

Collaboration

Volume IX Issue II Spring/Summer 2014

Women of Providence Excel!

Sister Denise Wilkinson Recognized as a Woman of Influence

Sister Denise Wilkinson, general superior for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, was named a "Woman of Influence," along with 11 other women. She was nominated by Dr. Dottie King and Dee Reed (from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College) and was honored at an award breakfast on April 10, held on the motherhouse grounds. Funds raised through the event go to the United Way of the Wabash Valley's "Success by 6" program.

Sister Denise attributed the Congregation to playing a significant role in her growth as a woman. "The education provided and the experiences provided have helped me to know

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Sister Denise Wilkinson, SP, received the "Woman of Influence" award on April 10, honoring her leadership and ministry as a Sister of Providence.

Sister Berenice Trachta, a CDP Treasure

As the oldest living Sister of Divine Providence of Texas in the congregation's history, Sister Berenice Trachta has a story to tell at the tender age of 104 years, of which 85 have been as a CDP. Her life story is rooted in her love for her faith and blossomed into many shades of happiness for this positive, energetic icon.



Sister Berenice Trachta

Sr. Berenice taught a total of seven years at the elementary, middle and high school level while pursuing a B.A. in Chemistry. This was followed by an M.A. in Biochemistry from Catholic University and 20 years of teaching science at Our Lady of Lake College (OLLC). One of her most significant accomplishments was being one of the early women in the USA to graduate with Master's and Doctoral degrees in Sacred Theology. She earned the degrees at St. Mary's

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Sister Sandra DeNardis Named 2014 La Roche College Woman of Providence

The La Roche College Woman of Providence Award is given annually at the spring Commencement to a member of the Congregation of Divine Providence who has served the college in a variety of ways over the years and whose life of service is a compelling example of God's Providence made visible.

This year's recipient, educator Sister Sandra DeNardis, is a living example of what it means to be a Woman of Providence for the world. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in education from Duquesne University and a master of science degree in biology from Villanova University. She began her ministry as an elementary school teacher at St. Joseph's in Braddock, PA, and went on to teach at a number



Sister Sandra DeNardis

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From your executive director ...

As I write this page for the newsletter, spring is indeed in the air. I share this poem from Percy B. Shelley to begin:

*And the Spring arose on the garden fair;
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.*

After the cold, snowy winter many of us have had, we certainly welcome spring and the new hope it brings. I look out the windows of the office and there are brighter blue skies, blooming flowers, and the grass is becoming a lush, thick carpet of glowing green. The miracles of new life are everywhere! I love this season that brings about a certain rhythm of grace and opens us to witness transformation before our very eyes.

In this Spring/Summer issue of Collaboration we also witness the gift of life, long years of life, and the rhythm of grace that is a part of the three women whose lives are honored on the front page. We congratulate them for their years of living under the influence of Providence and giving strong witness to others through their ministries. We also see Providence at work as we learn how "Women do Peace", as we look through the pages of 400 Home Children who passed through orphanages, how various Sisters, Associates and children in our schools celebrated Earth day and the International Day of the Child, and the continuing work on the shrine of our Providence woman, St. Mother Theodore Guerin. When we come for the Providence Event in June of 2015 we will all get to experience this "journey of a Saint" firsthand!



Sister Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC executive director

Even as all of this newness of life and grace surrounds us, we also know that we are living in times filled with great conflict, complexity and injustices. We pray for the Nigerian girls to be returned, for the coal miners' families to find comfort in their loss, for the victims of ongoing wars and devastation, and for those families still waiting news of their loved one from the ferry boat tragedy and the missing plane. For some there may never be answers or closure. We open our Provident hearts wide to embrace all these tragedies with compassion and our continued Provident commitment to co-create a world deeply rooted in Gospel values. We are part of one sacred world community... we are called to "birth Providence."

I hope you will find these pages telling the story of just how that birthing happens among our Women of Providence congregations. May you catch and deepen the rhythm of Providence grace in the spring and summer days ahead and give thanks for all!

Barbara



Women of Providence Honored *continued from page 1*

Sister Denise Wilkinson

my skills and develop my gifts and skills in challenging ministries and in a loving community,” Sister Denise said. “In my reception of the award, I acknowledge the role the members of the Congregation have played in shaping me as a woman of ministry and as a woman leader.”

Sister Denise, originally from Chicago, graduated from Saint

Mary-of-the-Woods College, earning a bachelor’s degree in English. She later received a master’s degree in counseling from Saint Louis University. She has ministered as a teacher in Galesburg, IL, St. Louis, MO, and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

Prior to being elected to the Sisters of Providence General Council as vicar in 2001, Sister Denise

served as director of the Mission Advancement office at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, which oversees development, marketing and communications.

