Caritas

Summer 2025

A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends

Ministry and Mission

Sisters of Providence bring the love and compassion of Our Provident God to their world.

Sisters of Providence who attended the 70th Anniversary Gala of Providence High School in Burbank, California. See page 10

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Ministry and Mission

Sisters of Providence serve others with acts of love, service, justice and peace. In organized settings or through everyday encounters with another person, Sisters bring the Provident God into the world, advancing the mission of the Sisters of Providence.

The following are just some of the ways today's Sisters of Providence minister.

Sr. Susanne Hartung, SP, *with a patient at a clinic in Guatemala.*

Ministry and **Mission**

From First Draft of History to Honoring the End of Life

Sr. Lynn Chappell, SP, (below, left) first contributed to the Chronicles in 1966. She has been involved with them, in one way or another, ever since.

Today, Sr. Lynn is training St. Joseph Residence (SJR) staff member Kate Flanagan to take over that ministry for SJR.

"The purpose of Chronicles is to create a historical record of the Sisters of Providence," explains Sr. Lynn. "St. Joseph Residence – where I have has been preparing the data for Chronicles of late – is a very busy house.

"I enjoy compiling the data," she says. "It's something I have a talent for and it helps me feel useful."

The term "chronicle" refers to a written account of the past year. Schools and hospitals run by the Sisters were required to produce three copies: one for the general administration at the motherhouse in Montreal; one for their provincial administration; and one copy to keep onsite. When Chronicles were handwritten (until about 1952), this was quite a chore, according to an article in the Winter 2021-22 edition of *Past Forward,* the Providence Archives' newsletter.

In addition to Chronicles work, Sr. Lynn also helps keep track of documents pertaining to end-of-life medical care, wills, power of attorney and other documentation needed when one of the Sisters passes away. She is training Kate in that ministry as well.

The work requires precision and constant updating. Some health care professionals, for example, may question end-of-life instructions if the authorization is many years old. Sr. Lynn, who has served as provincial secretary in the past, not only ensures that this vital information is kept up-to-date but also helps to ensure that the wishes of the Sisters are honored.

Piece Together History, One Snippet at a Time

Sr. Pat Eley, SP, (right) needs to be meticulous. First, she searches through a book more than a century old for French names. The handwriting is penned in a flowery style with ink that is now fading. Piecing together details and other translatable verses, she then must upload the results into an Excel spreadsheet.

She is ministering in the Providence Archives, transferring information on every woman who ever entered the Sisters of Providence. She's currently working on her second leather-bound volume. This one covers 1915 – 1929.

Sometimes names are similar, or the only information that can be found on a woman is that she entered the community.

It's a little like detective work mixed with a bit of puzzleology.

Sr. Mary Duffy, OP-T, Sr. Nora Murphy, OP-T, and **Sr. Virginia Miller, SP,** also work in the ministry to preserve the history of the Sisters of Providence and its various ministries (below).

Back in the day, before search engines and AI, when newspaper ink still rubbed off on your hands, clipping services would literally cut articles out of the newspapers to help organizations track what was being written about them. The service would tag each clipping with the name of the publication and the date the story appeared. Companies prominently in the news could get hundreds of clippings per week. But a lot of extraneous material surfaced as well, just as it is with a web search. Part of the Sister's job is to sort through the articles that really pertain to the Sisters or their historical ministries from

those that just mention a ministry but are really about other topics. For instance, the archives don't need an article about a car accident in which the victim was brought to a Providence hospital.

Srs. Virginia, Mary and Nora are sorting through years of the clippings, stored in banker boxes. They have completed the sort according to year and are now working on the month. Ultimately, the articles will be digitized.

The effort is in support of the Providence Archives which collects, organizes, preserves and makes available records of enduring and historical value relating to the Sisters and the health system. Their collection dates from 1856 and includes institutional and corporate records, manuscripts, artifacts, photographs and audiovisual materials.

Dark clothing is important for interpreters because people must be able to see their hands clearly.

