

An idea bears fruit

Portland Providence Associates made tradition of giving to El Salvador

At a dinner in 2006 at Providence Portland Medical Center, Providence Associates were delighted to pose for a photo with one of the young Salvadorian women they have raised funds to help educate, Sister Margarita Hernandez (center). At left is Sister Katherine Smith, liaison to the group.



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A cause was born in December 1996

when a group of Providence Associates in the Portland area talked about how to make a difference in the lives of the people of El Salvador. Their first inclination, to provide financial support for the services of a midwife to lower the infant mortality rate, was abandoned because of the practicalities involved. Another idea raised was to support the education of girls and young women, and heads nodded in agreement. Sharon Ellefson suggested fasting for one meal each Monday and then donating the money that would have been spent on that meal to the scholarship fund. That was it!

"It was a wise move," says longtime Providence Associate Roberta Sample. "We stayed connected through the plan and established a pattern of giving that has continued since then. We are still excited and enthusiastic about it after all these years. We have discussed changes over the years, but we haven't been able to let go of support of these girls and young women in El Salvador."

The group has other projects, including providing snacks, clothing and other items in the Portland public schools, and holding baby showers for Elizabeth House and Providence Portland Medical Center's maternity department, "but El Salvador is our thing," says Eileen Norris, PA. The group learned about the Sisters of Providence ministering in El Salvador and met Sister Fran Stacey. Helping there seemed the perfect fit for their charism of care for the poor and it was something the Associates in the area all could be involved in even though their homes are distant from each other. "I am not sure how many still fast on Monday, but a lot still give money," Eileen says.

It does not take much for a little idea to take off. In Portland, there are about 25 Providence Associates on the rolls, and 10 to 12 regularly attend meetings. Four potential new members are beginning the orientation process.

Over the years the Providence Associates of Portland have found other ways to boost their contributions to the scholarship fund in El Salvador. Betty Leadon, who has since moved to Arizona, would lend her three-car garage each year as a site for a garage sale, Roberta recalls. "We raised up to \$2,000 one year and the average was between \$800 and \$1,500."

The little idea has borne fruit in the form of thousands of dollars in scholarship support in El Salvador, nearly \$15,000 alone since Mother Joseph Province was formed in 2000. It has borne fruit in other ways, as well. One of the scholarship recipients became Sister Margarita Hernandez when she entered the religious community in 2005. Providence Associates proudly surrounded her for a picture in 2006 when she visited Portland on a Heritage Tour for the celebration of the sisters' 150 years in the West.

The PAs stay up on what is happening in El Salvador by talking with Sister Fran and receiving periodic reports on the education that is being provided. They have been delighted to hear about young women who have become secretaries, beauticians and employed in other types of jobs.

Today, the scholarship fund also assists some boys and young men who also need help getting an education, but because males have more opportunities, girls and young women remain the priority. "High school is expensive," Roberta explains, "so if a family could help with the cost, the boy would receive the opportunity first."

"The girls weren't getting the education when we started," Eileen recalls. "Now they write to us and tell us about their stories and how the scholarship has helped them." ●

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On December 22, 2008,

an Apostolic Visitation of U.S. communities of women religious was decreed by The Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (SCICLSAL). The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) notified its members of the visitation, which has four phases: 1) communication with the general superior; 2) a comprehensive survey of all the major superiors in the United States; 3) on-site visits to various congregations in the United States; and 4) compilation and delivery of a comprehensive report to Cardinal Franc Rodé, C.M., in Rome.

General Superior Kathryn Rutan, at the Sisters of Providence motherhouse in Montreal, Canada, has completed participation in the first phase of the process. In March, she submitted the requested information form and on April 27 she had a telephone conference with Mother Clare Millea, A.S.C.J., who is conducting the apostolic visitation process. Mother Clare expects to visit with the general superiors of all the apostolic religious congregations based in the United States by the end of July.

As of the end of 2008, Sister Kathryn reported, there were

Apostolic Visitation process begins



787 sisters in the congregation worldwide, including 166 sisters in Mother Joseph Province, the only province in the United States.

Topics Sister Kathryn shared with Mother Clare include:

- How Mother Joseph Province came into being, the recent history and that the new provincial administration office is in Renton, Wash.;
- Mother Joseph Province's energetic vocation ministry and the six transfers of vows since 2000;
- The creation of a new public juridic person, Providence Ministries, that allows lay persons and

religious to jointly sponsor ministries in Mother Joseph Province;

- The extension of hospitality to other religious communities at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle;

- Collaboration among religious congregations in the Northwest and also with the bishops and archbishops;

- Community life in Mother Joseph Province;

- Our international identity as a congregation;

- Providence Associates, their commitment to the Providence mission and their separate incorporation.

