Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania



report

ssjerie.org

philanthropia

No doubt, from your personal observation, you Dear Sister: have noticed the necessity of a new organ for Villa

The present organ has been in service since the Maria Chapel. erection of the Villa, and by constant usage has now

really become unfit for Divine Service. Owing to the immense debt already on our

Institution, which I am endeavoring to lessen, I feel obliged to ask each Sister to help defray the expense of the new organ by giving or collecting ten dollars (\$10), to be sent to me on or before St. Joseph's Day,

This sum is not much for each, but by contributing 1909. the same you will be instrumental in promoting the honor and praises of God, and lessening the anxiety such a debt

occasions me. Yours sincerely in Christ, mother M. Ergenia

I. M. I.

faria Academy, Erie, Pa., October 7, 1909.

-operation with me in my ence to the purchase of the solicit your aid in raising am laundry at Villa Maria.

pended for laundry-work present slow method by ndry very evident.

at our Gommunity will s existence on May 24, e heart of each Sister, vit of any public dem-

ti-ipates in the sorel that this event will leed.

e, ask you to con-, in gold, to be for-

e fervent prayer you with health ace of soul.

n. Engene



Connecting with God 🛧 Connecting with You

our mission

The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, SSJ agrégées, and associates, is to unite all people with one another and with God by responding to the ever-changing needs of the world and serving the neighbor without distinction.

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message from leadership

I always said I'd work on almost anything for the congregation, but please don't ask me to assist with fundraising and development. Yet, I find myself right in the middle of it as the leadership member responsible for public relations and development. My dreaded fear became a reality, but it was not as difficult as I assumed. Meeting with people who love the Sisters is a privilege, not a chore. Hearing their stories is a delight because it is an opportunity to see how our charism is lived out in varied ways.



SSJ Leadership: (L to R) Sisters Carol Morehouse, Mary Drexler, and Phyllis McCracken

We have been blessed with many women over the years who have quietly—or not so quietly—carried out our mission of unity. We honor them and give thanks for their witness to the love of God and the love of neighbor without distinction.

As we move into an unknown future, we do so with hope and trust that the God who has brought us to this moment in history will move us into a future filled with hope. We reach out to you, our friends, neighbors, partners in mission, and ask you to walk with us as we move forward, knowing that our work is not yet finished. Our God should be praised and thanked every day and our neighbor, whether near or far, needs to be served with love and grace.

We thank you for partnering with us on this journey of radical love. Blessings,

Mary Drepler, SSJ

Mary Drexler, SSJ SSJ Leadership



called for times like these

In 2021, I gave a presentation on St. Joseph at a parish day of renewal. The premise of that talk was that Joseph developed a faith and trust in a God who could do the POSSIBLE even in the midst of situations and circumstances that seem impossible.

Hold on to that. Cling to it like an anchor when the boat of life is rocking—storms pass. Earthquakes come and have aftershocks, but the ground settles. Fires become smoldering ash, and from the ash, a sapling will rise.

Like Joseph, they listened intently and responded faithfully to God's call to serve the needs of the era and area.

Here is a truth that will level the spiritual playing field: Joseph was made of flesh and blood, just like you and me. He was called by God in a very particular time and place. He was called to listen to the prompting of God in his life and respond with steadfast obedience. As I reflect on this level of attentiveness and devotion, I can't help but think of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who stayed the course in good times and bad. Like Joseph, they listened intently and responded faithfully to God's call to serve the needs of the era and area. And they're still at it—feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, revitalizing neighborhoods, and reaching out to the most vulnerable.

That excites me in my role as chair of the Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation. Where some see impossible challenges, the Sisters see what's POSSIBLE. They inspire us with their tireless passion and invite us all to share in the call. After all, we are all here in this time and place for a reason.

On behalf of the foundation, I thank every one of you who has joined us in serving the neighbor this past year, and I encourage you to continue alongside us. Whether you say a prayer, volunteer, or make a gift, you are answering the call.

And here is my final request. No matter what is going on right now in your life, or in the life of someone you love or know, remember it is temporary. Hold on to the anchor, Christ Jesus. And know that "all things are POSSIBLE with God."

Jim Bird Chair, Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation





philanthropy and the SSJ mission

by Stephanie Hall, Director of Communications and Public Relations

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph is rooted in initiating change as a response to need. Marius Nepper, S.J. described the Sisters of St. Joseph as *"Standing on tiptoe, eyes alert, ears attentive, sleeves rolled up"* because of their willingness to take on tasks others didn't. However, it wasn't always easy and they often depended on the philanthropy of others.

In its earliest form, philanthropy, from the Greek philanthropia, meant love of mankind. The meaning has evolved, but human civilization has long depended upon kindness directed towards strangers (National Philanthropic Trust). Philanthropy has always played a significant role in the Sisters' mission and service in the Erie Diocese.

Marius Nepper, S.J. described the Sisters of St. Joseph as *"Standing on tiptoe, eyes alert, ears attentive, sleeves rolled up"* because of their willingness to take on tasks others didn't.

