

# interim

Volume 37, Issue 6

June 2019

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

## Leadership Celebration

*Please join us*

Sunday, June 30, 2019

10:30 a.m.

SSJ Community Living Center

Liturgy and installation of  
new Leadership:

Mary Drexler, SSJ

Phyllis McCracken, SSJ

Carol Morehouse, SSJ

followed by

lunch and a gratitude celebration

honoring outgoing leadership:

Mary Herrmann, SSJ

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ

Mary Ann White, SSJ



**Patty Johnson, CSJ**  
**Executive Director**  
**Sisters of St. Joseph**  
**U.S. Federation**  
**Monday, June 3**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**SSJ Community**  
**Living Center**



Please RSVP by June 14th  
jennifer.woodard@ssjerie.org  
or 814-836-4204



Please join us  
in prayer  
at the site of the  
May 3 murder of

**Starleisha Smith**

Wednesday,  
June 5, 2019  
5:15 p.m.  
505 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street

## Welcome New Associates and Celebrate Milestone Associate Anniversaries

**Sunday, June 23, 2019**  
**Community Living Center**  
**1:00 p.m. Prayer Service**  
**Reception following**

**Please join us in welcoming  
the following candidates  
as they make their commitment  
as Associates of the  
Sisters of St. Joseph:**

**Susan Colvin**  
**Frances Skobieranda**  
**Linda Winters**



## mission possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

### honoring fathers, honoring Joseph

Sunday June 16th is Father's Day – a day set aside to honor all fathers and father figures. Billy Graham once said, "a good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society."

As I think about this, I am reminded of St. Joseph

who was entrusted by God to be the earthly father of Jesus. St.

Joseph was conscious of this responsibility and was a faithful and loving parent - a teacher, provider, and protector of Jesus. Scripture tells us that Joseph exhibited many wonderful virtues in his love and care for Mary and Jesus: compassion,



courage, faith, humility and love. Joseph was also a man of silence. In silence he heard God's voice speaking to him and he was obedient in doing God's will. He is designated by the church as the patron of fathers and he continues

to be a model for all fathers and father figures today.

We wish all of our associates who are fathers or father figures a very Happy Father's Day and we ask God's blessings on them as they continue to care for their families.

We are grateful to them for being role models to their children and others and for exemplifying the virtues of St. Joseph by living the SSJ charism. This is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible**.

### Strength of a Mountain

God took the strength of a mountain,  
The majesty of a tree,  
The warmth of a summer sun,  
The calm of a quiet sea,  
The generous soul of nature,  
The comforting arm of night,  
The wisdom of the ages,  
The power of the eagle's flight,  
The joy of a morning in spring,  
The faith of a mustard seed,  
The patience of eternity,  
The depth of a family need,  
Then God combined these qualities,  
When there was nothing more to add,  
He knew His masterpiece was complete,  
And so, He called it ... Dad  
Anonymous

### with heartfelt gratitude

The past eight years have been a graced time for us serving in leadership. God called us to use our gifts of presence, leadership and management to bring forward growth among our Sisters and to address the needs of our congregation. We have been strengthened by the prayers and support of our sisters, agreees, associates, sponsored ministries and employees and we found strength and support from U.S. federation of Sisters of St. Joseph and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

We have been blessed by the ability to work as a team as we made Spirit-led decisions during what is a challenging time for religious congregations. We have been blessed with the wisdom and counsel of consultants and companions who helped us assess our current realities and make plans for the future needs of our sisters, our sponsored ministries, and our properties. Through contemplative dialogue and discernment we were able to make some very difficult decisions of where best we were being called to serve.

Through it all, we couldn't have done it without the prayers, support, encouragement, friendship and hard work of each one of you. As we leave this time of Leadership, we wish to express our gratitude to all and extend our prayers and best wishes to the new Leadership.

With much gratitude,



May Hermann SSJ    Mary Ann White, SSJ    Clare Marie Beehner, SSJ

## SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation Awards 2019 Grants

Five grants totaling more than \$130,000 will be awarded this month to sponsored ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Specifically, the 2019 grant dollars will be used to support:

- case management and homelessness prevention at Erie DAWN;
- SSJ Neighborhood Network career education awareness for students in K through 8<sup>th</sup> grades at McKinley Elementary and Woodrow Wilson Middle School, as well as a summer work

- program;
- roof replacement and operating support at St. James Haven in Meadville;
- a concrete project, painting and repairs at St. Patrick's Haven; and
- the purchase of a water/ice dispenser and a portable scale for the Sisters at the Community Living Center.

Calls for grant applications were sent in February, with grant applications reviewed and approved by the SSJ Mission & Ministries

Foundation Board in April.

"This is an exciting time for the Foundation," says Tina Mengine, board chair. "It's a privilege to help raise funds to support the sisters' mission. But it's truly a joy to be able to put these dollars to work for the dear neighbor."

