



Sisters of Charity  
of Our Lady  
Mother of the Church

54 W. Main Street  
Baltic CT 06330

Development Office  
Phone: 860-822-6323

Email:  
development@  
sistersofcharity.com



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# WINDS OF CHARITY

A publication of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of the Church

Volume 16, Issue 1

Spring 2023

## *Like ripples on a pond ...*

From the desk  
of Mother Marie Julie, Superior General

**M**y dear good Friends,  
*Here's what I know.*

**I know** that when we needed you most, you stepped forward and gave the best you had.

**I know** that you embraced our mission and reached out to share your treasure with us.

**I know** that these are difficult times, and you must face some of the same financial struggles we face, but you chose to assist us in our service to the Gospel.

**I know** that you trusted us enough to permit us to make you part of our family.

**I know** that you have great faith, a compassionate heart, and a generous spirit.

**I know** that I will always hold you close to my heart, as do my Sisters.

*Here's what I don't know.*

**I don't know** where we would be today without your willingness to respond to our requests for your help.

**I don't know** how we would have paid our fuel bills this past winter or how we could have sent our young Sisters to college without your most generous response to our appeal letters.

**I don't know** how we could have ever thought that we would have to face our struggles alone.

We should have known that **YOU** would make such an outstanding difference in our lives and in our ministries.

**I hope you know** that we lift you up in prayer each day, bringing your needs to the Father of Mercies, and always remembering you with love.

**Like ripples on a pond**, your goodness flows out, far and wide, impacting lives and soothing hearts in ways you will never know or can ever imagine.

May you be blessed for your kindness, and may you and all those you love know that we carry you in our hearts today, tomorrow and always.

In His great love and with deep gratitude,

*Mother Marie Julie, SCMC*



## ... your goodness ...

*With  
the  
Sisters,  
you  
get  
things  
done.*

*Thank  
you!*

**Q** n March 21, Lauren Hanrahan attended the funeral of Sister Bernadette, her beloved First Grade teacher. She says it was important for her to be there, to pray for Sister and to give thanks to God for the blessing that she was to her and to so many others.

In her 70 years as a Sister of Charity, Sister Bernadette nurtured the hearts and minds of thousands of little ones like Lauren, in her ministry as teacher in schools in Connecticut and Minnesota.

Lauren shares: "Sister Bernadette was my First Grade teacher, and in many ways, also one of my first exposures to the Catholic Faith, seeing as my family was in the process of converting from Protestantism to Catholicism.

One memory I have of her was at Christmas time, when she set up the Nativity Scene. We all gathered around the table, then she took out each piece, described them and explained their significance in the story of the birth

of Our Lord.

I am thankful I had Sister Bernadette as my First Grade teacher. I will never forget her happy smile, which she so generously bestowed on each student."

Lauren credits Sister Bernadette with helping to plant in her young, tender soul the seeds of a strong Catholic Faith which now shapes her life, and which she is passing on to her children.

Sister Bernadette kept the list of each of her classes for the 70 years that she taught. And she prayed for each class right up until her death.

Your faithful generosity to the Sisters of Charity sustains the Sisters active in ministry, and ensures that our elder and infirm Sisters, like Sister Bernadette, can live out their golden years in peace.

*Like ripples on a pond your goodness reaches out through the ministries of the Sisters of Charity, touching hundreds of little souls like Lauren, who are now passing on that goodness to others.*



*Lauren shares the photo of her First Grade class with Sister Bernadette. She says: "I am in the middle row, all the way on the right."*



## ... reaches far and wide ...

When the residents of St. Joseph Home for the Aged moved into their new facility 35 years ago, we wondered what we would do with the old building that was now empty.

It wasn't long before one of the Sisters came across a family who was living in unsuitable conditions, and so she offered them

temporary housing in the old St. Joseph building. That was the beginning of Holy Family Home & Shelter. Since then, hundreds of families have found shelter and given a new start in life at Holy Family Home & Shelter.