Following the Civil War, Mother Agnes Spencer wanted to use her family inheritance to purchase land and build an orphanage and convent in Meadville, PA. However, because of discrimination against Catholic immigrants, the bank refused to deal with a woman wearing a religious habit. Undaunted, she put on lay clothes and returned to complete the transaction. Soon after the orphanage and convent were established, there was a train wreck, and the sisters opened their doors to the injured. Seeing the need for a hospital, Mother Agnes received permission from Bishop Joshua Young to canvas the city seeking funds to build St. Joseph Hospital. Philanthropy was essential to the establishment and operation of Villa Maria Academy. Father Thomas Casey, Vicar General of the Erie Diocese, gave the Sisters a parcel of land and provided funds to construct a school to provide young women with a Christian education. Later, Mother Eugenia Quirk encouraged the Sisters to ask 20 relatives or friends to give five cents a week for one year, or \$2.60, and to ask an additional ten people to do the same. The money would help fund an addition to Villa Maria Academy. In addition, the donor was assured of prayers and monthly masses as long as the school stood. More than \$100,000 was collected.

The chapel at Villa Maria Academy was named in memory of Bishop John Mark Gannon's mother in gratitude for his many gifts to the sisters.

Another gift to the congregation was the former Reed estate. Mary Bateman, sister of Mother Helena Dillon, donated the property to the Sisters, and in 1938, it was blessed by Bishop Gannon and christened Maryvale. Throughout the years, It was used as an extension of the elementary school, Villa Maria Academy, and the Villa Maria Conservatory of Music. It was also home to Maryvale Pre-school. In the mid-1990s, it became a vocation/formation house and hosted novices from throughout the U.S.

Saint Mary's Home of Erie has endured because of philanthropic support. The original skilled nursing building was possible because of donations from the Erie Diocese and the community. In addition, significant gifts funded a dedicated Alzheimer's unit at Saint Mary's East (now Nightingale Nursery and Rehab Center). Numerous rooms and wings, including the chapel, library, and exercise room at Saint Mary's at Asbury Ridge, are named for individuals and families who have generously given to the ministry. A donor's bequest established a benevolent care fund.

In 1993, a gift from Edna Londregan allowed the Sisters to establish Bethany House ministry. Londregan donated a home in Erie with the provision it be used for ministry. At the time, there was great need

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for womens' transitional housing. The ministry was designed to help women regain self-esteem and re-enter society following treatment.

The Sisters held fairs to raise funds for the orphans at St. Joseph Orphanage. Sisters also asked family and friends for money to purchase needed items for the children. The fairs continued for many years.

Though not specifically for ministry, generous gifts also provided vacation and retreat locations for the Sisters. In 1916, Reverend Joseph M. Cauley presented the Sisters with ten acres of lakefront property near North East, PA. An additional gift helped fund the construction of a modest cottage on the property. It was named Villa Joseph in honor of the donor. In 1946, the congregation was given a nine-acre country estate in McKean, PA, from Dr. G. W. Schlindwein. The estate was named Villa Rosa in honor of his wife, Rose. In 1967, a bequest from the Estate of Thomas J. Dillon deeded a parcel and cottage across from Villa Rosa to the Sisters; it became known as Villa Regis. These gifts provided wonderful places for spiritual retreats and relaxation.

Philanthropy makes it possible for the Sisters of St. Joseph to continue responding to needs just as they did during their earliest days in the Erie Diocese. Ministries including the SSJ Neighborhood Network, St. James and St. Patrick's Havens, and Saint Mary's Home of Erie serve the dear neighbor because of donations and philanthropic support. In addition, initiatives such as the SSJ Annual Thanksgiving Appeal, Erie Gives, the SSJ Mission and Ministries Foundation Appeal, and the Mission Haiti project generate thousands of dollars in gifts each year. SSJ partners in mission—the benefactors who support these ministries and offer their time, prayers, and financial resources ensure that the SSJ mission endures.



ABOVE (top to bottom) 1) The original Villa Maria
Academy, built on land donated by Fr. Thomas Casey.
2) Maryvale, a gift from Mary Bateman. 3) (l-r) Dr. Joann
Painter with Srs. Dorothy Wilwohl, SSJ, and Mary Claire
Kennedy, SSJ. 4) The Sisters of St. Joseph and its sponsored
ministries benefit from the generosity of many each year
through Erie Gives Day. 5) A resident is welcomed in the
early days of Saint Mary's Home of Erie, a ministry that
has been supported through philanthropic efforts.



Patron Saint of Philanthropy St. Katharine Drexel (1858-1955)

Mother Katharine Drexel of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament came from an affluent family that gave generously to her congregation. She was the sole heiress to the Drexel family fortune.

