



# THE MESSENGER

*of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas*

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## CELEBRATING OUR 2012 *Jubilarians*



**E**ach January, we introduce our Jubilarians — the very special women who are marking noteworthy anniversaries of the date they were received as novices into the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. In 2012, we honor eight sisters who together represent 485 years of love of God and service to the neighbor. On pages 4 through 7, you can read more about the Jubilarians, who will be honored with a special program and Mass this spring.

Pictured above are the 2012 Jubilarians: Top row, from left, Sister Lucienne Savoie (celebrating 75 years as a member of the congregation), Sister Barbara Berthiaume, Sister Rose Marie Dwyer and Sister Eulalia Kloeker (celebrating 60 years); and second row, from left, Sister Christina Meyer, Sister Mary Esther Otter and Sylvia Winterscheidt (celebrating 60 years); and Sister Regina Ann Brummel (celebrating 50 years).

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## ‘A new way of approaching what sisters have always done’

**F**rom their arrival in Kansas in 1883 through today, the Sisters of St. Joseph have worked to fill whatever needs we found in the communities we served. In the early decades, that primarily meant schools in new towns and growing cities across what was still a frontier. Later it meant hospitals and other care centers, an orphanage, a college...

Today it often means serving as pastoral ministers, spiritual directors, counselors and in myriad other roles in which sisters reach out to the people where we live.

And today Neighborhood Initiatives Inc. is a part of that reaching out. As Neighborhood Initiatives celebrates just its first birthday — and its coordinator marks her first anniversary on the job — the variety of its projects speaks both to the needs of rural communities and to the commitment of the sisters to continue to find and fulfill needs.

“This is just a new way of approaching what the sisters have always done,” says coordinator



“Leadership for Rural Communities” was developed by the Kansas Health Foundation and adapted by Neighborhood Initiatives. Coordinator Cheryl Lyn Higgins will lead the training beginning in Ellis, Kan., this spring — just one of several projects and workshops offered through this new office of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

Cheryl Lyn Higgins. “They are concerned about rural communities and the people who live in them, and we want to find whatever ways we can to help.”

Those “ways to help” make a

growing project list:

► “Community conversations,” which is a process to help leaders in rural cities and towns bring people together to identify challenges and seek solutions. The process has started in Ellis, Kan., where Higgins served as a facilitator for community meetings last fall. She has also visited other communities where sisters serve, to offer similar sessions there.

► “Leadership for Rural Communities,” which provides training for community members. The training was developed by the Kansas Health Foundation and adapted for use by Neighborhood Initiatives. Higgins will lead the first seven-week class in Ellis this spring.

► “B.E.S.T.” — or Basic Employment Skills Training — which gives people who are unemployed or underemployed a chance to

See **PROJECTS**, page 11.

# 'I was a *stranger* and you took me in...'

— Matthew 25:35



A message from  
*Sister Marcia Allen*,  
president of the  
Sisters of St. Joseph  
of Concordia

**D**ear Friends,  
Greetings in the New Year! We have a maxim in our tradition that goes something like this: Be convinced that whatever you are, whatever you have, and whatever you do for yourself and others depends on a pure mercy and an infinite capacity in God for love. This maxim, number 14 of 100, is in a context of our founder's teaching on how important it is for our complete capacity to be human. Being human depends on our ability to give of ourselves to others as God graciously gives to us.

You, our friends, have been praying for us during our Senate, that special time every four years when we stop to examine our effectiveness in our purpose and mission, and take up new directions where necessary.

In our Senate session this past November, one of our decisions was to focus on the issue of immigration. We hope to become as knowledgeable as possible about immigration legislation and policy and the day-to-day problems of immigrants in our country. We realize that we are one among many organizations and communities that have focused on this

issue and we hope to join them in resolving this divisive situation in our country.

As I ponder this decision I remember the many countries I've visited over the years.

In my travels I have experienced the anxiety of watching the port of entry officials scrutinize my passport and visa, study my picture and then study my face, the interminable wait — that stretch of silence, a vacuum of unknowing — before my documents are stamped and returned. I have had the embarrassment of asking questions in a stuttering second language and have the response come back to me in perfect English. I have wandered in a strange city, driven on completely unfamiliar roads and ridden public transportation without a clue as to where I was to get off a bus or train. I have longed for recognizable food, listened to long conversations in someone else's language until my head ached and prayed for someone to simply say something — anything — in the accent that I recognized as my own. I have felt completely helpless and have had to rely on the gratuity of strangers.

The one understanding that I had was that I was a stranger in a strange land

and that I was at the mercy of the strangers for whom the place where I traveled was home.

Being the outsider has a frightening, yet healthy effect: It teaches us how the visitor from another country feels when they are with us. They teach us compassion for the stranger who in our home is not at home.

Being a "foreigner" has taught me how to be especially attentive to those who feel strange in my home. Being a stranger has taught me what the pure mercy and God's infinite capacity for love is. I have been taken in over and over by persons who have had no obligation to be kind to me. I have never had the experience of being turned away because I was a stranger.

Stranger, foreigner, alien, immigrant, undocumented — all words we apply to those who come here from somewhere else; all words for a person who is not at home; words that have set us at odds with one another here in the United States.

There are many reasons for this unsettlement — our continued economic crisis, our unemployment condition, fear of or bias against strangers who might become more populous than those who

are "native" to the country. Strangers strike fear in our hearts in a time when none of us feels safe. Times of uncertainty breed fear of strangers.

Matthew 25, verse 35, is embedded in the parable Jesus taught about those who could and could not recognize the kingdom of God. Some could hear that God's design for creation included the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the ill, the imprisoned and the stranger — those whom we tend to overlook were those who were the chosen. Those who provided food, water, clothes, healing, justice and welcome were those who understood what God's infinite capacity for love is about.

God's love — an infinite capacity for acceptance of every kind of human being. That is what we hope to be a part of in our decision to become involved in the issue of immigration. We hope that our efforts, small as they will be in the great arena of this national conundrum, will somehow be effective in communicating God's capacity for love.

It is in this spirit that we wish you a very prosperous and fulfilling 2012. May this New Year be one in which you experience God's all inclusive and gracious capacity for love.

## THE MESSENGER

of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

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785/243-2113, Ext. 1217  
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SAVE THE DATE!

July 19-22

Theological Institute  
at Manna House of Prayer

with **Sister Ilio Delio**  
noted Franciscan theologian and  
author of "The Emergent Christ"



For detailed information or to register,  
contact Manna House at 785/243-4428  
or [retreatcenter@mannahouse.org](mailto:retreatcenter@mannahouse.org)

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# A simple story from 'behind the scenes'

**H**e dug his hands deeper into his pockets and shifted his weight from his left side to his right then to the left again. Gingerly picking up a black knight he whispered, "They're wood. My dad... my dad would love this."

It was Manna House of Prayer, 1995, the first year of the Kid's Holiday Store. He was about 15 — in trouble with the law, at school and at home. His dad was so angry — and so disappointed — in him that they rarely spoke.

Now here was the son, deep in his own pain at the strained relationship and infatuated with the wooden chess set complete with a smooth, wooden case to match. He spoke with one of the volunteers. He did not say much but seemed to need encouragement for what he was about to do. "Do you really think it would make a dad happy?" he asked more than once. He would leave and come back several times, always hoping that it would still be there. Sensing that this was a significant gift and that the young man would be back, the volunteers set the chess set aside for his return. He had a special way with special



SISTER JEAN  
ROSEMARYNOSKI

wrapping paper he wanted it wrapped. He took his time and took great care in wrapping it with one of the volunteers. As he left, he was a mixture of pride coupled with the fragility that comes when giving a gift as a peace offering that says, "Dad, I really need you."

That year there were many tender stories from the Holiday Store. But I was in awe of that proverbial thin strand that so powerfully holds us all together: There was the person who donated the chess set, the sisters at Manna House who hosted the store in those early years, the volunteers who delighted in each shopper and those who listened to a young man's heart-felt plea that his gift be wrapped "just so."

But what if someone had broken that one strand and not done his or her part? How would that have changed the story?

The ending to this story is that the father was deeply moved by his son's

gift. Through tears and reconciliation, the son promised to do better and the father committed to being more attentive. They both kept their promises. The father taught the son to play chess and that was the entryway into healing their relationship.

I've thought of that father and son often, especially at this time of year when I reflect on the goodness and generosity of you, our donors. The story of the young man from the Holiday Store is a simple one. None of the people who worked with him that day could have known the impact they would have — not only on the young man and his family but on the whole community. He kept out of trouble and was no longer in the court system; he concentrated on getting the most he could from his studies; and a family at peace within the home ripples out into the larger community. I was privileged to get to know the family to see firsthand how simple kindnesses

## 2011 Tax Statements

We are grateful to all who have supported us financially this past year. We could not do what we do without you! Thank you!

