

recruiter's call seeking a reference for someone else applying for the Providence position. The two talked about Chuck's interest in the job and three months later he was hired.

Today, Chuck works more with policies and policy makers than with individual elderly people, but he remembers well and fondly his years of working in low-income housing, assisted living and other services. What has meant most to him in his work on behalf of the elderly? "(It is) being able to see the difference that advocacy can make in the lives of the elderly person and the people who serve them," he offers.

Of the Mother Joseph Award, he says, "I am humbled by it and honored." "In no way do I compare myself to Mother Joseph," says Chuck, who has read the letters of this visionary pioneer. One of the things he appreciates most about her is her reliance on Providence. "The best 'successes' I have had have been at times when I was at a loss, and I have seen that in Mother Joseph's letters – Providence and trust." That is particularly true in direct service areas, when the success of new programs was uncertain. "When I was the least capable, I was enabled because of God's power."

The second facet of Mother Joseph that stands out for Chuck is her ability "to be a voice for the poor and to serve the poor specifically and preferentially." "A lot of people don't have that commitment or share those values," he says. In services like the low-income housing work, for example, he says, "but for Providence – the big 'P' and the little 'p' – that would not have happened."

When lobbying in Olympia or in Washington, D.C., he has found a source of strength in visiting the likenesses of Mother Joseph in both capitols. Chuck says he also draws inspiration from other Sisters of Providence, "people who follow in her footsteps." He recalls the time spent "cramming" through volumes of facts and figures for the job interview at Providence. He quickly was brought back to what was most important by Sister Yvonne LeBlanc's two interview questions: "Tell me about your journey of faith" and "What have you done in your life to serve the poor?"

Similarly, he recalls being asked by Sister Barbara Schamber, team leader/provincial of Mother Joseph Province, "If we don't do this, will it be done?" Chuck says he thought he was being asked whether there was a demand, but Sister Barbara actually was saying, "Tell me why we should be the ones to do it." It was at that point, Chuck says, that he learned about unmet need. "She was asking me what Providence brings to the table that the others will not serve."

"The mission of Providence is unique," he says. "A lot of groups deliver service to the elderly, but I am pleased to work for an organization that is doing it for the right reasons." ●

TWO VIETNAMESE SISTERS



Pictured in front from left are Sisters AnnMary Vu and Lang Tran. Behind them are Superior General Kathryn Rutan, SP, and Team Leader/Provincial Barbara Schamber, SP.

Sisters Lang Tran and AnnMary Vu, both natives of Vietnam, completed their transfer into the Sisters of Providence in a ceremony on October 18 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Seattle. The presider and homilist was the Reverend Patrick Brennan, vicar for clergy and judicial vicar for the Archdiocese of Portland. American and Vietnamese priests served as co-celebrants and the Our Lady of Lavang choir provided the music.

"These two perpetually vowed women are bringing their gifts and talents and are now going to live out and express the charism of Providence in their lives. That charism is in service to the poor," says Team Leader/Provincial Sister Barbara Schamber. She and Sister Kathryn Rutan, Superior General of the international community headquartered in Montreal, participated in the transfer ceremony which was followed by a reception in the parish hall.

Both women joined the Adorers of the Holy Cross in their native country. Sister AnnMary Vu was born in 1947 to a family of 12 children in the northern part of Vietnam, five of whom lived beyond infancy. In 1954, when the Geneva Treaty divided the country into North and South Vietnam, her family was among the nearly one million Catholics who moved from the North to the South to be able to continue practicing their faith. Those Catholics who remained in the North faced death or arrest by the Communists. In the summer of 1957 she was sent



Sister Ana Dolores Orellana-Gamero began a formal process of transfer with the Sisters of Providence in a prayer service attended by family and friends in Yakima in September. Sister Ana Dolores, a Salvadoran citizen, is a sister of perpetual vows in the religious community Mothers of the Orphans in Rome, Italy.

She has been living in Spokane since August 2002, where her mother and most of her sisters and brothers live, having spent years as part of a sanctuary program at St. Ann's Church before becoming documented.

Sister Ana Dolores currently is studying English and ministering with the Hispanic community in Yakima while living with the sisters at the candidate house. She also has completed a "Come and See Program" that included five months living with sisters in El Salvador to experience the life of prayer, community and ministry with them. ●

complete transfer into the Sisters of Providence

to a boarding house in Saigon that offered special training for children who wanted to be nuns. She entered the novitiate in 1962 at the age of 17.