The newly established federal income tax was a graduated one and led to exceedingly large tax bills for her order. Concerned about the effect on the congregation's charitable work, in 1924, she and her family successfully lobbied Congress to establish what was known as the Philadelphia Nun Provision. The provision allowed anyone giving 90% of their income to charity for the previous ten years to be exempt from paying income tax. Ironically, she was the only U.S. citizen who qualified for the provision. According to "Sharing the Bread in Service: Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament 1891-1991 — Volume 1," the "Philadelphia nun provision" was essential to the operation of the order in the years after the provision became part of the law. Although the Philadelphia Nun Provision no longer exists, it is credited as the precursor to the present-day charitable deduction.

news

laudato si' action plan updates

On the fifth anniversary of his encyclical, Laudato Si' (On Care for our Common Home), **Pope Francis** launched the **Laudato Si' Action**

Platform. He challenged everyone to create a seven-year plan to work toward seven integral ecology goals. We are in the process of creating our plan and have participated in various educational webinars and a thorough self-assessment. As a result, we realize that energy efficiency is always a priority whenever we make changes or improvements. Our participation in the Erie 2030 project and our commitment to cut our carbon footprint in half by 2030, have given us a good start in achieving the goals of the Laudato Si' Action Plan. In the next several months, we will develop a plan to address

LAUDATO SI' Action Platform

each goal. Working toward these goals will not be a changein direction for the community, rather a deepening of purpose.

ssj unity award

Each year, the **Sisters of St. Joseph** present the Unity Award to an outstanding **Villa Maria Academy** senior. The **Unity Award** is given to the student who best exemplifies living the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Nominations are submitted by VMA faculty and staff. **Sr. Mary Drexler** presented this year's Unity Award to **Margaret Mary McGovern** '22.

with heartfelt thanks

Another successful Erie Gives Day 2022

Special thanks to everyone who supported the Sisters of St. Joseph and our sponsored ministries. Collectively, the Congregation and ministries received 681 donations for a total of \$88,332 - and that's before the prorated match from The Erie Community Foundation and its generous partners. On Erie Gives Day and throughout the year, your acts of love change lives. You feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. You build community in inner-city neighborhoods. You welcome the immigrant. You stand with, support, and most important – love our dear neighbors. Thanks for all you do on Erie Gives Day and every day. If you missed out on Erie Gives Day but would still like to donate, visit www.ssjerie/.org.

Sister Mary Drexler (I) presenting Margaret Mary McGovern with this year's Unity Award

we remember deaths

Sisters

Sister Mary Rose Romeo Formerly Sister Mara Joseph January 19, 2022

Sister Mary Kevin Palazzetti December 11, 2021

Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ Formerly Sister Josita September 5, 2021

Ann Donohue, SSJ Formerly Sister Mary Timothy August 29, 2021

For Sisters obituaries or to make a memorial gift, visit **www.ssjerie.org** Associates Mary Margaret Jones *August 5, 2022*

Dolores Miller *June 15, 2022*

George D. Dufala, Sr. January 19, 2022

Linda Gier November 22, 2021

Barbara Schlosser November 10, 2021 Celebrations!

Sisters jubilarians

75 YEARS Rose Marie Chisholm, SSJ James Francis Mulligan, SSJ

70 YEARS Ann Patrice Murnock, SSJ Mary Arnold Tann, SSJ Ricarda Vincent, SSJ

More information about our Jubilarians is available at **ssjerie.org** Celebrate *SSJ Associates* Milestone Anniversaries

40 years Elaine Clyburn Patricia Marshall

35 years Kirsten Beall Diana Mikula Margaret Reinwald

30 years Margaret Alloway Patricia George Ginny Hughes Donna Nicholas Uta Smith Patti Sullivan

20 years

Rebecca Flynn Stephanie Hall Suzanne O'Connell Mary Lou Rathers

15 years

Marga<mark>ret McCrarey</mark> Marlene Scully Ann S<mark>emler</mark>

10 years

Jodi Andres Frank Mozdy Elaine Mozdy Brandon Vogt

5 years

Stephen Branton Tina Branton Joan Fels Marvin Ridgeway Clarice Sidun

Celebrate *SSJ Employees* Milestone Anniversaries

20 years Cynthia Olesky

15 years Cynthia Polesnak

5 years

Janice Barron Marcia Calabrese Sister Mary Fromknecht Susan Hoag Sheila Mack Jessica Perez

drawing strength from the community



by Sarah Packard, Trips for Kids National Chief Storyteller and Communication Volunteer. Reprinted with permission.

Bikes were an important part of Margarita Dangel's life at a young age. Growing up in Kirchheim/Teck, Germany, she experienced bikes being used for transportation. She remembers her female high school math teacher biking to work each day or even the elderly going shopping with their bikes. Bikes in Germany have been an integrated means of transportation. Margarita credits these experiences with instilling in her a lifelong respect for the bicycle and a deep appreciation for bike repair and maintenance.

Perhaps that's why Margarita is the perfect person to manage the bike program with the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network in Erie. The organization's Pedal Mettle program, which enables youth to earn a bike after attending a workshop to learn about bike repair, safety, and maintenance, utilizes Trips for Kids resources and programming. The bike recyclery operates by word of mouth, served 402 children, and has given away 547 bikes for free in its seven years of operation.

"We have the perfect location," Margarita shares. "We open our garage doors and have a big sign that says 'Bike Program' so everyone walking by can see what's going on. It's one of the few programs that's been able to thrive throughout the pandemic."

And it is not just kids participating -- adults have also benefited from the program.

"For many immigrants in the area, our earn-a-bike program is the first step toward having transportation," explains Margarita.

Veterans and the homeless can also participate, with Margarita typically asking for three hours of volunteer work in exchange for a bike. The program has expanded to include a recyclery, with more than 200 used bikes currently in the shop; during the pandemic, the volunteer group dwindled to four but is going strong again with 11 volunteers.

