

Volume 21.3 Winter 2018

NEWS

A Publication of THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Red Hill Farm

A Sustainable Oasis for
Community, Solitude, and
Organic Food

Also in this issue:

- A Place for Peace and Nourishment for Body and Soul
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

Commitment Statement

We recommit ourselves to “rebuilding the Church” by living the passion of the Gospel in the discerning spirit of our Franciscan charism and tradition.

We are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.

We desire to reflect this commitment in our dialogue with the entire Church, in our own governing structures, and in our relationship with one another as sister.

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, choose to live the Gospel in the prophetic spirit of Francis of Assisi and our Foundress Mother Francis Bachmann. With Jesus Christ as Brother, we live as sister with one another, with the entire human family and with all creation. Calling ourselves and one another to continuous conversion of heart, we commit ourselves to a life of contemplation, poverty and humility.

As vowed women of the Church, we respond with diverse gifts in a spirit of collaboration and of mutual service to the needs of others, especially the economically poor, the marginal and the oppressed. Seeking to participate in the Spirit’s action in the world, we direct our personal and corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Filled with trust in the goodness of God, we move forward.

POINT OF VIEW

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis writes, “Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river, and mother earth.” He concludes, “The earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone.”



**Sister Mary Kathryn Dougherty, OSF
Congregational Minister**

In this issue of Good News we read of two small locations where the land is nurtured and a bond of affection among people is fostered, creating cooperative community in these sacred spaces. Red Hill Farm, a community supported organic farm in Aston, Pennsylvania, is owned and supported by the sisters. The earth is nurtured and the fields harvested with love by Margaret Lilley, farm manager, and Joanne Rosenbaum, farm education coordinator, as well as other staff members and numerous volunteers. When the members come to gather the week’s produce, they enjoy the beauty of the land; picking flowers, herbs, and berries; and often, the delightful laughter of children. Conversations abound and relationships are cultivated. There is joy in being together and appreciating the abundance of God’s creation.

Across the country in Tacoma, Washington, dwells another haven, Hermitage Place—a retreat house established by Sisters Carol Ann Warnke and Carmel Gregg. As spiritual directors, they have created a sanctuary for those seeking spiritual renewal. In the quiet and peace, their guests experience warm hospitality, beautiful gardens, and a sacred space to encounter God along their journeys. The tenderness and care shared at Hermitage Place do not stay there. From this quiet refuge of beauty and solitude is a bridge to justice. Sisters Carol Ann and Carmel go forth serving their neighborhood and community in a variety of ways.

As we journey in life, may we allow ourselves to be renewed often by the beauty of God’s creation and actively nurture our earth for future generations.

Blessings,

Sister Mary Kathryn Dougherty, OSF

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Red Hill Farm is a six-acre CSA located in Aston, Pennsylvania, that is owned and supported by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Red Hill Farm provides produce for 120 members as well as for the sisters themselves. Since its inception Red Hill Farm has utilized organic practices, a commitment that goes hand in hand with the sisters' corporate stand on care for creation.

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Hermitage Place in Tacoma, Washington, run by Sisters Carol Ann Warnke and Carmel Gregg, offers a welcome getaway for people looking for time out from everyday life to deepen their relationship with God. While the retreat house offers visitors nourishment for the soul, the sprawling garden with produce, flowers, and berries offers nourishment of a different sort.

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The purpose of *Good News* is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia by sharing the good news of the congregation with our friends, family, companions, and sisters. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and invite others to become involved in our mission.

Good News is published three times a year (spring, summer, winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at address above.

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Red Hill Farm

Red Hill Farm manager Margaret Lilley plants in the hoop house. This greenhouse structure provides season-extending warmth and protection for crops. An active six-acre CSA, Red Hill Farm offers over 30 types of vegetables plus a variety of fruits, cut flowers, and herbs.



A Sustainable Oasis for Community, Solitude, and Organic Food



Farm share owners are welcomed each visit and have the opportunity to purchase additional items such as honey, eggs, and humanely raised meat from local purveyors.

“OUR COMMUNITY IS OUR MEMBERS AND OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR FAMILIES, AND OUR FRIENDS.”

It's a sunny July morning at Red Hill Farm and the place is buzzing with activity. Members of the community supported agriculture farm (CSA) are picking up their shares of produce for the week—filling their bags, baskets, and boxes with Swiss chard, peppers, zucchini, tomatoes, basil, and green beans. Some children play in the fields or in the children's garden while others help their parents gather the food they will take home. As folks collect their spoils, many stop to chat with one another or with farm manager Margaret Lilley (whom everyone refers to simply as “Lilley”) to share news, recipes, and gardening tips. Nearby a group gathers to watch the farm's education coordinator, Joanne Rosenbaum, demonstrate various ways to prepare fennel, one of the week's lesser-known vegetables. “Our community is our members and our members are our neighbors, our families, and our friends,” Lilley explained.



Sister Joan Kollis (left) enjoys working with farm manager Margaret Lilley, full-time farmer Justin Lebo, and education coordinator Joanne Rosenbaum who serve as the backbone of Red Hill Farm.

