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The celebration of our 150th anniversary of our founding by Mother Xavier in Germany, began with 150 DAYS of celebration on June 8 and concluded with Evening Prayer on November 4. We are grateful to the Sisters and Franciscan Associates who served on the committees; their efforts enabled us to celebrate in so many ways. You will read of these activities in this issue of Footprints:

• Public celebration at Loras College: the presence of so many people who have been important in the life of our congregation made this a joyous occasion on October 5.

• Peace efforts: a peace pole, a gift to Washington Park in Dubuque, will be a reminder that a peace-filled world begins with one person at a time.

• Looking forward: Four guests at the public celebration suggested what they expect from us in the next 150 years.

• Our gift to the world: an anniversary gift of $150,000 will be used to advocate for human rights.

• Works of service: over 10,000 hours of service throughout the land, from serving meals to hungry people to cleaning up ditches and gardens.

• Guest from Germany: we were enlightened by Father Udo Tielking’s knowledge of the history of Herford in the mid-1800s, the time of our community’s founding.

• Parish visits: many sisters renewed relationships as they visited parishes where we ministered in past years.

It’s been several weeks since our joyous celebration of St. Francis Day and our 150th public celebration of our founding in Germany in 1864. The SPIRIT, so evident at that time, will accompany us into the future. We will know again, in our Mother Xavier’s words: “God is with us still and the Lord will lead us.”

-Sister Mary Lechtenberg, OSF

Our Mission
Rooted in the Gospel and in the spirit of Sts. Francis and Clare, the Sisters of St. Francis live in right relationship with all creation.

Focus 2014 - 2020:
In our personal, communal and public life, we commit to ongoing conversion as we: deepen our relationship with Mother Earth and Sister Water | stand with persons who are poor | make peace and practice nonviolence.

This is who we are; this is what the global community can expect of us.

Leadership Team
Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski president
Sister Marie Cigrand vice president
Sister Mary Lechtenberg vice president
Sister Kathy Knipper vice president

“Look forward to what I will do for you, my promises remain. I’ll give what you need if you’ll only ask while trusting in my name.”

Sister Carol Hoverman, OSF
Welcoming the crowd of 350 people gathered at Loras College to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of St. Francis’ founding were Sisters Pat Heuer and Reyna Badillo. As a member of the class of 1934, Sister Pat is from the oldest class of sisters, and Sister Reyna, the newest, in 2014. Their joyful smiles mirrored the one seen on the face of foundress Mother Xavier Termehr in the painting at the podium in front of them.

It was in Herford, Germany, that Mother Xavier began her labor of love caring for the orphans and nursing the sick. Political changes resulted in the passage of laws in 1875, which called for religious communities to either disband or go into exile. The entire community of 18 professed sisters, seven novices, and four postulants chose to exile to Iowa City, Iowa, where they opened the first Catholic orphanage in the state. “It was grace for America. For us, it was a great problem,” said visiting priest Rev. Udo Tielking of Herford, Germany, to the crowd at Loras College.

Dubuque Archbishop Hennessy requested that the congregation move to Dubuque to open and staff an orphanage. They arrived in Dubuque in December 1878.

For 150 years, the sisters have been serving those in need, so in return, family members, associates and friends chose to honor the anniversary by doing the same. People from all over the United States and St. Lucia, filled out a service pledge form from the Sisters of St. Francis website and returned them to Sisters Camilla Hemann and Margie Felder with their...
intentions. “I wanted to give you the total recorded number of hours, but all I can say is my counted number came to 10,000 plus hours,” said Sister Camilla. “In reviewing all of the services I saw they could be categorized as standing with the poor, caring for all of creation, and/or building peace.”

Working to build peace continues to be a commitment for the Dubuque Franciscans for the next 150 years and as a symbol to that commitment, the sisters gifted a peace pole to the citizens of Dubuque. In accepting this symbol of peace and justice, **Dubuque City Council Member Karla Braig** commented on her personal connection to the congregation. “You taught my mother and her five brothers and sisters. You taught them to read and go to high school and go to college and raise their children to want to have those same values,” said Karla. “Your presence in the city of Dubuque has shaped how this city has gone in the last 150 years. And I’m so grateful that you’re still here.”

At the end of the program, President of the Congregation, **Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski**, addressed how the Dubuque Franciscans will go forward into the next 150 years. “Our mission statement developed 10 years ago, added to in 2008 and re-affirmed this summer in our Chapter gatherings, clearly says how we commit ourselves into the future,” said Sister Kate. “We count on your support and your challenge to remain faithful. We invite you to go forward with us into the future, knowing, as Mother Xavier has said, ‘God is with us still.’”

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Celebratory cake featuring our 150th logo.

During the celebration, Franciscan Associates stood and blessed the sisters.
“What do you expect of the Dubuque Franciscans in the next 150 years?”