In keeping with IRS regulations, we will mail tax statements for your records to those who have given a cumulative total of \$250 or more since Jan. 1, 2011; however, we are happy to provide a tax statement to anyone else who requests one. Please contact: Sister Jean Rosemarynoski at 785-243-2113 Ext. 1225 or email [jrose@csjkansas.org](mailto:jrose@csjkansas.org). Statements will be mailed by Jan. 27.

— and a son's courage — changed their lives.

The success of the simple gesture mirrors the results of your partnership with us. You are among the crew "behind the scenes" who make the outcome possible. Without you, it would not happen.

Our hearts continue to grow in gratitude and in humility for your belief in us.

You can reach me at:  
Sister Jean Rosemarynoski  
Development Director  
785/243-2113, ext. 1225 • [jrose@csjkansas.org](mailto:jrose@csjkansas.org)  
P.O. Box 279, Concordia KS 66901

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 25, and join us for food and friendship at our annual Spaghetti Dinner at our Motherhouse in Concordia.

Dinner will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m., and the day promises to have something for everyone!

To reserve your tickets, call or email the Development Office at 785/243-2113, ext. 1223, or [eweddle@csjkansas.org](mailto:eweddle@csjkansas.org).



### Menu

▶ Spaghetti, garlic bread, salad with dressing, spumoni ice cream and beverages

### Dinner tickets

(Reserved, in advance)  
▶ Adults: \$8  
▶ Children (12 and younger) \$4

(At the door)

▶ Adults: \$10  
▶ Children (12 and younger): \$6  
(Children 4 and younger eat free)

### Activities

▶ Entertainment (Four musical groups)  
▶ Bake sale (Breads, pies, candy and more!)  
▶ Drawings (Great prizes! Drawings held at 1:30!)  
▶ Grab bag (New this year — for only \$1 or \$2 choose from carefully wrapped surprises!)

- ▶ 125th anniversary video (Learn more about us in the video produced as part of KTUW's "Sunflower Journeys" series)
- ▶ Tours (Sign up for guided tour of the historic Nazareth Motherhouse)
- ▶ Gift Shop (Items handmade by our sisters)
- ▶ Coloring placemats for your children's artwork display!

### Prize Drawings

Thank you to donors who have provided the following prizes:

- ▶ Apple iPad (Vince and Laurita Berland)
- ▶ Handmade quilt (Sister Betty Suther)
- ▶ Handmade stuffed dinosaurs (Sister Loretta Clare Flax)
- ▶ Four-burner gas grill (Pestinger Distributing Company)

And more, from donors who wish to remain anonymous:

- ▶ \$500 cash
- ▶ \$250 gift card to Rod's Food Store in Concordia
- ▶ \$100 gift card to Lowe's
- ▶ \$100 gift card to Target Stores
- ▶ \$100 gift to Applebee's Neighborhood Bar & Grill

**BORN:** Dryburg, Mich.  
**RECEIVED:** Aug. 15, 1937  
**CURRENT HOME:** Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia

**EDUCATION:** Diploma for Registered Nurse, St. John's Hospital, Salina; bachelor's degree from Marymount College; master's degree in maternal and child nursing from Boston College and University, Boston.

**MINISTRIES:**  
 1945: Obstetrical instructor and supervisor at St. John's Hospital, Salina  
 1961-1972: Professor of obstetrics at Marymount College and supervisor of clinical practice of nursing students at St. John's Hospital, Salina  
 1973-1975: Geriatric, medical and surgical supervisor at St. Joseph's Hospital, El Paso, Texas  
 1975-1986: Parish pastoral minister in Las Cruces and Silver City, N.M.  
 1986-1990: Associate chaplain at County Memorial Hospital, Las Cruces  
 1990-2002: Home pastoral visitor in Las Cruces  
 2003-present: Personal prayer ministry at the Motherhouse



## Sister Lucienne Savoie

The focus of my service, ministry and mission living at the Motherhouse is "An attitude of gratitude."

Every morning on awakening, I pray, "Thank you Lord for another day of blessings." When a person asks me, "How are you today?" My response is, "I am blessed. Thank you." I am always aware of looking at and smiling to everyone I meet any time. I consciously and sincerely show gratitude for any little favor.

I am present to the sisters here at the Motherhouse and at Mount Joseph Senior Village. I bring Holy Eucharist to our bedridden sisters and pray with them, and assist elderly sisters by reading to them and writing their letters.

My big ministry is through correspondence and phone. I remember to send cards to family and friends for birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, Easter, and in times of sickness or death. I find that my gift of deep enduring friendship resulting from my 30 years of ministry in New Mexico continues to be nurtured. I can still communicate hope, encouragement, support in their trials and

spiritual guidance through phone or writing in answer to their needs, thus assisting them in the name of Jesus to maintain hope in their struggles, and to daily pray for them, and I am blessed in return.

My prayer life consists of communal prayer, which is daily Eucharist and praying the Rosary and Litanies, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday morning, prayer for Peace and special prayers such as vigils when a sister has died. I am committed to giving a conscious couple of half hours of contemplative prayer in the chapel daily.



Sister Lucienne Savoie, left, who is celebrating her 75th jubilee this year, chats with Neighborhood Initiatives coordinator Cheryl Lyn Higgins during the November 2011 Assembly at the Motherhouse.

Even today, when I find myself physically limited, I do all I do in the presence of God — but it's not doing as much as being. Our doing can bring success, but our being brings fruit. I hope I am remembered for who I was, not what I did.

## Sister Rose Marie Dwyer

As I think about my 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, I remember most fondly my five years in Xinguara, Brazil, where I served as something of an itinerant missionary. There were groupings of villages, or small communities, on various bus and truck lines, and the parish priest, Father Bene, and I went out to give workshops, Bible studies, and leadership training. The people from the whole region would group together, arriving by horseback, bicycle, and on foot to study in a chosen home, which had an open area of shade with houses nearby for hospitality.

One of the biggest communities was Sao Jose, where there were many leaders, a youth group and catechists to be accompanied. On the way to Sao Jose, I would get off the bus or van so I could visit another community. At the bus stop, I would see if there was anyone there to meet a traveler and would catch a ride up the line about three miles to this community. I would walk up the



lane to the leader's home, spend the night, and visit people the next day. Many times there was no one with a wagon, motor bike, or anything, so I'd walk the whole trip, watching for snakes and herds of white long-horned cattle. After visits and one or two meetings, someone would take me on their horse or loan me a second horse to go farther up the road to another community.

There were lots of other communities on another road leading away from Xinguara. There was one group of communities where an old pickup came to town every week for the Saturday market. I loved to go on this very certain transportation. Robao was the driver who had a farm at the end of the line, the community of John the Baptist. I would visit the people there, meet with catechists, and have my nightly Bible studies.

On other trips, I would get out of Robao's truck and walk a few kilometers to another clus-



ter of homes to meet in a school or chapel. These were some of my favorite communities.

But in all these villages, wherever I went, I was simply a humble channel of love to all whom God wishes to reach. Thank you, God, for using this lowly instrument as your Divine Plan so wills.

**BORN:** Jennings, Kan.  
**RECEIVED:** March 19, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Motherhouse, Concordia  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Marymount College  
**MINISTRIES:**  
 1954-64: Taught primary grades in Salina, Kan.  
 1965-87: Served in Brazil Mission, in Teresina, Piaui  
 1987-92: Worked in a Hispanic parish, Kansas City, Mo.  
 1992-2005: Worked on formation of communities in Picos, Piaui, Brazil  
 2006-10: Kindergarten helper in Plainville, Kan.  
 2010-present: Prayer ministry and English as a second language instruction at the Motherhouse

**LEFT:** Sister Rose Marie "Rosie" Dwyer teaches English as a second language four evenings a week at the Motherhouse.



Sister Barbara Berthiaume leads a Scripture study group in her home in Goodland, Kan., where she has provided parish pastoral care since moving there from Marquette, Mich., in 2002.

## Sister Barbara Berthiaume

As I review my life as a Sister of St. Joseph in the late 20th and early 21st centuries in the United States, I'm convinced that the Vatican II Council is the event that best redefined what religious life has meant for me. Vatican II brought tremendous changes in how I lived this life. Through the anxieties, stress and the excitement involved in renewing my life as a sister, I was stretched, I conquered fears and I emerged with new energy to risk venturing into new ministries.

The Vatican II Council document "Perfectae Caritatis" called women and men religious to renew our lives and bring our communities into the modern world. This meant that we moved from a rather cloistered life of restrictions and great dependence on Canon Law to a life of more freedom to develop our spiritual life and our gifts. It was a life more dependent on the Holy Spirit and with great emphasis on our charism of active and inclusive love of the dear neighbor. I welcomed these changes!