Now in its 18th year, Red Hill Farm is a six-acre CSA located in Aston, Pennsylvania, that is owned and supported by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. One of the sisters' many environmental initiatives, Red Hill Farm provides produce for 120 members as well as for the sisters themselves. Members purchase farm shares and receive a weekly supply of fresh produce, including 30 types of vegetables and a variety of U-pick crops like berries, cut flowers, and herbs. The farm also recently added about 50 fruit trees which are just beginning to bear fruit.

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Asher and Bryleigh Williams help to gather their grandmother's share. The farm's approximately 120 member families utilize the lion's share of the crops at Red Hill. Those not taken home by members are often used for meals in Our Lady of Angels Convent.

Red Hill Farm is a place where people can connect with the fruits of the earth as well as with each other. Franciscan volunteers like Theresa Kennedy have the opportunity to minister among the wonderful staff and volunteers at the farm, including Sister Monica Bauer.



Diane Scott cuts her own basil and fresh flowers to brighten up her home.



“IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE SUSTAINABLE WHICH MEANS THAT THE ACTIONS WE TAKE TODAY CANNOT HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

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Members pick up produce once a week—either on Tuesday or Friday from June through November—and receive a share of whatever was harvested that week. Winter shares are available as well with pick-up every other week from mid-December through the end of March. In addition to produce grown on the farm, members have the opportunity to purchase other locally produced items such as honey, eggs, and humanely raised meat.

Farming Organically

Since its inception, Red Hill Farm has utilized organic practices, a commitment that goes hand in hand with the sisters' corporate stand on care for creation. As part of the environmental initiative, the sisters promote sustainability and, of course, the farm implements this belief in numerous ways. “It is our responsibility to be sustainable which means that the actions we take today cannot have a negative impact for future generations,” said Lilley. “That means no synthetic fertilizer and no pesticides. We mainly try to nurture the soil. We use cover crops and compost which keeps the soil rich and healthy. We manage pests through crop rotation and physical barriers and we plant flowers that attract beneficial insects.” Other sustainable practices at Red Hill Farm include harvesting rain water for use in irrigation and utilizing solar panels to produce all the electricity used on the farm.

Red Hill Farm allows community members to connect with the source of their food and

to “eat locally,” a practice that produces food that tastes better and has more nutrients than food that has traveled long distances and sat on distribution center and grocery store shelves before making its way to the table. Eating locally also supports the local community, maintains regional farmland, and gives people confidence that their food is being grown in a manner about which they can feel good. “I enjoy showing people how their food is grown which is something most people are pretty far removed from these days,” said Lilley. “They start to get a real sense of eating with the seasons. You're not going to get a tomato from the farm in the middle of December.”

Tara Bledsoe and her family have been members of Red Hill Farm since 2010 when they moved to the Philadelphia area from Massachusetts. Tara chose Red Hill Farm for a variety of reasons, including the ability to pick up her share at the farm itself, the availability of U-pick crops, and the opportunity to get to know the farmers who were growing her food. “I grew up on a farm in New York State and all my early memories are from my time on that farm,” said Tara. “I want my kids to have that farm feel, to know where their food is coming from.”

“The sisters feel strongly about showing people how their food is grown,” Lilley added. “It is amazing to watch as people realize how certain things are planted and harvested—people who didn't realize that potatoes grow underground or that garlic is propagated by planting the cloves.”



Lilley and Sister Joan check the ripening peaches. Fruit trees are new to the farm and are just beginning to bear fruit.

Working The Land

Work on the farm is a perpetual endeavor. In late winter and early spring, activity begins in the potting shed with the sowing of seeds. As plants begin to grow, they are taken to the high tunnel greenhouses until the weather allows for outdoor planting. Summer is filled with weeding, irrigating, and harvesting—along with continued seeding and transplanting to ensure a continual source of fresh produce. Toward the end of summer, Lilley begins planning

for the winter shares with crops like beets, carrots, parsnips, radishes, kale, chard, and arugula which are harvested straight from the high tunnels. Once fall arrives, it is time to clear the fields and plant cover crops which serve to slow erosion, improve soil health, smother weeds, and help control pests and diseases.

Lilley, Joanne, and Justin Lebo work year round at Red Hill Farm. In addition, a dedicated team of volunteers fill a vital need for additional people-hours on the farm. Some *continued on page 8*



Justin Lebo, a full-time farmer, spends his days tending to the land and the crops and preparing items for pick up by members. Here he displays fresh picked corn from another local farm.



The farm is also a place to connect. In the fall members gather for a farm-to-table dinner, complete with a multi-course menu and live music. It is a fun-filled event that many members look forward to all season.

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members volunteer on the farm just for the love of it and others participate in a work-share membership that provides them with a farm share in exchange for 100 hours of work during the season. Among the volunteers is Sister Joan Kollis who enjoys being part of the farm team. “I am glad that the congregation has the farm and I really love working there,” said Sister Joan. “The only gardening I had done before was with some flowers around the house so I have learned from the ground up. Lilley and the rest of the team have been so helpful.”

Spreading The Word

Education is an important component of the mission of Red Hill Farm. Joanne is in charge of the many educational events at the farm as well as for community outreach activities. On pick-up days, folks can find her in the children’s garden teaching children about organic farming, leading expeditions to find and identify bugs with magnifying glasses, or showing off the farm’s monarch butterfly habitat. “Ever since they were tiny, my kids have been picking and watering vegetables and



Joanne Rosenbaum checks on the peppers. The workers use techniques such as crop rotation to avoid using harmful chemicals and pesticides on the growing crops. The result is local, fresh, organic food that tastes as good as it looks.