Ministry and **Mission**

Building Communities for All

Sr. Judith Desmaris, SP, (above) first learned to sign for the deaf when some volunteers at the Washington School for the Deaf said they needed help to teach religion to children.

Her signing was only rudimentary at first – spelling out each letter in a word. After taking interpreter training, she ministered with deaf people for the Seattle and Portland Archdioceses. But her ministry grew over time. It became such a part of her life that when she moved to Montreal as part of the leadership team, she interpreted at Sunday Mass once per month for English signing deaf people. She also spent time with the Sisters of Dolors, who are deaf.

Today, she interprets on a regular basis at Mass at St. Joseph's in Seattle and visits some people where they live.

The art of translating, whether spoken or sign language, is draining so interpreters try to work in teams. On a recent Sunday morning, during the first part of the Mass, Sr. Judith interpreted for a gentleman who was both deaf and blind (right). Afterward, she switched with the other interpreter and signed for the congregation (above).

The work of interpreters allows for everyone to fully participate in the liturgy. Deaf and blind congregants respond with the rest of the faithful through sign language and are fully engaged with the community.

St. Judith's work echoes the early days of the Congregation. Just a few short years after the founding of the Sisters of Providence, **Sr. Marie de Bonsecours** took an interest in teaching deaf children in Montreal. **Blessed Emilie Gamelin** took notice and formalized the ministry which eventually resulted in the opening of a school for deaf girls. It was the last ministry Blessed Emilie initiated before her death.

People who are deaf and blind have unique needs so interpreting must be customized for everyone.

Many Sisters, no matter what other ministries they are involved in, are active in parish communities. Sisters participate in choirs, food programs, lectoring, small faith groups, teaching children and adults, Eucharistic ministry, visiting the sick and much more.

Wherever there is need, Sisters step up to help.

One Busy Bea

One of the first ministers parishioners at St. Joseph's meet every week when they come to Mass is **Sr. Bea LaFramboise, SP** (right). As a hospitality minister, her job it to make sure everyone feels welcome and has everything they need to fully participate in the liturgy.

Sr. Bea also works with the local L'Arche community which celebrates the gifts of developmentally disabled people to foster a welcoming and understanding encounter with the entire community. Her L'Arche friends receive a warm welcome at the St. Joseph's Mass as well (right).

But that's just on Sunday. You can find Sr. Bea 24/7 on some errand, doing something kind for somebody.

She also volunteers in the SEEL (Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life) program as a spiritual director and coordinates hospitality for the monthly retreat days.

After all that, she still doesn't really slow down.

To help instill the Providence mission in others, she leads groups of students through the streets of Seattle where they provide food and other necessities to the homeless. It's called *Sacred Encounters.* Students from different Catholic Schools in the Seattle Archdiocese participate in the immersion experiences. After handing out sandwiches and toiletries they attend a noon Mass at Christ Our Hope Parish in downtown Seattle.

Every Tuesday, Sr. Bea cooks breakfast for the homeless in West Seattle at the American Legion Center. It is an overnight emergency shelter during extreme severe weather but breakfast is served year-round.

Pope Francis has asked the faithful to reach out to the margins. Students accompany Sr. Bea on one of her "Sacred Encounter" on the streets of Seattle.

Sr. Bea attends Sunday Mass with the L-Arche community members at St. Joseph's.

But wait! There's more!

Sr. Bea, who says she is "actively retired" still drives Sisters from St. Joseph Residence to their medical appointments and every quarter makes homemade cards with them something she very much enjoys doing with others.

She is also the Spiritual Advisor for St. Vincent de Paul Society Conference of St. Joseph Parish in Seattle and she writes the *Chronicles* for the Providing Peace local community.

Sr. Bea is very busy as are many Sisters of Providence. They may be retired but they are active in their parishes, with their local communities and with others who reach out to the poor and vulnerable in their city and towns.

During a retreat, Sr. Bea accompanies her friends on a walk to reflect on what they have experienced.