She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1963 and professed perpetual vows in 1973. In 2006, she became the 18th General Superior for the Sisters of Providence. She is currently serving her second term.

Sr. Berenice Trachta

College in South Bend, IN, which had the country’s first graduate program in Theology for women, thanks to President Sister Madeleva Wolff, SCS and her personal visit to Pope Pius XII.

Sister Berenice returned to OLLC to teach theology for 27 years. During this period she was asked by San Antonio Archbishop, Robert Lucey, to establish a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) at OLLC to ensure that every Catholic child not enrolled in a

Catholic elementary or high school could be taught in a CCD class by adequately trained catechists. Sister Berenice was very resourceful in finding places to train and teach her potential CCD teachers and did so during the evenings and weekends. Her efforts were influential in preserving the Catholic faith among the Mexican Americans who make up most of the Westside population.

In the 1970s, Sister Berenice began to teach adult Bible study classes at nine different parishes. As she continued for 26 years,

her spirit, energy and willingness remained strong but her eyesight did not, forcing her to retire from this ministry in 2001. Her 92nd birthday party, celebrated at St. Luke’s parish in San Antonio, marked the end of this era for her.

Sister Berenice’s currently resides at McCullough Hall Nursing Center and remains a source of wisdom, delight and humor for those who have the privilege to care for her and who visit with her. Sister Berenice is a living testament of someone who is rooted deeply in her faith.

Sr. Sandra DeNardis

of elementary schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh before moving to secondary education at St. Mary’s in McKees Rocks. Sister Sandra also taught at Canevin High School in Pittsburgh’s South Hills and at St. Basil’s High School in Carrick.

In 1975, Sister Sandra began her relationship with La Roche College when she began teaching biological sciences. In 1979, Sister Sandra took a break from teaching to earn a doctor of arts degree in biological sciences from the University of Illinois in Chicago. She returned to

La Roche in 1982 and, until 1990, was the chair of the natural sciences department and an associate professor of biology. She left La Roche to accept a position as associate professor (with tenure) of anatomy, physiology, and cardiopulmonary physiology at Wheeling Jesuit University.

Of her time at La Roche, Sister Sandra says, “My time at La Roche was filled with so many opportunities, not only to see God’s Providence in the faces and lives of my students, but to bring God’s message to students, as well as to

those with whom I have worked as faculty or on the Board.”

Sister Sandra served on the Community’s Leadership Team from 1995–2001. After her term ended, she devoted herself to working in the Community archives, and was also a part-time volunteer coordinator for Providence Connections, Inc., in Pittsburgh, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

“Journey with a Saint” Shrine update

The permanent shrine for Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, the 8th U.S. Saint as of October 2006, will be complete by the Congregation’s foundation day, October 22, 2014.

A visitor’s “journey with a saint” will begin immediately through the front doors of Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, with a newly designed reception area, including a visual display area focusing on Mother Theodore. If you turn right past reception, you walk by (and hopefully into) the renovated gift shop that will reopen on June 20 as Linden Leaf Gifts.

Linden Leaf Gifts will be larger than its predecessor, The Gift Shop at Providence Center, and will offer new merchandise such as fair trade items, an expanded White Violet Center/alpaca product area, cards and prints featuring new artists and a café near the registers. The café will feature several fair trade coffees and tea as well as Linden Leaf specialty cookies and several other baked goods. It will offer peaceful respite for visitors, tourists and pilgrims. Expanded windows give visitors a bright new look into the gift shop’s offerings and earthy paint and carpet tones remind you that the beautiful Woods are just outside. A transformed online gift shop presence is coming soon.

From Linden Leaf Gifts, a visitor will continue their “journey with a saint” past artifact cases, ministry murals and refreshed dioramas before entering the shrine itself, which is located under the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, between Providence Center and the Church of the Immaculate Conception.



WHITE VIOLET CENTER FOR ECO-JUSTICE

Color & Prayer

at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Saturday, July 3, 2014
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (EDT)

Experience reflection and the world of color, line, shape and imagination. We are all artists and creators. Our inner selves have much to reveal concerning life and the divine. No technical art training necessary. Instructor: Sister Paul Bernadette Bounk, CSJ.
Cost is \$75 (materials and lunch included).
Pre-registration is required.

WhiteVioletCenter
for Eco-Justice
A ministry of the Sisters of Providence
of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

rmorton@spsmw.org • 812-535-2932 • www.WhiteViolet.org



Women Do Peace

You know about best-laid plans? After 10 years of holding great conferences, the Congregation's Healing Violence Committee had sworn off them. But then, a great synergy happened. The committee held a meeting with the International Women's Day reps in Kingston, Ontario, and invited PeaceQuest to join in, and lo and behold ... Women Do Peace emerged. And it was good.