“The sisters have a great connection with the farm and support it in so many ways,” Lilley added. “Of course, there is the financial piece but they also volunteer at the farm, they talk about it in the community, and some even buy a share for their local convent.” When there is an abundance of produce, the extra food goes to the motherhouse. The dining staff make little signs to let people know that what they are eating came from the farm.

watching the monarchs,” Tara said. “It’s been wonderful.”

In the springtime it is not uncommon to see big yellow school buses pull up and unload students from Drexel Neumann Academy who visit the farm several times throughout the growing season. Many of the children, who come from inner-city Chester, have never seen a farm before and really enjoy the experience. Joanne has developed a special relationship with the



Joanne Rosenbaum delights in educating people about food, including how to cook it properly (above), how to use some of the lesser-known crops (right, showing how to properly cut fennel), and how to grow it yourself (right, as seen here with third graders from inner-city Chester who are enjoying their first trip to a farm).



third grade class; twice a month she travels to the school to teach students about nutrition, the science of farming, and care for the environment. The children start their own plants from seed and transfer them into the ground at the farm when they are ready. “When the children are here, I talk to them about rain barrels and solar panels and they are very interested,” Joanne explained. “Of course, they also just love being outside running around, smelling the herbs. And that’s important, too.” Joanne also leads age-appropriate farm tours for community groups, other local schools and universities, and gives educational lectures for members on such things as GMOs and pollinators.

Building A Community

It’s not just children who are inspired by being on the farm. Many adults find that Red Hill Farm is a place where they feel happy and at peace. “It is a very uplifting atmosphere,” Lilley said. “There is the beauty of nature, lots of families, kids running around, and people asking questions about their gardens or sharing recipes. It’s simply a lovely place to be.” Mimi Hall, a farm member and volunteer for the past 16 years, couldn’t agree more. “When I turn down the farm lane, I think of it as another opportunity to contribute in some small way to the healing of the planet and the people,” Mimi explained. “Over the years I have learned a lot about organic farming and I’ve been able to pass that along to my family and friends which has been very satisfactory for me.”

In addition to the business of growing and distributing produce and teaching the community about organic farming, Red Hill Farm organizes and runs a variety of events that engage members and foster community. Spring kicks off with a plant sale and open house. June features a “meet & greet” for members, complete with live music, beverages from a local brewery or winery, and games for the children. July boasts a visit from the Wild & Scenic Film Festival Tour—a national platform for environmental advocacy. In September members gather in a field at the farm to take part in a farm-to-table dinner. “The farm-to-table dinner is just magical. My husband and I go every year,” Tara said. “It’s like they turn the farm into Tuscany. There is a long table, twinkle lights, background music, and the food is incredible. They know how to make it really special.”

Joanne captured the feelings of all those involved with Red Hill Farm when she said, “So many people are very attached to the farm and I am definitely one of them. It’s like we have farm groupies. They love being in nature, watching things grow, talking about good environmental practices, bringing their children to help pick, and socializing with other members. Red Hill Farm is truly an oasis—a gift that the sisters have given to our local community.”

For more information on Red Hill Farm or to become a member call (610) 558-6799 or visit: www.redhillfarm.org. ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Join a CSA and share in the bounty of your local harvest. Being a CSA member takes the guesswork out of eating seasonally. Just pick up your share each week and enjoy delicious produce all season long.
- Check out your local farmers’ market for fresh, seasonal produce. Not only will you be rewarded with tasty fruits, vegetables, and herbs, but you will also be doing your part in helping your local food economy.
- Switch to organic practices in your own home garden. Find alternatives to synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, make your own compost, rotate your crops, collect rainwater, and weed by hand.
- Cook with fresh fruits and vegetables that may be new to you. Swap recipes with friends or search the internet for ways to prepare unfamiliar items.
- Remember to teach the young people in your life about the source of their food. Growing plants from seed, tending a garden, or visiting a farm helps build children’s understanding of how their food began, promotes healthy eating habits, and provides a greater understanding of the environmental impact of organic farming and local eating.



It has become a tradition for our Muslim friends and our sisters to gather for a group photo around the sculpture of St. Francis.



WASHINGTON, DC

Sister Maria Orlandini recently participated in an action hosted by the Poor People’s Campaign. The organization’s website describes their efforts as “40 days of moral fusion,” each focusing on a specific issue stemming from wealth inequality, racism, and climate change.” Sister Maria joined the group’s civil disobedience action on May 29 to draw attention to that particular week’s theme of “Veterans, Militarism, and War Economy.” Describing her own experience and explaining her rationale for joining with the Poor People’s Campaign, she said, “Thirty-nine of us were arrested in front of Senator McConnell’s office at the Capitol. I felt I needed to protest an economy that is too much based on military spending.”

Who are the ‘Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia’?

Through this section we hope to share a glimpse of our congregation and the individuals who make real its mission.



Sister Maria Orlandini (right) stands at the U.S. Capitol in support of people who are victims of an economy based on military spending.