At the celebratory event, four panelists were proposed this question: “What do you expect of the Dubuque Franciscans in the next 150 years?” Here are their responses:

“For the next 150 years, whether there are a thousand Franciscans or at least two, there you can find service, joy, and a shared life, that when lived authentically [and] completely, will most definitely make this world a different place and I believe a better place just by those three elements.”

_Dubuque Archbishop Michael O. Jackels_

We need you, sisters, to be a lighthouse in a sometimes very dark world. Keep doing what you are doing and being who you are. You are a shining light so the rest of us can make our way and reflect the light of others throughout the next 150 years.”

_Nancy Hemesath, Former Member_

“I expect us to stand with the Sisters of St. Francis and continue to raise our voices forming collaborations, building consensus, working for social justice, and for a society that offers opportunity for all.”

_David Harris, Franciscan Associate and Franciscan Way of Life Participant_

“The Dubuque Franciscans are today and I expect them to always be prophets. Prophets who walk among us. Calling attention to injustice wherever they see it and gently nudging all the rest of us to action on behalf of the oppressed. Our Franciscans are gift to the world. This is who they are now. This is who they ever shall be.”

_Marilyn Dansart, Franciscan Associate_
In honor of the 150th anniversary of their founding, the Sisters of St. Francis are designating $150,000 to create a fund that will promote immigration reform and eliminate human trafficking.

“A task force will be formed to set guidelines for issuing grants from this fund in order to assist those who are in need,” said Sister Kathy Knipper during the announcement at the 150th anniversary celebration.

In September 2014, the sisters passed their Corporate Stance which makes a commitment to end human trafficking. The stance states, “We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, and our associates, in the tradition of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, denounce all forms of human trafficking as criminal acts which violate basic human rights and exploit innocent people. We pledge to pray and work diligently with appropriate partners to abolish human trafficking and the economic and social systems that foster it.”

A special guest at the 150th anniversary festivities was Rev. Udo Tielking of Herford, Germany. Rev. Tielking gave a presentation to sisters and associates at Mount St. Francis on Saturday, October 4, titled “Rev. Bernard Heising: A Great Man in a Poor Time.” Heising is credited with opening an orphanage in Herford where the sisters first ministered. At the celebration at Loras College on October 5, Rev. Tielking read a letter from the Mayor Tim Kähler of Herford expressing his congratulations to the sisters. “We the people from Herford, are proud that your order was established in 1864 for the Catholic community during heavy times of need,” read Rev. Tielking. “We can only suppose what effects the work your sisters had if they could have stayed here, but the [foundation] of [their] work lasts still today. For example, the Bernard Heising Haus, which is a socio-education institution for children and young people. And also the hospital, too. We send our best wishes to you and God’s blessings for your future work from the town of [the] foundation of your order.”

There were many hours of service that were performed in honor of the sisters’ 150th anniversary all across the country. Briar Cliff University (BCU) staff and students sought to honor the sisters with service also and offered a “Connecting with Joyful Service” opportunity to everyone on campus as well as the community of Sioux City on Saturday, September 27 for three hours. Volunteers served at one of several Siouxland agencies and organizations. BCU Students Katie Mueller and Kendra Kersting volunteered their time at Mayflower Church in Sioux City in honor of the sisters. At the church they served a meal and created play areas for the children attending the church’s pre-school. Both Kendra and Katie have been influenced by the sisters during their time at BCU. “I love their energy and willingness to help others,” said Kendra. “Both Sisters Kathy Knipper and Ruth Schock have made a huge impact on me and my future career as a teacher,” said Katie. “Sister Janet May has gotten me involved in Campus Ministry and to grow in my faith. I have attended numerous Antioch retreats and Catholic Daughter meetings with her, and always leave feeling fulfilled spiritually. She often pushes me to grow deeper in my prayer life and to seek God always.”

**Footprints**
One way the sisters celebrated the 150 year anniversary of their founding was to return to the parishes where they served or entered from andthank the parishioners for their years of ministry. Here are a few reflections after their visits:

“Sister Mary Kilsart and I had a delightful trip down memory-lane by visiting St. Mary’s Church in Manchester which now is part of the Blessed Trinity Cluster of Masonville, Delhi, Ryan, and the Manchester parish and elementary school and St. Paul School of religion. We connected with many people by speaking at weekend Masses, as well as attending the Knights of Columbus parish breakfast. Even the parish priest had been a child at our orphanage in Dubuque, so it was a live testimony to the ministry of our sisters!”

Sister Carole Freking
St. Mary’s
Manchester, Iowa

“I visited St. Thomas in Sanborn, Minnesota, on the last Sunday in July for Mass. I stayed with parishioners on Saturday night and met others at a social Sunday morning. I had some good chats and we caught up on the happenings in our lives.”

