addition to vowed members, there were also "agrégées," from a French word meaning "attached to" or "aggregated with."

An agrégée — pronounced *ah-gre-ZHEY* — did not make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. But she lived according to the rules of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and was recognized by the local people and the local churches as a sister.

In the past decades, the modern Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia studied our origins and our original spirituality, and have now revived that early practice based on what we

A DONATION IS A PARTNERSHIP

A way to live out your hopes and dreams

An investment in the common good

It says we have hope for the future

We could not do what we do without the generous contributions from our donors and the gift of time from our volunteers. The stories and the successes we have to share are your stories as well. Our hearts are full of gratitude for your collaborative efforts!

Through the stories in our newspaper and on our website (www.csjkansas.org), we strive to share information about the needs and our efforts to respond to them through Gospel values. Our mission of promoting nonviolence — ranging from one's own personal interactions with others to global situations — and our willingness to be reconcilers prompts us to reach out to people in multiple and varied ways.

Let me share one story of how your generosity has made a difference in our world.

It is a story from Neighbor to Neighbor.

A young, transient woman was alone and pregnant when a trucker found her walking on Highway 81. He brought her to Concordia saying, "The sisters will be able to help you."

The sisters at Neighbor to Neighbor work closely with other agencies in town, and they had gotten in touch with the Cloud County Resource Center and the Domestic Violence Association, which were both working to assist the woman.

But it soon became obvious that the woman was going into labor.

A few hours after delivering a healthy baby boy, the woman told hospital staff that she did not want the child and simply walked out of the hospital. She has still not been located, but the baby is in foster care and doing well.

The lingering question that continues to nag at many in the community is this: What would have happened to the baby if Neighbor to Neighbor did not exist and if it did not collaborate with others?

Since Neighbor to Neighbor does not charge for any of its services, it would not exist save for your contributions. Since the sisters receive no salary, it would not be possible for them to do this work without your support.

This story is truly your story. Our hearts continue to grow in gratitude and in humility for your belief in us.

*Sister Jean Rosemarynoski,
Development Director*

Development Office • PO Box 279 • Concordia KS 66901
785/243-2113, ext. 1225 • jrose@csjkansas.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE



▲ Expenses for retired sisters



Volunteer program ►

Capital expenses:

- ▶ Boiler at Manna House of Prayer
- ▶ Energy-efficient windows at Motherhouse

Programs:

- ▶ Agrégée program
- ▶ Vocation ministry
- ▶ Associate program
- ▶ Scholarships for retreats at Manna House

Projects/ Outreach/ Ministry:

- ▶ Young Adult Ministry
- ▶ Silver City (N.M.) Spirituality Center
- ▶ Concordia Needs Community Forums
- ▶ Community Garden of Hope
- ▶ Subsidies for sisters who minister without remuneration
- ▶ Discover Camp for junior high girls
- ▶ Spring Break Alternative for college students



Neighbor to Neighbor ▲

◀ General operating expenses & maintenance

'Perseverance of two sisters' Grand Junction, Colo., counseling center celebrates 30th anniversary of service

When Sisters Faye Huelsmann and Pat Lewter opened their home in 1981 to serve those with little access to professional counseling, they may not have realized they were beginning what 30 years later would be a vital community agency in Grand Junction, Colo.

As the Counseling and Education Center that grew out of the effort by the two Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary, Executive Director Penny Frankhouser credited "the perseverance of these two sisters" with the agency's longevity and impact

on the community. Today CEC serves more than 600 clients a year with a staff of more than 15 and an annual budget of \$250,000.

And, Frankhouser said, Sisters Faye and Pat continue to be a vibrant part of the agency. Sister Faye provides play therapy to very young children, and is considered an expert in her field. Sister Pat not only provides counseling at CEC, with her expertise working with troubled adolescents, but she is also a part-time school counselor at the Holy Family Catholic School.

In 1995, the CEC structure was changed, so it now has a community



Sister Faye Huelsmann, right, talks with Sister Pat Lewter, center, and CEC board member Pam Gardner at the HeART for the Community fundraiser in October. The event raised more than \$5,500 for CEC's low-income counseling services.

board made up of 11 business owners, professionals and members of the faith community in Grand Junction.

The board is dedicated to "Providing affordable professional counseling to families and individuals in need."

With the guidance of Sisters Pat and Faye, the CEC has created a community of professional staff who believe in CEC's core values: Affordability, dedication, meeting emotional needs and community.