Throughout it all, bike repair remains a

constant focus -- for both youth and adult participants of the program.

But Margarita's responsibilities do not end with the bike program. As the Neighborhood Network site director, Margarita's days are busy and full of diverse experiences organizing community gardens, building relationships with neighbors through neighborhood programs or community events, and listening and caring for those in need. All the while, Margarita works to conduct outreach and networks to link people between services. ())

The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Since 2018, the neighborhood network has also been a recipient of more than **\$162,700** in **SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation** grant funding. Thanks to our donors, lives are being changed in inner-city Erie neighborhoods.

> "If there's a flat tire, kids will throw the bike away - unless they have the knowledge to fix it," Margarita Dangel

around the table

"Much more happens at a meal than satisfying hunger and quenching thirst. Around the table, we become family, friends, community..."

Fr. Henri Nouwen may have penned these words, but an amazing group of Meadville area neighbors delivers on them. These generous neighbors – individuals, organizations, groups, clubs, and schools – have made it their mission to feed the men at St. James Haven every night.

According to Samantha Stump, executive director of St. James Haven, this wasn't always the case.

"When I started in 2018, Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community and Meadville Medical Center were our main sources of food donations for meals. Then COVID hit, and those arrangements were understandably suspended. So after cooking meals onsite for months, I reached out through Facebook requesting meals, and the response was overwhelming." "We are blessed to be able to serve a hot, nutritious meal nightly. We also send a lunch with the working men and have snacks available in the morning before they leave and in the evening before bed," she continued.

More often than not, donors drop the meal off before 6 p.m., but some community members stay and share a meal with the guests.

"Each of our guests comes to our doors broken and in desperate need of love and acceptance," Samantha explained. "Receiving this from our staff, volunteers, and donors means as much as the meal, if not more."

Unlike many homeless shelters, St. James Haven offers a "guarantee."

"Most shelters operate on a first-come, first-served basis nightly – with no bed guarantee. Once our guests check in the first night, a bed is held for them every night as long as they show up. This is a huge weight off their shoulders, which allows them to focus on rebuilding their lives without wondering when they'll eat or where they will sleep," Samantha added.

"We are the landing pad where they can be assured there is a place to lay their head at night and know they will have a hot, nutritious meal when they get here. We set them up for success by encouraging them to save money while with us to prepare for independent living. Our model is to house them and connect them with other social service agencies that will help them find jobs, housing, and support for other issues,



Volunteers arriving at St. James Haven, in Meadville.

including addiction if they are interested."

"I have seen some amazing transformations in the lives of our guests. And it all starts with the basics – food, shelter, and acceptance, made possible by loving neighbors," she adds. "It's proof that love goes a long way."

St. James Haven is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Since 2018, St. James Haven has received more than **\$110,000** in **SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation** grant funding. Thanks to our donors, lives are being changed in the Meadville area.





Dr. Chris Clark, president and chief executive officer of AHN/Saint Vincent Hospital, was elected to the board in April 2022. Before taking the helm at Saint Vincent, Dr.

Clark served as a family physician, senior vice president of medical affairs, chief quality officer, and director of medical education at Saint Vincent, and medical director for Highmark Inc.

Chris holds a medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and a master's in health administration from Penn State University. Chris also serves on the board of directors for Penn State Behrend, Erie Catholic Preparatory School, the United Way, VNA of Erie County, the Erie Downtown Development Corporation, and the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership.



Also elected in April was the **Hon. Ernest DiSantis**,

retired president judge of the Erie County Court of Common Pleas. Judge DiSantis earned his undergraduate degree

from Gannon University and his J.D. from the University of Akron Law School. Before being

welcome board members

elected to the bench, he served as deputy attorney general, first assistant district attorney, and assistant U.S. attorney.

Ernie – as he's asked us to call him – has a long history of volunteerism in the Erie community. He served as president of St. George's School Board and on the Parish Council. In addition, he held board or committee positions with Erie County Rape Crisis, the House of Healing, Stairways Behavioral Services, Emerge 2040, and the JEM Foundation.



Meghan Fuhrman,

Meghan, a science teacher with Millcreek Township School District/ McDowell Intermediate High School, is rounding out the

slate of new foundation trustees.

After earning a biology degree from Penn State Behrend, Meghan committed her life to education. For years, Meghan taught alongside the Sisters of St. Joseph at Villa Maria Academy. At VMA, she served as a science teacher, department chair, director of the student assistance program, and dean of students. In addition, she has experience as a gifted support teacher and caseworker.

SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation Board

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SSJ Mission & Ministries Staff

Dotty Hanna Cathy Fresch Executive Director

ch Campaign Manager/Major Gift Officer

Carol Hermann Carleen Onuschak Development Associate Staff Accountant

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one job

Believe it or not, we have one job – many responsibilities, seemingly endless pressures and too little time – but one job. "Love one another as I have loved you."

It sounds simple enough, but to love like Jesus is radical. It's transformative. It's a come-as-you-are, no boundaries kind of love. It's given freely to friends, family, neighbors, strangers, and especially "others" – those who live or believe differently, or who live on the margins of society. It's action, not emotion. And it has the power to change everything.