May She Rest in Peace

Celebrating the Life of Sr. Barbara Rose Schamber, SP

1943-2025

Sr. Barbara Schamber, SP, devoted her entire life to the mission of the Sisters of Providence. She was a gifted and compassionate person who tirelessly served her community and the Church while embodying the virtues of humility, simplicity and charity.

She took an active and engaging interest in nearly everyone she met. Her goal was not mere politeness, but a genuine desire to get to know people and to appreciate their lives.

Sr. Barbara was the second of three children born to Joseph and Hildegarde Schamber in Chicago. Her brother, Joe, was five years older and her brother, Tom, was fourteen years younger. When she was a sophomore, her parents decided to leave the cold Chicago winters and move to warm Sun Valley, California. She enrolled in the newly established Providence High School, Burbank, California, and was introduced to the Sisters of Providence.

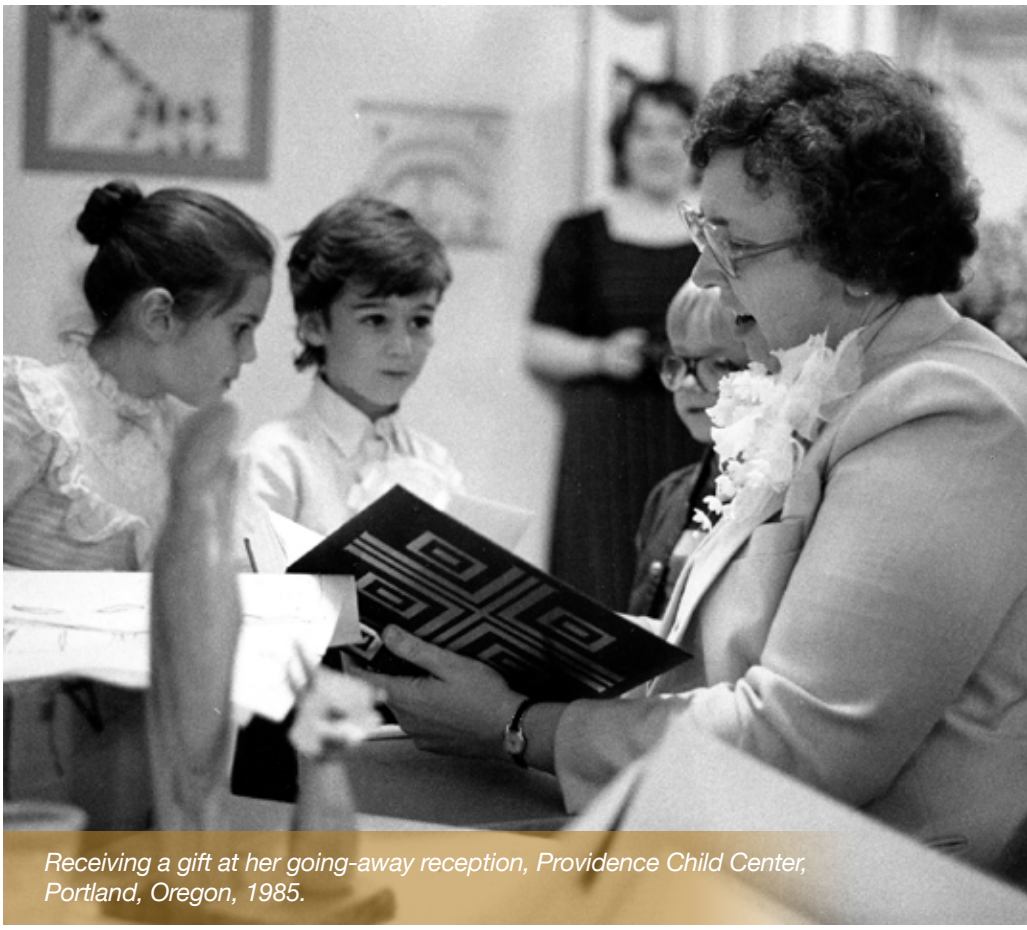
During high school, Sr. Barbara was influenced by many sisters, especially **Srs. Lauretta Frawley, Rachel Hofmeister, Rebecca Berghoff, Mary Gleason** and **Margaret of Jesus.** During their senior year, three students – Barbara along with **Mary Alice Miller** and **Peggy Crawford** – decided that they wanted to enter the Providence community. They dubbed themselves the "SP Trio." (Sr. Mary Alice is still with the community.)

Sr. Barbara became a novice in August 1962 and professed first temporary vows in August 1964. She professed perpetual vows in August 1971.

Her desire to teach young children led her to Holy Family School in White Center, Washington, and later to St. Joseph School in Vancouver, Washington, and St. Finbar School in Burbank. She served as principal of St. Elizabeth in Van Nuys, California, and the Montessori School at Providence Child Center in Portland.

Sr. Barbara's joy and delight in teaching first graders made it one of her favorite ministries. She loved the excitement and eagerness that children of that age had for learning.

Visiting Sr. Vilma Franco and client in El Salvador, 2023.



Receiving a gift at her going-away reception, Providence Child Center, Portland, Oregon, 1985.

Her leadership role in the community began in earnest when she became provincial superior of Sacred Heart Province in 1985.

She was central to the formation of the new Mother Joseph Province, leading a team to form one cohesive entity. She was the first and the last leader of the province, serving terms in 2000-04 and 2020-24. She helped guide the community into the current *Journey to Oneness* and the new governance structure for the Congregation.

For Sr. Barbara, leadership was not just about managing. It was about connecting with people – Sisters, staff, volunteers, collaborators and others. She learned about their lives and those of their family. She would remember important events or be there when anyone was celebrating or suffering. She was always on time for any event.

Her dedication to the community and education was demonstrated once again when she began to be more involved in the health care ministry.

Sr. Barbara's tenure included chairing the Board of Directors for the Sisters of Providence Health Care Corporation (1985-1991) and serving on the Board of Directors for the Sisters of Providence Health System (1997-2000).

She was instrumental in the formation of the sponsorship model for Providence Ministry in 2010 and in drafting the *Hopes and Aspiration* document which still guides the Providence St. Joseph Health System.

Continued >

"There have been joys, there have been sorrows, but there has always been that deep call of desiring to be a Sister of Providence in the Church in whatever transition form that takes. Prayer, the Eucharist and Reconciliation have been a great source of strength in my faith development as well as the example of many great Sisters of Providence who have been inspirational to me in both my ministry and in my life of community and prayer." –Sr. Barbara Schamber, SP

Speaking at the dedication of Providence Milwaukie Hospital, Milwaukie, Oregon, 1986.

As one of the first sponsors, she dedicated herself to nurturing a ministry in which laity and religious work together. Along with others, she set the model for how the sponsorship system functions in today's Catholic health care environment.

Even in the face of unprecedented challenges, such as the onset of the Covid pandemic, Sr. Barbara's leadership remained steadfast. Her adaptability and willingness to embrace new methods, like participating in video calls, showcased her resilience and commitment. Despite physical barriers, she continued to connect with the Sisters, offering prayer, laughter and support. She made every effort to ensure the bonds of the community remained unbroken.

"There have certainly been many people who have touched me deeply, both Sisters of Providence as well as lay people with whom I've had the pleasure of working," Sr. Barbara once said while reflecting on her vocation. "There have been joys, there have been sorrows, but there has always been that deep call of desiring to be a Sister of Providence in the Church in whatever transition form that takes. Prayer, the Eucharist and Reconciliation have been a great source of strength in my faith development as well as the example of many great Sisters of Providence who have been inspirational to me in both my ministry and in my life of community and prayer."

Sr. Barbara brought the joy and love of our Provident God to the world.

Gifts of Water and Mountains, *book signing at University of Providence, 2024.*

Memorial contributions *may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, M1-C, Renton, WA 98057 or by visiting sistersofprovidence.net. To sign the memory book for Sr. Barbara, please visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at* ***bonneywatson.com.***

Celebrating milestones with her sisters in the community.

Opening of new Provincial Offices, 2023.