To learn more about the Counseling and Education Center in Grand Junction, Colo., go to <http://www.cecwecare.org/>

Center expansion will double space for women & their children

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From Monday through Friday, the sisters and volunteers offer classes and services that range from one-on-one tutoring for GED exams and book studies to providing a place to do laundry or take showers and classes in sewing, baking, lacemaking and household budgeting.

Individual counseling services are also available as needed, as is help in navigating the social services maze. And, for some moms, the center has become a place to come with their young children, to give the kids a chance to play and the moms a chance to befriend other moms.

There is never any cost to the women taking part; all the programs are offered free, with funding coming from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, a handful of grants and individual donations.

"This is about one neighbor helping another," as Sister Ramona explains it.

And the neighbors throughout Cloud County have responded — the center is often packed throughout the day.

So Gallagher and the sisters began working on a plan to bring the upstairs back to life, in much the same way as was done downstairs.



Women may come to Neighbor to Neighbor to learn skills like sewing or to use the washers and dryers — but they often keep coming back for the friendship they find there.

Second-floor plans call for an art room, a private counseling or small meeting room, two more bathrooms, lots of storage space and a kitchenette that will look out over a large play area for children.

Sister Jean emphasizes the word "large" in

that description of the coming work: "With more and more children, they really need a bigger space," she explains, "and this is the only way we can provide that."

Again, Motherhouse employees will do the bulk of the work, which keeps the labor costs for the project low.

But Neighbor to Neighbor has launched a fund drive that will pay for materials and furnishings. A donation of \$24.33 will pay to renovate one square foot of the upstairs space; a donation of \$48.66 will pay for two square feet, and so on.

"We hope this will truly give people in Concordia and Cloud County a sense that they are investing in what we're doing here," said Sister

Pat. "Neighbor to Neighbor is for the women of Cloud County, and this is a way for individuals to help us by paying for a piece of it."

The fund drive also began Dec. 1.

Gallagher expects the work on the upstairs to be completed this spring.

Memories bind us together

Dear Marymount alumni,
The holidays have passed and a new year is upon us. But how I hate to move on from the holidays!

I guess it goes back to those warm memories you make as a child and then try to recreate with your own children. Sometimes it's the smell of Mom's homemade cinnamon rolls that no one no matter how hard they try can imitate. And of course mine never seem to measure up but I make them nonetheless because I want my daughters to have those same delicious memories.



Or maybe it's the simple gifts that come from the heart that touch you and are forever imprinted on your spirit. I remember every

Christmas as I was growing up my siblings and I would eagerly await the magical moment when Mom would pull herself away from her dinner preparations long enough to open the most coveted and last gift under the tree from Dad. And every year without fail we would joke back and forth amongst ourselves about what it could possibly be! The point is that we all knew what it was because every year it was the same thing. And yes, every year my Mom would carefully open the badly wrapped present with such anticipation and then gush over the new silk stockings Dad bought for her. Surprise, surprise!

I mean who gets excited about stockings for goodness sakes! But in true mom fashion, my mom did and she lovingly acknowledged my dad's effort. Back then, I really didn't get it, but today I do: I get that the best gifts are simple when they are attached to the heart of someone you care about deeply. And so every

year I love giving gifts to family and friends I craft myself, and each one of them has a little piece of me in its creation.

Guess who else does crafts now?

My oldest daughters are constantly brainstorming alongside me on what potential our next projects might hold. It's amazing how many things you can do with a block of wood! And so tradition continues to bind us together.

That's how I think of our beloved Marymount. How I love the wonderful people and memories tied to that time and place! Every three years for one special weekend we gather together to celebrate and reminisce about the times we shared. We get reacquainted with alumni, staff and administration, make new connections and create more memories.

We tour the grounds and buildings that were once our home for a brief period of our lives. We celebrate the Eucharist that feeds our spirits yesterday and today in the beautiful chapel. We share a meal of camaraderie, merriment and laughter. And we commemorate in the sunken garden those who are no longer with us.

You, too, can experience all this just one weekend every three years. I invite all of you to make plans now and mark your calendars for our Marymount Holiday, Aug. 3-5, 2012.

Get in touch with Sister Lucille Herman (see below) to update your address on the mailing list to receive more reunion information. And visit the Marymount Alumni website — www.csjkansas.org/marymount — for details as we get them put together. It's all of you who bind our Marymount family together.

God bless all of you and oh, I almost forgot, "Happy New Year!"