**BORN:** Escanaba, Mich.  
**RECEIVED:** March 19, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Goodland, Kan.  
**EDUCATION:** BS, Marymount College; MA, University of Detroit, Mich.  
**MINISTRIES:**  
 1954-63: Junior high school teacher, Chicago and

Leawood, Kan.  
 1964-65: High school science and math teacher, Manhattan, Kan.  
 1966-67: Junior high school teacher, Chicago  
 1968-73: High school science and math teacher, Salina  
 1974-84: Hospital pastoral care, Concordia



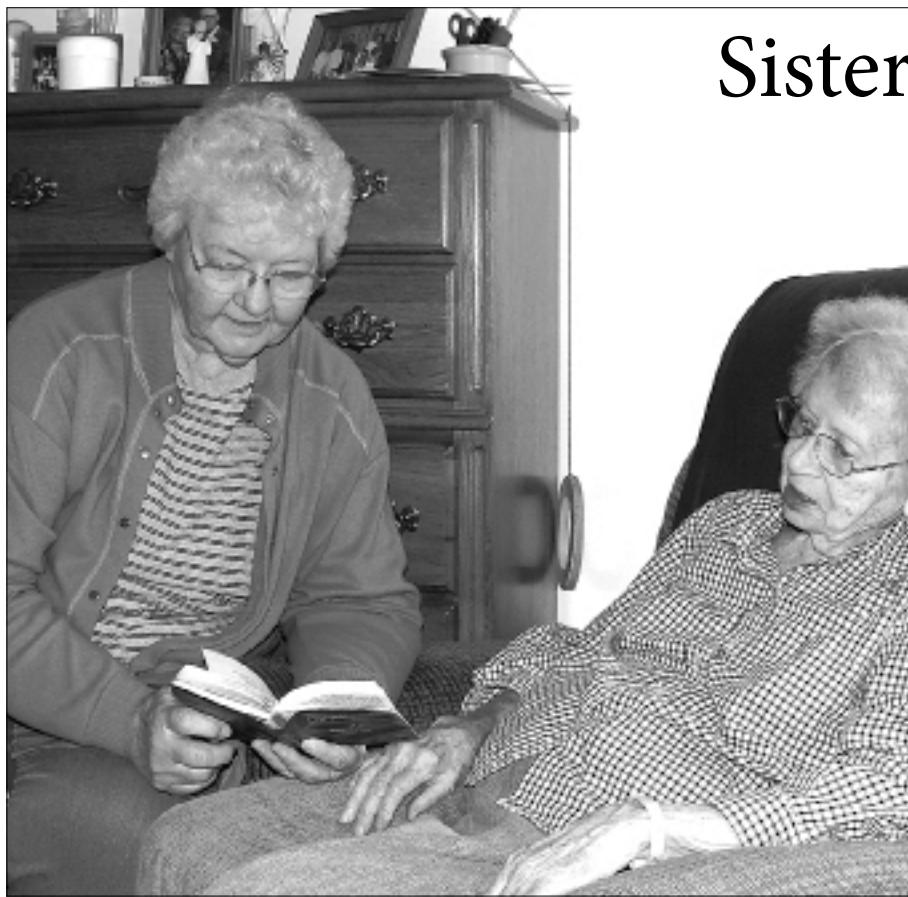
As new ministry opportunities opened up for us, I moved into hospital chaplaincy and then later into parish pastoral care. These moves often entailed anxiety, stress and loneliness, but with each move I faced my fears and learned much about my new ministries and about myself. I discovered talents that I didn't know lay hidden within me. These new learnings enriched my life and instilled in me a great deal of self-confidence.

For 60 years I have been privileged to live the call as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia. It has been for me a life of learning, growing and enrichment. As a result of the Vatican II Council I have been able to live a new and more meaningful understanding of prayer, the vows and community living. And I have had countless opportunities for spiritual growth on my personal journey of faith.

1985: Began a retirement center for Native Americans, Oneida, Wis.  
 1986-92: Parish pastoral care, Crystal Falls, Mich.  
 1993-2002: Diocesan Catholic education department, Marquette, Mich.  
 2002-present: Parish pastoral care, Goodland, Kan.

**BORN:** Marysville, Kan.  
**RECEIVED:** Aug. 15, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Beattie, Kan.  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Marymount College; additional education courses at Kansas State University, Kearney (Neb.) State College and the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley; studied clinical pastoral education in Independence, Iowa; completed Crum's Beauty College, Manhattan, Kan.  
**MINISTRIES:**  
 1954-75: Taught elementary school in Concordia, Salina, Oakley, Gorham and Park, Kan., and in Grand Island, Neb.  
 1975-80: Parish ministry in Grand Island, Neb.  
 1980-84: Served as housekeeper and in the kitchen at Manna House of Prayer, Concordia  
 1984-85: Office help at the Center for Enriched Communications, Grand Junction, Colo.  
 1986-92: Pastoral care ministry in Hanover, Kan.  
 1986-2000: Barber and stylist for sisters living at the Medaille Center in Salina and St. Mary's in Concordia  
 1993-94: Chaplain at Mount Joseph Senior Village, Concordia  
 1994-present: Pastoral care ministry in Marysville and Beattie, Kan.

**RIGHT:** Sister Eulalia Kloeker reads to a parishioner as part of her pastoral ministry.



## Sister Eulalia Kloeker

One afternoon in my early years of being a member of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph, I ran across a verse card titled "Raboni," which means Good Lord. The first stanza reads as follows:

*When I am dying  
 How glad I shall be  
 That the lamp of my life  
 Has burned out for Thee.*

This image serves me well. In 1976, the community allowed me the privilege of assisting my mother in the bedside care of her mother, who was 102 at the time. At my grandmother's death, she raised her previously immobile arm and audibly said, "Mein Jesu!" This may have been the moment of grace for me to develop a desire to minister to the sick in a rural environment. After Clinical Pastoral Studies, I have been in this ministry for the past 25 years.

As I celebrate this jubilee, I continue to keep the image of my burning lamp before me. I'm filled with gratitude for the wonderful examples of faith, trust and confidence in God's love that I have witnessed at bed-sides of the dying.



## Sister Christina Meyer

As I reflect on 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, three particular things come to mind:

I was privileged to accompany Sister Margarida Boucher to Brazil for three weeks to visit our community there. The graciousness, hospitality and simple living that I experienced from our sisters touched me deeply then and continues to do so. From their generosity, I experienced abundance.

I am also grateful for the experience of accompanying RCIA candidates for 10 years in Scottsbluff, Neb., while being a pastoral minister. The candidates' trust and faith were inspiring as we approached and prepared for their reception of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Of course, the special joy was when they articulated "Wow!"

Being present to those in the dying process has been another powerful experience in parish ministry. I have been overwhelmed by the kindness of families who have been gracious in allowing me to be with them at the most profound and holy time. It was a reminder of the truth that our ministry is our presence.



Sister Christina Meyer volunteers at the Salina Rescue Mission on a recent December evening.

I am grateful to my family, friends and community for being there for me these past 60 years, which have been abundantly blessed by our generous God.

**BORN:** Grainfield, Kan.  
**RECEIVED:** Feb. 2, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Salina, Kan.  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Marymount College; MA, Kansas State University; spirituality studies at the School of Applied Theology, Berkeley, Calif.

### MINISTRIES:

1956-71: Teacher in various elementary schools, including Gladstone, Mich.  
1971-73: Principal, St. Joseph-St. Anne School, Chicago.  
1973-79: Principal, St. Michael School, Fairbury, Neb.  
1979-87: Executive Councilor for the congregation  
1988-89: Staff member, Manna House of Prayer, Concordia  
1989-90: Campus minister, Dodge City, Kan.  
1990-2000: Pastoral ministry, Scottsbluff, Neb.  
2000-03: Motherhouse coordination team, Concordia  
2003-06: Pastoral ministry and administration, Sutherland, Paxton and Hershey, Neb.  
2009-present: Advocate, Justice and Peace Center, Salina



## Sister Sylvia Winterscheidt

I've enjoyed many exciting and touching moments during my teaching years. A favorite memory happened in the early 1970s while I was teaching English and religion at Central Catholic High School in Grand Island, Neb.

That spring our students put on the musical "Show Me Jesus." It brought out many talents not always observable in the classroom setting: inspiration, dedication, responsibility and enthusiasm, to name a few. The students' "aliveness" was inspired by their music director, Sister Bernadine Hickman. And their faith life touched many in the audience.

At performances both in Grand Island and on the road, their enthusiasm, love of music and love of the Lord lifted spirits while spreading the Good News.

As a Sister of St. Joseph, I witnessed our charism reflected in the teenagers we were educating. What better way to show love of God and love of neighbor than by seeing this Good News come alive on the stage! I still

enjoy listening to the taped recording of "Show Me Jesus" and it still makes my heart smile. Originally, the tape was reel-to-reel (1970s); later I dubbed it for my cassette player. The acoustics leave much to be desired, but the visual and audio memories are crystal clear!

A few years ago I was given a trip to Hawaii to visit my friend, Bernadine Hickman Zimbra and her family. As we remi-

nised about our days at CCHS, we recounted many blessings still alive in our hearts today.



In early December, Sister Sylvia Winterscheidt makes rhubarb-strawberry jam in the kitchen on the third floor of the Motherhouse. She sells the jams and jellies in the Motherhouse Gift Shop.

