

Providence International Missions

Partnerships in Uganda, Kenya and Cameroon

Uganda

Our primary involvements have been in conjunction with the Daughters of Mary and through a partnership created by Claudia Leonard, MD, who heads the residency program for internal medicine at Providence St. Vincent, Portland. The first shipment of donations was a 20-foot container valued at \$55,325 sent in 1995. Included in the shipment were 36 new hospital mattresses donated from St. Patrick's Hospital in Montana. The shipment, sent to Holy Family Convent in the Diocese of Masaka, proved to be very difficult to get through customs and was delayed for over one year. An agency called Interservice was used to facilitate the clearing of customs, and the shipment was cleared in May 1996. In 2000, a handcarried donation of medicines valued at \$260 was taken to



Uganda. In February 2001, a shipment for the Diocese of Eldoret included donations for the Daughters of Mary.

Dr. Claudia Leonard initiated an exchange program for the medical resident students at Providence St. Vincent and a couple of different hospitals in Uganda in 2000. Each year she tries to place a faculty member and a resident in a hospital for a one-month rotation.

Kenya

Shipments to Kenya for St. Brigida's hospital, sponsored by the Diocese of Eldoret, have been made in 2001 (\$47,414), 2003 (\$97,318) and 2004 (\$91,574).

The residency program for internal medicine at Providence Portland Medical Center has had an exchange program

4 • Novice enters community in El Salvador

Margarita Araceli Hernandez Alfaro was welcomed into the novitiate of the Sisters of Providence in March at a ceremony in La Papalota, El Salvador. Provincial/Leadership Team Coordinator Margaret Botch, SP, was present to receive her. Her father and other friends and family joined the celebration.

Margarita, 24, has said she believes God has called her by name through children and persons in greatest need. "We join you in praying that this sense of call will continue to develop during your novitiate," Sister Margaret said, adding, "and that, if it is God's will, you may desire to consecrate yourself to God through religious vows and live our Providence way of life as a professed member of our congregation."

Margarita has joined Vilma Franco in Santiago, Chile, where both are making their canonical novitiate, courtesy of the Provincial Council of Bernard Morin Province.

She was born in November 1980 in Puerto Parada, Usulután, and moved with her family to La Papalota when she was 10, seeking to escape from the civil war's conflict and fear. She felt her life change when she met her new



Margarita Hernandez

neighbors in her small village in 1995. "God, who is Providence, came to me," she says. The Sisters of Providence had arrived and they lived right in front of her home.

She and her older sister Rosa became involved in catechetical programs and youth groups, as well as liturgy preparation and dance groups. The sisters invited Margarita to think about religious life. In 2001, she participated in a "Come and See" experience

and the following year began a longer living experience with Sisters Maria Antonieta Trimpay and Monica Campillay.

Margarita was received as a postulant in September 2002, with her father, brothers and sisters at her side. Her mother had died earlier that year. During the postulant stage of formation, she hoped to be able "to be well formed in order to serve others and in order to become a Sister of Providence, with all the lovely and difficult moments that might bring."



Margarita is welcomed by Provincial/Leadership Team Coordinator Margaret Botch.

with Moi Medical Center in Eldoret since 1997. A faculty member and a resident from the program in Portland go to Eldoret for a one-month rotation and two medical students from Kenya come to Portland each year.

Cameroon

Shipments were sent to Cameroon in 2002 (\$82,914) and 2003 (\$104,320). Two more shipments were sent in 2004 and 2005 (\$72,348 and \$76,270). The relationships with the hospitals in Cameroon are the result of visits by Dave Sauer with Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) and the Catholic Consortium for International Health Care.

While there are Sisters of Providence present in Cameroon, we have not had any direct involvement with the work they are doing. This visit provides an opportunity to assess how or what we could be doing in the future as well as share with the sisters the activities we have had in other parts of the country. ●

Margarita and her father embrace.



Initially, she feared that she would not make it into the community. She no longer fears this, but does question her own ability to be open in the process of formation. She says the thing that has helped most in her discernment process is "accompaniment by a spiritual director and my own personal prayer." ●

Return to the campus Sister of Providence joins GU ministry office

Sister Elizabeth Cole finds herself on the college campus again these days, this time as coordinator of non-liturgical programs at Gonzaga University in Spokane. There, she oversees retreat programs and supports initiatives such as prayer groups for students.

She took the position at the end of August, after seeing an ad on the Internet. "It was just as last year's novitiate was winding down," she recalls. Sister Catherine Chan, a novice from Holy Angel's Province in Edmonton, had just returned home and there was no canonical novice in Spokane for this year. Sister Liz, not one to sit idle, "took it to prayer and decided to apply for the Gonzaga position."

The job, five days a week, is full time for 10 months, with June and July off. Her boss, Father Rick Ganz, SJ, has asked her to attend as many retreats as possible, including freshman retreats, as part of her job. That gives her an opportunity to meet students in informal settings, as do lunches in the campus COG.

When this interview was conducted, she was coordinating an Agape retreat of a team of six student leaders (three male and three female) with the help of her student assistant, Marcus Duffey. The retreats, held four times a year, begin with dinner on Friday and continue until Sunday afternoon in Wallace, Idaho, with meals and lodging courtesy of Idaho businessman Harry Magnuson.

"Students do talks on God's love and how they have experienced God's accepting, forgiving, sustaining love in their lives," Sister Liz says in describing the retreats. "I love working with the students' retreat team and helping them prepare their talks. I also enjoy participating in meetings of our university ministry office's seven-member team. It is quite wonderful. I can't think of a better job in the whole world," she says with a beaming smile.

What makes this role so special is being able to be with the students, she explains. "They are so fun and full of life. They really are searching for God in their lives. I think the ones I meet are more reflective about God than I was at their age." She was one of the ones who resisted God's call, putting it off, Sister Liz confesses.



Sister Liz Cole (left) is getting to know her assistant for next year, Michelle Nilsen.

She was a "40-ish" novice coming into the Sisters of Providence in 1989. At the time she was teaching psychology at Gonzaga, a role she continued for 14 years at the institution where she attended grad school. "This is quite different," she says of her current position. "This is much more a fun role. Before, I liked the kids, but my heart wasn't in the subject matter," she explains.

Teaching has always been part of her experience. She served as an aid in a migrant education classroom in Milton-Freewater and as an English as a Second Language teacher in the Washington State Penitentiary. After training for nine months in St. Louis for novitiate and formation work, she stepped into the role of member of the formation team for a six-year term that ends in August.

"Once in a while in this work (at Gonzaga), vocation comes up," she says. "I talk to them a bit, then refer them to Father George Morris, SJ, who handles vocations, to answer their questions."

Many students on the Gonzaga campus want a relationship with God, need to belong and like having peer support, she says. "One girl at a retreat wanted to go to Mass, but she needed to find someone to go with her. Students are more likely to come to Mass if they have some friends to accompany them," Sister Liz explains.

Having found the job she loves, Sister Liz now is focused on getting better at it. "I want to gain more confidence in this role," she explains. "I am called upon to give talks at times, and they end up fine, but it is anxiety producing." She is finding it fulfilling to be both teacher and student. ●



In this group photo with Gonzaga University student retreat participants, Sister Liz is in the second row at right.



Lucille Dean, SP

PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

Principal retires; successor named

After 19 years presiding over graduations at Providence High School in Burbank, Sister Lucille Dean has hung up her cap and gown. She is retiring from her role as principal at the end of the 2004-05 school year. She will, however, stay on as chair of a new Mission and Governance Committee at the request of the regents. Her tenure at the helm of the Catholic, accredited college-preparatory school for young women and men in southern California has put it on the map. Providence High School, founded in 1955, has been nationally recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. Its growth, in number of students (549 in 2004), physical plant, curriculum and stature, has been significant. Enrollment in the innovative Health Careers and Media Communications focus programs developed under Sister Lucille's leadership is sought after by students interested in media and health careers.



*Lucille Dean
1992-93*

A key measure of the school's success is its impact on the futures of its students. "Today, 98 percent of all Providence students continue on to higher education, both locally and in colleges and universities throughout the nation," according to former Provincial/Team Leader Barbara Schamber, SP, and Bobken Amirian, former chair of the Board of Regents in their announcement of the search for her replacement in May 2004. "In every way, the school has flourished under Sister Lucille's leadership."



Students gather around Sister Lucille



Sister dons a hard hat, (third from left) for groundbreaking of the student activity center.



Sister Lucille introduces the new principal, Michele Schulte

At the school's fourth annual Promise for the Future gala in March, Sister Lucille was presented a special award for her dedication to the education of young people and her service to the community, which has included a total of 25 years at the high school.

The new principal, chosen by the Board of Regents and approved by the Leadership Team, is Michele Schulte, formerly director of guidance and counseling from 1992 until June 2003. She will begin her new role in July. "We are pleased to have Michele Schulte further the Providence tradition of excellence in education and preparation of students whom we know will make a difference in the world," Provincial Superior/Leadership Team Coordinator Margaret Botch, SP, and Ken Coopman, chair of the Board of Regents, said in naming their choice in March.

Michele left the high school at the end of the 2002-03 school year to complete a certificate program in Catholic school administration at Loyola Marymount University. She has a Master of Arts in school psychology, a Pupil Personnel Services Credential, and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology, all from California State University-Northridge. Her love for the high school and commitment to its future has been evident in her extensive experience there. She has facilitated faculty/staff retreats, provided crisis counseling to students and families, chaired the counseling department, served on the curriculum committee, planned the annual Career Day, developed schoolwide crisis intervention programs, processed group testing programs, and participated as committee chair for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) process. ●