International Women's Day, held on March 8, was active, participatory and engaging. Renowned author Erna Paris was the keynote speaker and she brought breadth and depth to her presentation.

Moving between the tragedy of the Aboriginal women forgotten on the Highway of Tears in British Columbia to the Syrian women caught in a deadly conflict, she spoke of what gives women the "agency" – the ability to act – and what blocks this from developing. Key are empowerment, education, supportive families, economic opportunity and learning empathy.

In the question period following her talk, she was open and unequivocal when she put human rights above other rights, without exception.

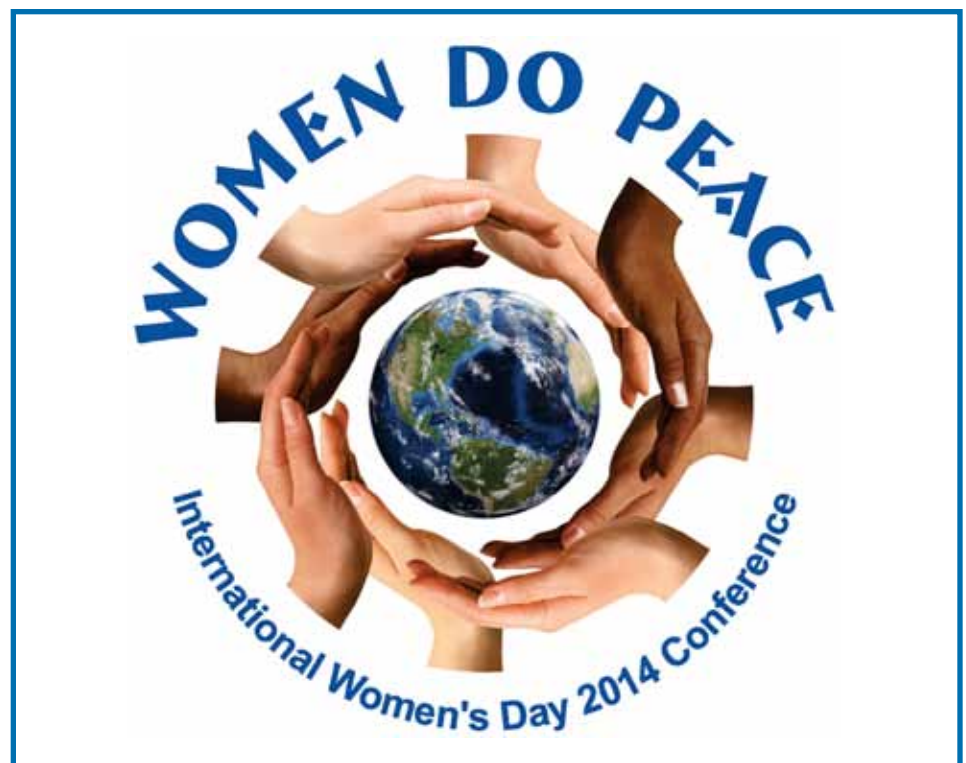
The day opened with a smudge from First Nations' woman Sharon Beaudin, whose workshop on prenatal care and peace in childbirth was inspirational. The inclusive opening ritual of the valiant woman brought our own valiant women to mind. The music by Wendy Luella Perkins opened our voices and gentled our spirits.

Workshops included the spirituality of peace by Dolores Hall of the Providence Spirituality Centre; a cooperative game: Peace in our Time; Sudanese women speaking of war and peace in their country; Canadian women speaking of their charities in Africa where they felt compelled to act; and a storytelling and drama workshop by PeaceQuest.

Asked on the evaluations why they came, participants cited that simply the theme of peace and women doing peace were the big draw. They indicated a need to be involved and surrounded by kindred spirits. And so they were.



*Keynote speaker Erna Paris.
Her address is available at
ernaparis.com*



The 400 ‘Home Children’ Who Passed Through the House of Providence

Between 1870 and the late 1930s over 100,000 “home children” were sent to Canada from Great Britain. Due to the industrial revolution, cities in England in the mid-19th century were overcrowded and living conditions for many poor and destitute adults and children were terrible. Over 50 different charitable and religious agencies participated in what was considered rescuing impoverished children by sending them to Canada where they were received by distributing centres and then placed in homes. Unfortunately, many children were permanently separated from their families and were exploited as domestic servants and farm labour in Canada.

In the summer of 1887, the Sisters of Providence were asked by the Catholic Children’s Protection Society of Liverpool (CCPS) to receive what were described as “English Orphans” and to place them in homes in Canada. The Congregation, which had been looking after local orphans since it was founded in 1861, agreed. From May 1888 to September 1891, the Sisters of Providence received eight groups of English orphans, totalling approximately 400 children aged three to 18 years old.