Over the years, the Shelter has seen much needed renovation and upgrade. But there is still so much more to be done. One need that has been weighing on us for quite a while is the need to convert the sleeping quarters from dormitories with curtained cubicles, to private rooms. Simple rooms; small but adequate. A dignified, private space for each family. The people who come to us have lost so much, we want to be sure they do not lose their dignity.

On Giving Tuesday 2022, we reached out to you, asking your help with this project. Your response was amazing! Because of your goodness, we were able to renovate 12 rooms. We were also able to put a new look on the general gathering space with a fresh coat of paint and replace the old, worn-out carpet. There is much more to be done, but you have given us a very good start and we are eternally grateful!

Giving Tuesday was begun to provide an opportunity for those with more, to



*Sister Lucette says thank you! You have provided a dignified living space for the Laney's in their time of need.*

make a difference and impact the lives of those with less. That you have done. You have changed the lives of those now living at Holy Family Home & Shelter, as well as those to come.

Anyone taking a quick walk through the Shelter will see the difference your generosity has made

in providing a dignified space for children and their parents in need.

Ask any one of the approximately 130 families who found both a home and shelter at Holy Family during the past year. They will tell you that if you have to be in a shelter, Holy Family is the place to be. Here our residents get more than a place to live. They get the skills and tools they need to improve their lives.

Many of those who have passed through Holy Family are now homeowners. Some have even earned college degrees and have entered professional fields. All they needed was an out-stretched hand to help them pull themselves up by their bootstraps and re-make their lives.

With the staff at Holy Family Home & Shelter you are doing just that. You are truly making a difference. You are helping to end homelessness, one person at a time.

***Like ripples on a pond your impact reaches far and wide, touching the lives of those now at Holy Family Home & Shelter and reaching beyond to those still to come. Thank you!***

***Giving Tuesday 2022***  
*Your amazingly generous response has provided a dignified living space for our residents. Thank you!*

## ... soothing hearts ...

***I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. (Eph. 1:16)***

**P**eer ministry. Teens helping teens to go deeper in their faith and fall in love with the Lord. Their own faith is strengthened and their love for Our Lord deepened.

*"Peer ministry has been a great blessing in my life. The club is giving me the opportunity to both lead and attend events I didn't know I needed. My Catholic faith is very close to me, and so I love having a space to share it with my peers while also being guided and encouraged by a mentor. Peer ministry is truly fulfilling a need in the AHF community. I am so grateful to have been part of this club's beginning, and I can't wait to see where the Spirit leads us in the future!"* - Rebecca, Peer Minister

In January 2022, Mrs. Maureen Fleming, herself a graduate of the Academy of the Holy Family (AHF), came on board at the school as Campus Minister. This position was a first for AHF. She immediately began a Peer Ministry Club. Its mission is to foster a community of faith where together the students grow in their knowledge of God's love and mercy, in their recognition of the Holy Spirit's movement within and around them, and in their call to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The students immediately jumped into action with their first student-led

JAM event. (Jesus And Marists). Marists in honor of Mary. For the students of this all-girls school, Mother Mary has always been their model of true womanhood.

"Identity In Christ" was the theme of the JAM event. It was a time of fun, community building, and growing in faith. The students ministered to their peers by teachings and witness talks. There was time for personal reflection and small group sharing, facilitated by the students. At the conclusion of the event, the participants were invited to share their experience of the day. Akinyi: *"Peer Ministry gives us the opportunity to experience the joy of a faith-filled community."*

Last Fall, in preparation for Christmas, the group hosted a second JAM event: "Make Our Hearts His Bethlehem. Prepare Him Room". It was well attended and well received.

The Peer Ministers organize praise and worship Holy Hours with Eucharistic adoration. The joy on the faces of the students as they sing their favorite praise & worship songs, and their reverence as they sit in prayer before Our Eucharistic Lord, is inspiring. *"Being a part of this Peer Ministry brings ME closer to God."* - Chanelle, Peer Minister.

Mrs. Fleming says she is blessed to be mentor to such an amazing group of girls. The group, which began with 12 peer ministers, has now grown to 18. They are prayerfully discerning and planning a wide range of faith-filled events.

