

A Woman of Grace and Humility

The Congregation, Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) has led Saint Joseph's very nearly all of its 130 years. This mission has been gifted with many prayerful, tireless workers, women who have and who continue to share their confidence in divine providence, their compassion and their vision of a better future. Among these was a woman whose kindness and sincerity earned her a place in the hearts of everyone she met.

Sister Saint Francis Lyons IHM, who has been an integral part of Saint Joseph's for over 35 years, recently went home to God and to a reunion with so many of the wonderful people with whom she has shared her life. A teacher by training, she left the schools after twenty five years in the classroom and came to Saint Joseph's, where merely by association she taught countless numbers of people to see the best in every circumstance.

Sister Saint Francis was officially tasked to offer religious opportunities to the Center residents, to be the keeper of all the Center's hundreds of keys and vehicle logs, she processed crates of incoming and outgoing mail every day, she worked at the switchboard, performed countless secretarial duties and was the treasured, gratitude companion at every fundraiser and thank you event, to each of the four administrators under whom she served. Although she rarely spoke publicly, her genuine smile and easy nature made her a truly beloved presence.

In a touching letter announcing her passing, Sister Maryalice wrote, "Sister Saint Francis shared work and life with so many who became her circle of friends. She loved to laugh with you and hear your stories of weekend and travel adventures, family life and celebrations, and funny tales about your children and

grandchildren. Your joys and happiness became hers. As with friends, she also embraced you with love and prayers when life was challenging. Your sorrows and heartaches became hers. But more than anything, you became her family and she truly loved the family of Saint Joseph's Center."

This accurately describes the relationship between Sister Saint Francis and every resident/person served, fellow staff, the Boards and Auxiliary, volunteers and all Center visitors. She knew the story of everyone who wished to share it and asked about their family members by name. She was always available. Sister moved into the Convent on the fourth floor of Saint Joseph's original, yellow brick building when she was first

assigned to the Center in 1983. She happily remained there until the last three months of her life.

At the celebration of Sister's life many spoke of kindnesses she shared during her 80 years, her faithful support of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pirates, her joviality, the pleasant demeanor that made everyone feel she had all the time in the world to listen, her dedication to her fellow Sisters and to Saint Joseph's Center and of her abiding confidence in God's love. This humble woman's friendship was a blessing beyond her own awareness. May her example continue to grace the people and the mission of Saint Joseph's.



As she always loved to do, Sister Saint Francis shared a laugh with Sarah, who is in residence at the Main Center.



Sister visited with Don Jacobs and Bill Schultz, her longtime friends from WNEP at the dedication of the Center's Therapy Garden.



In the occasion of her retirement party, (after which she continued all her duties as a full time volunteer) Sister visited with her co-workers and friends of many years, Georgie Slack and Karen Kowalchick.

Maternity and Family Services Always on the Go



SWAN family



New mom and dad welcome a son

One hundred and thirty years since the Center's inception, Maternity and Family Services, Saint Joseph's original program, remains as vital today as ever it was. Extending assistance to expectant mothers and to new mothers with babies who find themselves without a safe place to live, to infants awaiting adoption and couples hoping to offer a home to a child, to children of all ages who are in need of a permanent family and to young families who love each other but may struggle financially, these are the people who remain the focus of this very active department. Encompassing multiple programs, Maternity and Family Services encourages life affirming choices and aids children and adults as they work towards building a happy and healthy future together.

Pregnancy testing, counseling, prenatal education, medical referrals, parenting classes and ongoing, non-judgmental support are readily available to women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. Additionally, a nurturing temporary home in Walsh Manor is available to pregnant women who are in need of safe housing. The Mother and Infant Program became a natural and desperately needed extension to the maternity services. Many young women who sincerely want to raise their child but who find themselves alone and struggling, may now seek transitional housing and around the clock reassurance at the Mother and Infant Home. Mom and baby find a secure, empowering environment maybe for the first time in their lives. Participation does require adherence to the rules of the home and active involvement in many classes, including life skills and employment training. The goal is to help these new families manage the everyday challenges and aim towards a self-sufficient future.

The Baby and Children's Pantry began as an offer of support to the women who were involved in the maternity program but over the years has become a valuable tool for many area families who need a bit of extra help. Managed largely by volunteers under staff direction and stocked primarily with donations,



Birthday Party benefits the Pantry

both gently used and new, the Pantry fills over three hundred and fifty requests for supplies every month.

Adoption Services have been a significant part of the mission of Saint Joseph's for most of its history. Today there are various programs under this umbrella title. Pairing children who need a family with couples

and individuals who want to share their lives with children, requires a great deal of planning. Saint Joseph's offers adoption services to healthy infants but also to special needs infants and to older children. All adoptions require home studies and often foster care while children await adoption. The goal of devoted staff is to surround children in a loving environment through each step of the process and in the many years ahead.

Saint Joseph's is also the local affiliate for the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), for children who are in the custody of the county children and youth agencies but who are eligible and interested in adoption. In recognition of the potential benefits and challenges to parenting children who have lived through difficult circumstances, SWAN case workers carry out extensive preparations for both those considering parenting and for the children hoping to begin a new life. They help each member of the family-to-be, to see clearly not only their roles but also the gifts they bring to this new union. Support groups for post adoptive families continue the involvement and demonstrate a profound dedication to long lasting relationships.