**Circle of Friends  
Save the Date  
Saturday  
September 14  
4 p.m. Liturgy  
5 p.m.  
Picnic & Games**

## New Furnishings Thanks to SOAR!

If you haven't already, stop by the Florida Room at the CLC and take a look – or better yet, have a seat – on the new senior friendly furniture made possible through a grant from SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious).

The new rockers and armchairs are not only beautiful, but also have higher, shallower seats – providing just the right support when getting in or

out of a seated position. The new table's design is sturdy and made to easily accommodate wheelchairs. And that's not all. New senior friendly furniture is also on order for the activities room in Marycrest.

Heartfelt thanks to SOAR! and to the following Sisters who served on the furniture selection committee for the Florida Room: Srs. Marjorie

Adams, Rose Marie Chisholm, Lucille DeStefano, Mary Fromknecht, Veronica Mittal and Mary DePaul Sabella.

## Marycrest May Crowning

To celebrate May, the month of Blessed Mary, the sisters in Marycrest held a May Crowning. Sister Ann Loretta Urmann was May Queen and nursing aide Jessica Perez her attendant. The May Crowning ceremony took place in the Day Room with more than 30 Sisters in attendance. Sister Lucille DeStefano played the piano while Sister Joyce Lowrey led the service.



## get to know ssj associates



### Tom Hudson

A physical therapist, Tom retired from Gannon University where he was an Assistant Professor and taught Pediatrics and Adult Neurology for twenty years. He also worked part time for 35 years, retiring in June 2018, from the Erie Homes for Children and Adults as a therapist. In his bio that he submitted when he became an associate, he says, "I am a better human being for having worked there part time for the last 35 years."

Tom and his wife Mary Lee will celebrate their 43rd wedding anniversary in June. They have five children and eleven grandchildren. Tom is very active at Sacred Heart Parish where he is chairperson of the parish outreach committee and co-director of the parish's five year strategic planning committee.

Tom became an associate in 2015 and Sister Mary Fromknecht was his mentor.

## associates' news and happenings

### Happy June Birthdays

Barbara Alward  
Rita Lyle  
Kirsten Beall  
Margaret McCrerey  
Donald Swift  
Betty Chess  
Barbara McGaughey  
Peggy Rusnak  
Gratia Wittmann  
Ruby Schaaf  
Arlen Twerdok  
Alice Fuhrman  
Mary Wright  
Barbara Schlosser  
Cecelia Shatem  
Marjorie Fischer  
Tammie Mang  
Pamela Kiehlmeier  
Norman Schlosser

Many thanks to **Mary Fuhrman, Sisters Martha Howick and Mary Ann White** as they complete their term as members of the Associate Advisory Committee. We are grateful to them for their dedication and support for the past three years. The committee advises and supports the co-directors regarding activities and procedures for associates. If you feel called to be a member of the advisory committee please contact the associate office at 836-4134 and let us know of your interest.

### Coming Soon!

**Summerpalooza** will take place Saturday, July 27, 2019 in the CLC Gathering Room. Our sponsored ministries - St. Patrick's Haven, St. James Haven, SSJ Neighborhood Network, and Erie DAWN will benefit from your generosity. More details will be in the next Interim.

Following is a list of the items requested:  
paper products, garbage bags, laundry supplies, 3-in-1 men's body soap, dish soap, carpet and air freshener, coffee, canisters of creamer and sugar, individual snacks, beach towels, flips flops, sand toys, sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, bubbles, school supplies, Zoo passes, arts and crafts, basketballs, soccer balls, electric skillet, toasters, pots and pans, blankets, linens and towels, pillows, toys, men's gloves, socks.

### Maxim moments

In the 17th century, Father Jean Pierre Medaille wrote the Maxims of Perfection or fundamental rules of conduct that a person seeking a life with God could follow and they still have a message for us today. We offer the following Maxim this month for your personal reflection.

**Maxim 69:** Never think of tomorrow unless it has some necessary link with today, but entrust it entirely to Providence.

Contemporary translation: Stay present to the moment and the future will take care of itself.

### For reflection:

- I renew my practice of finding God in the present moment.
- I notice any tendency to regret the past or fear the future.
- "Look at the birds of the air." Do I live in the present moment?

### directory changes

Associate Kay Hotchkiss' email [chotch19@outlook.com](mailto:chotch19@outlook.com)

**LITTLE ITALY FARMERS MARKET**  
 331 West 18th Street  
**FRESH • HEALTHY • LOCAL**

**EVERY MONDAY**  
**June 24 — September 30**  
**3:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

Featuring produce grown in the  
 SSJNN Local Food System by local farmers  
 as well as small local businesses

SNAP, WIC and FMNP Senior Vouchers



accepted & MATCHED to encourage eating  
**FRESH • HEALTHY • LOCAL**

Also accepting credit cards.