When Saigon fell in 1975, giving the Communists control of Vietnam, they also took control of the Catholic schools and prohibited the Catholic nuns from teaching. They were forced to choose between working in the factory or the fields. Sister AnnMary worked for six years in a bamboo curtain factory and taught piano and tutored children. Her family decided to escape from Vietnam together, and joined another group that escaped in a small sailboat in 1981. There were 11 people in all, ranging in age from 71 years to 2 months. They were saved by a German ship and reached a Philippines refugee camp. Sister AnnMary was reunited with her religious community when she came to Portland in 1983.

Sister AnnMary, who suffered two strokes shortly after beginning her transfer process in October of 2000, moved from Seattle to Spokane earlier this year. Sister Marilyn Charette, who has been serving as her transfer director since her move, said the two have been "discovering Spokane together" since her own move from Richland. "Sister AnnMary is very talented and intelligent and has lots of stories to

tell," Sister Marilyn says. "She has been very, very eager to learn about the Sisters of Providence, the Constitutions, the vows and how we live them out."

What she brings to her new religious community is "a sense of enthusiasm and tremendous love for the community," Sister Marilyn says of Sister AnnMary, who has been volunteering at Catholic Charities. "She has an eagerness to be a part of what's going on." Sister AnnMary also can help the Sisters of Providence learn and understand Vietnamese customs, culture "and how we can integrate and blend the cultures," she adds.

Sister Lang Tran was born in 1952 in North Vietnam to a family with seven children. She became a pre-candidate in the Adorers of the Holy Cross as a fifth-grader at the age of 11. She professed first vows at the age of 20 and began teaching first grade. Like Sister AnnMary, she was unable to continue teaching with the fall of Saigon, so she worked in the fields. She escaped from Vietnam to France, and eventually made her way to the United States. In 1997 she moved to Portland to join her religious community there.

Sister Lang taught for two years in a Portland day care facility and also in



Friends and family surround Sisters Lang and AnnMary at their transfer ceremony in Seattle.



Sister Ana Dolores Orellana-Gamero

Singing at the ceremony to begin their sister's transfer process are (left) Esther Orellana and Louisa Westport, a Providence Associate in Spokane.