Eileen R. (Curran) Thibault '81
President of Alumni Association

Marymount Alumni Office • P.O. Box 2485 • Salina KS 67402
Email: lcherman@yahoo.com • Phone: 785/823-8803

Eternal rest grant unto them, O God!

Members of the Marymount family we've lost

Genevieve Kaffer '29A
1998

Rev. Thomas Conway, Chaplain 1977-79
Oct. 6, 2010

Rosemary Kaffer Hamilton '29A
2004

Patrick Feighny '86A
Oct. 12, 2010

Congregation now includes four agrégées, with eight more working toward membership

Continued from page 14.

learned. The Senate of the Concordia congregation approved agrégée membership in 2006.

The first modern agrégée professed a vow of fidelity to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia a little more than two years ago. Since then, three more agrégées have joined the congregation.

As of Nov. 13, seven other women are agrégée candidates and one more is a "pre-candidate."

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. In almost every aspect, they are viewed as full members of the congregation, meaning they have a voice and a vote on most congregational issues.

But 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 God, to live according to the spirit and charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

But it is a noncanonical vow, meaning that it is not part of Church law and is instead a private commitment between that sister and the Concordia congregation.

It also means that the agrégée does not relinquish her finances to the congregation, and the congregation does not assume financial responsibility for her.

▶ Also, vowed sisters begin their religious life with a formal "formation" that lasts 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 period of being a candidate may be about the same length of time, but they do not leave behind their outside lives. Instead, they meet with mentors and study around their regular work and life schedules. And after they have professed their vow of fidelity, they return to their regular work and life schedule.

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

COMING EVENTS

Jan. 22 — Seasonal Spirituality: In the dead of winter

Presenters: Sisters Liberata Pellerin and Janet Lander
The landscape around us is stark, bare, seemingly dead. January is a month when many people would say the same about their emotional landscape. In this day of prayer we will explore the life-affirming grace hidden in grieving and emptiness. From 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

NEW!

Jan. 24, Feb. 7 & Feb. 21 — Beginning Quilting Classes

Have you wanted to learn to quilt but haven't been able to find the time or the person who could help you get started? Come to Manna House on Monday evenings and learn some basic skills and complete a small project that will give you the courage to keep at it. You can come to one or all of the classes. Sister Betty Suther will be your instructor. You will need to bring your sewing machine and some other basic things that will be explained to you when you register. From 7-10 p.m. Cost: \$10 per class. From out of town? Come for supper and spend the night!

Jan. 28-30 — "Stacked Posies" quilting retreat

Back by popular demand. Although having a pattern is not absolutely necessary, the pattern we are using is called "4-Patch Stacked Posies" by H. D. Designs and it will be a good reference after you leave. You may purchase the pattern from Fabric Essentials or wherever you usually shop for patterns. Another option: You and a friend might share your pattern. This will be a basic lesson on Stack and Whack and will give you the tools to try more. Sister Betty Suther will teach this class.

Feb. 11-13 — "String Quilts" quilting retreat

We will be using Gwen Marston's innovative techniques for fast, foundation-free string quilts. Everyone will bring strips and scraps of material and we'll put them all in a pile in the middle of the room and go at it! We ought to come up with some unique designs! You may want to get one of Marston's String Quilt books, but it's not necessary. Sister Betty Suther will lead this class.

NEW!

Feb. 25-27 — Baking Retreat and Blessing

Life Presenters: Sisters Beverly Carlin and Betty Suther
Baking bread can be a spiritual experience because Jesus made food and fellowship the core of his ministry. Come spend a weekend with us in prayer, reflection and making bread! Bring your apron, your Bible and your journal. From Friday at 7 p.m. to Sunday at 1 p.m.

March 5 Seasonal Spirituality : Tending the field of my life

Presenters: Sisters Liberata Pellerin and Janet Lander
What have you planted in the field of your life? Is it receiving enough moisture and enrichment? How are you cultivating the tender shoots of new life? Spend a day tending to the field of your life through contemplative writing, with time for personal and communal prayer.

April 8-10 — "Fit To Be Tied" quilting retreat

Guest instructor: Kathy Pflaum
Kathy Pflaum from Topeka is our guest teacher this weekend and she will teach a pattern using the bow tie block. You will want to purchase the pattern by KariPATCH Designs called Fit to be Tied. Kathy is a returning teacher from last season and we have enjoyed her attention and expertise. This is a great pattern for both the beginner and the advanced quilter.

