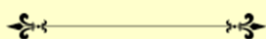


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WINDS OF CHARITY

A publication of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of the Church
Volume 17, Issue 1 Winter 2024

Your Impact: Changing Lives, Bringing Hope

Do you sometimes wonder what your financial gifts to the Sisters of Charity are accomplishing? In this issue of our Newsletter, meet some of the people whose lives you have touched by your generous support of our ministries.

Kayla and her husband lived in their car for three months before coming to Holy Family Home and Shelter. During that time their four children, ages 4-9, went from relative to relative. Kayla says the hardest thing for her during this time was not being with her kids but, she says, "we couldn't have them living in the car with us and no one was able to take in all six of us for more than a couple of days."

When there was an opening at the Shelter, we were able to receive

them as a family – all six of them. They have been at our shelter for four months and are very grateful for the chance to pick up their lives and start over.



For Kayla and her family, Holy Family Home & Shelter gave them their lives back. (Camera-shy Dad absent from photo.)

Kayla says Holy Family Home & Shelter is a great place to be. "It gave me my life back. I could work. We could be together as a family. The Shelter has been for me a stepping stone to getting things back to where they should be. I am grateful for the chance to be here."

With the help of the

Shelter's case manager and local agencies, Kayla will be in a new apartment in a couple of weeks.

And there is Linda!

Linda was raised in a family that did not provide a loving, nurturing home. Her mother was frequently ill and her father abused her in many sad, terrible ways. One day, when she was eleven years old, he tied her to a pole, taped her mouth closed and poured an entire bottle of Tabasco sauce into both of her ears.

She soon lost her hearing. Things for her continued getting worse. She was later placed in a loving foster family who helped her to receive her First Holy Communion. Linda says that was the happiest day of her life because "now I knew God would always be with me." *Cont'd on p. 3*

Your faithfulness...



Sister Loreto teaches her students to open their hearts to Jesus

In our letters to you we often tell you that because of your goodness, our Sister-teachers nourish the faith and impact the lives of **the young people in**

our schools.

Sister Loreto is a Junior High School teacher. A very important part of her Religion program is to teach her Seventh and Eighth

grade students how to pray—really pray, praying from the heart, not just saying prayers. She teaches them to pray with Scripture, using a time-honored tradition in the Church called Lectio Divina.

One student shared: “Thank you, Sister, for teaching us how to do Lectio Divina. It helps me concentrate more on the actual praying and less on the things around me. I find myself praying this way when I am feeling stressed, when I have extra time or even when I

am in a mood. It helps calm me down, I feel close to God and I open my heart to Him. Thank you.”

Sister Loreto says she wants her students to fall in love with Jesus. Teaching them how to open their hearts to the One who loves them infinitely and unconditionally is the most important lesson she can ever teach them. This is the mission of the Sisters of Charity—to impact lives and bring them closer to God.

With us, you are making a difference. lives.



Sister Marie Celeste assists those who visit our Food Pantry.

Dear Sisters, another holiday has come and gone and, as usual, you helped our family by providing a delicious dinner. You make such a difference in our lives. We appreciate all your help. We love you.”

When we receive messages like this from the people who visit our Food Pantry, our thoughts turn immediately to you who make this ministry possible.

Each month we serve on average almost 50 families,

more than 100 individuals. They come looking for food – and for hope. Many count on us for emotional or spiritual support in their struggles with addiction and poverty.

Some ask questions about the faith, how to deepen their faith. Others have even asked to receive the Sacraments. Many say that we are like family to them. They say we are “their Sisters”.

A note we recently received reads: “Thank you for all you do for the community. You have blessed my family and many other families. Mere words cannot express my gratitude

to God that He has sent you to this small, unassuming town. I pray that He blesses all of you.”

And we pray that God blesses you, dear Friend, for your goodness in making this ministry possible.



Sister Joan Marie spends time with little Alex while Mom is assisted at the Food Pantry.