Radical love has always been at the heart of the Sisters of St. Joseph ministries. Love inspired us to build orphanages, hospitals and homes for the elderly. It moved us to teach, to counsel, to feed and to shelter. And today, it inspires us to respond to the ever-changing needs of our neighbors – especially the lonely, the hungry, the homeless and those worn down by poverty and limited opportunities.

many responsibilities

This work has never been ours alone. Since the very beginning, friends like you have loved – and served – right alongside us in every ministry. And our work is far from done. That's why we encourage you to keep up the good work. Welcome the stranger. Include the excluded. Offer a smile or extend a hand up. Volunteer or say a prayer. Whatever you choose, know that your act of radical love will change lives.

We also ask you to consider a gift to the Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation. The challenges of the past few years have heightened the needs of our dear neighbors. And our resources — especially those required to care for our aging sisters — will be exhausted long before our work is done.

To make a gift, visit us online at www.ssjerie.org or use the enclosed envelope. Your gift, of any size, is an act of love that will help more than you know.

With Gratitude –

Someone once said, "Blessings come in many ways, but the best come as friends." We couldn't agree more.

Again in 2021, we were humbled by the many good friends who furthered our ministry through prayer,

presence, and financial gifts. Due to this outpouring of support, we are acknowledging all donors by name only. Listing donors by area of giving would take many more pages and many more dollars in printing and mailing costs. And we're sure you'd rather we spend all we can serving the neighbor.

Whether you made one gift or several, whether you supported our work or the care of our sisters, please know that we are truly thankful. You bless us beyond measure.

2021 Benefactors

Monica Abbate

in memory and in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph and members of the Abbate family

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in memory of Benny Dabrowski



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Lois Benoit in memory of Edward Rohrbach

Edith Benson

in momony of (

in memory of Sr. Mary Kay McNelis, SSJ, and in honor of Olive Benson Wilson

Edward J. Bensur

in memory of my mother, Mary F. Benson, and my wife, Mary E. Benson

Edmonda Berarducci

Valerie and James Berchtold

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in memory of Mary and Frank Bernato

Karlynn and Eugene* Bernhard

in memory of Mr. and Mrs. E. Petrusch and Mr. and Mrs. E. Bernhard

Karlynn Bernhard

in memory of Eugene Bernhard Karen and John Berry

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(I-r) Sr. Joseph John McDonald, Mary Jo Cherry, Nelle Cherry, and Sr. Mary Irene Lunger.

Mary Jo Cherry

...extended family

Donor Profile

It all started with a simple lunch.

Mary Jo Cherry's search for a college brought her to Erie. She was taught by the Sisters of Mercy in DuBois, Pa., so, of course, she planned to visit Mercyhurst College. But, in addition, she decided to look at Villa Maria College.

"Mom, dad, and I went to Villa first," she recalled. "We were at lunch with Sr. Lucille, Sr. Lucy, and Sr. Teresina, when Sr. Lucy, who was from St. Marys, said, 'Shall I tell them who I am?""

"Then she turned to my father and said, 'I'm Lucy Woods, Paul Woods' sister.' And my father, a long-time friend of Paul's, shouted, 'Well, Lordy sake!"

"It was like home ... and we all agreed it would be Villa."

Like most college students, Mary Jo knew that this would be the start of building her life's work. What she didn't realize was that the Sisters of St. Joseph would help her build a family – and, in the process, become cherished members of her extended family.

Mary Jo's lifelong commitment to education took her away from Erie. Still, she always returned between earning degrees – a bachelor's from Villa Maria College, a master's from the University of Maryland, and a doctorate from Kent State University. First, she taught at Villa Maria College; then, she was director of Maryvale. Finally, she served as dean of the College of Education, a joint program between Villa Maria and Gannon.

These roles, of course, made Mary Jo a member of the SSJ family, but that's not the best part of the story.

In 1983, Mary Jo decided that she wanted to adopt a child. After much prayer, she contacted Catholic Charities and was placed on the waiting list. Four years and a month later, she got the call. "I received the call on Monday, and on Tuesday, I went to Erie to meet Nelle," she said. "I walked up to the third floor of the old motherhouse, and there she was, with Sr. Joseph John."

Nelle was nine months old and had been in the loving care of her foster mothers, Srs. Joseph John McDonald and Irene Lunger, for two months.

Sr. Joseph John McDonald holding Nelle Cherry after her christening. Nelle is one of more than 120 infants cared for by Sr. Joseph John during her 20 years as a foster mother.

Two weeks later – when it was time to bring Nelle home – one of the sisters cautioned Mary Jo. "Be ready," she said. "We don't talk to Joseph John on the days when she places a baby. They are her heart."

That day would not end Nelle's relationship with the sisters. Mary Jo and Nelle visited often.

Mary Jo reminisced. "I would carry her up the stairs at the motherhouse and ask, 'What do you have to do, Nelle?' And she would say 'kisses!' And as soon as they heard her voice, all the sisters' doors would open."

"She'd yell, 'Joe John, I'm here!' then barely get her hugs and kisses in because Sr. Irene would be waiting with a chair on wheels to roll Nelle up and down the hallway."

For Mary Jo and Nelle, family is forever.

"We don't get back often anymore, but the sisters who taught me, taught with me, and were a part of Nelle's life will always be family," she said.