Sister Jeanette Homan
St. Thomas
Sanborn, Minnesota

“It was wonderful. It was like seeing old friends again.”

Sister Lene Rubly
Saints Peter and Paul Church
Petersburg, Iowa

“It was a joy to celebrate our 150th anniversary with the people of Stacyville. We were thrilled to meet parishioners, students, parents of former students, and even classmates and they were just as excited to see us. We witnessed the supportive, welcoming spirit that was alive years earlier and still lives in the parishioners.”

Sister Rosie Vaske
Visitation Church
Stacyville, Iowa

For sisters who were unable to visit Bancroft, Iowa, Sisters Ginny Heldorfer and Lila Hellman collected memories from the sisters who served there to be published in the parish bulletin:

“One memory puts a smile on my face even today. On the feast of Christ the King, grades 7th through 12th gathered in church in the afternoon for consecration to Christ the King. As my 7th grade class entered the church a 3-year old-girl in the pew took one look at me and called out, ‘Hi, Mrs. God!’ Her brother, a seventh grader was embarrassed. I said to him, ‘Don’t be embarrassed, I’m thrilled.’”

Sister Catherine Weisenseal
“I spent four happy years at St. John School in Bancroft from 1959-1963 teaching sixth grade. These 60 students were easily motivated and cooperative. Since Bancroft was a ‘baseball town’ giving students a little extra baseball time helped give incentive for students to excel in schoolwork. The family values of hard work and church were evident as the heart of the town.”

**Sister Nona Meyerhofer**

When former students of the sisters read the memories the sisters wrote, they then submitted their memories about the sisters to the Bancroft Register who published the memories submitted from October to December. Here are a few of those submissions:

“One week I questioned Sister Bede’s referee call during a basketball game. She said nothing at the time, but the next week she handed me the whistle and informed me that I was the referee. She still didn't say a word beyond that, but I think she knew I got the message. She was an extremely wise woman.”

**Marion Walsh**

“Sister Gwen Hennessey was my first grade teacher. My memories bring back to me a very frightening time before I went to school. I was literally scared to death and dreading it. I will never forget my first day and walking into the first grade classroom and meeting Sister Gwen: a peace fell over me like none other. Sister Gwen taught first graders with love and a calmness that only a nervous little boy like me could appreciate.”

**Larry Hellman**

“Sister Aquillina was principal my senior year and helped me with the testing to apply for Nurses training. Thank you sister. I was a nurse for 50 years.”

**Joan Fox Harper**

“Sister Tarsisius: has she been canonized yet? What are we waiting for? An unbelievable teacher, a wonderful person and a true servant. Her love of nature taught me to be a steward of our environment.”

**Roger Hellman**

Franciscan Associate Paints New Image of Mother Xavier

The new painting of foundress Mother Xavier Termehr by Franciscan Associate Jo Myers-Walker of Iowa City, Iowa.

History has always fascinated Franciscan Associate **Jo Myers-Walker** so when she moved to Iowa City, Iowa, in 2013 she wanted to research the areas of the city that were connected to the Dubuque Franciscans. Jo, an artist drawn to watercolors, then painted the sites in Iowa City the sisters lived or ministered in. But it was the image of Mother Xavier Termehr that wouldn't leave her. In the one photograph that exists of Mother Xavier, her expression is rather stern. However, the more Jo read about her, the more that photo didn't match her spirit. “You read what she did and how she loved and you just knew she had to be much more than that photo so I decided to paint her,” said Jo.

In the new painting, Mother Xavier stands with her arms extended around women, which seemingly blur into daisies. “I wanted to give it the appearance of ‘look what she flowered, this bounty of wonderful women,’” said Jo. “I have her gathering her flock in habits and street clothes.” And the expression on Mother Xavier’s face bears a slight smile. “I made her very loving looking giving a softness to her. I could see through that stoic photo there was another smile in there. I wanted to do that instead of that harsh look [in the photograph]. I knew there was more to her than that,” said Jo.

And how have the sisters reacted to her painting? “It makes me cry,” recalls Jo. “The sisters kept hugging me and thanking me and it humbles me. I want to be more like them. They’re so gracious.”
Traveling almost 700 miles around Iowa, visiting seven cities in five days sounds like it would be exhausting, however, Sister Gwen Hennessey found the experience just the opposite. “It was energizing,” said Sister Gwen, who along with Sister Marge Staudt, traveled with the “Nuns on the Bus” tour in Iowa in September.

National Catholic social justice lobby NETWORK out of Washington, DC organized the tour and traveled to 47 cities in 11 states to register and encourage men and women to vote in the midterm election. The “We the People, We the Voters” tour was headlined by NETWORK’s Sister Simone Campbell, CSJ and joining her in Iowa were several sisters from congregations all over the state.