April 15-17 — Meditation and Movement: Opening the Heart

Presenter: Sister Julie Christensen and registered yoga teacher Shanell (Champlin) Mergerson

The weekend program will be a mixture of meditation, movement (yoga) and reflection on Old Testament and New Testament scripture. We will look at entering into individualized prayer practices, our separation from God, the Gospel call to nonviolence and embracing unity in Christ. Each section of "Opening the Heart" will happen physically, emotionally and spiritually. Familiarity with yoga is valuable, so give us a call for recommendations on preparations for the weekend. The retreat is from 7 p.m. Friday to 4 p.m. Saturday.

NEW!

June 22-26 — Quilting Marathon Retreat

Have you been looking for some quality time to combine relaxation, quiet reflection time and quilting? Come to Manna House for four days with other quilters, learning from one another and enjoying the prospect of completing some long overdue project. Each morning begins with a prayer and an invitation to share faith. Features of the time at Manna will include field trips to Fabric Essentials in Concordia and Sew Country in Belleville, great food and comfortable accommodations. Sister Betty Suther will be your host. Invite a couple of quilting buddies and come! Retreat begins on Wednesday evening with supper and concludes after lunch on Sunday.

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

Annual dinner set March 27

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 27, and join us for food and friendship at our annual Spaghetti Dinner at the Motherhouse in Concordia.

Dinner is served from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m., and tickets will be available in advance with a limited number for sale at the door.

To reserve your tickets, call or email the sisters' Development Office: skrause@csjkansas.org or 785/243-2113, ext. 1221.

New coordinator

Continued from page 1.

Higgins said she was particularly impressed with the sisters' Neighbor to Neighbor center in Concordia and with the congregation's continuing work at bringing various aspects of the community together through the public forums that began two years ago.

"I get satisfaction in bringing people together and asking those questions: 'How do we improve the community? What would a better community look like?'"

But, she noted, while Neighborhood Initiatives and her position are new, the concept is not: "It's really the way our country was founded. There were many needs and few resources; we had to work together to raise a barn or build a school."

Mailing Label Update

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and print the corrected information below.

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SAVE THE DATES
JULY 14-17

2011 Theological Institute
at Manna House of Prayer



Sister Mary Leo Zeman: Dec. 12, 1917-Nov. 1, 2010

VIGIL: Nov. 4, 2010, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia

EULOGIST: Sister Bette Moslander

We remember and honor the life of Sister Mary Leo Zeman who died Nov. 1, 2010, at Mt. Joseph Senior Village.

Sister Mary Leo was the fifth of nine children of Frank and Barbara Vopat Zeman. She was born on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, 1917, at the family farm southwest of Wilson, Kan. Her parents named her Georgina Alice.

Georgina received all of her grade school education in a one-room country school. During the course of those grade school years Georgina suffered a ruptured appendix and was near death. On that occasion her mother dedicated her to the Blessed Mother and Mary Leo said that as a consequence she always had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Mary Leo attended high school at Wilson. Father McManus, the pastor, recognizing her ability, urged her to attend Marymount College when she graduated. She was vacillating between entering the Sisters of St. Dominic in Great Bend and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia when she came to a decision while making a retreat as a student at Marymount. On Sept. 8, 1926, at the age of 18, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph. She made first vows on March 19, 1928, and final profession three years later.

Mary Leo's life review is typical of her simple, direct way of living her life — it captures in small vignettes her life as the years unfolded.

In 1951 she was asked to go to Creighton University to begin work on her master's degree, which she completed in 1957. She immediately was assigned as principal and commercial teacher in Beloit and later in Tipton and Junction City where the high school students enjoyed learning to be credible bookkeepers and secretaries. The late 1960s and early '70s were times of great sadness for her. Her father died in 1969 and her mother a little more than a year later in January 1971. In her life review she speaks of recording her mother saying some prayers and singing a song in Bohemian so that she could relish that memory.

In June 1971 Mary Leo was elected to serve as Secretary General of the Congregation. It was a

work she gave herself to with precision and generosity even though she missed teaching the lively high schoolers. When she had completed her term in 1975, she applied for a position at Central Catholic High School, in Grand Island, Neb., as secretary to the principal. She loved her work and quickly became a favorite of both students and faculty alike. She served at Central Catholic for 15 years before retiring in the Grand Island convent where she continued to volunteer in the parish, visiting the shut-ins and counting the Sunday collections.