PENNSYLVANIA

Our relationship with our Muslim friends from the Zubaida Foundation continues to grow as we share with one another various aspects of our faith traditions. In June we met at Our Lady of Angels Convent. Sister Anne Amati opened the program with a presentation on “The Universal Call to Holiness: The Ordinary and the Extraordinary.” She distinguished the difference between “ordinarily holy people” and “extraordinarily holy people” and described the impact of Vatican II which emphasized the universal call to holiness. She focused, however, on individuals who have been officially recognized and canonized as saints by the Catholic Church and outlined the steps leading to official canonization. Sister Marie Lucey addressed the historical background against which Archbishop Oscar Romero, slated for canonization in October, lived and died. Sister Maria Orlandini then shared the story of Archbishop Romero’s life and his evolving participation in seeking justice for his people. She utilized clips from the film, *Romero*, in which we saw in detail “how conversion happens.” Following Sister Maria’s presentation, Sister Kate O’Donnell asked our Muslim guests if they had anything similar to share. After a discussion period, we shared dinner and conversation with our guests.



WASHINGTON

Transitions is one of our cosponsored ministries in Spokane. One of its latest endeavors to help women is Home Yard Cottages which will provide low-income housing for 24 women and their families. The cottages vary in size ranging from a studio apartment type to one that is more like a three bedroom apartment. Each cottage comes with the basics—washer, dryer, beds, stove, and refrigerator. The women who will move into the cottages will be women from the various Transitions programs—Miriam’s House, the Transitional Living Center, and Women’s Hearth.

Sister Marie Lucey is honored to shake Pope Francis' hand and to ask him to pray for those suffering in the world. She described the experience as a "uniquely moving moment and encounter."



ITALY

Sister Marie Lucey, associate director of Franciscan Action Network, and Patrick Carolan, executive director, traveled to Rome and Assisi for viewings and discussions on *The Sultan and the Saint*, a docudrama on the encounter between St. Francis and the Sultan during the Crusades. They also attended a general audience with Pope Francis. Describing the experience, Sister Marie wrote, "Shaking hands with Pope Francis was not on my bucket list because it seemed beyond the realm of possibility. But on May 9, thanks to Patrick and an Argentinian collaborator, Tomas, there I was in the front row when Pope Francis made his way around the perimeter of the dais after his Wednesday general audience. As I waited, I prayed for family, community, friends, and all suffering people, especially those treated unjustly. I also mentally practiced a few words in my limited Spanish: 'My name is Sister Marie, a Franciscan from the U.S. Please pray for us.' When I held the hand of Pope Francis for the brief encounter, what struck me was his presence to me and to each person he met in the moment of meeting. He looked directly at me as he responded. I think he said he prays for us. I know he said as he always does, 'And don't forget to pray for me.' It was a uniquely moving moment, and encounter for which I am very grateful."



FLORIDA

A recent article in the *Panama City News Herald* covered the outstanding work being accomplished by the yearly Vacation Bible School Program organized by Sister Jean O'Connor at St. Dominic Parish. Acknowledging that many of the children have family members in the military, every day's program includes a flag-raising ceremony. Each year students are involved in a theme-focused mission project that



involves collecting a variety of items to be sent to the U.S. military in the Middle East. For this year's theme, "Shake It Up," the children collected individual size flavored water enhancer packets, squeeze bottles, and Tic Tacs—items soldiers can put in their pockets. To help with shipping costs, the children also collected loose change. Since 2013 they have also been collecting money throughout the year for Hero Dogs, a nonprofit organization that trains service dogs for retired veterans.



NEW JERSEY

Sister Justina Marie Miller recently attended the 75th anniversary celebration of St. Mary of the Lakes Parish in Medford, New Jersey, where she served as principal of the parish school from 1981-2003. The special anniversary book has a chapter on the history of the parish school and includes a special tribute to Sister Justina's 22 years of service. A scholarship in her name is awarded each year to two graduating 8th graders to be applied to their high school tuition. The acknowledgement read, "Her smile is fondly remembered as a guiding light during a time of expansion and development at the school."



WYOMING

Sister Teresa Frawley was chosen as the Diocese of Cheyenne's nominee for the *Catholic Extension's* Lumen Christi Award. The award honors "an individual or group working in one of America's mission dioceses who demonstrates how the power of faith can transform lives and communities."

The criteria goes on to describe nominees as "hidden heroes in our midst" who "bring light and hope to the forgotten corners of our country." Sister Teresa's write-up cites her 37 years of ministry with the Eastern Shoshone and North Arapaho tribes on the Wind River Indian Reservation, an area of 3,500 square miles and home to 27,000 residents. Her ministry includes serving as religious education coordinator for St. Stephens Indian Mission as well as working at St. Joseph Church in Ethete and Blessed Sacrament Church in Washakie.