“It was wonderful to share that experience with the other sisters,” said Sister Marge. “That was just a gift.”

In each city, the sisters canvassed and held town hall events to meet with citizens and engage in dialogue. “Everywhere we stopped there were people there to welcome us,” said Sister Marge. “People were clapping as you got off the bus. There was a lot of support. People see [sisters] as authentic and as willing to try and make a difference.”

“It was a tremendously powerful experience and reinforcing,” agreed Sister Gwen.

Sister Margie Hosch, OSF, had a similar experience touring with the Nuns on the Bus for five days in North Carolina.

“I was so proud to be included as one ‘Nun on the Bus.’ The interaction with the people who showed so much energy was electrifying.”

Sister Margie Hosch
Celebrating Peace Through the Arts

by Common Venture Volunteer Laura Steines

Editors note: Franciscan Common Venture is the Sisters of St. Francis’ volunteer program that provides the opportunity for women and men to contribute their talents, time and commitment in service by standing with the poor, caring for creation and building community. Short and long-term service opportunities are available in the United States and overseas.

From August 2013 through May 2014, I had the privilege to be a Common Venture volunteer in the town of Suchitoto, El Salvador. While in Suchitoto I was located at a community center called Centro Arte para la Paz, which is a center dedicated to promoting peace and nonviolence through the arts. This community center was created seven years ago as a way for both children and adults throughout Suchitoto and the surrounding communities to experience the arts after a civil war ravaged the country from 1980 through 1992. While the repercussions from the war can still be felt, Centro Arte para la Paz provides community members a way to express themselves and experience the healing power of the arts.

Before arriving to the center, I had thought that I would simply be teaching classes in violin and cello. However, I quickly learned that I would be involved in so much more. Throughout my time at the center, I taught classes in violin, cello, drama, and crafts. Additionally, another volunteer and I went to a rural community school each week where we taught classes in music, led a choir, and also taught basic English.

While I had arrived in El Salvador to volunteer and help others, I never could have imagined how much I would learn myself. I knew that I wanted to volunteer abroad. I wanted to find an outlet through which I could serve others, as well as really learn about a culture that was different from my own. Needless to say, I feel as though I gained much more than simply a great mark on my resume. I learned so much about the resiliency of the human spirit, the kindness of others, as well as the importance of cross-cultural exchange.

Spending time at the center also re-affirmed my belief in the healing power of music and the arts. Through the arts, we are often able to express those things that we are unable to share in any other way. It truly was amazing to watch my students grow and express themselves as they learned more and more about the arts. My time at Centro Arte para la Paz is something that I will never forget, and I carry the memories of my students and the wonderful people of El Salvador with me every day.

Above photo: Laura Steines with her students at the Centro Arte para la Paz. Contributed photo.
It was just a simple email from the Archdiocese that I opened, read, and quickly dismissed. A few days later Sister Maureen Leach said to me, “Sally, you could do that.” I thought about it for awhile and had all kinds of reasons why I could not be a volunteer conversationalist to sisters who did not know English. Sister Maureen assured me that I did not have to know Spanish; in fact, it was better so that the Sisters could not speak Spanish to me. They were to listen to English and learn correct pronunciations.

These sisters are studying English at the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio. They are from Mexico, Central America, and Puerto Rico. The reason they are studying English is because they are coming to spend three to five years as missionaries in Texas, Iowa, and Virginia.

I looked at my schedule and seeing that I was now teaching just one class each term, I could afford the time. Four hours a week did not seem like much to spend with small groups to help them with their English. They were learning vocabulary and grammar in classes each day. Now they had to practice.

Much to my surprise I learned on the first visit that I would have our Sister Erika Calderon as my first ‘student!’

The second sister I saw that day, Sister Irene Santiago, a Dominican Sister from near San Juan, Puerto Rico, could speak and understand quite English quite well. I enjoyed my conversations with her so much.

I had one more sister to see, a Franciscan from El Salvador, Sister Ana Deysi Delgado Garcia. Deysi was in level one, so we had to work very hard and very long. She is a delightful, playful, and happy young woman. She and Erica have become good friends.

One evening Erica and two other sisters came to watch us swim in the outside high school pool. They figured if an almost 80 year old could swim they could join us! Later I took the sisters around for a short tour of places they hadn’t seen and then brought them to my apartment for a treat and a visit to help get away from studying for awhile!

It has been a great experience that I will continue. This group, except for Erica, will be moving into their new places of ministry. Another group of 20 Sisters will be arriving at that time. Erica will remain until December when she returns to Honduras. For a time we all came together!
Letter of Instruction to Family

In our last several issues, we shared the initial points of a suggested “Letter of Instruction to Family.” Here we include the last seven points. We are most willing to send the full “Will Planning Worksheet” to anyone who wants a copy. The complete worksheet contains many other helpful suggestions in planning a will and discussing it with your family. Write, call or email: Sister Cathy Katsoki, 3390 Windsor Ave, Dubuque, IA 52001, katoskic@osf-dbuq.org or (563) 564-9411.