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in memory of Ida and Aloise Stumpf, and Genevieve and Elmer Haibach

Mary E. Haines in memory of William E. Haines Katie and Harold Hakes

in memory of Sr. Mary Kay McNelis, SSJ Judith and Donald Halcom in honor of Sr. Nancy Sonnenfeld, SSJ

Madeline and Daniel Hall

in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ Mary Hall

Richard Hall

L.D. Waterson

in memory of Sharron Lee Hall and Marjorie Carroll Carolyn Hammer Edward L. Hammer Leroy Hammond Mili and Thomas Hanes Elizabeth and James Hanigan Mary and John Hanke in memory of Michael Bross Dotty and Bill Hanna in memory of Sallie and John Law Mary and Donald Hannah Kathie and Alan Hannibal Mary Ann Hannon in memory of Owen V. Hannon and

Sandra and Daniel Hanstine

in memory of Dolly Smith, Bob Smith, Catherine and Charles, and in honor of Aaron, Kim, Lee, Jasmin, Cassie, Ben, and all the Sisters of St. Joseph

Maureen Haraczy

in memory of Kathy Haraczy

Jeffrey Hardner in memory of Trish Hardner

Norbert H. Hardner Foundation

vorberen. Haraner i bandacion

Patricia Hardner

Michelle and Patrick Harkins

Beverly Harrity in memory of William Reiser, Theresa Baniszewski and Chuck Harrity

Francis J. Hart

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Sheila and Scott Hayes in memory of Rosemarie and Samuel Hayes

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Candy Henry

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in memory of Jeanne M. Costa and all deceased Costa family members

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in memory of Audrey Weindorf Straub and Charles Straub, and in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the military, our country and honest politicians

Phyllis and Robert Herbstritt

in memory of Edith R. Alberico, Mark D. Alberico and R.G. Herbstritt

Kathleen Herman

in memory of deceased members of the Zimmer family and in honor of Sr. Millicent Zimmer, SSJ

Carol and James Hermann

Frank Herrmann

Sr. Mary Herrmann, SSJ

Mary Lynn and Joseph Herrmann

Pam and Charles Herron

Kathryn Hershock

in memory of Vittoria and Victor Aiello, and Dorothy and Joseph Medvid

Joan Hersperger

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in memory of Francis J. Herzing Jr.

Joanne and Stephen Herzing

in honor of Sr. Susan Herzing, SSJ

Julie and Scott Herzing

Sr. Susan Herzing, SSJ

Rita K. Hessley

in memory of Agnes Hessley Higham Denise A. Hetherington

Kathy and Christopher Higgins

in memory of Srs. Ann Donohue, SSJ, and Joyce Lowrey, SSJ, and in honor of Srs. Mary Fromknecht, SSJ, Nancy Fischer, SSJ, Marianne Stuckert, SSJ, and all the sisters who ministered at Notre Dame School

Becky and William M. Hilbert Jr.

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in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ The Joseph M. Hilbert Fund of the Erie Community Foundation Martha Hilbert

Carol A. Hilbrich

in memory of Daniel Hilbrich, and in honor of Megan Overfield and Sr. Veronica Mittal, SSJ

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Jeffrey Hill

William J. Hill

in memory of Dorothy Hill

Mary Hintenach

in honor of Julie Rice

Kimberly and William Hitchcock

in honor of Sr. Phyllis Hilbert, SSJ

Kathleen Hixenbaugh

in memory of Gary Hixenbaugh, Mary and Raymond Tronski, Donald B. Tronski, Joe Tronski, Fr. Scheifer, and in honor of the Tronski family

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in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ, and William Reiser

Kathleen and James Hoffman

in memory of Ruth and Arnold Meyer, and Marie and Joseph Hoffman

Mary Hoffman

Sharon and Stephen Hoke in memory of Marion Hoke and in

honor of Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ Glenn Holland

in memory of Judith Holland

Sylvia C. Holland

in memory of deceased teachers Ruth and Stephen Holmes

in memory of Sr. Kathleen Kirsch, SSJ

Jo Ann and William Holtz

in memory of Kathleen Holtz

Catherine Holzwarth

Joanne Homicz

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Sharon E. Howard

in memory of Srs. Lucy Woods, SSJ, and Mary Julia Scully, SSJ, and in honor of Srs. Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ, and André Feulner, SSJ

Sr. Martha Howick, SSJ

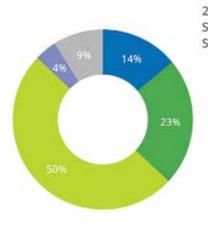
Lisa Howland

in memory of Luduvina and Ed Rossi and in honor of Joan Rossi

Madeline and John Hromyak

Esther E. Hubert in memory of Kathleen Hubert

Financial Report



2021 Gifts to the SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation Supported

- Homelessness
- Hunger/Food Insecurity
- Care of the Sisters
- COVID

Inner-City Neighborhood Programs

Jessica Hubert

in honor of Fr. Jerry Simmons The Hudson Group Mary and Ronald Huff in honor of Sr. André Feulner, SSJ

Mary V. Hughes

Maureen and Jerome Hughes

Louise and Eugene Humenay

Mary Frances Humenay

in memory of Betty Humenay and in honor of Gene, Bernie and Roni

Wendy and George Humes in memory of Mary Ann and Delwin Cox, and in honor of Leah Humes and her prison ministry