The Sisters ended their contract with the Catholic Protection Society of Liverpool in 1891 because the Society had begun sending children with developmental and physical disabilities in spite of previous agreements to the contrary. The Sisters had great difficulty

placing these children with foster families. During the years the Sisters received British children, they also continued to run their orphanage for local orphans.

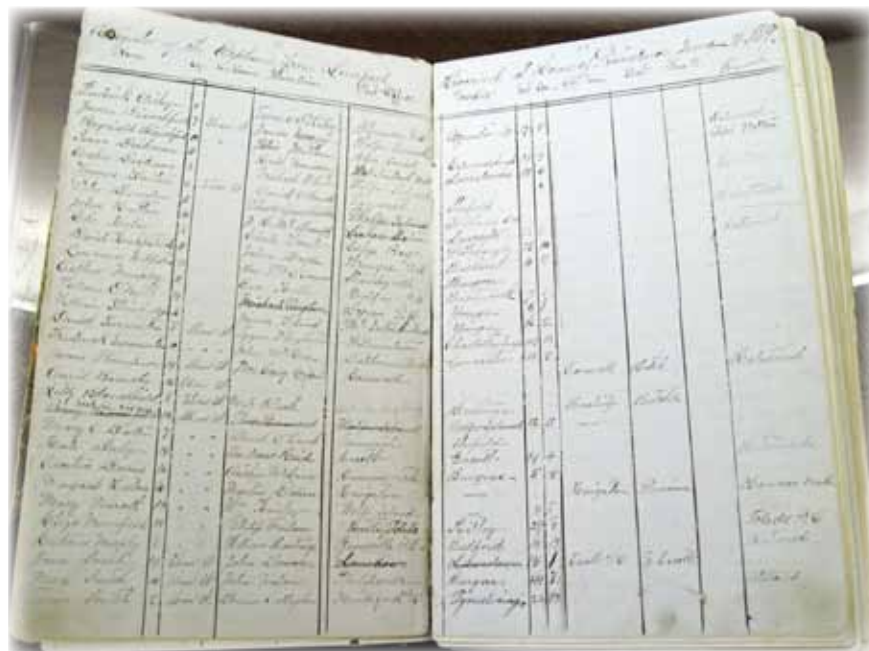
We do not know the fate of most of the home children who passed through the House of Providence.

However, we do know that three home children, who were received by the Sisters of Providence and placed with guardians, returned to the House of Providence as adults. Matilda Marsh, Lillian Blanchfield and Marjorie Wherry entered the Congregation and lived out their lives as Sister Mary George, Sister Mary Angelica and Sister Mary Benita respectively.

Home children have become a major

topic of research for genealogists. Last summer the Kingston branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society transcribed and published the home children registers of the House of Providence in order to make the records more accessible.

The Home Children Records of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Kingston, 1888-1899 contains information on the eight groups of home children who arrived between 1888 and 1891, as well as those children subsequently returned to the Sisters of Providence Orphanage up until 1899. The publication is available for purchase for \$8 from the Kingston Branch OGS, www.ogs.on.ca/kingston.



Pages of the fragile Home Children register of 1888, held by the Congregation’s archives.

CDPs Elect New Provincial

Delegates of the Sisters of Divine Providence gathered for a weekend of prayer, discernment and dialogue the weekend of April 26-28, 2014 to elect their new province leader. The current Provincial, Sr. Fran Moore, will complete her second term at the end of July.

In the presence of Sr. Susan Baumann, the Superior General of the Congregation of Divine Providence who presided over the elections, the fifty-three delegates elected Sr. Alice Gerdeman to lead the province from 2014-2019. A native of Kalida OH, Alice will celebrate her golden jubilee with the community in June before she and her council begin their five year term of province leadership in July.

Education has been a primary focus for Alice throughout her years of ministry. Initially, she served as teacher and principal in elementary schools and eventually extended her focus to young adults at the university level. In each of her ministries, education and advocacy around peace and justice issues surfaced as her passion.

In 1992, she became the Director of the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center, a Cincinnati coalition of faith based organizations who work together to educate around justice issues. In addition to her ministry as Director of the Center, Alice served on the Provincial Council of her community from 1994-1999 and again from 2009-2014



(Left to right) Sister Frances Moore, Provincial; Sister Alice Gerdeman, Provincial Elect; Sister Susan Baumann, Superior General



Keys to the Future to Start Vocations

While engaging in full-time vocation ministry for the Marie de la Roche Province, Sister Lisa Paffrath had the opportunity to participate in Moving Forward in Hope: Keys to the Future, a program sponsored by the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC).

This process for religious congregations was created as a conversational tool to help community members engage in a deeper exchange about the results of the NRVC/CARA study and the implications for apostolic religious life, specifically around the areas of community, visibility, communal prayer, and the celebration of Eucharist as they are experienced in our congregation.