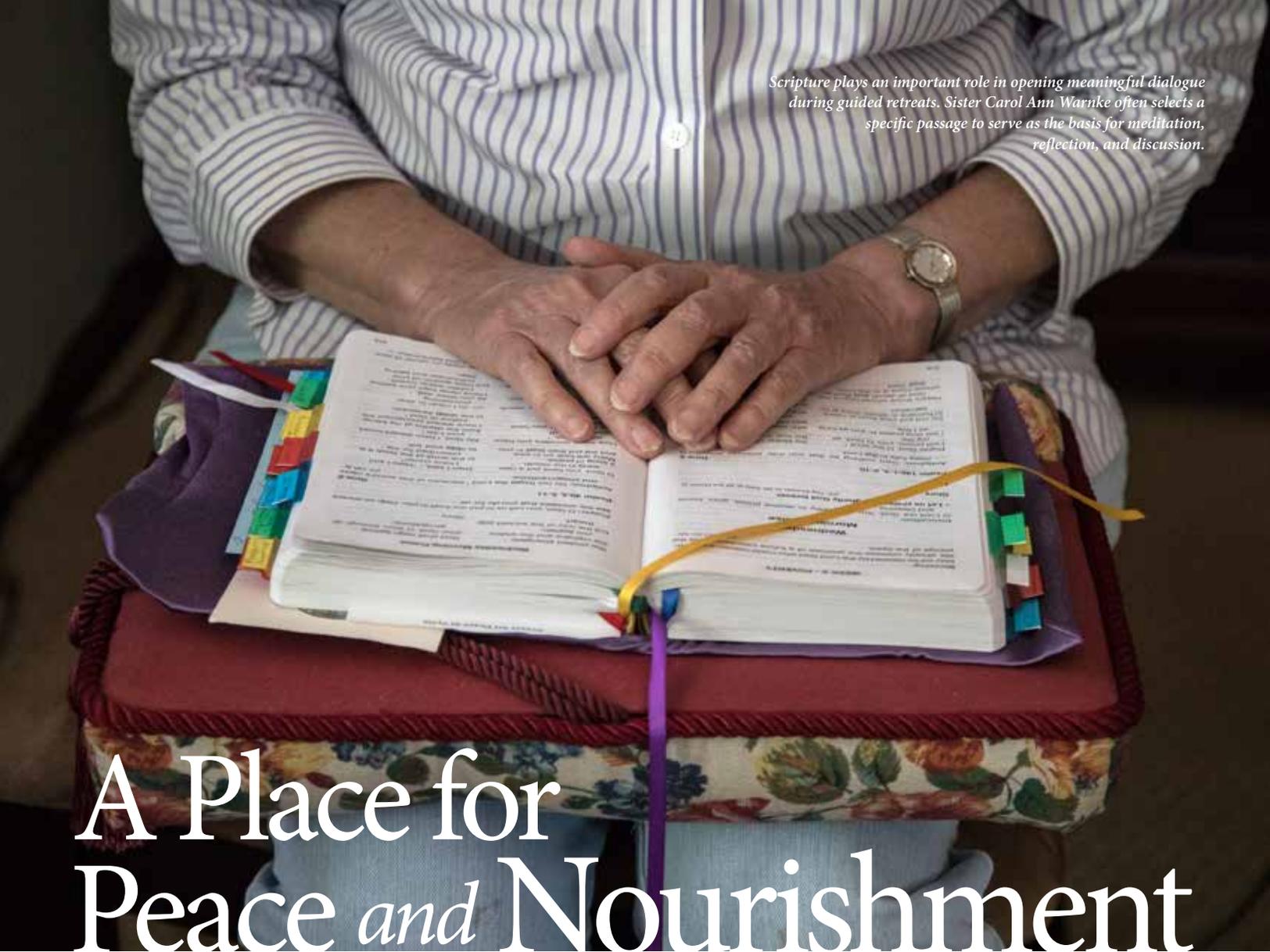
PENNSYLVANIA

Our 2017-2018 Franciscan volunteers bade us farewell in July. During a prayer service in our chapel, those present blessed the three young women who shared their lives and their service with us during the past year. Following the service we gathered for



Volunteers Laura Anderson, Rachel Dunlap, and Bianca Martinez receive the blessings of the sisters and guests.

refreshments and a time of sharing from both the volunteers and their guests. Their sharings—each reflecting their individual personalities—evoked both tears and laughter. We will miss these three young women and thank them for the gift they have been to us.



Scripture plays an important role in opening meaningful dialogue during guided retreats. Sister Carol Ann Warnke often selects a specific passage to serve as the basis for meditation, reflection, and discussion.

A Place for Peace *and* Nourishment *for* Body *and* Soul

Tucked within the bustling city of Tacoma, Washington, sits an oasis of quiet and solitude. Hermitage Place, a retreat house run by Sisters Carol Ann Warnke and Carmel Gregg, offers a welcome getaway for people looking to take time out from everyday life to deepen their relationship with God. One of three residences at St. Ann's Home that formerly housed children in the sisters' care, the house itself contains six bedrooms; an open kitchen, living, and dining space;

a chapel; and a lower-level hospitality and meeting area. In good weather a deck extends the living space, accommodating outdoor prayer or meals.

Just as the earlier sisters nourished the spirits and bodies of the children for whom they cared, Sisters Carol Ann and Carmel nourish the spirits of those who spend time with them. Hermitage Place offers private directed retreats for individuals and retreat space for individuals or groups. People come for a day, a weekend, a week, or longer. The sis-

ters tailor each experience to the particular person or group—offering as much or as little interaction as visitors desire. Many people take part in spiritual direction during their stay. Others simply crave silent private time for their own prayer and reflection. Hermitage Place is ecumenical, welcoming visitors from a variety of faiths and from as far away as Egypt and Cameroon. Prices are kept low, allowing those who would not be able to afford larger retreat houses to take part in a retreat experience.