(17) Matters relating to your house or condominium, including address, in whose name it’s recorded and description. Include a list of home improvements, with the date and cost. Include also a statement as to the actual cost of the house, and expenses incurred in purchasing the house.

(18) If renting, name and address of lessor, expiration date of the lease, location of lease agreement and receipts of payments.

(19) If veteran, instructions to notify nearest Veterans Administration of your death and to ask what benefits are available.

(20) If an organ donor, please contact the proper medical authorities immediately if appropriate. Time is of the essence in organ and tissue donation.

(21) If a bequest is made, please list the nonprofit organizations, their tax ID#, and a contact name and phone number. Also advise if this is to be done with recognition of the gift or anonymously and any restrictions on the gift. If you are placing any restrictions on your gift, it is advisable to discuss this with the charity in advance, to assure that they can meet the requirements of your restrictions.

(22) Any other special instructions.

SISTERS IN THE NEWS

Sr. Dolores Ullrich Receives Fundraising Award

Sister Dolores Ullrich received the Judges Award from the Greater Tri-State Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals on November 13 at the Grand River Center in Dubuque.

Sister Dolores was nominated by Karen Knepper of Shalom for her work as a volunteer fundraiser. In her nomination essay Karen wrote, “Sister Dolores quietly works behind the scenes yet has the heart, the great skill, and the confidence to approach major donors and make the successful request for support. She has willingly joined our Center Director, Sister Marci Blum, to make personal visits with donor prospects for our fall annual appeal to raise funds to support projects such as replacing the boilers and updating the electrical/adding central air conditioning. These personal visits have helped us reach our fundraising goals each year. ... She is interested in the well-being of others and exemplifies professionalism, friendliness and commitment in every aspect of service given as a volunteer fundraiser.”

Sister Dolores was president and CEO of Stonehill Franciscan Services, retiring in 2007 after 29 years. She presently serves as sacristan at Mount Saint Francis in addition to volunteering for many community organizations.
Nicole Hockley’s message was clear: “Our hearts are broken, but our spirit is not.”

The mother, whose 6-year-old son Dylan was killed in the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012, along with 19 other children and six adults, spoke to a crowd of several hundred at Loras College on October 30. The event was organized by the Dubuque Coalition for Nonviolence, a group that was launched by members of the Sisters of St. Francis Peacemakers Circle after the shooting at Sandy Hook.

Hockley now directs communications and outreach for Sandy Hook Promise; a charity started by families who lost loved ones at Sandy Hook, which aims to prevent gun violence by starting a grassroots movement in communities around the nation.

“Sometimes when you lose someone you love and all hope seems lost, that is when you find strength you never knew you had,” said Hockley. “The strength doesn’t come from grief or despair or anger. It comes from faith. It comes from love, and perhaps if we let love lead us we would more easily find a course of action and create solutions to protect the future of our country, our children.”

Hockley was later joined on stage by Tim Makris, executive director of Sandy Hook Promise, to take questions from the audience. Both explained that the goal of the group was not to ban all guns or attack responsible gun owners, but rather to work together to find solutions, including promoting education on the causes of gun violence, gun safety and mental wellness.

Hockley and Makris drew a distinction between “mental illness” and “mental wellness.” Whereas only about 4 percent of gun violence in the United States is done by people with serious mental illness, the majority is done by people who lack mental wellness due to anger issues or other problems, according to the speakers.

Hockley said solutions begin with education about what causes gun violence. Her group encourages “Promise Communities” at the local level, which receive tools from the charity. Sandy Hook Promise focuses on education to foster social change, provides resources to promote mental wellness, and gun safety in homes. Hockley also mentioned support of gun laws to increase safety, which everyone can agree on — such as background checks.

Hockley credited the love of friends and family and their patience with helping her work through the grief. For many, the healing process is still going on two years later, according to Makris, whose son was in the school that day.

“We have about 800 kids in our town who are in therapy and countless adults,” he said. “Countless attempts at suicide and two people who have succeeded, so there is a ripple effect that has come out of this tragedy, that perhaps a lot of people don’t realize.”

Hockley and Makris called Sandy Hook Promise’s mission to change the culture of violence a “marathon” instead of a “sprint,” that will require average people to step up.

The Dubuque Coalition for Violence is hoping to be part of those individuals who “step up.” “We came together in January 2013 and began discussing what we could do to build support for addressing the issue of gun violence in our own community,” said Dubuque Coalition for Nonviolence Member and Franciscan Associate Mary Sawyer. “We knew that hearing Nicole’s story would be deeply moving, but it was also inspiring to hear and see her dedication to making the lives of her son, Dylan, and the other 19 first graders have meaning by working to keep other children safe.”
“The story really begins at my coming to Morton, Mississippi,” said Sister Rita Goedken about a trip by Dubuque non-profit ResourcesUnite to Excel in Morton.

Shortly after Sr. Rita moved to Morton as the Project Director for Excel, the organization added a re-sale shop. It was then that Sister Rita’s sister, Delores O’Brien of Cascade, Iowa, began collecting clothes and household items to donate to Sister Rita for Excel. “I’d go up to Iowa and take a car load back with me,” said Sister Rita. “It was wonderful to have that.”

Word spread that Delores was collecting items for the people of Mississippi and family and friends then also started to donate their home goods and clothes to her. But Delores collected so many items this summer that it was beyond Sister Rita being able to put it in her car to take back to Morton.

Delores’ son, Mark O’Brien, wanted to help. He had heard of the good that non-profit ResourcesUnite in Dubuque was doing. ResourcesUnite’s mission is to help strengthen communities by connecting people to volunteer opportunities and resources. Their organization aims, “to change the way we change the world.” Mark approached ResourcesUnite’s founder Josh Jasper about how to go about getting the goods to Morton. Josh connected with Bird Chevrolet in Dubuque and they donated one of their trucks to the cause. Josh and another ResourcesUnite employee, Kevin Greene, then offered to drive the truck with the donated items to Mississippi themselves.

There to greet the truck containing over a hundred bags of clothing and boxes filled with books and household items were Sisters Rita, Pat Clemen and Eileen Hauswald as well as other Excel staff and volunteers.

“There was so much wonderful stuff,” said Sr. Rita. While in Morton, Sister Rita gave Josh and Kevin a tour. On his blog, Josh wrote about the poverty he witnessed and how the truckload of goods would help a lot of people but that the people in Morton have even more needs. “This is why [the sisters and staff at Excel] spend every waking hour not on collecting clothes, but on education and community building,” said Josh. “They know how critical it is for each child to receive a quality education and how armed with a high school diploma, they can rise above their surroundings and realize success and independence.”

Sister Rita said the donations that Kevin and Josh were able to transport to Morton have helped a lot of people. Some of the goods were sold but also there have been multiple families who lost their homes and trailers to fires and thanks to Delores, her family and friends, Bird Chevrolet, and Josh and Kevin, all of them were able to get clothes, shoes, blankets, dishes, and towels they so desperately needed.

“I am very grateful for their time, their goodness, and their energy,” said Sister Rita.
In 2011, Sister Melita Meyers visited Sisters Mary Lee Cox and Frances Nosbisch in St. Lucia for the first time. As a third grade teacher at Sacred Heart School in Reedsburg, Wisconsin, Sister Melita was curious what the education system was like on the island. With the help of Sister Mary Lee, Sister Melita was able to visit three schools and talk with the teachers and staff. “It was obvious to me that they were working with very few materials,” said Sister Melita. While touring the schools she decided she wanted to help the teachers and staff and asked them for their “wish lists” of materials and resources with the idea that she would work to fulfill them. “I met with them twice before I left the island. I didn’t want to be the one that made the decision of what came to the island. I wanted to hear from them what they thought they needed,” said Sister Melita.

For the next three years, Sister Melita experienced a united effort to fulfill the needs at the schools in St. Lucia. With the help of the congregation she received three ministry grants that allowed her to buy supplies and ship them to the island. And there were others who wanted to help: co-workers, students, friends, parishioners, and business owners. They listened to the needs Sister Melita witnessed and responded. “Colleagues went dumpster diving even,” she said, recalling the story of her co-workers who had been looking for cardboard and found religion books in mint condition. It was the beginning of sending total educational programs in math, reading, science over the next three years. “So many people were involved. I’m overwhelmed at the generosity of people,” she said.

Earlier this summer Sister Melita returned to St. Lucia. Since her first visit in 2011, she had sent numerous boxes of supplies to the schools but never received any confirmation of their arrival. At the first school Sister Melita returned to, she saw no signs of the materials that so many people had helped her gather and began to feel hopeless.

(continued)
"I was ready to give up," she said. Then she asked a staff member at the school if there were any rooms she had not seen. She was then led to the school’s resource room. "I walked in and I prayed, 'God, I need a sign. I don't see anything that I sent,'" recalled Sister Melita.

When she walked around the room, Sister Melita’s eyes met a small book called, “The Good Samaritan.” She took it off the shelf and opened it and saw her initials in the corner and knew then, yes, the materials had made it after all.