Provincial Director Sister Mary Francis Fletcher asked Sister Lisa to facilitate Keys to the Future in each geographic area of the Province: the Caribbean, Kingston, MA, St. Louis, MO, and Pittsburgh, PA. Sixty-five Sisters and four Associates completed the five-hour process that began with the participants diving deeper into their own personal vocation story, naming the Community's current reality, learning from the NRVC/CARA vocation study, and listening to newer women

and men religious talk about their reality. Participants were challenged to ensure that religious life exists as a possible option for the future.

"Keys to the Future generated wonderful energy among the participants," Sister Lisa reported, "and I look forward to taking part in implementing the bold, courageous, concrete next steps the participants have proposed."

She went on to say, the late CDP "Sister Joan Albaugh often commented that 'We are more together than individually.' I believe that no one member can carry out the needs and demands

of vocation ministry. Vocation ministry is about relationship, and when every member and Associate of the Province engages wholeheartedly in vocation ministry, our scarcity will be turned to abundance by our Provident God!"



Toy cars and maps helped to convey the journey being taken during the Keys to the Future workshop.

CDP Representatives at National Catholic Sisters Week

National Catholic Sisters Week was celebrated March 8–14 as part of Women’s History Month. The initiative was part of a national campaign to raise awareness of women religious, made possible by a \$3.3 million grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Rosemarie Nassif, SSND, director of The Catholic Sisters Initiative, proposed a plan to the Foundation to raise the visibility of women religious and was instrumental in obtaining the grant.

The weekend of March 7–9 was the inaugural event at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN, that brought together college-age women and women religious from various congregations. The objective of the event was to form a network of the two groups and to engage young women in conversations about religious life and the use of social media in promoting vocations. Broadcast journalist Soledad O’Brien led a panel discussion on discernment called “Sisters Stories: How Did I Know?” The young college women will connect

with a Sister to record her untold story, thus creating a thread of oral histories throughout the congregations.

Sisters Elena Almendárez and Karina Conrad attended the inaugural event at St. Catherine University with two La Roche College students, Sydney Harsh and Stephanie Wizorek. La Roche College, located in McCandless Township, PA, is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Sister Maria Clara Kreis also attended the event with a student from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Upon returning from Minnesota, Sister Elena said, “Although there was a foot of snow on the ground outside, the spirit and affection of the many students and Sisters shared within the University brought warmth to the weekend. We look forward to collecting the oral histories of Catholic Sisters to preserve the blessing and inspiration they have been and continue to be.”



(Left to right) Sister Karina Conrad, La Roche students Sydney Harsh and Stephanie Wizorek, and Sister Elena Almendárez attend the National Catholic Sisters Week inaugural weekend.

Earth Day Events at Providence Heights

With Creation as the theme for this year's Earth Day, the Marie de la Roche Province held small celebrations each Tuesday throughout April.

On April 8, food service provider SAGE baked sugar cookies and decorated them with chocolate and white icing to depict the first day of Creation—*day and night*; on April 15, peat pots were distributed to celebrate the third day of Creation—*seed-bearing trees and plants*; and on April 22, bags of Goldfish-brand crackers and small packs of gummy bears candy were distributed to celebrate the fifth and sixth days of Creation—*fish of the sea/creatures of the land*.

On April 29, an Earth Day prayer service was held in Mother of Divine Providence Chapel. Sister Betty Sundry led everyone in the opening prayer, and Rebekah Hill, liturgist and director of music, accompanied us on the piano and led us in song. An Alpha School student from each grade then read from the Creation play while students from that class paraded around the chapel depicting that particular day. The service closed with a Litany of Confession (based on Matthew 6:9–13), a prayer, and a song.



Alpha School students participate in the Earth Day prayer service at Providence Heights.

The International Day of the Child

On April 16, 2014, Sisters of Divine Providence in Querétaro, Mexico, along with co-workers, volunteers and friends, celebrated the International Day of the Child and the first anniversary of the first Mobile School in Mexico.

Mobile School is an international movement based in Belgium whose purpose is to reach out to children of the streets to educate them in basic life skills and promote their self-esteem.

Three members of the CDP community work with the “*escuelita*” and the project is funded by Alvida, an organization whose chief focus is to provide food aid to those in need. Another CDP Sister works with Alvida in the food program.

The stories of the street children are, of course, very touching. Five or six year olds are left on the street to care for one year old siblings while parents are either working or otherwise engaged. Very young children provide support for their families by washing car windshields 12 hours a day. Teenagers on the streets often get into substance abuse and gangs.

The little Mobile School cart on the street six afternoons a week is a place of respite where youngsters, and even the not so young, can come to learn, play and to talk with adults who they are sure will always treat them with respect.