Maureen M. Humphreys

in memory of John E. Humphreys Sr. Darlene Hurst

Elizabeth Hutchinson

Maureen and Leonard Huya in memory of William Reiser

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in memory of Rosanne Hyatt Rosanne* and Floyd Hyatt in memory of Sr. Marie Claire Kearney, SSJ Charles Jannello

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in memory of Roszan Trohoske and Frances Sokolowski, and in honor of Joseph Santone

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in memory of Connie Monahan and deceased members of the Kennedy family

James Johnston in memory of Sr. Mary Joan Beauseigneur, SSJ **M. Judith Johnston** in memory of Sr. Mary Joan Beauseigneur, SSJ Sr. Ann Marie Joint, SSJ **Kathleen Joint and James Zeitler** in memory of Theresa Baniszewski **Eileen G. Jolls Barbara Jones** in memory of Robert E. Jones **Krista and Brian Jones** in memory of Danielle and Sophia Jones **Marlene Jones** Mary Margaret Jones* in memory of Helene and Clarence Jones **Rose Jones** Mary Jordano in memory of Jackie and Dominick Jordano **Carol Joyce** Nau and Larry Justus in memory of Sr. Marilyn Terwilliger,

in memory of Sr. Marilyn Terwillige SSJ, and Patty Terwilliger

Colleen Kacprowicz Rita and Gary Kahle Linda and Frank Kaleta Walter Kalista in memory of Casimira Kalista Suan Kaliszewski and Ron Norman in memory of Sr. Ann and Sr. Christine Patricia and Daniel Kalivoda Mary Kay and Dave Kalivoda in memory of Sr. Mary Kay McNelis, SSI **Thomas E. Kalkhof** Marjorie A. Kaminsky Mona and Jay Kang **Mary Karien Sahakian** in memory of Zora Karien **Dolores M. Kase** in honor of Sr. Josette Marie Gocella, SSJ Kathryn Kase/The Jeffrey Cohen **Charitable Gift Fund** Joan Kautsky in memory of my brother, Robert Kautsky, and Cynthia (Michael) Ayers, VMC '71 Lisa and Thomas Kaveney **Annie Kaverman Rev. Charles Kaza Dorothy Keane** in memory of Michael J. Keane and Sr. Elise Ann Haener, SSI **Dorothy and Howard Keil** in memory of Dorothy Fratus Campbell Virginia and Anthony Keim in memory of Robert, Catherine and Francis Keim Julie M. Kelley in honor of Sr. Lucille DeStefano, SSJ Sandra and John Kempisty **Susanne Kempisty Phyllis Kempter** in memory of Mary Ann Lynch Nickerson, and in honor of all VMC girls Alice Kendziora in memory of Kenneth Kendziora and Sonny Cronauer **Ellen and Jon Kennedy** Sr. Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ Mary and John Kennedy **Rebecca and Thomas Kennedy Family Fund**

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in honor of those who lost loved ones during the pandemic, especially those who were unable to visit loved ones **Mary Margaret and James Malue Carol and George Mamrak Anne and Howard Manasse Thelma Manendo** in memory of Louis Manendo **Cindy and David Mangiaracina** in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSI, and Jeanne Costa, and in honor of Sr. Jean Baptiste DiLuzio, SSJ **Patricia and Thomas Mangold Deacon John L. Manley** in memory of Carol Manley Sr. Catherine Manning, SSI **Rev. Robert A. Manning** in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Manning and in honor of Sr. Catherine Manning, SSJ Kathleen J. Mannino in honor of my sons, Tony, Matthew and Tim, and in memory and honor of all the Sisters of St. Joseph -- especially those from St. Anne's, Villa Maria Academy and Saint Vincent **Connie and Luther Manus Christopher Maras Gerri Marino** in memory of Theresa Baniszewski **Patricia and Robert Markham Richard J. Markiewicz Harry Markopolos Patricia and James Marnella Carol and Dave Marsden Dorothy Marsh*** in memory of Sr. Andrea Bennett, SSJ **Patricia and Richard Marshall Robert Marshall** in memory of Suzanne Zollinger Marshall **Rev. Dennis A. Martin** in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ **Mary and James Martin** in memory of Sr. M. Eunice Carlos, SSJ **Joseph Martone** in honor of C.F. Brown **Patricia Martone**

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in memory of Florence Mastrian **Marion Mateicka**

in memory of Dolores and John Thomas and in honor of the VMC Class of '74

Loretta and Richard Matha

in memory of Marie and Louie Morelli **Mary Jo Matheis**

Matthew J. Hauser & Associates Inc.

in honor of the sisters who taught at Sacred Heart, Prep, VMC and Gannon, and those who served at Saint Vincent Hospital