Word eventually got out to the staff at the school that Sister Melita had arrived. Teachers hugged and thanked her for their materials. "I got the calculus book you sent me," she remembered one teacher saying. "I told you I wanted to improve my own education and you helped me by sending me that calculus book to teach myself." And Sister Melita was even able to fulfill the cook’s wish for a blender to make fruit juices. "When I walked into the cafeteria and said 'I’m here for my glass of juice,' the cook lit up like a Christmas tree!" said Sister Melita.

Being able to fulfill the teacher’s and staff’s wishes has also fulfilled a need within Sister Melita. "Back when I entered 50 years ago I knew to accomplish something in this world that I could not do it alone. I didn’t really know how to articulate it at the time," she said. "But I didn’t do this project personally, I did it as a Sister of St. Francis. I am so proud, happy, and blessed of the fact that I’m in a community that allows us individually, with community support, to fulfill something personally."

Photos on page 16 top row: Students look at the reading books Sister Melita sent to St. Lucia; bottom row: a teacher with her alphabet dice; Sister Melita with students in St. Lucia; a teacher with her reading materials. Top photo: A teacher holds the book Sister Melita found in the resource room that let her know the materials had made it to St. Lucia. Photos contributed by Sister Melita Meyers.

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**Sister Judy Sinnwell Honored by Calhoun City Chamber**

**Sister Judy Sinnwell**, of Excel, was recently selected to be honored by the Calhoun City Chamber of Commerce with their new quarterly award.

The Calhoun City Chamber of Commerce in Calhoun City, Miss., voted in October to honor chamber members for their contributions to the community each quarter. Sister Judy was voted as the first honoree.

"Sister Judy makes a difference in our community and entire county by her efforts of promoting the need to have children get a firm foundation in the first formative years of schooling," Chamber President Laura Edwards said. "Children from all four schools in Calhoun County have benefited from the Excel program. She also teaches Tai-chi at the center, provides computer classes for adults and performs massage therapy."

Sister Judy serves as chairman of the Chamber’s Green Committee and was instrumental in getting the countywide recycling program underway.

She is also an active member of CCCU (Calhoun County Churches United) which is currently supporting the countywide food drive and a supporter of the Sister Water project.

“We are honored to have Sister Judy as a member of our community as she sets a wonderful example for us to follow by encouraging growth and deeply caring for our town and Calhoun County,” Edwards said.
Sister Noel Weinert January 19, 1928 - November 13, 2014

On January 19, 1928, a seventh child was born to Julius and Theresa (Schlicht) Weinert, in Oak Forest, Ill. They named their new daughter Agnes at her baptism in St. Christopher Church, Midlothian. All seven children in the Weinert family went to St. Christopher School, and Agnes remembers being drawn to the sisters who taught her. By seventh grade she already knew that she wanted to enter religious life.

After graduating from Morgan Park High School, she entered Mount St. Xavier in Dyersville. After profession, she was sent to teach primary grades at Sacred Heart School and Holy Trinity in Dubuque. Following that, she was sent to St. Joseph School in Richardsville.

When Noel was sent to teach at St. Christopher School in Midlothian, she was able to help her parents and be with her father when he died at the age of 96. She also taught at St. Mary of the Woods and Hazel Crest. As convents were closed, she moved into tutoring and subbing in various schools in the Chicago area. She worked in the church and did gardening as well as teaching at St. Benedict in Blue Island. For a time she lived with the Clinton Franciscans in Oak Lawn and filled in wherever needed in the school. For five years she was a caregiver to her sister, Lillian, during many painful back surgeries.

She retired to Mount St. Francis in 2003. In her autobiography, she wrote, “I feel I must turn over some of my dreams to God. What I really want to do is to cultivate contemplation and wonder and to be free enough to enjoy God.” Noel moved to Holy Family Hall in 2010. Sister is survived by her sister Lillian, her sisters-in-law, Lois Weinert, Cleova Weinert, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared 67 years of her life.

Sister Mary Ann (Quentin) Hackenmiller May 28, 1925 – November 15, 2014

The sixth of seven children, Mary Ann was born to Andrew and Anna (Merten) Hackenmiller in Meyer, Iowa, on May 28, 1925. She had three brothers and three sisters. Mary Ann was baptized at Sacred Heart Church in Meyer, and attended the parochial school there. Her mother died when she was three and a half years old, leaving her father to raise the children to adulthood.

She became a postulant in 1944, joining an aunt, Sister Mary Virgine. Her high school education was received at the Immaculate Conception Academy. She later got a bachelor’s degree from Briar Cliff College and a master's degree from the University of Portland. On August 12, 1945, she was received into the community and took the name, Sister Mary Quentin. After profession in 1947, she began her teaching career at New Hampton. She also taught at Corpus Christi in Chicago, Sacred Heart in Dubuque, St. Joseph in Rickardsville, St. Martin in Portland, and St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville.