***Like ripples on a pond your faithfulness reaches out, soothing hearts and strengthening faith through the ministry of these students. You made Campus Ministry at AHF possible. You made Peer Ministry possible.***



***Mrs. Maureen Fleming (first row, center), AHF Campus Minister, with her "amazing" group of Peer Ministers.***



## ... impacting lives ...

Here's what we hear from the girls who attend Holy Family Summer Camp: *"It was amazing building relationships with each other and with Jesus." "It was a 10 out of 10 experience." "Camp has renewed my motivation to do God's will and live the Faith. I have learned new ways to pray and more about Our Lady."*

Now in its eighteenth year, the Sisters of Charity run a week-long summer camp for girls ages 9-15. Like most camps, it is a time when the campers learn more about themselves and about life, enjoy great outdoor activities and trips, and form lasting friendships.

But, with the camp run by the Sisters of Charity, there is a huge added bonus—it is an opportunity for the girls to grow spiritually and become more grounded in their faith, a time to know without a doubt that they are loved infinitely and unconditionally.

Many of the campers are “regulars” who return year after year. And, when they pass the age of being a camper, many return as counselors to assist the Sisters. Holy Family Summer Camp is a time of deep spiritual enrichment and great fun for all—campers and Sisters alike.

*Like ripples on a pond ... your impact touches lives through the ministry of the Sisters of Charity. Thank you for your generous support.*

**Do you know a girl age 9-15?  
Invite her to have an amazing experience  
this summer.**

**Holy Family Summer Day Camp  
July 24-28, 2023  
Located at Holy Family Motherhouse  
54 W. Main Street, Baltic, CT**

You can get more information by contacting  
the camp directors:

**Sister Mary Kathleen, SCMC**  
srmariakathleen@gmail.com  
Phone: 860-887-4363

**Sister M. Rafael, SCMC**  
Phone: 860-822-8241  
smraf@ahfbaltic.org

**It's going to be another really awesome year!**



## ... bringing hope.

Chances are, when you call the Development Office of the Sisters of Charity, the voice you are almost sure to hear on the other end of the line will be that of either Jeanne Rogers or Jackie Johnson.

These ladies will tell you that they have the best job in the Development Office as they are able to speak directly with you, our donors, to hear your concerns and, often, to share your joys.

*Jeanne:* "I'm happy to help our donors. Each call is different, whether it's placing an order for our devotion-al materials, accepting a donation or listening to your prayer request. I am humbled by the trust you place in me."

*Jackie:* "I feel blessed to witness the many different ways in which, you, our benefactors provide so generously for the Sisters of Charity. I am honored and privileged to pray with you when you share your needs with me, praying together one of the many beautiful prayers from our book, *My Treasured Catholic Prayers*."



*Above: Jeanne Rogers  
Below: Jackie Johnson*

*Be  
the  
first  
to  
seek  
to  
bring  
good.*

*-Pope  
Francis*

By your support of the mission of the Sisters of Charity you join us in heeding Pope Francis' call to Religious to live the present with passion—to touch lives in profound ways. To nurture the minds and hearts of the students in our schools who are hungry for God. To stand for justice and to be the voice of the voiceless, whether it be the unborn child or the migrant dying in the desert. To be a comforting presence to our treasured elderly, sometimes feeling lonely and forgotten. To extend a helping hand and an open door to the poor and homeless. ***Like ripples on a pond your goodness flows out to others through the ministries of the Sisters of Charity, bringing hope. Thank you!***



Mother Anthony (l.), Sister Loreto and all the Sisters of Charity want you to be sure that you save the date: Oct. 7, 2023. You won't want to miss our annual Family Blessing Mass and Gratitude Luncheon at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity in Baltic, CT, to honor you and thank you for all you do for us. Your invitation will be mailed in late August but we are sending you this save-the-date announcement early so as to secure a place on your calendar. We look forward to sharing the day with you. As in the past, for those unable to attend, the Mass will be live-streamed on our website.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>  
2023**

## And for that ...

Night and day. That's how my Mom saw the difference between her and my Dad. My parents had vastly different approaches to many things.