James B. Mattis

in memory of Sr. Marie Paul Ashworth, SSJ

Barbara and Joseph Mattis

Sandi and John Matts

in memory of Sr. Joan Thomas, SSJ, and Marian Thomas

Donna Maycock in memory of Dick Maycock **Jeffrey Mayer Patricia Mayer** in memory of Annemarie Buki and Stella Brozowski **Rev. Richard Mayer Kathleen Mays** in memory of Elizabeth and Henry Hart Vanessa Mazza in memory of Mary Klemen Kathleen A. McCabe Joan McCain in memory of deceased family members **Kathleen McCarthy McCarty Printing Co. Karin and Richard McCormick** Sr. Phyllis McCracken, SSJ **Tina and Ward McCracken** in memory of Srs. Joyce Lowrey, SSJ, and Joan Thomas, SSJ Margaret J. McCrarey in memory of Robert McCrarey Sue and Geoffrey McCreary Margaret McCurdy in memory of Donald McCurdy

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in honor of living and deceased members of the Minichelli and **Rufini families**

Linda and Thomas Mish

in memory of Srs. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ, and Peggy Ballizet, SSJ, and all sisters who made our grade school education a treasured memory

Evelyn D. Miskiel in memory of Jeanen Hall **Barbara Mitchell** in memory of Sr. Marie Paul Ashworth, SSJ **Josephine and Earl Mittelmeier**

in memory of Catherine Pirrello and Kelly Mittelmeier

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Mary E. Moroco

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in memory of all deceased Sisters at Villa Maria and in honor of Mildred Heubel

Mary A. Mosher

in memory of Francis V. Kloecker and deceased members of the VMA Class of '55, and in honor of Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ

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in memory of Margaret and **Richard Bohrer**

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Joan Murray

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in memory of Sr. Marie Eileen Moyer, SSJ, and in honor of Sr. Martha Ann Rinderle, SSI

Anne and Thomas Murtagh

in memory of Jonathan Pears

Nancy and James Musarra

in memory of Marian Scolio Musarra

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in memory of my mother Mary Alice and Dennis Nagosky **Marie Namey**

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Frank Ohmer in memory of Kristin Anderson and

Steve Ohmer

JoAnn Ohmer in honor of Sr. Marilyn Zimmerman, SSJ Marlene Ohmer in honor of Sr. Marilyn Zimmerman, SSJ Mary L. Ohmer

in memory of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ Nettie and Thomas Ohmer in memory of Ann and Bob Ohmer, and Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ

Penny and Joseph Ohmer in honor of Sr. Marilyn Zimmerman, SSJ

Sheila and Tim Ohmer Marlene Okel

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in memory of Ella Marie Olcese Bledsoe Ruth and Arthur Oligeri

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Barbara A. Onofrey in memory of Joseph Onofrey, Johanna and John Halas, and

Jackie Halas Marge and Deacon Ronald Onslow

in honor of Sr. Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ Sr. Maria Onuffer, SSJ Robert Onuffer and Miriam R. Thomas Carleen Onuschak

Christine and George Opron Margaret Orchard in memory of Mary Lou Orchard

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Rev. Walter E. Packard in honor of Sr. Jean Baptiste DiLuzio, SSJ Erin and Michael Paglione

in memory of Sr. Mary Ellen Dwyer, SSJ Mary Beth and Daniel Pais

in memory of Sr. Mary Ellen Dwyer, SSJ

Sr. Colette Palmer, SSJ

in memory of deceased Sisters of St. Joseph and their family members, and in honor of Sr. Mary Fromknecht, SSJ

Dorothy and Douglas Palmer

in honor of Sr. Colette Palmer, SSJ **Herb Palmer** in memory of Constance M. Palmer Shauna Pandolfino in memory of Margaret Deter Corraine (Sr. Camilla) **William Pangratz Philip Papotnik Joseph Parlak** Audree A. Parr in memory of Sr. Ann Donohue, SSJ Partnership of Women Religious Inc. Mary and Gary Pasqualicchio **Rev. Gregory P. Passauer** in memory of Emma and Willard Passauer **Suzanne and John Pastorini Charles Patterson** in memory of Andrea Patterson **Anna and Wade Patton** in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Nelson



Pathways to Wellness

Thanks to a grant from the **Catholic Sisters Initiative** of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) is launching Pathways to Wellness. We are delighted to be one of 14 congregations selected to participate in this pilot program. While still in the early phase, we are moving forward with a program that will provide wellness opportunities for our sisters, including videos, seminars, and ZOOM presentations, and by hiring a wellness coordinator who will engage our sisters with new ways of moving forward and collaborating. In addition, grant funding opportunities will also be available to participating congregations.

Loretta and Timothy Patton

Elvera Payne

Linda Payne

PDQ Pest Control

Robert Pears

in memory of Marie J. Pears

Douglas Pelkowski

in memory of Sr. M. Adrianne Pelkowski, CSFN

Mary and Vincent Pellegrini

Paul Pellerite

Karen and Pierre Pelletier

Geraldine and John Pendill

Jane and Lewis Penna

Nancy L. Penner

in memory of Bob Penner

Laurene and Tom Peterman

Jean Petersen

in honor of Sr. Marianne Stuckert, SSJ

Jacqueline and James Peterson

in memory of Sr. Gertrude Marie Peterson, SSJ

Jean M. Peterson

in memory of Sr. Gertrude Marie Peterson, SSJ, Thomas Peterson and deceased members of the Peterson family, and in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph

Lynette Petruska

Betty and Sam Petruso

Kristen and John Petulla

Ellen A. Pfadt

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in memory of Judge William Pfadt and Jeanne Maley Pfadt

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