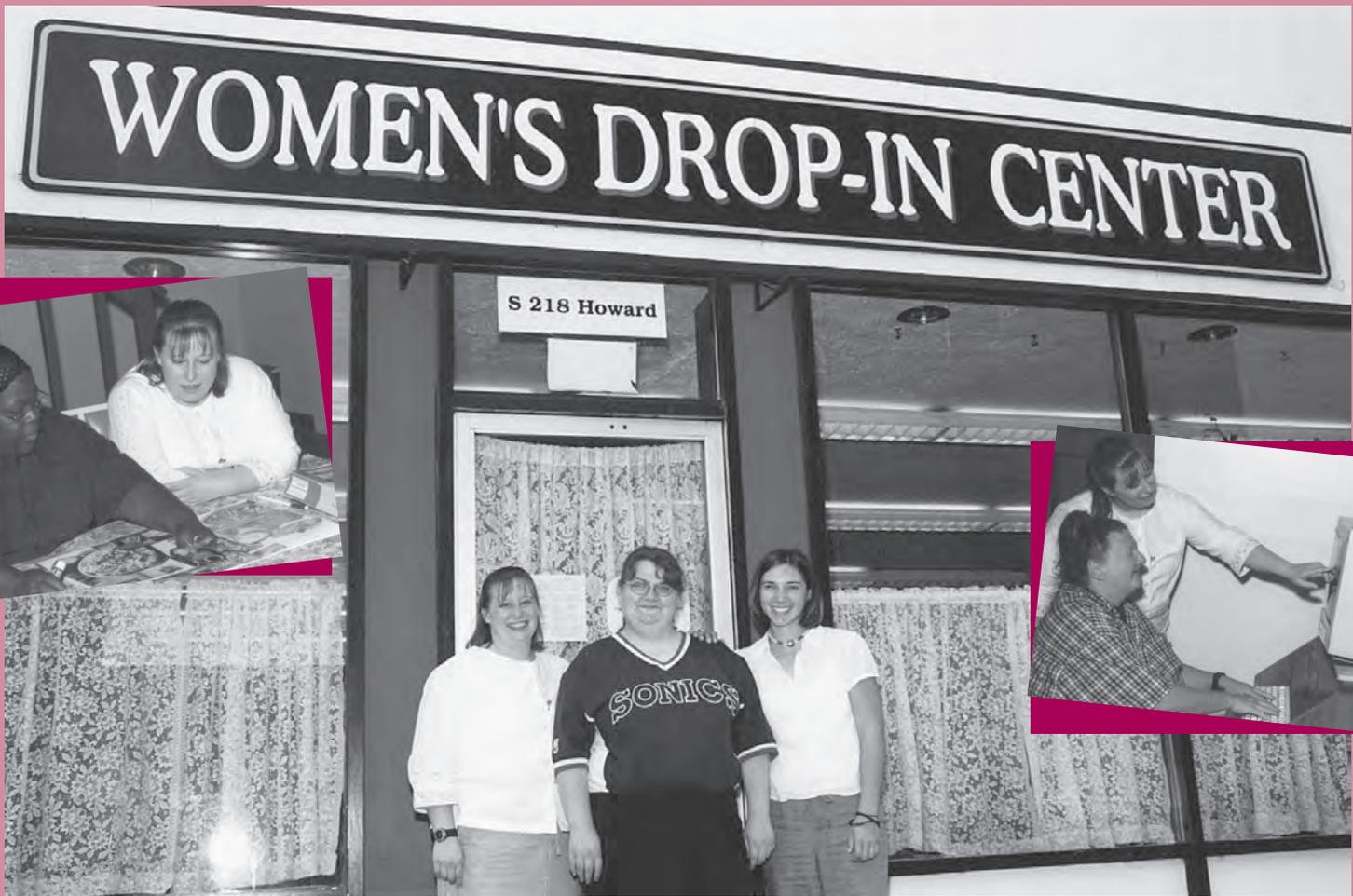
Salvadoran begins transfer process

Sunday school. As part of her three-year transfer process into the Sisters of Providence she has studied English and has been taking early childhood education classes at Spokane Falls Community College.

"Lang is a very beautiful woman with very deep faith," says Sister Joan Gallagher, who initially was transfer director for both women. "And she has a wonderful sense of humor. She has been a real joy to every house she's lived in."

As Sister Lang has struggled to overcome her limited English skills, Sister Joan says her admiration for her has grown. "She has plugged through it and worked hard. It has not been easy, but she has been determined to get through it." As her English has developed, Sister Lang's endearing sense of humor has come to the surface, delighting the other sisters, Sister Joan adds.

"Both women are truly blessings to our community." ●



(Center photo from left) Sister Jessica poses with Jennifer and Maile in front of the Women's Drop-In Center. At top left, Jewel shows her a collage and at top right she works with Gloria at the computer. Below, she shares thoughts with Betty.

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WORKING "UNDERCOVER"

Sister Jessica learns and teaches at Women's Drop-In Center

Three days a week, Sister Jessica Taylor takes on what is almost an undercover assignment in Spokane – as a volunteer at the Women's Drop-in Center.

"A lot of the women don't know I'm a sister; I'm just who I am," 31-year-old Sister Jessica says. Of the ones who do know, she says, "I don't ask them to call me sister. It is interesting when the others find out because they say I'm too young and that I don't look like a sister. We talk about it, the stereotypes. I tell them why I am working there as a sister. It's an education for both of us."

Conversation flows naturally. Some of the women ask questions; others ask for prayer or for Sister Jessica to pray with them.

At the downtown center, Sister Jessica finds fulfillment in

interacting with the poor and homeless women who drop in to get their needs met, from refreshment and companionship to education, advice and supportive conversation. The women are ages 18 to 80s, but the core group is 40 to 60 years old. If they have children, they are encouraged to come without them because the center is "not always kid friendly." These are adult women with adult issues, attitudes and lifestyles. About one-third of them are homeless, living on the street, doubling up with someone or in transitional living centers. The rest have some sort of housing. In addition, the center has five apartment units that can be rented for up to six months at reasonable rates.

The Women's Drop-in Center is a safe place where women can get hygiene products, shower, participate in regular monthly activities, celebrate birthdays and special occasions, and "make sort of an average life." "They can be themselves and be accepted for who they are, Sister Jessica explains. "They don't have to put on masks." ●