814-454-7814 • www.SSJNN.org



**SSJ Neighborhood Network "Garden Teens"** proudly pictured here with their first paychecks!

**Take a stand for Bike repairs!**

Thanks to ECGRA, residents in the SSJ Neighborhood Network service area now have access to a public bike repair stand. The stand is a much needed tool as bikes are used for transportation to get to work or go shopping. With Brian Kaveney's help, the stand was installed next to the SSJNN east location. We provide instructions on using it and provide repair kits if needed. Pictured here is volunteer Eric Brozell.



Save the date  
**October 18-20, 2019**

**A Catholic Leadership Conference**  
**Women of the Church**  
 Saint Mary's College  
 Notre Dame, Indiana

The second Women of the Church Conference highlights the diverse work of Catholic women in the Church and in the world.

We will examine how women's leadership is a source of strength and knowledge, and imagine new possibilities for women as leaders in the Catholic Church.

To learn more visit [saintmarys.edu/WOTC](http://saintmarys.edu/WOTC).



**2019 Race Unity Picnic**  
**Sunday, June 9**  
**Presque Isle State Park**  
**Shelter #2**  
**(by the Waterworks reservoir)**  
**2—6 p.m.**

Smith's hot dogs will be on the grill and food on the table at 3:00. Bring your favorite beverage and a dish to share.

Everyone's invited for great food & fun.  
 Mark your calendar and plan for a fun day rain or shine!

Sponsored by: Erie Area Bahá'is, Race Unity Dialogue Group, and the Amerimasala Festival Committee.

Call 736-2838 or 454-1820 for additional information  
[www.d.crr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/presqueisle.aspx](http://www.d.crr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/presqueisle.aspx)

## events, happenings and ministry news



For many years, sisters, agrégées and associates have a **Relay for Life** team. The SSJs & As team raises money

throughout the year selling Daffin's Candy Bars in the Erie and Warren, PA areas. Additional donations from anyone who wishes to help are more than gratefully accepted. This year RELAY will take place at in the Highmark Amphitheater at Liberty Park on the bayfront on Saturday, June 29 from 11a.m.—5:00 p.m. This year, rather than luminaria, there will be pinwheels blowing in the wind as decorated by our sisters in Marycrest. For a \$5 donation, you can purchase one in the name of a loved one who is living with cancer or who has

passed away from cancer. To walk during one of these hours, to donate to our team or to buy pinwheels contact: **Associate Linda Gier 866-1090 S. Mary Fromknecht 836-4213 or 440-4041**

### Garage sale for a cause

Seven years ago, agreees Arlene Chaney and Jeanne Marie Ryan met Kate Fletcher and began their sponsorship of Hekima Place near Nairobi, Kenya. Widowed at 65, Kate felt God calling her to do something 'more.' She searched out a need, rolled up her sleeves, stepped into the unknown in love (sound like SSJ charisma?) and founded Hekima Place to house and educate Kenyan girls. They currently care for 93 girls - infant through university age.

Despite the dangers of being Christian and educated in Africa, Kate and the girls are determined to change the treatment of girls/women and expand their opportunities.

Arlene and Jeanne sponsored a young woman named Ann Njambi for 6 years who they are proud to say recently graduated valedictorian from university with a degree in pharmacy.

You can help support this important cause. Please stop by Arlene and Jeanne's garage sale. Proceeds benefit Hekima Place. You never know what treasures you might find. Or, just stop to say hello!

Please pray for Kate, (founder) the staff, and all the girls.

**June 21—23  
June 28—30  
July 5 & 6  
8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.  
3309 Asbury Road**

## truth & justice matters: a blog



Be sure to read the compelling blog posts by agreees Betsy Wiest and Deb Seng who, along with Patrice Swick of the Erie Diocese, just returned from two weeks of volunteering with immigrants and refugees at Annunciation House on the Texas/Mexico border.

Read their story at [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) (click on Mission & Spirituality then click on Truth & Justice Matters: a blog.



*journey  
to the  
border*

A volunteer's experiences at the Annunciation House ministry on the Texas/Mexico border.

*Thank you to all who sent us cards, emails and prayed for us while we were serving the refugees in El Paso, Texas. We felt your support and truly appreciate your words of encouragement, prayers and kind thoughts. Because of the ministry of presence you gave to us, we were better able to serve our dear neighbors with compassion and love. Thank you for being a part of our experience.  
Deb Seng and Betsy Wiest*

## where's the justice?

### Mission Haiti—mission accomplished

Thank you to everyone who donated toward the Lenten Mission Haiti collection. A check in the amount of \$324.68 was sent to the EBAC Orphanage in Haiti. This is the orphanage where the students from Villa Maria Academy go for a mission trip each year. A check in the amount of \$324.69 was sent to Mission Haiti which is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Thank you all for helping to create a brighter future for the orphans in Haiti and the students we sponsor at Annunciation School. Civil unrest and gang warfare is still occurring in Haiti. Please keep the Haitian people in your prayers for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.