One student's memory of Mary Leo appeared



HOMEcomings

in the UPDATE 91, a school news bulletin:

If you attended Central Catholic in the '70s and '80s, you undoubtedly have one of those fleeting images whenever you think of Sister Mary Leo. You might remember her smiling at you over the office counter, or how she scolded you for "wasting paper." You might remember her bending over the flowers in front of the school preparing for graduation, or defrosting the ice box in the teachers' lounge. And how many of you remember her lunch bag? It appeared to be such a small bag. And yet out of its depths, Sister Mary Leo could produce a seven-course meal to the wonderment of all.

Sister Mary Leo served in Grand Island for 28 years. It was during these years that she realized she was slowly but steadily losing her eye-sight and it was this that helped her decide to retire from active duty at her beloved Central Catholic.

In her life review Mary Leo poignantly describes her own spiritual journey during what she calls her greatest years of growth, 1971-75. After several directed retreats, she asked to make the 30-day retreat in Hales Corners. She continued this spiritual journey throughout her years in Grand Island. The Diocese had encouraged and supported the Pentecostal and Cursillo movements, and Mary Leo became deeply involved, serving on Cursillo teams.

Her retreats and her work brought her much consolation and strength which helped her through the chaos of the post Vatican II renewal in the community.

"That was a time of frustration for me," she

wrote. "Prayer, community living, clothing, ministry — everything was changing. It took me some time to sort things out and be at ease with it, but as the years have gone on I feel it was one of the greatest things that happened in the Church and in religious life."

As the years moved on, the aging process was taking its toll on her and those she loved. Her reflections on her family reveal the deep felt affection and faithful love of a large, faith-filled family.

She retired from Central Catholic in 2000 and took up work with the RCIA program. She also visited the elderly, answered the phone at the rectory one day a week and helped with the cooking in the convent. At the same time she was slowly losing her eyesight.

In 2003 Mary Leo returned to the Motherhouse. Here she entered into the life of the Motherhouse community and continued to cope with her increasing loss of sight.

Interestingly enough, Sister Mary Leo wrote an essay for the West Nebraska Register in October 1988 on the Gospel story of the blind Bartimaeus. In that essay she describes how blindness can be a spiritual condition, more serious than the physical handicap.

In the end, she wrote, it is only with the heart that we can see rightly. Her own increasing blindness became a means of ever-greater faith for her. She never stopped praying for faith and for patience and gratitude.

Through the years, Sister Mary Leo filled out her mission commitment statements. Over and over she committed herself to a life in community, quoting Psalm 133: "... how good and how pleasant it is when sisters live together in unity. For there the Lord bestows his blessings, even life forevermore."

We will miss her! We all remember her pocket. She could pull from her pocket everything from soup to nuts, literally and figuratively. It was just a matter of fact that she would have anything required at any time: screwdrivers and bottle openers, flashlights and glue, notepaper and even a hammer and nails. Capacious and ready for any occasion: that pocket, later turned pocketbook, was just a metaphor for how she lived in the world: ready for anything that was of service to others — with characteristic generosity, patience, congeniality and humility.

Sister Mary Leo Zeman, we remember you with profound gratitude and joy. May you rest in peace!



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All the news that didn't fit

Snapshots of events at the Motherhouse and Manna House of Prayer



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<http://www.csjkansas.org>

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FAR LEFT: Remember when the Jolly Old Elf really seemed like the biggest thing about Christmas? At the Neighbor to Neighbor party Dec. 15, Kaden Owens discovers himself looking up (and up and up) to Santa (who at other times of the year is known as Bill Valcoure of Concordia).

LEFT, TOP: Crystal Borhani joined other students from Kansas State University and Cloud County Community College, plus faculty from St. Isidore's Church and Sisters of St. Joseph to sew blankets for the Manhattan, Kan., homeless shelter Dec. 4.

LEFT, BOTTOM: Roberta Lowery, right, was one of scores of "tasters" at the Chili for Charity event Oct. 14 in downtown Concordia. The open-air annual event features local groups and organizations — including Manna House of Prayer, represented here by Sisters Betty Suther, left, and Bette Moslander — competing for a share of the prize money to benefit their work.

ABOVE: Motherhouse facilities administrator Greg Gallagher peeks in the doorway of the Auditorium Dec. 11 to hear the Concordia High School Chamber Choir perform as part of the annual Open House at the Motherhouse.