Happy Birthday, Escuela Móvil Querétaro.



Earth Day at Providence Place

Earth Day came a little later than originally planned for the enthusiastic contingent of workers representing Providence Place's May 2nd efforts to collect the winter buildup of litter lining Whitney Avenue in West Springfield, near the entrance of Providence Place. The environmentally minded group originally intended to tackle the task on April 16, well before the April 22 official celebration of Earth Day.

Disappointingly, a surprise overnight snowfall covered the land and thwarted their plans. When the group re-assembled on May 2, their 16-member party included Sister Kathleen Popko, President of the Sisters of Providence; Sister Mary Caritas, the Congregation's Special Projects and Advocacy Coordinator; Sister Mary Horgan, Co-Director of Providence Associates; and four Congregational employees.

Richard Pelland, Providence Place's Executive Director and Roger Korell, Director of Facilities Operations, directed the project and were joined in their



Sisters Kathleen Popko (left) and Mary Horgan

efforts by eight members of the Providence Place staff. It was a bright, sunny, slightly cool day without a snowflake in sight!

The group was outfitted with reflective safety vests, garden work gloves, rakes, shovels and grabbers. In the end, 16 bags of litter were loaded onto the bed of a battery operated truck for proper disposal by the Maintenance Department.

Referring to this and future efforts, Pelland said, "Providence Place's Spirit Committee will continue to identify community activities that benefit our own retirement community and its surrounding neighborhood."

Other environmentally friendly projects spearheaded by Providence Place Administration and staff include coordinating proper disposal of batteries, computer toners, and fluorescent light bulbs. Providence Place also collects metal, recycles paper, bottles, and cans. Its Coffee Shop has moved away from using paper products.



The clean-up volunteers take a well deserved break!

Total Experience of Nature and the Creation Story

What could be more thrilling than holding a baby black bear in your arms? For Sister Elizabeth Oleksak, not much. “It was the highlight of my 81 years,” she says, of the unique experience she enjoyed last March while on a state research expedition. The research party included state wildlife biologists and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and Richard Sullivan, environmental affairs secretary. Richard is Sister Elizabeth’s nephew by marriage.

The expedition gathered data on the Commonwealth’s black bear population by locating a previously tagged bear in the Belchertown woods, sedating her and retrieving her five-week old baby cub for study. The cooing female cub Sister Elizabeth cradled in her arms was a little over six pounds, and shivered slightly from the cold. Mama bear, a bit heavier than last year, tipped the scales at 240 pounds.

Robert Taylor, Mass Wildlife Connecticut Valley Supervisor, said mother and child are in great health. Officials look forward to following the two bears for years to come.

For Sister Elizabeth, her subsequent visit to the state’s nearby fishery with its trout and salmon made the whole day “a powerful, total experience of nature.”

“You really get to see the complete inter-connectedness among the species,” she said. “For example, salmon possess phosphorous nu-



Sister Elizabeth and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick



trients that bears need. So, when the salmon swim upstream, the bears catch and eat them and then excrete the nutrients the trees and plants need to produce oxygen.

After learning of the salmon-bear-tree-human cycle, Sr. Eliza-

beth summarized it by saying that, “There is no other way to put it. The day was a powerful, extraordinary, total experience of nature and the creation story.”

A First: Blessed Emilie Gamelin Parish

The new Blessed Emilie Gamelin Parish celebrated a joyful Eucharist on Sunday, January 12, in Saint Lin Laurentides, Diocese of Joliet, Quebec. The pastor, Father Wilson Ramirez Angel, led the members of the two former parishes, Saint Lin and Saint Callixte, into one combined faith community.

The many Sisters of Providence welcomed to the event included the three sisters who minister at Saint Lin, Sisters Monique Lauzon,

Simonne Lachance, and Thérèse Vallée; others who have lived or worked in the area; members of the provincial and general leadership teams; as well as active Providence Associates.

Thanks to promotion by the local sisters and Providence Associates, the parishioners voted for the name of a patroness who shared their own history. In another age they would have been her neighbors, friends, and fellow parishioners!

visited Montreal and the Providence International Centre to better know Emilie's life and work. At the end of Mass, he installed her relic on a side altar of the church.

Women, men, young people, and families with children actively participated in the dedication liturgy. Their devotion and affection for Blessed Emilie gave a spirit of freshness to the Mass. The pastor's inclusive manner showed itself in his invitation to Sisters Karin Dufault, Annette Noël, and Mary Kaye Nealen to offer their thanks in the community's three main languages.

The architecture of the church, built between 1887 and 1890, and its well-preserved state make it a jewel within the province and the wider church. If you have the opportunity to visit the first parish to bear the name of Blessed Emilie Gamelin, here is the contact information: 235 12th Avenue, Saint-Lin-Laurentides, Quebec. Tel.: 450 439-2210.