**Food
Pantry**

...reaching far and wide

From p. 1

Linda later left the foster system and began to care for her mother who suffered from diabetes. She struggled to find enough food and medicine to keep her mother alive so she began to steal small amounts of food from the landlord. Finding that she could do so without being caught, she began to steal larger amounts. She was eventually found out, was arrested, and spent a year in prison for her 'crime'. When she was released, her Mom had died and Linda became homeless.

In her wanderings, she found her way to Willimantic, Connecticut, on the steps of a church, across the street from the

Shelter. On the steps of the church, she felt near to God once again. She gazed across the street and thought: "That must be a shelter. I see nuns. Maybe they will take me in." Fearfully, she rang the doorbell and was welcomed by the staff. They promised to care for her and assist her in finding permanent, safe and affordable housing.

Linda often says: "This place saved my life!" She knows, and we know that your kindness proves that God is indeed very near to her and all those in need.

Your gifts help us daily to assist people, who, like Linda and Kayla, once found themselves alone, lost, hungry, sometimes threatened, and eventually homeless. We won't send

them back out into the street or tell them we can't do anything for them. You help us save lives and give hope. We give thanks for gentle, beautiful souls like Linda's and Kayla's, and for generous, beautiful souls like yours. Linda asked not to be photographed but she wanted you to know that you have saved her life.



Sister Lucette (above), Florann (below) and all the shelter staff are always ready to welcome and assist those in need of shelter.



From the youngest to the eldest and all the Sisters in between, you provide for us. We could not do what God calls us to do without your support. Thank you.



Meet some of our youngest: (left photo, l. to r.)

Mother Joan Clare, Sister Alexandria and Sister Kateri.

And some of our eldest: (right photo, l. to r.)

Sister Mary Francesco and Sister Denise. Because of your goodness, our young Sisters can make Christ present in the world, especially to the poor, and our elder Sisters can live out their golden years in peace.

Gratitude Luncheon

October
2023



You are our heroes



On October 7th, 100 of our friends and benefactors joined us, first at the Table of the Lord when we gave thanks to God for the gift that you are to the Sisters of Charity, and we asked a blessing on you and your family. Then, they joined us for our annual luncheon to thank you for all that you do and are for the Sisters of Charity. We so enjoyed being with you! Thank you for taking the time to be with us. We would love to include in this collage of photos, snap shots of each of you who came! Please know that whether or not your photo is here, you are in our hearts and prayers.



Thank you



You support our mission. Thank you.

We invited you to send us your prayer requests so we could pray with you for them at the Holy Masses offered in our Motherhouse Chapel during the Christmas Octave, December 26—January 1. As they arrived, we arranged them in baskets and placed them on the steps of the Altar, a visible reminder to us to pray for your needs, not only during the celebration of Holy Mass, but also in the community and private prayers offered by the Sisters during the joyful celebration of the birth of Our Savior. You were very much with us in our celebrations.



Whatever your petitions and intentions, know that God hears your prayers, perhaps not at the time or in the manner that you would like to have them heard, but they are heard in God's time and manner, and that is the most perfect timing. May your will always be aligned with His

will. *Thank you for your faithful generosity to the Sisters of Charity in response to our Christmas Appeal.*

A bequest could be the most significant gift you ever make.

And it takes as little as 15 minutes to change the world as you know it.

If you already have a will, a quick phone call to your attorney is all you'll need to start the planning process of leaving a personal and enduring legacy. Your gift ensures that the works of the Sisters of Charity will do good forever in your name. For more information, call the Development Office at 860-822-6323.

Your SCMC Mass Enrollment Cards

Have you received your new Mass Enrollment Cards? We now offer you three cards instead of two. In addition to the beautiful, newly designed Birthday Card and Good Shepherd card which you may wish to use to express your care and compassion for someone experiencing a difficult time, we now offer you a Perpetual Mass Enrollment card. With this card you will be able to enroll your deceased loved one, to be remembered at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for all time. *What a beautiful, memorable and significant gift!*

How much more meaningful these cards with the spiritual gifts of prayers than a store-bought Birthday, Sympathy or Get Well card.