A very old program that has been a source of hope in the lives of so many over the years, Maternity and Family Services maintains its relevance and its quality thanks to staff who are deeply committed to providing the very best outcomes for the many who seek assistance.

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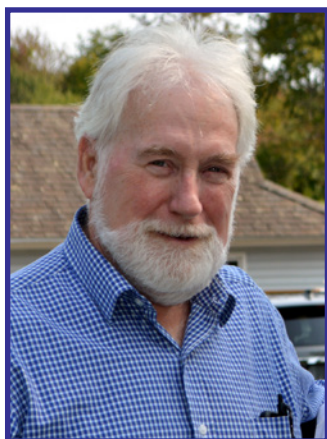
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SAINT JOSEPH'S
CENTER

Deeply Grateful to Vice President/CFO Upon His Retirement



On behalf of all who have worked at and most especially those who have received services from Saint Joseph's Center over the last 35 years, we thank Bob Gordon for his kindness and dedication to the mission as he begins his retirement. Bob, who has had the daunting task of managing all the financial aspects of Saint Joseph's Center for decades, will be deeply missed. Under his careful stewardship, the Center has weathered very dire fiscal crises and struggled to expand programs when needs presented themselves. Acknowledged as supremely capable and a man of integrity, Bob made it look easy.

As is always the case when someone does a job well, this Chief Financial Officer was given additional responsibilities when asked to also assume the position of Vice President, overseeing Therapy, Human Resources and all the departments within Support Services. Bob served on the Center's Boards and often dealt with the Sisters of IHM as the Corporate Member of Saint Joseph's Center, expanding the circle of those who respected his talents. On behalf of Saint Joseph's and so many other agencies, Bob also served numerous task force efforts through PAR, the statewide association. Best of all, Bob fulfilled his many responsibilities with dignity and good humor.

An advocate for the many services provided by the Center and for the fair treatment of every co-worker, Bob has also helped to prepare his successors. As he begins this new chapter in his life, the collective family of Saint Joseph's wishes Bob good health, happiness and peace.



Seated from left are Ryan McGowan and Debbie Saracino with the M&T Charitable Foundation, NEPA; Phil Johnson, M&T Bank Regional President. Standing are Jo Ann Verduce and Tracy Bannon, Saint Joseph's Center Foundation and Debbie Rhinard, Chair of M&T Charitable Foundation, NEPA.

M&T Bank Offers Support to Saint Joseph's

Saint Joseph's staff extend the Center's gratitude for the bank's financial and physical support at many of Saint Joseph's fundraising efforts at a recent M&T Bank gathering. Eager to learn more, members of the M&T Charitable Foundation also toured the Center, met several people who are in residence and saw various programs in action.

Grant Provides a "Live Music" Treat



performers with rhythm instruments. With staff from all departments as companions, each resident was able to fully participate in the festivities. It was a delightful experience for everyone involved.

Thanks to a grant from the Scranton Musicians Association, four professional musicians, including Doug Smith, the event organizer, visited Saint Joseph's Main Center to perform for those in residence. The appreciative audience enjoyed an afternoon of music and dancing. They were also invited to sing a long and to accompany the



Matt DeVivo, Speech/ Language Pathologist at Saint Joseph's and a longtime Minnesota Vikings fan, generously congratulates his friend Stephen, a Center resident and lifelong Philadelphia Eagles fan, on the Eagles road to the Super Bowl Championship.



Dear Friends of Saint Joseph's Center,

As I write this greeting for the Spring edition of Concern, snow is falling outside my window and clinging beautifully to the tree branches. Spring in NEPA holds your attention as you can truly experience all of the seasons - from snow and windy conditions to sunshine and warm temperatures - within the span of a few days. All reminders of how the natural world is alive with us.

In this edition of Concern, you will read about some of the everyday ways that we enjoy life with music and friendship, even when cheering for different teams, and showing support and encouragement. There also is the extraordinary story of the Maternity and Family Services Department which is the foundation of this great ministry dating back to 1888. It is humbling to consider how these services have evolved to reflect new and changing needs of each generation, and yet, to also hold fast to the awe inspired by the blessing of each new life. What a privilege it is to witness as children and families grow in stability and fullness.

We also share a message of loss and sorrow. Just a few months ago, Sister Saint Francis was one among us completing her daily tasks with dedication and sharing life with laughter and her bright smile. During her sickness, we became aware of the many things she quietly managed to make life easier for others. She is deeply missed. As we grieve, we have also been able to reflect upon her life and the example she gives us to live as a witness of God's unconditional love for one another.

All of these stories teach us about the significance of the relationships that form around the ministry of Saint Joseph's Center. The career of Bob Gordon is a fine example. We often hear the comment about what a special place this is. And it is, but it isn't only a place. It is a special feeling which comes from the experience of relationship which holds us together - with our many differences we have this connection which is beyond words. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to share this with you and so many others. Let's not take it for granted.

May the Hope of Resurrection and Joy of Easter fill your hearts and home with love, promise and peace.

With prayer and gratitude,

Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM

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President/CEO



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