Outside of teaching, she had a varied career as a day care provider, pastoral associate, and teacher aide. She considered the two summers she spent working among Indian and Eskimo communities in the bush of Alaska a special highlight of her career. Mary Ann retired to Mt. St. Francis in 2005, where among other things, she frequently washed dishes during retreats and events at Shalom Retreat Center. In 2011 she moved to Clare House.

Sister is survived by her sister-in-law Angela Hackenmiller, a niece, nephews and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared 70 years of her life.

William “Bill” Basinger
Franciscan Associate, Husband of Franciscan Associate Jean Basinger
Luella Elsbernd
Sister-in-law of St. Ruth Elsbernd
Margaret Snider Weiler
Sister-in-law of Sr. Ann Marie Weiler
Marcella Ginder
Sister-in-law of St. Edna Ginder

Dixie Rapp
Sister of St. Laurinda Hefel
John Schwendinger
Brother-in-law of St. Mary Ann Helle
Barbara Meissen
Sister-in-law of Sister Emiliana Meissen
Jeanette Graff
Sister of St. Janice Rosman
William “Bill” Huebsch
Brother-in-law of St. Bernice Schuetz

Betty Wheeler
Grandmother of Sr. Sarah Kohles
Richard Hoffman
Father of St. Janice Hoffman
Francis David Hennessey
Brother of St. Gwen Hennessey
Edward and Agnes Foertsch
Brother-in-law and sister of Sr. Lila Hellman
Armella Mary Homan
Mother of Sr. Jeannette Homan

Rest in Peace
Excel in Morton, Miss., Celebrates 15 Years

Excel Community & Learning Center in Morton, Miss., celebrated its 15th anniversary this fall. Excel offers after school tutoring and summer learning programs for children and computer, conversational Spanish, ESL, CPR, First Aid, pottery, copper enameling and other enrichment classes for adults. Excel Board President Ken Gordon said, “It is a privilege to be part of Excel, an organization that provides support to those in need regardless of race or religion. May it serve for many, many future years.”

Dubuque Franciscans Welcome 8 New Associates

During the Associate Gathering weekend on Sunday, October 12, seven new Franciscan Associates (left) were commissioned at Mount St. Francis. Front row left to right: Jan Cody, Joyce Even, Kathy Glatz, and Pat Vogl. Back row left to right: Mary Jo Pfeifer-Wulf, Father Ron Freidell, and Chuck Glatz.

On Thursday, October 23, Sister Kate Katoski (right) commissioned Franciscan Associate Jodi Nowowiejski at Briar Cliff University.

Vietnamese Sisters Learn English at Mount St. Francis

In September, four sisters from Vietnam arrived at Mount St. Francis to live for two years. Sisters Ha Cao, Chi Huynh, Thao Nguyen, and Trinh Nguyen are from the Lovers of the Holy Cross order and are working with sisters at Mount St. Francis to learn English. In Vietnam, Sisters Ha, Thao, and Trinh ministered as teachers, and Chi served at her motherhouse sewing vestments and greeting guests. In October the Vietnamese sisters took part in the annual hayride Mount St. Francis employee Mark Sheldon offers to the sisters. Ha, Thao, Trinh, and Chi liked it so much they rode once in the morning and again later that afternoon.

Sister Mary Peter Celebrates Silver Jubilee

Sister Mary Peter celebrated her Silver Jubilee (25 years) on Saturday, September 13, at Mount St. Francis.

Sister Mary was born in Coon Rapids, Minn., to Raymond and Betty Peter.

Sister Mary entered the congregation on August 28, 1987, and was received August 10, 1989.

Sister has served as an elementary school teacher at St. Augustine School, Halbur, Iowa; Epiphany Catholic School, Coon Rapids; Holy Ghost, Dubuque; and Aquin Catholic Elementary School, Cascade, Iowa. Sister Mary currently teaches 5th grade at St. Matthew Catholic School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
In gratitude for 150 years: A Tree of Blessings

God of our beginning,
in wonder and gratitude we proclaim
that you have been our companion
on each step of our journey,
beginning in Herford when
Mother Xavier and her companions,
seeking to follow the example of Jesus,
offered themselves wholeheartedly
to the care of poor children, the sick and all in need.
We are awed and humbled as we recognize
that today you entrust their vision to our frailty.

God with us still,
like a tree planted near running water
you root us in your love and grace;
you strengthen us in our desire
to be oases of your presence wherever you call.

May our arms stretch out like branches,
freely offering ourselves, our resources and our gifts
to all our sisters and brothers in creation,
and receiving from them in humility and gratitude.

God of our future,
as you call us into the unknown,
keep us faithful to our founding vision
which you nurture in our common heart.
As we are blessed, may we be blessing
in each and every tomorrow.

- Sister Veronica Bagenstos