Sister Yvette Demers, SP, followed by the General Leadership Team carried a statue of Blessed Emilie Gamelin.

Sister Yvette Demers, as secretary of the Office for the Cause of Emilie Gamelin, carried a statue of Blessed Emilie in the entrance possession.

The previous week Father Ramirez had



SPs present at the ceremony.

Rededication, Blessing of St. Joseph of the Flood Statue Finds a Home at St. Joseph Residence

On March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, a statue of this patron saint of Mother Joseph and of St. Joseph Residence found its way back to the sisters for a blessing and rededication ceremony. Engraved on its base is “St. Joseph of the Flood, of June 1894”. The concrete statue’s journey has been a remarkable one since it was crafted by Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart in thanksgiving for St. Joseph’s protection after the devastating flood of the Columbia River in June 1894. History records that flood as the highest ever recorded along the Columbia River, measured at 34.4 feet at Vancouver, WA, on June 7, 1894.

The short history is that the four-foot statue was installed on top of the sisters’ farmhouse in 1895 and remained there for several years. In the 1930s it was placed on a pillar in the garden of the nurses’ home at St. Joseph Hospital, where it stayed until the hospital was sold to the Vancouver community. In late 2012, the hospital’s new sponsors, Peace-Health, were cleaning out a storage area and offered to return the statue to the Providence Archives or it would be disposed of. Today, after the careful research and restoration work led by the Providence Archives, the statue and its story are secure for future generations.

For more information, go to www.providence.org/archives and select the Past Forward link on the left side of the homepage.



***St. Joseph of the Flood statue,
created by Mother Joseph in 1895***

Foundresses, Community's History in Stained Glass Welcome Renton Visitors



**Statue of foundress
Blessed Emilie Gamelin**

It took just a few minutes on April 10 to complete a mini-pilgrimage at the entrance of the Renton, WA, offices that house Providence Health & Services (PH&S) and the Sisters of Providence Provincial Administration, but it represented a journey of 171 years.

First stop was the statue of foundress Blessed Emilie Gamelin in front of the main building in the office complex. Second was a larger than life statue mold of Mother Joseph inside the building's foyer. The final stop was a surprise: the unveiling by PH&S CEO Rod Hochman, MD, of a stained-glass artwork that represents the heritage of the sisters and their ministries in the past, present and future.

The stained-glass artwork installed in the Charles E. Hawley Conference Center reveals the rich history of the Sisters of Providence since Blessed Emilie Gamelin



**Larger-than-life statue mold
of a kneeling Mother Joseph.**

began the religious community in 1843 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The piece is a gift from the leadership of Providence Health & Services to the Sisters of Providence and all the caregivers of Providence. It was inspired by the stained-glass mural in the Providence International Centre in Montreal.



The stained-glass artwork recounts the history of the Sisters of Providence.

Sisters in the Philippines Become Part of Mother Joseph Province

Effective May 17, the last day of the General Leadership Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, the three sisters of Our Lady of Providence Vice Province became part of Mother Joseph Province. Sisters Julia (Julie) Macasieb, Dalisay (Beth) Rayray and Lucila (Lucy) Vasquez were welcomed the following afternoon in a joyous celebration at St. Joseph Residence, Seattle.

The change is the result of a lengthy discernment process begun in 2013 regarding the future of the Sisters of Providence in the Philippines. Five Sisters of Providence originally arrived in Manila on October 14, 1989, after the Philippine Sector was established on August 1, 1989. It later became a vice-province. As outlined by General Superior Karin Dufault in a communication to members of the religious community, factors taken into consideration included the small number of sisters in the Philippines, the ministry needs that exist there, and the sisters' passion and commitment to being a Providence presence through collaboration and networking. There also is a desire for continued promotion of vocations in the region.

The outcome is that the three sisters in the Philippines will become a local community of Mother Joseph Province, "while at the same time maintaining the long-standing supportive relationship with Holy Angels Province (in Edmonton)," Sister Karin wrote. "They want to retain the 'Philippine-ness' of mission, that is, inculturation of the



Sister Julia



Sister Lucila

mission through Filipino eyes, setting realistic priorities for ministry."

These three sisters are not the only new members of Mother Joseph Province (MJP). On May 1, two sisters from Bernarda Morin Province in Chile officially joined MJP. Sisters Marcia Gatica and Marisol Avila requested and received permission for this change. "Let us rejoice with Sister Marisol and Sister Marcia as they live their call in whatever way God will lead them into ministry now and into the future," Provincial Superior Judith Desmarais said in a letter to the sisters of Mother Joseph Province.

Congratulations and welcome to all of the province's new members!