Providence High School Celebrates 70 Years

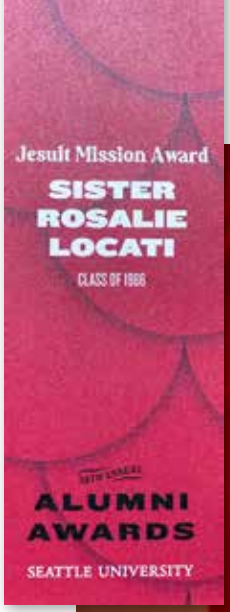
Sisters of Providence, along with hundreds of parents, faculty, students, alums, health system representatives and friends attended a gala celebration to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Providence High School (PHS) in Burbank, California.

The evening included a moving tribute to PHS-alumna **Sr. Barbara Schamber, SP,** who passed away just a few days before, by Scott McLarty, head of school, and proud praise of the school by Providence St. Joseph Health System CEO, Erik Wexler.

Proceeds from the event benefit the Providence Leadership Fund, a new movement which honors the vision of long-time principal **Sr. Lucille Dean, SP,** who championed leadership as the hallmark of a Providence education.

The Providence High School choir, which last year performed in Carnegie Hall, New York, sings for the guest during the dinner. They will tour Italy this summer.

Sisters of Providence who attended the gala include (front row, l to r) ***Srs. Lucy Vasquez, Lang Tran, Maggie Pastro, Felma Cerezo, Hong Nga Nguyen, Rosa Sen Nguyen, Susanne Hartung,*** *and* ***Josefina Lerios;*** *(back row, l to r)* ***Beverly Dunn, Donna Burkhart, Jaqueline Fernandes, Karen Hawkins, Mary Alice Miller, Teresa White*** *and* ***Margarita Hernandez.*** *Srs. Beverly and Teresa are alumnae of the school.*



Laurie McCormick (left), a friend of 42 years, nominated Sr. Rosalie for the award.

Sr. Rosalie Locati Honored

Sr. Rosalie Locati, SP, (Class of 1966) has been recently honored by the Seattle University Alumnae Association for her unwavering commitment to the Jesuit mission and dedication to service and care.

She is the first recipient of the school's Jesuit Mission Award.

"Sr. Locati has served the community as a Catholic school teacher, Campus Ministry member at Washington State University and leader at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane," said the Alumnae Association in her award announcement. "In her work leading others with their relationship with Christ, she emphasizes valuing the whole person and understanding the human spirit."

> "In her work leading others with their relationship with Christ, she emphasizes valuing the whole person and understanding the human spirit."
>
> – Seattle University Alumnae Association

Laurie McCormick, a long-time friend, who nominated her for the award, said, "I think that in her contributions to society, she lives the Providence mission to make this a better world. Sr. Rosalie has shown true love, gentleness and a real understanding of the human spirit. Her communication skills are like none other. She communicates with so much love. She understands each one of us."

Friends and fellow Sisters of Providence celebrate with Sr. Rosalie at the award gala at Seattle University. Front row, (l to r) ***Sr. Hong Nga Nguyen,*** *Laurie McCormick,* ***Sr. Rosalie*** *and* ***Sr. Josefina Lerios.*** *Back row (l to r) Tina Johnston and Mary Jo Klopfstein (friends from Washington State University) and* ***Sr. Barbara Schamber.***

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sistersofprovidence.net

MOTHER JOSEPH
Sisters of Providence

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Sharing the Loaves and Fishes

Sharing the loaves and fishes,
You gave us an image of solidarity with the hungry,
O Lord.
Sharing yourself in the bread and wine,
You called all to the table, O Lord.
Give me the hunger to be a part of the feeding
And the healing of this world.
Nourish me with your Grace,
So I may work with joy to serve your children.
Open my eyes and my heart
To recognize those in poverty
And increase my awareness
Of the structures and systems
That need to be changed
So we may all break bread together.
In your name we pray for the end of hunger.

– Education for Justice

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift today in support of the many ministries of the Sisters of Providence.