‘A wealth of resources’
Sisters help tap strengths in five years of lunches

At the first Community Needs Forum “working lunch” in January 2009, Cameron Presler asked the other 20 or so participants, “Do we know about all the resources we have in this community? In my five years here, we’ve never had this type of meeting.”

Cameron — or Cami, as she’s known — has been here 10 years now, and some things have changed. She’s Cameron Thurner today and instead of representing the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas as she did in 2009, she now works with the Cloud County Community Resource Center.

What has not changed is her commitment to “this type of meeting.” Last month she attended the 24th working lunch at the Nazareth Motherhouse as the effort by the Sisters of St. Joseph to bring together people from across Concordia concluded its fifth year.

The idea actually began in the fall of 2008 when the sisters met individually with a variety of community leaders to ask them their views on the most pressing issues facing Concordia and Cloud County.

Conclusions from those informal conversations and other research became the basis for a “community needs report” the sisters presented in a forum in mid-January 2009.

“This room has a wealth of resources,” Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph, told the participants at that first lunch.

She had no idea...
The list of projects, presentations and solutions that have grown out of discussions at the working lunches is impressive. They include:
Sister MaryAnn Flax

I am so grateful for my call to join the Sisters of St. Joseph. I experience the presence of prayer, joy, generosity, and a great love of life and theology. For several years now, I have been a regular contributor to the St. Joseph Parish newspaper, as well as a member of the parish council. I have also been involved in various community initiatives, including the St. Joseph Outreach Program, which provides food and clothing to those in need. In my spare time, I enjoy reading and spending time with my family.

Sister Patricia Lewter

T he first thing that came to my mind was “You Can- not Imprint the Word of the Lord.” The words of St. John Berchmans’s sermon at the opening of the Kennedy Center on Sept. 11, 2001, was in my mind. I cannot express adequately the impact this song, “You Cannot Imprint the Word of the Lord,” had on me and continues to have on me. I see it as a reminder that God is always with us and that we are not alone in our struggles.

Sister Carolyn Teter

T he event that captures what cultural relevance means to me in Vietnam (2002-2005). I began to see that Church teachings and doctrine were not written in stone, that they could evolve or be relevant to the 21st century. The understanding of its place in the Church and in the world took on a deeper, overlapping, more interrelated meaning. The Church is not a static institution; it is dynamic and responsive to new challenges.

Sister Margaret Nacke

E very age is a gift if you know what to do with it. For me, being a Sister of St. Joseph, I am not too sure what I know to do with it. I am now very young and am excited about the possibility of new learning and new friendships. My vocation has been a wonderful journey. I have been involved in a number of initiatives, including establishing a sisterhood in Kansas City, and currently work for the Global Philanthropy Program. I am in the process of raising funds for the new building in Kansas City. My hope is that this project will have a positive impact on the community and on the world.

PARENTS: Kaye and Carol Lee Jackson
HOMETOWN: Eureka, Kan.
RECEIVED INTO CONGREGATION: April 16, 1954
RELIGIOUS NAME: Sister Jean Venery
EDUCATION: Manhattan College, Saline (bachelor’s degree in art); Catholic University of America, Washington (master’s degree in education); University of Kansas, Lawrence (master’s degree in education)
MISSIONS: Marquette College, South Bend, Ind. (teaching and mission); St. John’s University, Crow Wing, Minn. (teaching and mission); St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas (teaching and mission)
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Sister Loretta Jasper

Nail from Cockey Creek to Cockey Creek. St. Teresa’s School’s forever. The people and Peter and Paul Parish were the initial kick for my education and faith formation. This is where I am from.

I was nurtured with the heart of the Sisters of St. Joseph by having women of stellar quality as teachers and mentors through grade school, high school, and throughout my years within the Congregation of St. Joseph.

I was raised on a farm, into a family for whom the “near neighbor” was almost synonymous with family. It was natural for local families and neighbors to participate in the meals and celebrating the accomplishments of each other through the neighborhood, the local community, the church.

PARENTS: William and Elizabeth Schmidt
HOMETOWN: Reinert and Jernscheid, Kan.
RECEIVED INTO CONGREGATION: Aug. 17, 1942
RELIGIOUS NAME: Sister Rose Victor
EDUCATION: Monmouth College, Salem, Ill. (bachelor’s degree in theology). Mount St. Joseph College (junior pastoral in ministry). Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, Sneads, Ariz. (paralegal is currently in the School of Theology, San Antonio.

1957–1972 – Ateneum, School, Glatz, Côte d’Ivoire
1976–1988 – Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, Valley Hope, Iowa (director of chaplains)
1991 – St. Agnes Parish, Shawneetown, Ill., pastoral minister
I would not trade the last 50 years as a Sister of St. Joseph for anything I've been able to do.

I grew up in a strong Catholic family who taught me to appreciate one another.

When I attended Marymount College, I met Sister St. John, who radiated joy. I wondered what made her so happy. Could it be that she was a Sister? I was inspired to date several girls with similar qualities and we had three proposals of marriage, yet I kept looking for what was in God. After college I attended a spiritual mission, The priest mentioned that God was calling enough people to be present and sisters but some were not listening. I asked Brother what God was calling? I reviewed my life and found that I was most at peace and happy when I was praying, teaching others about God or helping another person. I knew I did not have to date as a Sister. So I decided to enter the Sisters of St. Joseph in Concordia.

It was here that I felt so at home and the place I said “yes” to the love of my Jesus, the “perfect one” who filled my life with love. I have always been passionate about my relationship with the Lord and to try and mold my life after his.

PARENTS: Leon and Cecilia Kroesen Jasper
HOMETOWN: Cedar City, Kan.
RECEIVED INTO CONGREGATION: Aug. 19, 1954
RELIGIOUS NAME: Sister Anica Marie
Marymount College, Salina, Kan. (bachelor's degree in home economics). St. John's College, Collegeville, Minn. (master's in mental health counseling). (Amer-Indian Graduate Program, U. of Idaho, Grace/Graduate summer in to play French)

2005–2006: Sri Lanka; three delegations post-tsunami, (master's in mental health counseling); Mid-America St. Michael Parish, Fairbury, Neb., religious education.

If you have been brought to make 30-day retreats that helped me to the ministry of teaching, counseling and personal growth.

“...our mission is to renew the Church’s capacity to pass on to others the deposit of faith entrusted to the Apostles by the Lord. In the Church’s mission to make disciples, she continues to be the Church of Jesus Christ.”

Catholic faith as the special joy I’ve had in my ministry were the letters I received from a small team that started Rebound Program in Grand Island, and helping to start a new Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center in Gibson, Neb.
In 2001, a small team that started Rebound Program in Grand Island, and helping to start a new Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center in Gibson, Neb., to walk with people dealing with life’s joys, sorrows, strengths and weaknesses.

My family as Catholic, always celebrated the novena of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Our family was always realigned in our faith. In 1977 I came to Torreon, Pue., to work for am extending my ministry to the Sinhalese people in the Catholic faith. But the faith principles that my own family have grown up, to continue my work with the Church.

1999–2006: Gualaceo, Ecuador, with Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and other Latin American countries.
2006–2008: Ponce, Puerto Rico, teaching at University Ponce de Leon.
2010–2011: Jakarta, Indonesia, working with Indonesian youth group.
2011–2012: Ponce, Puerto Rico, teaching at Instituto Ponce de Leon.
2012–2014: Ponce, Puerto Rico, teaching at University Ponce de Leon.
2014–2016: Ponce, Puerto Rico, teaching at Instituto Ponce de Leon.
2018–present: Ponce, Puerto Rico, teaching at Instituto Ponce de Leon.
2019–present: Quito, Ecuador, teaching at Universidad de la Sabana.
2020–present: Quito, Ecuador, teaching at Universidad de la Sabana.
2020–present: Quito, Ecuador, teaching at Universidad de la Sabana.
2021–present: Quito, Ecuador, teaching at Universidad de la Sabana.
In 2016 I met a man who was studying to become a Canon, a priest. We married in 2017 and I have been to the Philippines as an Associate of the Congregation of St. Joseph. I’m Dr. May’s research assistant at the Congregation of St. Joseph. I’m Dr. May’s research assistant at the Congregation of St. Joseph. I’m Dr. May’s research assistant at the Congregation of St. Joseph.