Sister Dalisay

WPC VFL Gathering

The WPC Vocation/Formation/Leadership Gathering was held March 12-16, 2014, at Kearns Spirituality Center, Allison Park, PA. The Theme of this particular gathering was: Abundance/Scarcity through the Lens of Providence. Michele Bisbey, CDP, was the presenter.

There were two conferences on Friday, March 14 with time for discussion among the participants and with the presenter. These presentations gave the attendees a richer and deeper understanding of Providence by looking at images both personally and communally as well as in various Scriptures.

The Vocation/Formation and Leadership Liaisons from most of the WPC member congregations were present and also held their business meeting, made plans for the next initial formation gathering following the Providence Event in 2015, and completed work on their VFL charter to be sent for approval to the Governing Board. During this gathering they also made plans for their 2016 gathering which will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Because their meeting coincided with Kearns Spirituality Center's program and celebration of St. Patrick's Day, the VFL group had fun attending the Irish Tea on Thursday and met in their individual focus groups



on Saturday, concluding with an open mic reporting and sharing time. The business meeting finished on Sunday morning and the conference closed with a ritual of blessing and farewell to some members moving out of the VFL ministry.



WPC Governing Board Meeting

The Women of Providence Governing Board met in Seattle, WA, on February 25-26, 2014. At this meeting the Governing Board completed a revision of the by-laws with a re-writing of one of the Articles and some minor editorial changes to a few of the others. The Board also approved the final revisions of the WPC Investment Policy, as well as two other minor operating policies.

The Governing Board also dealt with the Year End Financial Report, a discussion of dues, plans and the budget for Providence Event 2015, plans and updates on all the writing projects, publications, and their timelines, and the completion of next year's 2014-2015 budget.

Executive Director reports were presented by Sister Barbara McMullen which included updates on all of the activities of the WPC office. Also included in this meeting was the annual performance review of the Executive Director by the WPC Executive Committee with the input from the total board.

The meeting concluded with a blessing ritual for outgoing Board members Fran Moore, CDP and Carmen Sanchez, MCDP followed by a delightful dinner.



The executive committee members (left to right) are, front row: Kathleen Popko, SP--Chair, Denise Wilkinson, SP--Vice-Chair; back row: Ann Petrus, CDP--Secretary, Karin Dufault, SP--Treasurer



The board members (left to right) are, front row: Fran Moore, CDP, Barb McMullen, CDP, Judy Desmarais, SP; back row: Sandra Shannon, SP, Ann Petrus, CDP, Mary Francis Fletcher, CDP, Kathleen Popko, SP, Annette Noel, SP, Karin Dufault, SP and Denise Wilkinson, SP.



Providence Event News



June 19-21, 2015
St. Mary-of-the-Woods

The Providence Event Core Planning Team met in May by Oovoo to continue planning for the June 19-21, 2015 Providence Event. The theme is: *“Birthing Providence....the Universe is Pregnant with God.”* Speaker Ilia Delio, OSF, is the main presenter and will do presentations on Friday morning and afternoon, with time for interaction with participants. She will again address the group on Saturday morning. In the afternoon there will be two breakout session choices, followed by an evening celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Women of Providence in Collaboration. A special program of remembrance with a delightful dessert will be enjoyed by all participants. Don't miss the fun, the friends, the festivities! Registration materials will be distributed in September!
Watch for more details!

Future Dates/Coming Events

2014

WPC Editorial Board meeting: June 11 (Oovoo meeting)

WPC Executive Committee meeting: November 3-5 Genesis Retreat Center, Westfield, MA

2015

WPC Providence Event Core Team Meeting: January 23-Jan. 25, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

WPC Governing Board meeting: March 17-18, Sisters of Providence International Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

WPC Providence Event Core Team Meeting: June 17 through Event, June 21

WPC Associate Leadership meeting: June 18, (day before Providence Event) at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN.

WPC Initial Formation Gathering: June 21-23, (after Providence Event) at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

2016

WPC VFL Conference: March 30 - April 3, Providence Renewal Center, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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Member Congregations: **Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence**, Allison Park, PA ♦ **Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence**, Melbourne, KY ♦ **Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence**, San Antonio, TX
Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Wakefield, RI ♦ **Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence**, San Antonio, TX ♦ **Oblate Sisters of Providence**, Baltimore, MD ♦ **Sisters of Providence**, Holyoke, MA ♦ **Sisters of Providence**, Montreal, QC, Canada ♦ **Sisters of Providence (Emilie-Gamelin Province)**, Montreal, QC, Canada
Sisters of Providence, Seattle/Spokane, WA ♦ **Sisters of Providence**, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN ♦ **Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul**, Kingston, ON, Canada ♦ **Sisters of Providence**, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada