

New board members and new leadership welcomed

The board of Providence Pariseau Corporation, which includes the ministries of Providence Hospitality House, Sojourner Place and Building Bridges, has elected new leadership. The new board chair is Steven Cavit, the board president is Sister Mary Grondin, and Donya Johnson is board secretary.

Providence Pariseau also has four new board members:

- Jaime Beytebiere, an administrative assistant in Provincial Administration who has been a volunteer at PHH and co-owns an event planning and custom creations business;

- Celeste McDonell, a lawyer, longtime parish volunteer and St. James Cathedral Financial Council member;

- Patricia Szabo, executive director of Providence O'Christmas Trees with wide-ranging administrative and leadership experience in fundraising, human services and education; and

- Michelle Tschida, who has been involved with programs for the homeless for more than 20 years and has served as team leader for homeless needs assessment for the City of Seattle. ●



Steven Cavit



Mary Grondin, SP



Donya Johnson



Sara Antonelli

New interim director at Providence Hospitality House

Sara Antonelli has accepted the position of interim director at Providence Hospitality House, a Seattle ministry sponsored by the Sisters of Providence that provides supportive housing and resources to women in crisis and their children. Sara replaces Megan McArthur, who left to accept a job with the City of Seattle and to spend more time as a new mommy to Margaret Rose, born May 27, 2009. Sara was a staff member at Providence Hospitality House who served as interim director during Megan's maternity leave. ●

Staff anniversaries



Four Provincial Administration employees were surprised to have their years of service recognized at a staff luncheon in January. Pictured here are Susan Selbach, project coordinator, 10 years; Jennifer Hall, director of finance, 10 years; Kelly Davis, Chronicles coordinator, 20 years; and Debbie Roth, fiscal coordinator/accountant, 20 years. Congratulations to all!

Providence Associate news

Three Providence Associates have been elected to serve as co-executive directors: Suzanna Harland, Portland, and Shirley McKay, Kirkland, and Geri Ann Johnson, Republic. Also, the E. Lake Washington region will rejoin the Greater Seattle region of Providence Associates.

The region in the state of Georgia recently welcomed two new Providence Associates: (below) Lisa Gillespie of Martin, Georgia, (left) and Pat D'Entremont of Clarksville, Georgia, (right). They are pictured here with Charlotte Van Dyke, SP. ●



Suzanna Harland



Geri Ann Johnson



Shirley McKay

PLEASE
REMEMBER
IN PRAYER

Monique Belcher, mother of Kaye Belcher, SP, died November 15, 2009, in Monroe, Wash.

Mary Jane Eley, mother of Patricia Eley, SP, died January 5, 2010, in Seattle.

Cecilia Lentz, mother of Clare Lentz, SP, died January 8 in Yakima, Wash.

Helen Burkhart, mother of Donna Burkhart, SP, died January 11 in Lafayette, Ind.

Juan Iturriaga, father of Myrta Iturriaga, SP, died January 21 in Temuco, Chile.

Does your heart cry out to serve the poor?

Do you long for a life in community, sharing daily prayer and Eucharist?

Does devotion to our Mother of Sorrows move you?

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Presenter R.J. Cooper and a child celebrate demonstration of a piece of adaptive equipment.

10th educational conference

Building Bridges

for children's specialized nursing facilities

by Sister Katherine Smith, Ph.D., RN

At the end of October 2009, despite the nation's economic deep freeze and cut-backs in Medicaid funding, 122 staff members from 31 pediatric organizations nationwide excitedly congregated in Portland, Ore. They gathered for networking and camaraderie made possible through the 10th educational conference of Building Bridges. Portland was also the site in 1997 for the first-ever conference designed specifically for providers of pediatric long-term care.

This ministry is a not-for-profit organization under the umbrella of Providence Pariseau Corporation, which also includes two other Sisters of Providence ministries: Providence Hospitality House and Sojourner Place.

Based in Portland, Building Bridges is a network of pediatric long-term care facilities providing care for children who are medically fragile and require 24-hour skilled nursing. The network includes 120 facilities throughout the United States as well as Canada's only pediatric complex continuing care facility, located in Toronto. Network members are both proprietary and not-for-profit, religious-sponsored and not, and include both freestanding pediatric and pedi units within adult nursing facilities.

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The network developed out of my thesis work, which involved identifying, contacting, and connecting the facilities, which until 1990 were geographically and organizationally isolated. Many, like Providence Children's Nursing Center in Portland during my 22 years there, believed themselves to be the only entity providing their type of care. Most facilities were the single such entity in their state and had no knowledge of any peers. Some states had more than one facility, but none had any organized system for communication, sharing knowledge and experience, or mutual support. I am the network's executive director, working with facility volunteers in various professional development, research, technical assistance, and advocacy activities.

Families whose infants and children are medically fragile face wrenching dilemmas regarding their children's post-hospital care. Technological advances in medical and surgical care help children survive who experienced premature birth, congenital disorders, infectious diseases, or trauma, but many are left with serious health and neurodevelopmental impairments and frequently continue to be dependent on various technologies. While care of children in their own homes is a widely accepted ideal, increasingly we recognize that this alternative is not feasible for all families. Extensive support systems must be in place and these are not available to all families or in all communities. Pediatric specialized nursing facilities are a crucial resource in the continuum of children's care options, yet in many states, bias against out-of-home care deprives families of this possibility.

developing support of each other and strengthening our combined voices for advocacy for the children and their families. Our conferences are organized by a committee of volunteers and take about 18 months of preparation. We select venues that are small and affordable, with a host pediatric facility nearby which participants can visit.

In order to provide learning opportunities for staff members from many different professional disciplines, the planning task force invites varied presentations. Recent participants described the benefits they experienced from the conference, with emphasis on networking and learning:

- *"Finally—we all speak the same language and understand each others' concerns and needs. Thank you!"*
- *"Very few conferences about this special population are offered — it is fabulous to have sessions that actually pertain to my specialty."*
- *"Chances to network with other people who are also working with our population. Learning how other programs manage many of the same challenges we face."*
- *"Networking, as without this opportunity we do feel we are the only one doing what we do!"*

A memorable highlight of 2009's conference was a letter that arrived with the return address of The White House. Shortly after the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama, I wrote to First Lady Michelle to acquaint her with our country's hidden population of medically fragile children and their families. Michelle Obama had described herself as "Mom-in-Chief" and was concerned about family issues. The letter in response said, in part: *"Thank you so much for sharing the information about your organization... I appreciate that you took the time to write, and I want to thank you for all that you do in your community, for daring to innovate, for dreaming big, and for finding ways to create a better tomorrow..."*

Each year, the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services releases its scores for U.S. nursing homes based on evaluations using hundreds of data measurements in three categories: health inspections, nurse staffing, and quality of care; the top score is five stars in each category. In February, U.S. News and World Report published its honor roll of 12 facilities from among the more than 16,000 skilled nursing homes nationwide which achieved four straight quarters of perfect five-star ratings. Two members of Building Bridges are on that honor roll, and several more members received five stars in each category. I'd like to think that our efforts with educational conferences and mutual information sharing have helped influence this evidence of quality care. ●



Sister Katherine Smith and Malissa Nesbit, of Eastern Virginia Medical School, have their own reason to celebrate: completion of a successful conference!

In my 1999 doctoral study of families' experience when their children received care in pediatric nursing facilities, a major finding was, not surprisingly, that parents' first priority was the quality of their child's life; parents were deeply affected by who was caring for their child. When considering a pediatric long-term care facility, parents' primary concerns were that their child would receive excellent quality nursing and medical care, therapies and activities, but would also be loved. It was this need that impelled parents to make the agonizing decisions to admit their children to the facility.

We consider that regular educational conferences can be a vehicle for sharing best practices as well as for

Caritas

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SOA Watch

Another generation of sisters experiences weekend at Fort Benning

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Editor's note: Last November, a ceremony in San Salvador to honor six Jesuit priests slain, along with their housekeeper and her daughter, by the army 20 years ago drew participants from around the world. "For me, this act means [we] pull back a heavy veil of darkness and lies to let in the light of justice and truth," said President Mauricio Funes. "We begin to cleanse our house of this recent history."

Meanwhile, a world away in Fort Benning, Georgia, activists held their annual pilgrimage and prayer vigil demanding that the United States shine the light of truth on the School of the Americas and shut it down. It is there that U.S. tax dollars fund the training of military personnel who commit violent terrorist acts in the name of freedom, activists say. Though today the Department of Defense's school for soldiers bears a new name, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, the protesters argue that its agenda and practices are the same.



A moment of reflection from Jessica Taylor, SP

I thought I knew what happened at Fort Benning during the School of the Americas (SOA) watch. I had heard the stories of Sisters of Providence going and what happened each year during that November weekend in Georgia. But it is very different making the journey yourself and experiencing the various events that are planned. My first activity was the orientation program for first-time protesters. This is the meeting where you receive all the contact phone numbers you will need in case you are arrested. The leaders asked everyone to promise to follow a peace commitment for the weekend. This was my first experience as a protester for any major movement. I was surprised at how calm everyone was there and the love that came out of the meeting room.

After the orientation, we headed to the gates of Fort Benning. It felt like a festival, with everyone going to each display booth and looking around. We walked around and listened to the speakers as they talked about the damage that SOA has brought to different countries. In the middle of the street there was a line of clothing that showed the names and ages of persons who have died as a result of SOA activities. At each end of the clothing line were various types of clothes you could put on. I decided to take a turn lying down on the street to depict a dead person. I put on a shirt that was marked with paint and lay down to pray for all those who have been killed. I was amazed by my own emotions as I lay there soaking up the understanding and suffering of all the men, women and children who are dead because of the SOA. It was only a short time that I lay in the street, but



those few moments changed my understanding and feelings so dramatically that I became one with the suffering.

The second most powerful thing that happened to me on this weekend was when we gathered for the solemn funeral procession. We were all gathered to join our voices with those who can no longer stand or be voices for themselves. It was moving to see all the people present for the procession. The police were out in force to make sure we were following the law. During the procession, all the names of those who have been killed as a result of the SOA were announced. We followed each name by responding "Presente" as we held our crosses to the sky. In that action, we brought them with us as we walked to the gate to place our crosses at the entrance of Fort Benning. The power we shared in that moment will stay with me always.

What I didn't expect from this weekend was to feel so peaceful and full of hope. Nor did I expect the feeling of solidarity with those who have suffered and are suffering today at the hand of SOA graduates. And it was a new experience to feel the oppressiveness of our own government's huge and intense police presence during this peaceful gathering. ●