The next step in the process is for Sister Margaret Botch, Provincial Superior and Leadership Team Coordinator of Mother Joseph Province, to receive a questionnaire in August. Later, a sampling of religious communities will be notified that they will receive actual visits.

"We hope the visitation will lead to increased knowledge and understanding of the vitality and depth of the life of U.S. women religious and hope there can be mutual learning about how to assure that the life continues," Sister Kathryn has said of the process. ●

Come & See

Sisters of Providence

Vocation Discernment Retreat for single women age 18 to 40

7 p.m. Friday, August 14, through 2 p.m. Sunday, August 16

Free meals and lodging are included.

Caritas Court, West Seattle

For information and to register, contact:

Sr. Clare Lentz (206) 923-4028

vocations@providence.org

www.sistersofprovidence.net

Briefs

Alaskan honors

Sisters of Providence induced into Alaska Women's Hall of Fame

The Alaska Women's Hall of Fame announced its Inaugural Class at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage in March, and the Sisters of Providence were among the honorees. The ceremony honored 50 women who have made or are making significant contributions in shaping Alaska. The honorees come from all fields, including, but not limited to the arts, athletics, business, education, government, health, the humanities, Native affairs, philanthropy, community service, conservation, adventure, theology and science.

The event was sponsored by the Alaska Women's Network, Zonta Club of Anchorage, the Anchorage YWCA, the Alaska Women's Political Caucus, the Anchorage Women's Commission and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). ●



Blessings for new babies

Greater Seattle area Providence Associates gathered baby items and money to provide layettes for pregnant low-income women at Birthright of Seattle at their annual Baby Shower/May Crowning. Providence Associates pictured at the event are (from left) Cheri Allan, Dixie Elmore, Nancy Elmore-Ward, Marilyn Wittenmyer and Karie Owens. Sisters Paula Cosko, Yvonne LeBlanc and Kaye Belcher also attended. ●



Provincial Administration staffer Jaime Beytebiere (second from left) poses with some of her fellow bakers at Sojourner Place.



Sharing a WONDERFUL experience!

That is how Provincial Administration staffer Jaime Beytebiere described her adventure teaching a budget baking class at Sojourner Place in Seattle. Jaime, along with her mom Carol Woodard, volunteered to create a fun social afternoon for the residents as well as provide yummy affordable recipes. Each recipe consisted of 5 ingredients or less and cost under \$10 to make, Jaime says. The afternoon, which is sure to be repeated, included plenty of tasting, fellowship and sharing of stories. Jaime left the women with copies of a cookbook printed in the System Office along with extra supplies donated by the System Integrity Department (where her mother works) to keep the baking going. Amazing what can happen when an idea takes off! ●

104 years young

Sister Jane Dufault celebrated her 104th birthday on March 16 with a bundle of greeting cards, cake and punch, and a roomful of her fellow Sisters of Providence and staff at Mount St. Joseph, Spokane. Sister Sue Orłowski, superior at The Mount, helped her peruse the birthday wishes. ●





Northwest Women's Conference

Sisters of Providence were well-represented at this spring's Northwest Women's Conference in Bellevue. The group pictured came ready to be motivated by the speakers, energized by the music and dance, and jazzed by the opportunity to network with other women. Some, including (from left) Sisters Clare Lentz, Judith Desmarais and Deling Fernando, also were busy educating attendees who stopped by their table set up to spread the word about human trafficking. ●

Third-floor remodel of St. Joseph Residence is blessed



If you think SJR stands for St. Joseph Residence in West Seattle, guess again. On May 7, it stood for "*Survived Jacqueline's Remodel*," as bright blue T-shirts proclaimed to the guests at the blessing of the newly remodeled third floor. Sisters of Providence and friends toured the redesigned, homelike living room, kitchen, dining area, residential rooms, hallways and offices and pronounced it all good. Superior/Administrator Jacqueline Fernandes hosted the festivities and Provincial Superior/Leadership

Team Coordinator Margaret Botch lit a candle, gave the opening prayer and presided over the blessing ceremony. Sister Therese Kohles was all smiles as she officially cut the ribbon to the remodeled area that is shared by sisters and lay women who call the third floor home. ●

Fun in Montreal

It wasn't all meetings when the Provincial Superior and Provincial Council members from Mother Joseph Province visited Montreal in April. For a few moments, some sisters became part of the artistic scenery: (from left) Sister Kaye Belcher, General Council Treasurer Rollande Malo, Sister Anita Butler and Sister Annette Seubert. ●