**BORN:** Mercier, Kan.  
**RECEIVED:** March 19, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Motherhouse, Concordia  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Marymount College;



### MINISTRIES:

1953-68: Elementary school teacher in Chicago, Grand Island, Neb., and Manhattan, Sequin, Gorham, St. Peter and Leawood, Kan.  
1968-75: Secondary school teacher, Grand Island, Neb.  
1976-78: High school religion teacher and parish minister, Sidney, Neb.  
1978-86: Parish ministry, Grand Island, Neb.  
1984-96: Led personal growth programs and retreats, offered spiritual direction and served on ecumenical staff in Kansas, Nebraska, Indiana, Texas, Maine, New York, Alberta and British Columbia, from a home base of Grand Island  
1990-present: Staff member, Manna House of Prayer, Concordia

**BORN:** Clayton, Kan.  
**RECEIVED:** Aug. 15, 1952  
**CURRENT HOME:** Concordia



Omaha, Neb.

### MINISTRIES:

1954-81: Elementary school teacher in Manhattan, Cawker City, Salina and Schoenchen, Kan., and Silver City, N.M.  
1980-81: Teacher in adult education and English-as-a-second-language programs for military spouses, Junction City, Kan.  
1981-82: Nazareth Motherhouse staff, Concordia  
1985-94: St. Clare House staff member, Junction City, Kan.  
1995-99: Care for aged mother in New Almelo, Kan.  
1999-2000: Assisted in Plainville, Kan.  
2000-present: Retirement at the Motherhouse, including prayer ministry, recycling and care of indoor plants



Sister Mary Esther Otter cares for the croton plant at the Nazareth Motherhouse on a sunny December morning.

## Sister Mary Esther Otter

As I reflect on my 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, my thoughts are of decades of heritage, faith and service preceding me. Ah, the mysterious ways and marvelous handiwork of our God! I am grateful to God, my parents and siblings. I am also thankful for my Sister of St. Joseph teachers and a high school Methodist principal with rural students of various creeds.

Prior to the last decade of these 60 years, I was a caregiver for my aged mother who had impaired vision. Three years later I was diagnosed with macular degeneration. I needed care and took oasis and adaptation in the Plainville mission where my sister, Sister Francis Margaret Otter, was teaching. Later I retired to the Motherhouse and assisted Sister Mary Julia Stegeman with the greenhouse work.

Among the plants was a small

croton, which can have a variety of leaf shapes and a diversity of designs and colors. In tending and observing its growth, I noticed its sensitivity to environment and care. It reminded me of my 28 years of teaching, including a summer with children of migrants and a year assisting military spouses learning English as a second language. I also visited the Brazil mission and its rich culture.

However, the croton's diversity compares best to my experience of assisting Sister Viatora Solbach in establishing and staffing a shelter for homeless women, children and those in need. I observed God's extravagant love in these beautiful persons desiring change, a new environment and acceptance.

I thank God and the community for these 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph.

## Sister Regina Ann Brummel

Religious life for me has come to mean Jesus' call to share life in a community of his friends and disciples in solidarity with one another and the dear neighbor without distinction. The experience of this solidarity that has most shaped me is a "moment" when, as a Marymount College French instructor, I spent the summer of 1975 in West Africa where indigenous people called me in a new way into the world neighborhood.

This neighborhood, I have come to realize, is anywhere my sisters and brothers have been and continue to be marginalized through political and economic injustice. I have found myself, as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia, most alive when I can engage in friendship and collaboration between and among the poor and voiceless. Native people have taught me that this neighborhood is close indeed, as close as extended family and as near as all creation.

That summer in 1975 is an ongoing "moment" in my life. As I try to listen to

the Spirit of Jesus, the neighbors have continued calling me to solidarity with the poor and marginalized, especially in Haiti and American Indian reservations. The experience is a constant reminder that as long as I can share my gifts and talents, no matter where I serve in the world, my CSJ sisters are there also.

I believe that we are disciples, partners

and collaborators with Jesus who gives his life to all, and whose only rule is that we love one another as he has loved us, with the love of friendship. (John 15:12)



On a September morning, Sister Regina Ann Brummel interacts with students at Turtle Mountain Community High School in Belcourt, N.D., via a video call from her office in Concordia. In this experiment in hi-tech "distance learning," she teaches the French I class five mornings a week, and her computer equipment has now been upgraded so she has a direct internet link with the school.

**BORN:** Pilot Grove, Mo.  
**RECEIVED:** Aug. 15, 1962  
**CURRENT HOME:** Concordia  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Marymount College; MA, University of Kansas; MA, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver; Ph.D., University of North Dakota

### MINISTRIES:

1965-69: Teaching school in Plainville, Kan., Aurora, Ill., and Chicago  
1969-74: Attending Marymount College, Creighton University (Omaha, Neb.) and University of Kansas  
1974-80: Teaching French and ethnic studies at Marymount College (including summer 1975 in West Africa)  
1981-83: Attending University of Denver  
1983-88: Establishing, teaching in and administering a high school for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, Sisseton, S.D.  
1988-98: Researching and studying for a doctorate, University of North Dakota at Grand Forks  
1998-2003: Helping to establish the White Earth Tribal and Community College, Mahanomen, Minn.  
2003-05: Chairing the teacher education department and teaching at Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt, N.D.  
2005-08: Teaching and grant writing at White Mountain Tribal and Community College  
2008-present: Serving on the congregational Leadership Council



NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK JAN. 9-14, 2012 • WOULD YOU ALLOW GOD TO CALL YOU TO BE A SISTER OF ST. JOSEPH OF CONCORDIA? • NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK JAN. 9-14, 2012 • WOULD YOU ALLOW GOD TO CALL YOU TO BE A CSJ ASSOCIATE? • NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK JAN. 9-14, 2012 • WOULD YOU ALLOW GOD TO CALL YOU TO BE A CSJ VOLUNTEER?



Sister Anna Marie Broxterman cleaning a Concordia city nature path



Sisters joining a rally for peace near Fort Riley, Kan.



Sister Polly Kukula leading an evening discussion during Discover Camp



Sister Philomene Reiland playing the pipe organ at the Nazareth Motherhouse



Sister Pat Eichner taking a break in her garden



Sister Julie Christensen leading a game at a summer day camp



Sisters learning about the possibilities of wind energy

Can you picture  
*yourself*  
as part of our picture?

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**Sister Beverly Carlin**

P.O. Box 279 • Concordia KS 66901  
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OR online at [www.csjkansas.org](http://www.csjkansas.org) and on Facebook at CSJKansas

JAN. 9-14, 2012 • WOULD YOU ALLOW GOD TO CALL YOU TO BE A CSJ VOLUNTEER?

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# The story continues

*Sister adds new book to work on life behind Iron Curtain*

The story of Catholic sisters who survived behind the Iron Curtain is now available as a book, thanks to the work of Sister Margaret Nacke.

"Bearers of Faith: Undaunted Courage of Catholic Sisters Under Communism" is available through lulu.com for \$19.95 plus shipping for the 74-page paperback edition or \$5.99 for the ebook.

Sister Margaret and Sister Mary Savoie, both members of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, first went to Romania in 1993, as volunteers to help the Church in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. Over the next decade in many visits, they branched out to other Eastern European countries and built relationships with many of the sisters who had survived.

In 2003, Sisters Mary and Margaret began serious research into the plight of those Catholic sisters, eventually covering eight countries and the years from the rise of Stalin in Russia to the fall of the Berlin Wall. That included numerous trips to Eastern Europe, interviews with the women they came to call "Sister Survivors" and extensive academic study into local and Church history.

In July 2006, they planned and facilitated a conference in Lviv, Ukraine, bringing together sisters from eight former communist countries. The goal was to examine fundamental values guiding those sisters who survived under communism and to explore ways



SISTER MARGARET NACKE

those values could be integrated into the lives of American sisters.

As a result of the work done by Sisters Mary and Margaret, hundreds of testimonies, photographs, books and other documents have been collected and archived at Catholic Theological Union's Bechtold Library in Chicago.

It was also in 2006 that Sisters Mary and Margaret hired NewGroup Media of South Bend, Ind., to create a documentary of the story of the Sister Survivors. Written and produced by Sister Judy Zielinski of the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, the documentary — "Interrupted Lives: Catholic Sisters Under European Communism" — aired nationally as part of ABC Television's "Vision and Values" series in September 2009. It has also been aired by EWTN in the United States and in Europe. In June 2010, the hourlong film received a national Gabriel Award for religious programming.

Since then, Sisters Mary and Margaret, who live and serve in Belleville, Kan., have continued showings of the documentary around the country and have scheduled other educational programs to tell the stories of the Eastern European sisters.