My Dad, who passed away in 2015, was extremely detailed. He had all his documents in order. He had even written his obituary! Everything was planned out and written down in a notebook, bullet-point style. His hand-written list was backed up on his computer! All we had to do was follow his instructions when he passed away.

**BUT**, my Dad never discussed with us his final wishes or plans and I admit, we were surprised by a few of them. I had questions. It gave me peace of mind knowing that I was doing exactly as he wished, but I do regret that we never spoke about his plans while he was alive. Some in my family had difficulty reconciling with his decisions. A conversation or two about his wishes and his estate plan would have helped.

My Mom, who passed away in 2020, was the total opposite. Mom never thought she had much of value and didn't see the need for a will or a plan. She would say that my brother, sister and I were welcome to fight over her six espresso makers! We did find a Guardianship document among her possessions, but it was so old that it was no longer relevant. She had it drawn up when my sister was young and it basically only covered guardianship of my sister if my Mom passed away while she was still a minor.

**HOWEVER**, my Mom always talked to us about her final wishes. Even though it was never a comfortable conversation, we knew exactly what to do when she passed away.

Two parents. Two different approaches to estate planning. Night and Day. Fortunately, we were able to settle both estates with ease. My Dad's, because despite not exactly agreeing with his wishes, we followed the written plan laid out for us. My Mom's, because despite not having a written plan, she often talked about her final wishes and what she wanted us to do.

**What is your approach to estate planning?** My advice to you? Be like my parents. **BOTH** of them. Have a well-thought out written estate plan **AND** let your family and friends know your wishes. If you already have an estate plan there is no time like the present to review it. Tax laws change, and so do family circumstances – births, deaths, divorces, moves to another state, etc. Take the time to make sure that your estate plan still works for you.

And when you write or re-write your will, please consider including a bequest to the Sisters of Charity. A gift through your estate plan is an ideal way to support us. You'll be building our future financial strength and helping to ensure that our mission and ministries continue to help our brothers and sisters in need. I'm happy to provide more information about estate plans in general, and bequests to us in particular. Don't know where to start? Call or write to us and we will send you a copy of **My Personal Record Keeper**. It is yours free for the asking. I'm here to help. Please reach out.



**Margaret Cuccinello**  
*Director  
of Planned Giving*

*The true  
meaning  
of life  
is to  
plant trees  
under  
whose  
shade  
you  
do not  
expect  
to sit.  
--Nelson  
Henderson.*

*Planned  
Giving:  
Planting  
seeds  
for  
the  
future.*



## ... we thank you!

*Like  
ripples  
on a  
pond,  
our  
prayers  
go  
out  
to you,  
reaching  
far and  
near!*

**W**hat better way to thank you than to pray for you. In the entryway leading into the main Chapel at our Motherhouse are shrines dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Here is where the Sisters light the candles and pray for your needs when you send us your prayer intentions on the candle reply slip. Most days, Mother Marie Julie and Mother David personally read these intention cards, light the candles and pray for your needs. But the Sisters, too, on their way into the Chapel, often stop in the shrines to light a candle and pray for your needs. The candles burn throughout the day at the feet of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

You receive a candle reply card with each thank you letter from the Sisters. Please send us your prayer needs on these cards. No donation is ever required for prayer. We want to pray for you. So many of you ask us to pray with you for holiness of life, for a greater love of family, for conversion of loved ones, for the repose of the soul of a loved one. Your needs are varied and profound. These candles burning brightly are a reminder of our prayers, yours and ours, ascending to the merciful Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of His Blessed Mother. *It is our privilege to pray with you for your intentions. Keep them coming.*



*Above: Sister Mary Grace (l.) and Sister Immaculata.  
Below: Mother Marie Julie (l.) and Mother Mary David praying for you.*

## Let's stay in touch!



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of Our Lady, Mother of the Church

**Connect for Good**

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[Development@  
sistersofcharity.com](mailto:Development@sistersofcharity.com)

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- Pray with the Sisters
- See new opportunities for charity and so much more....

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