“PEOPLE LOVE THE QUIET. THE BEAUTY OF NATURE IS INTEGRATED INTO FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY.”

The grounds at Hermitage Place are both a sanctuary and a source of spiritual nourishment in their own right. A big maple tree serves as a welcome spot for shade and serenity. A large picnic table—a perfect setting for journaling—sits under the tree, providing a beautiful view of the nearby garden. A statue of Mary and a cluster of benches in front of the garden add to the ambiance. Across the street a little jewel box of a park complements the Hermitage Place grounds, featuring a small lake with a walking path surrounding it. “It’s a peaceful haven that nurtures the soul and the spirit,” Sister Carol Ann said. “People love the quiet. The beauty of nature is integrated into Franciscan spirituality.”

Stepping Away From The Everyday

Designed by Sister Carol Ann, the garden at Hermitage Place provides nourishment of a different sort. It teems with flowers from early spring until the first freeze and with an abundance of fresh produce. Its bounty provides strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, pears, cherries, rhubarb,



Sister Carol Ann meets one-on-one with retreatant Bruce Wilson. Some visitors to Hermitage Place come seeking complete solitude while others prefer a more interactive experience that includes shared meals, spiritual direction, and communal prayer. Sister Carol Ann and Sister Carmel Gregg work hard to give each retreatant what he or she needs.

asparagus, and tomatoes and is fertilized using compost made from kitchen scraps, fall leaves, and garden waste. Although it is the sisters themselves who do most of the work in the garden, some retreatants help with weeding—finding the practice meditative.

In the 10 years since Hermitage Place opened its doors, it has been a refuge for countless people looking to step outside of the everyday hustle and bustle of their lives and reconnect with God. “Our world

is a very noisy world. Stimulation comes in great quantities all day,” said Sister Carol Ann. “It is very valuable to have time away to let that go. Stepping away can bring its own anxiety but mostly people say it’s a blessing. The silence is here. Our role is to protect a sacred space of silence so people can connect with God in a way they may not be able to do in their normal lives.”

Sister Carol Ann and Sister Carmel provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner for guests, using produce from the garden whenever possible. “People like that kind of care,” Sister Carmel explained, “especially those whose lives are very busy or scheduled, who feel like they are always on the run or that their time is never their own. The experience of no intrusions, no one asking anything of them, no responsibilities except for their own reflection is a gift. People are able to come home to themselves without the intrusiveness of everyday life.”

Bruce Wilson has come for retreat at Hermitage Place numerous times and has *continued on page 14*



(Top left) Sister Carol Ann readies one of the rooms at the retreat house. The house contains six bedrooms; an open kitchen, living, and dining room; a chapel space, and a spacious basement area large enough to accommodate groups. (Above) Sister Carol Ann enters the garden she designed. This inviting outdoor space provides a bounty of food as well as the perfect location for quiet contemplation. A number of volunteers and donors have helped make improvements to the garden each year. (Bottom left) Sister Carmel Gregg hauls fresh laundry. In addition to items from the retreat house, Sister Carmel helps collect, wash, dry, fold, and return laundry to former Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees living in temporary housing across town.

been particularly appreciative of the hospitality he has experienced there. “Sister Carol Ann and Sister Carmel have a way of caring for you that is deep and true and kind. It is very Franciscan and it allows you to just focus on you,” said Bruce. “You can just spend your time on your spirituality and your faith.”

Both Sister Carol Ann and Sister Carmel are very involved in ministering in the wider Tacoma community, particularly with those being released from a nearby ICE detention center. A mobile unit serves as a first stop and welcome center for many who find hospitality, guidance, interpreters, telephones, and even bus fare to temporary housing.

Some people who come to Hermitage Place are looking for complete solitude and request their meals on trays in their rooms. Others share their meals with the sisters and are eager to hear about their lives, experiences, and spirituality.

expand their prayer lives or are exploring a sense of restlessness or a desire for something more.

Marlene Bertram has been taking part in spiritual direction with Sister Carol Ann for four years and says she barely recognizes the person she was four years ago. “I was rushing from task to task and not attending to my own needs,” Marlene explained. “Spiritual direction with Sister Carol Ann has helped me to examine the issues in my life that I needed to approach differently. Today I am much more willing to ask God first how to proceed before bolting ahead.”



Going Deeper With Spiritual Direction

In addition to guidance for those on retreat, Sister Carol Ann provides individual spiritual direction for a number of directees on a regular basis. These one-on-one sessions foster people’s personal relationships with God by helping them identify and focus on God’s presence and activity in their lives. People seek out spiritual direction at Hermitage Place for a variety of reasons. Some are looking to deepen an existing relationship with God. Others are working through a particular transition or loss. Still others are looking to

Marlene also is part of a group that travels the more than 50 miles round trip monthly from Orting, Washington, for group spiritual direction. Each group session opens with a welcome and a quote from Scripture followed by four to five minutes of silence to allow people to center. Sister Carol Ann then asks whether there is someone who has something to share—be it a joyful experience or something difficult—something where they are unsure what God is doing, asking of them, leading them to, or speaking to them in their life.

“They share as much or little as they like and then sit in silence,” said Sister Carol



The mobile unit is stocked with clothing and toiletry items for just-released detainees who have only what is on their backs.