"When we gave our presentation, inevitably someone would ask, 'Are you going to do a book?'" Sister

## RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC YOUTH

### Corey Elizabeth Cochran

**SCHOOL:** Hayden High School, Topeka; junior  
**ACTIVITIES:** VA Hospital helping with recreational therapy; Golden Age Games; police cadets helping direct traffic at Heartland Park, security for the Mexican Fiesta, with camps, and helped in canvassing a homicide; Fall Festival helping with set-up, tear-down, outdoor games, chili feed, and serving lines; liturgical ministries; retreats with Campus Ministries

**WHAT MOTIVATES ME:** Many things motivate me to do these service activities. I enjoy helping people —

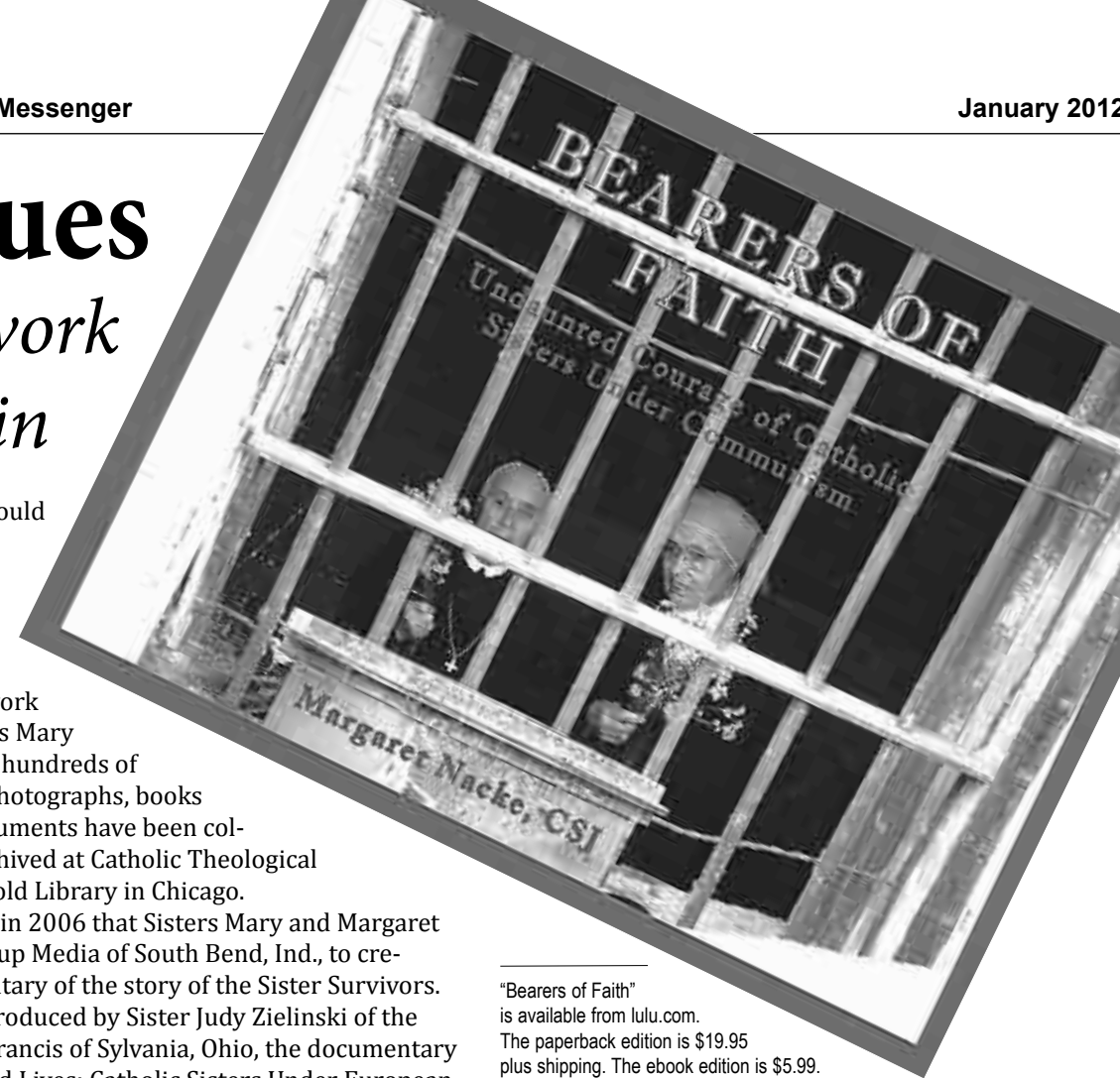
especially the elderly and the young. I don't care how many people know what I do or know how many hours I do, I just do it because I know it is the right thing to do and I enjoy doing it. It warms my heart to see the happiness in the veterans' eyes when I come to visit and help them with things because a lot of them don't have family members to visit them. And it's amazing because as time goes on we grow close, like a family. Jesus said to visit those who are sick or imprisoned and sometimes these veterans may feel as if they are imprisoned because their families don't come to visit. I like helping people in general.

**PARENTS:** Bill and Kelley Cochran of Topeka



If you know a young person — either male or female — you'd like to recommend to be featured in The Messenger's "Recognizing Catholic Youth," please let us know by contacting:

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



"Bearers of Faith" is available from lulu.com. The paperback edition is \$19.95 plus shipping. The ebook edition is \$5.99.

Margaret explains. "This complements the DVD; it's something for people to hang on to."

Sister Margaret continues to work with Catholic sisters in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, helping them write grants and offering other assistance where she can.

"These are the saints of our day," she said. "It's so important to help people understand the oppression and suppression these sisters have gone through. So few of us know what they suffered and the courage they showed."

# THE LATEST NEWS FROM OUR SISTERS IN BRAZIL

## Mission elects leaders for next 3 years



SISTER MARIA AUGUSTA MENDES BISPO

Sister Maria Augusta Mendes Bispo has been elected coordinator for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia in Brazil.

In the community elections in late October, Sister Joana Maria das Graças de Sousa was named vice coordinator, while Sister Luciene Maria de Carvalho was re-elected treasurer and Sister Patricia Neihouse was named councilor.

The new team will take office in mid-January, for a term of three years.

Sister Maria Augusta will succeed Sister Donna Otter as coordinator.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia founded the Brazil Mission in 1963, from a base in Teresina, the capital city of the

state of Piauí in northeast Brazil. Sister Patricia was one of the original sisters in that mission.

Over the years, they have reached out to neighboring cities and states, and today have three mission houses within the city of Teresina, as well as in Picos and Guaribas, both in Piauí, and in the city of Graça Aranha in the state of Maranhão. There are 15 sisters in the Brazil Mission, plus four postulants.

Sister Maria Augusta was born and raised in Amarante, Piauí, and worked as a teacher for several years before entering the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia in 1980. She professed her first vows in 1983, and her perpetual vows in 1989 in

her hometown of Amarante.

She served in diocesan and parish ministry in the southern part of the state of Pará, and after attending the Center of Theology and Spirituality in Rio de Janeiro joined the mission's Formation Team in Teresina. She later served in Amanarte and then served in Teresina for three terms as treasurer of the mission.

In 2008, Sister Maria Augusta was asked to go to Guaribas, Piauí, as Coordinator of Education for Youth and Adults at the State School, and in 2009 served as Supervisor of Curriculum for that school under the State Department of Education, and then in 2010 served as co-director of the school.

Today she lives in Guaribas and does pastoral work, while also supervising the Associate Member Program for the Brazil Mission, working with CSJ Associates in five cities throughout northeast Brazil.

As coordinator, Sister Maria Augusta will have primary responsibility for the development and growth of the Brazil Mission. She and the vice coordinator, treasurer and councilor will make up the Coordinator Team of the congregation's Brazil Mission.

## Immigration speaker set for April 14 Projects

Continued from Page 1

One Neighborhood Initiatives project brings together the social justice tradition of Catholicism and the sisters' heritage of compassion and courage.

In November, the Senate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia — the formal deliberative body of the congregation — gave full support to a "statement on immigration" that calls for a comprehensive national policy that includes:

- ▶ A pathway to lawful permanent residency and citizenship for the undocumented persons currently living in the United States;
- ▶ A process to reduce the backlog of family visas in order to ensure family unity and reunification;
- ▶ A guest worker program that ensures labor protections and equitable wages;
- ▶ A border security and enforcement policy that is humane;
- ▶ A process whereby undocumented students living in the United States can earn a college degree and become gainfully employed.



ILIANA HOLGUIN

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph have made similar calls for comprehensive national immigration reform.

As part of educating sisters about immigration issues and finding ways to collaborate with other concerned groups and individuals, coordinator Cheryl Lyn Higgins has organized a number of meetings and presentations.

The major event will be a public presentation April 14 at the Motherhouse by noted immigration rights advocate Liana Holguin.

Holguin is executive director of Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, the largest provider of free and low-cost legal services to immigrants and refugees and their families in El Paso, West Texas and Southern New Mexico. She is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers

For information on Neighborhood Initiatives or any of the projects mentioned here, contact coordinator Cheryl Lyn Higgins at 785/243-2113, ext. 1215, or [clhiggins@csjkansas.org](mailto:clhiggins@csjkansas.org)

Association, the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild and the Pro Bono College of the State Bar of Texas. She served two terms on the State Bar of Texas Committee on Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality and is a member of the U.S./Mexico Border and Immigration Task Force.

She frequently donates her time to speaking on immigration-related issues to the immigrant community, law enforcement officials, and other social service agencies.

The presentation begins at 1:30 p.m. and the public is encouraged to attend. More informal meetings in Salina and Dodge City, Kan., have also been scheduled with groups and individuals who are currently working on immigration issues. See "Coming events" on page 13 for details.

improve their job prospects. The two-day program was provided at Neighbor to Neighbor, the sisters' women's center in Concordia, last fall. But in one of the most exciting developments for Neighborhood Initiatives so far, Higgins has received permission from the state agencies that developed the program to create an online version that will be available to anyone. Work on that is expected to begin later this winter.

▶ "Kansas Optimizing Health Program," or KOHP — pronounced *cope* — which is a six-week workshop designed to help people with chronic health conditions live healthier lives. The first session in Concordia will begin Feb. 23. (See story on page 13.)

▶ "Kansas Monarch," which is an ongoing discussion about the need for transitional housing for women and children in Concordia. Nothing definite has developed yet, but Higgins and a small committee of sisters continue to discuss the possibilities.

# Dreams do come true!

## '80 grad publishes book on her mother's 91st birthday

I graduated in the Marymount Class of 1980 with a degree in physical education. My first job was as women's volleyball coach at Ottawa (Kan.) University, but within a couple of years I decided I wanted to become a dietitian.

In 1983, I returned to college. By 1986, I'd earned a master of science degree in Institutions Management (dietetics) from Kansas State University, and eventually became a registered dietitian, or RD. My first RD job was in Lawrence, and then the following year I moved to Las Vegas with my spouse. Three things happened after moving to "Sin City." I landed a clinical dietetics job, joined the US Navy and divorced.

In 1988, I was commissioned as a lieutenant junior grade within the Navy's Medical Service Corps. So far, I've served 23 years, with nine on active duty and the remainder as a Reservist. I have been stationed in Japan, Italy, Saipan, South Korea, Morocco, Texas and California. Working in a myriad of environments including the desert, aboard aircraft carriers and as a consultant to the US Navy Seal Team Training School in Coronado, Calif., has been rewarding. These people are smart, disciplined, motivated and physically fit.

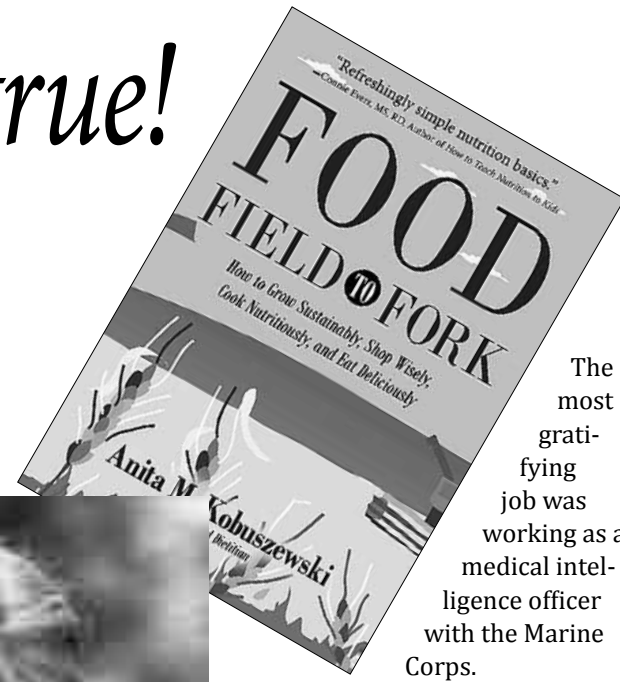
My coolest Navy job was serving as a dietitian, Catholic peer minister, helicopter control officer and flight deck officer aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy on the Pacific Ocean.



Anita M. Kobuszewski graduated from Marymount with a degree in physical education but soon discovered her real passion was to become a dietitian.

Dreams do come true!

Today I live and practice dietetics in Northern California. I'm the owner of AnitaBeHealthy: A Food, Nutrition & Lifestyle Consulting Company, and AnitaBeHealthy Publishing ([www.anitabehealthy.com](http://www.anitabehealthy.com)).



The most gratifying job was working as a medical intelligence officer with the Marine Corps.

In 1999, I was hired as a registered dietitian for a national grocery store chain, as a consumer educator and media spokesperson for its stores. That job proved to be a steppingstone. In 2005, with a solid foundation in media and writing experience, I started a dietetics practice and began to pursue my dream of writing a book.

God is good. My practice is thriving and my book — "Food, Field to Fork: How to Grow Sustainably, Shop Wisely, Cook Nutritiously, and Eat Deliciously" — was released July 12, 2011, the 91st birthday of my mother, Regina Karber Kobuszewski (Marymount 1974). "Food, Field to Fork" has received positive reviews, and I have been invited to be a featured author at the 2012 Tucson Festival of Books in Tucson, Arizona.

## Alumni board is working on 2012 reunion

Happy New Year! As promised to Sister Lucille Herman, we board members and planning committee will be off to a busy start this month, working out the final details of the 2012 Marymount College Reunion on Aug. 3, 4 and 5.

Be sure to mark those dates on your calendars. We will send out "save the date" cards later this month, and we would love to see you all there!

The Marymount Alumni Association still has the office at the old administration building. Right now we have a note on the door with a phone number and I'm getting all the emails that come in.

If anyone knows of someone living in the Salina area who is not working but would like to volunteer a few hours a week to help cover the office, please let us know. Having some computer skills and knowledge of Excel and Microsoft Word would be helpful.

Email us at [lcherman@yahoo.com](mailto:lcherman@yahoo.com) or [glj2w@aol.com](mailto:glj2w@aol.com), or call 785/823-2149 and leave a voice-mail message.

— Jaci Morey Walsh '76 is a member of the Marymount College Alumni Association Board of Directors. She lives in Salina.



JACI WALSH

## COMING EVENTS

▶ **THURSDAY, JAN. 19** — **Salina Immigration Conversation**, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., at Sacred Heart Cathedral Hall of Bishops, for those who provide services to immigrants or have a role in shaping state policies pertaining to immigrants. For information, contact Neighborhood Initiatives at 785/243-2113, ext. 1215, or [chiggins@csjkansas.org](mailto:chiggins@csjkansas.org).

▶ **SATURDAY, JAN. 28** — **Winter Spirituality: "One of a Kind, Like a Snowflake,"** presented by Manna House staff at Manna House of Prayer, Concordia. There will never be another you! What is the gift that you are? Do you know it and celebrate it? The day will include contemplative writing, time for personal and communal prayer, input and creative process. From 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; registration: \$40 (includes lunch).

▶ **FEB. 17-19** — **"Teach me your ways O Lord" Retreat**, in the Milford Lake area. A pre-Lenten retreat for women in their 20s who desire to open their hearts and follow more closely the ways of the Lord; presented by Sisters Julie Christensen and Beverly Carlin. Cost: \$20. For more information or to register, contact Sister Beverly Carlin at [srbevcc@csjkansas.org](mailto:srbevcc@csjkansas.org) or 785/220-7996.

▶ **THURSDAY, FEB. 23** — **KOHP (Kansas Optimizing Health Program) begins.** This six-week program for those living with chronic health issues will meet from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., Concordia. Registration is required before 5 p.m. Feb. 15. Cost: \$15, which includes the required textbook. To register, call 785/262-4215.

▶ **THURSDAY, FEB. 23** — **Community Needs Forum "working lunch"** at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia, from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. The next in a continuing series of community meetings to look at challenges in Concordia and Cloud County and to bring people together to find solutions. You do not have to have attended earlier meetings to join the process now. Lunch is provided free, but those planning to attend are asked to RSVP to Sister Jean Rosemarynoski at 785/243-2113, ext. 1225, or [sisterjean@csjkansas.org](mailto:sisterjean@csjkansas.org).

▶ **FEB. 24-26** — **Syncopated Rhythm Quilting Retreat**, at Manna House. Presenter Christina Bloom will show students how to make the Syncopated Rhythm by Karen Montgomery using a simple template and cutting technique; pattern will be provided. Begins Friday at 5:30 p.m.; concludes 1 p.m. Sunday. Registration: \$40. Room and Meals: \$100.

▶ **THURSDAY, MARCH 1** — **Dodge City Immigration Conversation**, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., at Our Lady of Guadalupe Social Center, for those who provide services to immigrants or have a role in shaping state policies pertaining to immigrants. For information, contact Neighborhood Initiatives at 785/243-2113, ext. 1215 or [chiggins@csjkansas.org](mailto:chiggins@csjkansas.org).

▶ **MARCH 9-11** — **T-shirt Quilts** with Helen Bausch, at Manna House. Gather your favorite old t-shirts and Helen will show you how to make a memorable quilt for a child, grandchild or for yourself. Begins Friday at 5:30 p.m.; concludes 1 p.m. Sunday. Registration: \$40. Room and Meals: \$100.