### Rep. Merski—helping to fight human trafficking

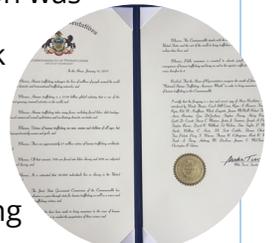
Betsy Wiest, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator, met with State Representative Robert Merski to discuss initiatives the SSJ and Crime Victim Center are doing to increase awareness of human trafficking in the Erie area. Betsy also spoke with Representative Merski on the SSJ initiative to have appropriate educational signage placed in PA rest stops. Since the meeting, Mr. Merski is working on drafting legislation to update the signage.

### Welcome new U.S. citizens!

Betsy Wiest was on hand to welcome 40 immigrants who took their oath of citizenship at the Erie County Federal Courthouse on May 3, 2019. In her remarks to the new citizens, Betsy spoke about how the Sisters of St. Joseph were founded in the United States by immigrants just like them. She talked about how the Sisters have written their story in our area in healthcare, education and social services and encouraged the new citizens to write their story in our community by sharing their backgrounds and diversity.

### Representative Bizzarro raises awareness of human trafficking

Representative Ryan Bizzarro sent a copy of a Proclamation from the PA House of Representatives which declares January to be National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. The proclamation was sent as a thank you for the work the Sisters of St. Joseph are doing to bring awareness to human trafficking in the Erie area.



### Plastic Ocean update

If you missed seeing *A Plastic Ocean* at the Tom Ridge Center in April, it is now available on Netflix. Watch it and join the Wave of Change!

### Erie—another city on the grid

Filmmaker Vanessa McNeal recently showed her award winning documentary *Gridshock*—a film about human trafficking in Iowa. In the presentation after the film, Vanessa spoke about how similar Erie is to Iowa in that both areas have been identified as pass-thru cities where traffickers bring humans to sell for a short period of time before moving to another city. For more information on human trafficking, visit [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org).



### St. Patrick's Haven—can you spare an hour?

The visiting team at St. Patrick's Haven commit to spending one evening a month for an hour at 7 p.m. talking with our guests. Can you spare an hour and join our team? We are in need of more people to help with this important ministry. Please contact Betsy Wiest at 836-4153 for more information.

## Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

5031 West Ridge Road  
Erie, PA 16506-1249  
Phone: 814-836-4100  
Fax: 814-836-4278  
E-mail: publicrelations@ssjerie.org

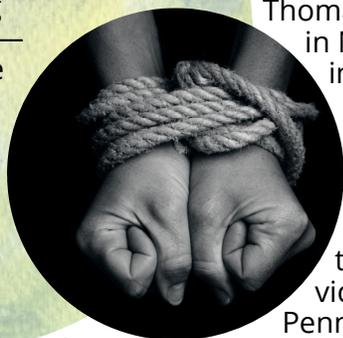


WWW.  
SSJERIE  
.ORG

## Human trafficking—Erie update

Human trafficking happens everywhere—even in Erie. Because Erie is located on the intersection of I-90 and I-79, is two hours from I-80 and the Canadian border, Erie is considered a “pass-thru” city for traffickers. Handlers bring their victims to Erie for short periods of time to be sold multiple times before moving them on to a new location.

Just recently, Erie successfully prosecuted the first two defendants charged with trafficking of two girls, ages 15 and 16. Both defendants eventually pled guilty to the charges. In September 2017, Devonte Lucas was sentenced to 13 years in jail and 10 years of supervised release on his conviction of sex trafficking a child. His co-conspirator,



Thomas Petoff, pled guilty in November 2017 and in April 2018 was sentenced to 14 years in prison for overseeing a multi-state trafficking scheme in which he transported the victims through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia and eventually selling the girls in Florida. The girls were advertised for sale on the now shutdown backpage.com web page.

The survivors were eventually rescued at the El Patio Motel in Erie during a sting operation in conjunction with the Millcreek Police. During the sting, the agreed upon price for the sex act was \$170.

One of the survivors testified that Mr. Petoff knew she was under the age of 18 at the time the crimes were committed.

In an effort to bring awareness of human trafficking to the Erie area, we are collaborating with the Lutheran Women’s Association and Gannon University’s Social Concerns group to start the SOAP (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) initiative in

Erie hotels. Small bars of soap with the

National Human Trafficking Hotline number are left in area hotel rooms in hopes that trafficking victims will find them and call for help. To date, we

have placed soaps in 20 area hotels.