If you still have the older cards on hand, you may continue to use them or you may request the new designs by submitting your enrollment online at <https://sistersofcharity.com/mass-cards/> or you may call the Development Office at 860-822-6323.



“Allow God to use you without consulting you.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

From the desk of Margaret Cuccinello, Director of Planned Giving

Every year around December 29th I get the dreaded question from friends and family: What are your New Year's resolutions? Do you make New Year's resolutions? I do. You know the ones – lose a little weight, save some money, get more organized, etc. Do you keep them? I usually lose sight of my resolutions by mid-February. Perhaps they have become so routine and the same year after year that they lose their value. Each year I promise myself that I will do better.

Often, at the beginning of a new year, many people are inspired to reflect on the legacy they wish to leave behind. This can be a difficult topic, but it is one that is extremely important. Legacy giving has been a cornerstone of charitable contributions for centuries.

In the Catholic tradition, legacy giving is deeply rooted in the principles of stewardship and generosity. It is not just a financial transaction; it is a deeply spiritual act. By making a legacy gift, we embrace the virtue of stewardship, acknowledging that all we possess is a gift from God. It reflects a profound trust in an organization's ability to continue its mission of service and compassion. The act of legacy giving is a tangible expression of one's faith and commitment to the Church.

YOU are a very dear friend to the Sisters of Charity. You support us with your gifts and prayers. You give to make a difference in the lives of others – helping the Sisters serve God's little and least ones with caring and compassion. We are very blessed to have you share in our mission.

One of the most common forms of legacy giving, and one that I advocate for in my role as Director of Gift Planning, is giving through a bequest in a will. Bequests can be Restricted or Unrestricted. They can be Specific, Percentage, or Residuary.

Unrestricted Bequests are available for general use and can be applied where the need is greatest at the time the bequest is received.

Restricted Bequests are designated to an Endowment Fund or earmarked for a particular ministry of the Sisters of Charity.

A **Specific Bequest** directs an exact amount of money or a particular asset to the Sisters of Charity.

A **Percentage Bequest** designates a percentage of an estate rather than a specific dollar amount or specific item.

A **Residuary Bequest** is the part of an estate that is left after all expenses have been paid and other specific and percentage bequests have been distributed.

I am honored to assist our donors in finding peace and comfort in knowing that their bequest will not only align with their values and beliefs, but also leave a lasting impact on their family, friends, and organizations like the Sisters of Charity.

I hope you will be inspired to consider legacy giving as a natural and meaningful aspect of your faith journey, and may that journey be guided by hope, joy and peace. Please feel free to reach out to me at 860-822-6323 with your questions.



New
Year's
Resolu-
tions
and
Legacy
Giving

Digital Details



Giving Tuesday 2023. Open Doors. Open Hearts. You opened your hearts wide to ensure that the doors of Holy Family Home and Shelter would remain open for those in need. Our staff and families who look to us for shelter thank you!

Christmas Octave. It was a blessing to be able to pray with you each night during the Christmas Octave. If you missed it, you can still connect with us by visiting our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/thesistersofcharity>.

While you're there, take a look and enjoy some of the wonderful things happening at our High School, the **Academy of the Holy Family**. 2024 is a big year for our school. The faculty, staff and students are preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of our beloved AHF. The Sisters came from Holland in 1874 and started a school to teach the children of the mill workers how to read, write and love God. And we are still doing that, 150 years later! **The mills have gone but the Sisters of Charity are still here.**

We are truly grateful for each of you. Your prayers and financial support sustain our mission. We thank God for you.



Nasheena and her son, Xavier, thank you for opening your hearts to make sure they have a safe place to stay while they pick up the pieces of their lives.

*You have changed the world
because you have touched our lives
and the lives of those we serve. Thank you!*

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Thank you
for sharing
in our
mission.



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Winds of Charity is published by the Development Office of the Sisters of Charity
of Our Lady, Mother of the Church.

The purpose is to communicate to family and friends the works and needs of the SCMC community.
Co-Directors: Mother Mary David Riquier, SCMC & Mother Mary Jude Lazarus, SCMC