▶ **MARCH 11-15** — **Busy Person Retreat**, Concordia. If one of your New Year's Resolutions was to invest more time in deepening your relationship with Jesus Christ, this retreat

**NEW!** would certainly assist you. Those who participate make a daily commitment to half an hour praying with scripture and half an hour meeting with a spiritual director at the time that fits your schedule. Cost \$25. For more information or to register, contact Sister Beverly Carlin at [srbevcc@csjkansas.org](mailto:srbevcc@csjkansas.org) or 785/220-7996.

▶ **SUNDAY, MARCH 25** — **Annual Spaghetti Dinner** at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia. Dinner is served from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m., and tickets in advance are \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. To reserve your tickets, call or email the Development Office: [eweddle@csjkansas.org](mailto:eweddle@csjkansas.org) or 785/243-2113, ext. 1223. (See page 3 for more details.)

▶ **APRIL 1-7** — **A Holy Week Retreat** with Father Matt Walsh, OP, at the Nazareth Motherhouse. A chance to step back and ask why this week is called "holy" and a time to reflect on what you need to do to make each week "holy." Begins with 11 a.m. Mass on April 1 and concludes with the Easter Vigil. Lodging is available at Manna House. To register or for information, contact Manna House (see box below).

▶ **SATURDAY, APRIL 14** — **A National Perspective on Immigration**, with Iliana Holguin, executive director of the Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services Inc. of El Paso, Texas, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The public is invited to this free event at the Nazareth Motherhouse. (See page 11.)

▶ **APRIL 16-20** — **"At Home in the Religious Life Culture: A workshop for lay employees,"** at Manna House. This workshop is designed for lay professionals who serve religious congregations as Development Directors, Human Resource Directors, Communication Directors, Finance Directors, and Motherhouse Administrators. The men and women who serve in these positions bring important professional skills and expertise to the religious congregation that hire them, but they may be unprepared for the culture of religious life. Join us as we explore and discuss working with a religious community — the language, the charism and mission, the history and the future. Registration \$200. Room and Meals: \$200. Registration deadline: March 16.

▶ **APRIL 27-29** — **Vocation Discernment Retreat**, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia. Women who are discerning religious life are invited to "come and see" our life as Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. The retreat will provide opportunities for communal prayer, meet sisters and explore the charism and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph, while also giving you time for personal reflection. For more information or to register, contact Sister Beverly Carlin at [srbevcc@csjkansas.org](mailto:srbevcc@csjkansas.org) or 785/220-7996.

**SAVE THE DATE!** ▶ **MAY 31-JUNE 2** — **Discover Camp**, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia. An extraordinary experience for girls going into the sixth, seventh and eighth grades to deepen their relationship with God, learn more about themselves and become acquainted with peers who are Catholic. More information and the registration form are available at [www.csjkansas.org](http://www.csjkansas.org). Or, for more information, contact Sister Beverly Carlin at [srbevcc@csjkansas.org](mailto:srbevcc@csjkansas.org) or 785/220-7996.

For programs at Manna House of Prayer, call 785/243-4428 or email [retreatcenter@mannahouse.org](mailto:retreatcenter@mannahouse.org) for details or to register.

## Workshop helps people with chronic conditions

Faced with a chronic health condition and the challenge of living a healthy life?

A program that will be offered for the first time in Concordia next month may provide exactly what you need.

The Kansans Optimizing Health Program — or KOHP, pronounced "cope" — is a six-week workshop developed at Stanford University and designed by the Kansas Health Department. It specifically addresses living with arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and lung disease, but includes all other chronic health issues as well.

It will be offered beginning Feb. 23 at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., Concordia, from 9:30 a.m. to noon for six Thursdays. The cost is \$15 and includes the textbook "Living a Healthy Life with a Chronic Condition."

Leading the discussion will be

Rosie Skeels and Sister Jean Befort, both of whom live with chronic conditions and who have completed the Health Department training to serve as KOHP facilitators.

Topics that will be discussed include:

- ▶ Becoming more physically active safely
- ▶ Making healthy food choices
- ▶ Communicating with family, friends and the health care team
- ▶ Becoming an active member of the health care team
- ▶ Dealing with difficult emotions, frustration and anger
- ▶ Setting and achieving weekly action plans
- ▶ Identifying and solving problems caused by having a chronic condition

The workshop is limited to 20 participants, so registration is required before Feb. 15. To register, call Neighbor to Neighbor at 786/262-4215.

## 'The Emergent Christ' author to lead Theological Institute

Noted theologian and author Sister Iliia Delio will lead the 2012 Theological Institute at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia.

The residential institute is scheduled for July 19-22. The registration fee is \$125 and lodging at Manna and all meals is \$150.

To reserve a space or for more information, contact Susan LeDuc at [retreatcenter@mannahouse.org](mailto:retreatcenter@mannahouse.org) or 785/243-4428.

Delio, who is a Franciscan sister, is the author of "The Emergent Christ: Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe," published in 2011.

She is a research analyst for the Franciscan Action Network



SISTER ILIA DELIO

and is a senior research fellow in the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University.

The Institute, titled "Evolutionary Christianity: Hope for the Future," will explore two basic questions: What is the meaning of Christ in evolution and what are the implications for Christian life?

The Theological Institute was established at Manna in 1995 as a way to continue the long-standing educational tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, which sponsors the annual seminar.

*An extraordinary experience, for extraordinary girls.*

Discover Camp • May 31-June 2 • Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia, Kan.

For Catholic girls entering 6th, 7th & 8th grade. To learn more and to register, go to [www.csjkansas.org/for-kids](http://www.csjkansas.org/for-kids)

## Sister Mary Reiter: July 17, 1925-Dec. 12, 2011

**VIGIL:** Dec. 13, 2011, Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia  
**EULOGIST:** Sister Mary Jo Thummel

*"I have loved you with an everlasting love. I am constant in my affection for you."*

— Jeremiah 31:3 & 4 (Jerusalem Bible)

This Bible quote and Psalm 139 were very important backdrops for Mary these last few months, so we will use them as the underpinnings of our sharing as we remember and celebrate her life.

Sister Mary Reiter was born July 17, 1925, on a farm south of Beloit, Kan., to Thomas Reiter and Ella (Eilert) Reiter. She was the fifth of 10 children and was named Elizabeth Ann. Mary was born in the season of harvest amidst the gathering of wheat, garden produce and canning. I wonder if this set the pattern for the fullness of life that Mary seemed to enjoy.

The blessings of her life included her siblings: Arnold Joseph, Leonard, Lorena, Mary, Lila, Pauline, Maxine, Joan and Rose Ann. All but Lila, Maxine and Joan preceded her in death. I know Mary treasured her family and the times she spent with them.

Mary's elementary education took place in a one-room country school. She never tired of learning: "I avariciously devoured the few books available to me even reading several of the same books over and over." In 1939, Mary entered St. John's High School in Beloit. She lived with a family in town during those years and worked for her room and board. She graduated in 1943.

When she was a senior, Sister Margaret Ann Buser helped her write her letter of application to the Sisters of St. Joseph in Concordia. A few months later, on Sept. 8, 1943, she entered. She attributes her vocation to the deep faith of her mom and dad. Her mom voiced the desire to have one of her daughters become a sister and her two aunts — Sister Christopher Reiter (her father's sister) and Sister Casimir Eilert (her mother's sister) — were held in high regard.

Those who received the habit with Mary were Sister Bernard Marie Schruben, Sister Mary Alois Lauscher, Sister Edwardine Flavin, and Sister Amabilis Hasselbring. They made first vows on March 19, 1945, and final vows on Aug. 15, 1948. The religious name given to Elizabeth Reiter was Sister Mary de Paul. In 1978 she dropped the de Paul and became simply Sister Mary.

Immediately after making first vows, Mary began her college education with a correspondence course that took 18 summers and 17 hours of correspondence. Mary graduated from Marymount College in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. She earned her master's degree in physical science in 1972.

From 1945 to 1960, Mary taught elementary school, in every grade from kindergarten through eighth. In 1961, Mary was asked to teach science and math in high school, which she did until 1985. Her teaching missions included Manhattan, Damar, Vincent, Salina, Herington, Junction City and Beloit — all in Kansas — and Aurora, Ill., Silver City, N.M., Fairbury and Grand Island, Neb., and Boonville, Mo.

In the summer of 1986, Mary took a sabbatical to attend the Focus Program at Gonzaga in Spokane, Wash. She speaks of it as an enriching experience for body, mind and spirit. After finishing her sabbatical, Mary became Director of Religious Education at St. Mary's Parish in Salina from 1986 to 1989 and Director of Religious Education and RCIA Coordinator at St. Fidelis Parish in Victoria, Kan., from 1989 to 1993. During the following year, not being able to find a position that seemed to fit her, she moved to the Medaille Center in Salina. In 1994, she, Sister Doris Marie and Sister



### HOMEcomings

Viatora Solbach were hired to do pastoral ministry at St. Mary's in Ellis, Kan. Mary ministered there until 2000 when she felt called to come "to be of service at the Motherhouse."

The many ways she found to be of service here are too numerous to mention. She faithfully carried out this ministry, to the best of her ability, until her death early Monday morning, Dec. 12, 2011.

Mary loved to journal and has six pages of memories written about each of her years of mission experience. She includes many of the highlights and low points she encountered in each place. "I learned an awful lot about myself as I wrote down these memories," she noted.

Like most of us, Mary was well aware of her shortcomings and what she called the areas blocking or hampering her union with God and the dear neighbor. Mary gives us a peek into her depth through some of her last retreat notes, which she shared with me.

It was during this retreat — from Feb. 19-26, this year — that the words from Jeremiah 31:3 & 4 (Jerusalem Bible) and Psalm 139 became very meaningful to her. She came to a deep realization of God's love for her in all her gifts and imperfections. She speaks of the pain and suffering that had begun to be a part of her life and how God walks with her even in her suffering. Though Mary didn't yet know that she had pancreatic cancer, God seemed to be readying her heart and spirit to know

and accept his love even in the suffering and humility needed to be ministered to by others.

She speaks of God knowing her in her weaknesses and strengths, in her generosity and in her helplessness and reiterates many times: "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I am constant in my affection for you." She was very touched by the thought of God's constant affection for her.

She speaks of her insatiable thirst and hunger for knowledge — especially Godly knowledge — through the Mass, contemplative prayer, Advent prayer, living nonviolently, the "Falling in Love for a Lifetime" 30-day retreat and many other religious experiences that she was privileged to have. Mary was grateful for the many opportunities for spiritual growth offered her by the community.

In her most recent Commitment Statements, Mary speaks of being attentive to the Spirit and a faithful witness to the good news of God's unconditional love for each of us. She desired to have a positive approach to life and to be a haven of hope.

The last conversation I had with Mary was the Saturday morning before her death. She kept speaking of a girl baby who had been born. I'm not sure who this baby was. She was having a little trouble getting all the words together in a manner that satisfied her. Later, (because of references in the conversation) I wondered if it was some foretelling of her own rebirth into the arms of God.

Before I left, we prayed together and she said to me, "I don't know if you'll need to give that eulogy today or tomorrow." And then she smiled. It wasn't very long ago that Mary had asked me to give her eulogy. I told her it would be a privilege but also asked her why she had asked me. She said that she knew I would do it in a plain way without frills. I guess Mary considered herself a plain woman and in a way she was. But she also brought frills to our lives through her gift of crocheting beautiful pieces out of thread as well as the love woven through her life.

Mary's life review ends with this quote, "I view my life as a constant miracle of God's love and forgiveness. I try to share my love with all whose lives I touch. Oftentimes when I feel things are going very well, an unexpected cross comes from an area I least suspect. I view all of these as ways of keeping me honest ... I give thanks to God for all that has been and all that is still to come."

We also give thanks to God for the gift Mary has been to us through all her life.



## Sister Lila Marie Schmidt: July 4, 1933-Nov. 16, 2011

**VIGIL:** Nov. 18, 2011, at the Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia  
**EULOGIST:** Sister Lucy Schneider

What a shock to hear on the afternoon of Nov. 16 that Lila had quickly gone to God! What a sadness.

George Cohen's song goes like this: "I'm a Yankee Doodle dandy, a Yankee Doodle do or die. A real live nephew — we'll change that to niece — of my Uncle Sam, born on the Fourth of July."

That's what Lila was: Born on the Fourth of July, 1933.

Lila was the eighth of 13 children. Her parents were Catherine Breit Schmidt and George J. Schmidt. Within sight of the strikingly beautiful church in Pfeifer, Kan., the 13 grew up challenged by dust storms and hot, hot summers and the Great Depression.

Lila said she had a very loving mother and a strict father who was a good provider, progressing from real poverty to being a well-off farmer and rancher and a good manager. The farm of Lila's birth was the one her grandparents had homesteaded 50 years earlier.

The siblings were closely bonded and continued so throughout the years. Visits — including a recent one — to Lila by Leroy, Kenny and Patty bear out that statement. Lila acknowledged that the brothers and sisters had the usual sibling rivalries and disagreements, but whenever one of them was sick, she found it in her nature to take on their pain and suffering. It remained easy for Lila to continue this empathy and compassion for the people she cared about.

Lila entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia on Sept. 2, 1949, at the age of 16, having gone to two years of high school at Sacred Heart in Salina while staying with one of her married sisters.

Lila said of entering, "I was following in the footsteps of two of my sisters, so I thought. Sister Ann Clare passed away in 1951 at age 25; I was still in the novitiate. My mother passed away two years later, never getting over the grief of her daughter's loss. ...

"My other sister in the community left a few years later. Even though I knew she was doing OK, I missed her a lot. My father died in March 1981 at the age of 80."

Lila became Sister Fabian when she entered the novitiate on March 19, 1950. Her first profession was March 19, 1951, and she professed perpetual vows on July 5, 1954.

The date of this vigil is the feast of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, who once said, "We cultivate a very small field for Christ, but we love it, knowing that God does not require great achievements but a heart that holds back nothing for self." Some people may have had the impression that Lila, too, cultivated a very small field, but they would have been wrong — very, very wrong. And her heart surely held back nothing for self.

Although highly intelligent, Lila was not sent to school when going out on mission. Rather she was put in charge of dietary departments in hospitals, schools and convents, She admitted to perfectionism, which made for excellent service to all involved but which took its toll on her.

Vatican II opened "a whole new horizon for me," Lila said. "I was ready to put all my experience to use. I volunteered for the Jesuit missions on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations in South Dakota."



### HOMEcomings

The Jesuits, the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Charity and the native people all looked up to Lila, and loved her greatly. In the Lakota language, the word "Lila" is pronounced Leela and means very, very. The word "waste" — pronounced wash-tay — means good. So they affectionately called her "Sister Leela Washtay" — Very, Very Good.

Loving her work there, Lila expected to live out her working days in South Dakota. But that didn't happen; burnout and perfectionism took her to a life-time low. Emmaus Community in St. Louis brought her the life-giving, life-saving help she needed, through Sister Julia Harkins, a Sister of St. Joseph of Boston.

Lila's new field of ministry broadened to include work at Salina's Pathfinder House, a halfway house for recovering alcoholics. There again she was much appreciated for who she was and what she was able to do for them, in terms of food and community building.

During this time she lived and shared life with the children of St. Joseph's Children's Home, with the wise Father Wasinger and with Sisters, including Mary Lou Roberts, Therese Blecha and me. Those years at the Children's Home plus our common reser-

vation experience led Lila and me into a friendship that only deepened through her years in Concordia.

Before coming to the Motherhouse in 1995, Lila developed a clientele in Salina for her home health care and companionship ministry. Families' relationship with her, as I know from personal experience, continued long after the death of the patients.

Speaking of lifetime connections, there were four women friends who worked with Lila at Meadowbrook Junior High in Kansas City. Their annual visits to Lila continued over the years, with the four becoming three, then two, etc. The Lakota have an expression, Mitakuye Oyasin (meaning All My Relatives), and that was certainly lived out by Lila, with all those she ministered to wherever she was.

The Lakota expression is meant to include not just humans but all of creation. And in recent years, the finches in the Motherhouse Aviary became part of Lila's relatives; the admiring and prayerful times she spent in their company attest to that fact. And fittingly, the picture of Lila on her memorial card was taken with the aviary and its happy inhabitants in the background.

Turning mounds of dough into rolls and loaves with the aid of many young Indians' hands was one of Lila's talents. Another was turning containers of beads into medallions, barrettes, watchbands and the like.

Lila wasted by no time in going from this life to the next, entering the hospital one day and dying the following afternoon, Nov. 16, 2011. So, since little else remains to be said this evening in her remembrance and honor, I will waste no time either.

Dear Lila, we say to you pilamaya — that is, in Lakota, thanks you, dear Sister, for a faith-filled, service-filled life to the dear neighbor, a life given over to Mitakuye Oyasin — All My Relatives: family, Sisters of St. Joseph, those you ministered to, the finches and all of creation. Since such a large part of your heart remained on the Rosebud reservation, the community's choice of flowers for you reflects that reality.

The pink rosebuds decorating the chapel during the vigil service are taking the place of the pink wild roses for which the Rosebud reservation is known and named. Goodbye for now, dear good friend, "Sister Leela Washtay."





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**All the news that didn't fit**  
*Snapshots of events at the Motherhouse and Mamma House of Prayer*



**LEFT:** Santa greets children at Neighbor to Neighbor in Concordia during a Christmas party in mid-December.

**ABOVE:** The Concordia Year of Peace Committee, chaired by Sister Jean Rosemarynoski, has launched its third "year" with the theme of "bringing people together."

**RIGHT:** An Oct. 16 event in Belleville, Kan., organized in large part by Sisters Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie (*inset*), drew more than 700 volunteers of all ages and faiths to spend their Sunday packaging more than 100,000 meals for Numana Inc. The 2-year-old El Dorado, Kan.-based nonprofit organization has provided more than 23 million meals to the people of eastern Africa.



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