Sister Carol Ann helps make arrangements for a refugee who has recently been let out of the ICE detention center.



Once back at the retreat house, Sister Carol Ann finds a quiet moment in front of the Mary statue on the garden grounds to regroup, reflect, and prepare for the following day.

Ann. “From there the session is like breaking open a loaf of bread. Group members ask open and honest questions for the purpose of helping the person who shared find new ways to look at, approach, or understand the situation they shared. I’m a gatekeeper to make sure the session stays on track.”

Each session focuses on a single individual and group members take turns being the focus of the group’s attention from one session to another. Participants often find, however, that they benefit as much from sessions focused on others as they do the ones focused on themselves. “So often after a session, people thank the person sharing and say, ‘Something like this has come up in my own life and I didn’t know how to proceed,’” Marlene explained.

Going Beyond The Center

Despite their full schedules, Sisters Carol Ann and Carmel extend their ministries

beyond Hermitage Place to the neighborhood and community that surround it. Both are involved in Tacoma’s Safe Streets campaign, an initiative that strives to build a safer, more thriving community in the city. They have joined an annual march for Safe Streets, gathered food donations for a Thanksgiving meal for 200 families, helped with an annual neighborhood clean-up that collected and disposed of more than 30 tons of household discards, and succeeded in getting graffiti on their street removed.

Sister Carmel also ministers at the nearby ICE detention center where she provides hospitality for people being released. “All these people have is what they had on them when they came in,” said Sister Carmel. “We have telephones they can use and interpreters who can help them. We give them guidance, clothing, bus fare, sometimes even temporary housing—whatever we can to get them where they need to go.”

Nourishing And Nurturing

Providing people with what they need to get them where they need to go, whether for their bodies or their souls, is precisely what Sister Carol Ann and Sister Carmel do every day. “They approach everyone who comes to Hermitage Place with the attitude of ‘we will take care of you while you are journeying on this road,’” said Bruce.

Whether that road brings folks to Hermitage Place for spiritual direction or a full retreat, whether the sisters encounter them in the garden or walking the neighborhood streets, what people find in Sisters Carol Ann and Carmel is a spirit that promotes peace, that nourishes and nurtures, and that creates a space that allows them to come away enriched. ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact goodnews@osfphila.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Establish a pattern of regular, daily prayer to help cultivate and nurture your relationship with God. This can be as simple as devoting a few minutes to prayer several times throughout the day—in the morning, at mealtimes, before bed, or according to any schedule that works well for you. This practice can bring greater peace and order to even the most hectic day.
- Schedule a yearly retreat experience. Whether your life allows for a month, a week, a day, or even just an afternoon, designating time for a retreat experience allows you to step away from your normal activities and listen attentively for the Holy Spirit.
- Locate or create an outdoor oasis to enjoy at home. Spending time in a backyard garden, on a small apartment balcony filled with potted plants, or at a favorite spot at a local park can be both peaceful and invigorating.
- Remember the importance of turning prayer into action. Identify the needs in the world around you and ask yourself how you can help meet one or more of those needs. Then find a ministry that speaks to you and commit to it.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.

— Anne Frank (adapted)

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char·ism

/ker·izəm/

noun THEOLOGY

another term for charisma: TO LIVE IN LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS, TO CARE FOR CREATION, AND TO SEE ALL AS A REFLECTION OF GOD'S LOVE.

What is our Franciscan “Charism?” — *Who Are the Sisters of St. Francis?*

The Sisters of St. Francis recently developed a short statement that explains who we are in a way that can be easily remembered and explains what we mean when we say “charism.” In essence, our charism as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia is to live in loving relationship with others, to care for creation, and to see all as a reflection of God’s love.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia are a community of Catholic women who commit their lives to God as followers of Sts. Francis and Clare. We strive to live in loving relationship and service with all people and creation. We are dedicated to bringing hope and joy to those in need by promoting justice and peace with emphasis on human rights and environmental concerns in our daily encounters.



(l-r) Sister Mary Augustini and Father Michael Duffy congratulate Sister Leslie Birks on her award.

Franciscan Federation Award

The 2018 Franciscan Federation Conference was held in Buffalo, New York. The theme—“Franciscans and Muslims: Lessons from the Past and Prospects for the Future”—reflected current world situations. At the annual Franciscan Banquet, a representative from each congregation was recognized for the ways in which she reflected the characteristics of the conference theme. Our nominee, Sister Leslie Birks, ministers at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia. Following both her own call to service and the mission of the Inn, Sister Leslie does more than provide and serve meals. She builds relationships and sees her ministry as a way to follow St. Francis and to work

more closely with those who are poor. “We are all broken,” Sister Leslie said. “Some of us wear our brokenness on the inside; others wear it on the outside for all to see. However, we are all God’s people and deserve love and respect.”

Cultivating Peace through Faith, Culture, and Beauty

In August our sisters “created something new”—a peace conference entitled “Cultivating Peace through Faith, Culture, and Beauty.” The event provided an opportunity for us to share our Franciscan values and charism with others. In the morning session, participants had the opportunity to hear Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS, an artist and writer who uses his artistic gifts in the context of social justice and in finding beauty in the margins. After lunch participants chose from a variety of speakers offering presentations related to peace in both individual and societal contexts. Some guests, for example, chose to attend sessions on one of our congregation’s corporate stands or other social justice issues. Others chose sessions on stress reduction techniques or on Tai Chi Chih. Still others chose to investigate the session called “Art Expression and Peace” or the one on “Singing Bowls: A Contemplative Experience.” Prior to the conference, we had invited students in elementary and secondary schools to engage in either an art or essay contest and prizes were awarded at the conference.



Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS, autographs a book for Pam Mills, one of several of his published works available for purchase after his presentation at the Cultivating Peace conference.



During the liturgy the jubilarians renewed the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience—vows they had first professed many years ago and which they continue to live out daily.

Celebrating our Jubilarians

The Sisters of St. Francis 2018 Jubilee Celebration was held on Sunday, June 10, at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston, Pennsylvania. Our sisters, members of the Franciscan Companions in Mission, members of the *Franciscan Volunteers: No Risk No Gain* program, and former members gathered for the Eucharistic Liturgy presided over by the motherhouse chaplain, Father Cyprian Rosen, OFM Cap. Sister Andrea Likovich, OSF, coordinator of music and liturgy, directed the choir. Collectively the 19 jubilarians—individually

celebrating 50, 70, or 80 years of religious profession—represent 1,130 years of collective service in multiple ministries, including healthcare, child care, social services, education, prayer ministry, parish ministry, diocesan ministry, congregational ministry, and eldercare. Their ministries have taken them to 27 dioceses in the United States as well as to Antigua and Ireland. Following liturgy the jubilarians and their guests joined in a celebratory luncheon.



Aloha From Assisi House!

(l-r) Sisters Florence Petsch, Bernadette Gardiner, and Kathleen Veronica Carroll enjoy a cold drink while they wait for the luau lunch to be served.

Not all luaus are held in Hawaii—just ask our sisters in Assisi House about the great time they had this summer. The party actually started before lunch when the sisters checked their closets for muumuus, colorful blouses—anything that would add a touch of Hawaiian spirit. They added multicolored necklaces and made a decision as to whether they preferred indoors or outdoors. After the delicious lunch, the games began: Beachball/Volleyball, Wacky Tourist Relay Race, and the Hot Coconut Game. Unlike many sports, winners and non-winners alike earned prizes!



In Memoriam

Sister Kathleen McMullin
(formerly Sister Kathleen Theresa)
May 27, 2018

Sister Christine Marie Nicoletto
(formerly Sister Christine Marie of the Crucifixion)
June 6, 2018

Sister Anna Hope Bauerlin
(formerly Sister Miriam)
July 24, 2018

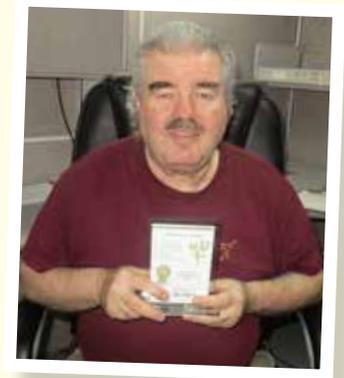
Sister Angela Patrice Power
September 12, 2018

Chester Community Coalition Receives Grants

The Chester Community Coalition received two grants awarded by the Catholic Health Initiatives' Mission and Ministry Fund and Congregation Ohev Shalom's Outreach Grant which will assist in providing local families in Chester, Pennsylvania, with programs geared to healing the psychological and emotional trauma incurred as a result of exposure to local violence. For example, money will be allocated to provide group therapy for families who have lost someone to homicide or experienced injury due to gun violence and will also coordinate peer-based violence education and volunteer trauma response teams. Sisters Jean Rupertus and Virginia Spiegel are both members of the coordination committee that will oversee the programs.

FOCUS

► Al is justifiably proud of his Charism Award. When asked what his job entailed, Al did not initially supply a list of duties. His initial list included being “reliable, dependable, and coming to work.” Asked what he likes about his work, he responded, “Feeling wanted and respected.”



AL BRUTON

“AL BRUTON IS TRULY A GIFT FROM GOD. HE TREATS EVERYONE HERE AT OUR LADY OF ANGELS WITH RESPECT AND IS ALWAYS QUICK WITH A SMILE. HE SERVES US IN THE SAME WAY I IMAGINE ST. FRANCIS WOULD HAVE SERVED US TODAY.”

— SISTER REGINA CARMEL MCMONAGLE

▼ Al prepares to receive an order. One coworker observed that “I often come into the building near the receiving dock. Al is always pleasant with the person making the delivery and always so helpful getting the items on the elevator.”



Earlier this year, we awarded our first Charism Award—presented to an employee who reflects our Franciscan values and beliefs on a daily basis. The winner was Al Bruton who has worked at Our Lady of Angels Convent (OLA) in receiving since 2008. Al worked at his previous job for 34 years but when the company closed, he was out of a job. Although he expected to find work in a factory, Al saw an ad for a position in our receiving department. He immediately sent a résumé and received a call to come for an interview. That interview led to a second one and within a week Al was notified that he was head of receiving at OLA. “I found a completely different atmosphere here,” Al recalled. “Things are much calmer and I’m always being thanked for whatever I do!” Although Al’s job is listed under the food services department, he is, in many ways, a one-person department. He orders food and supplies, receives deliveries of all sorts, sees that they get to their respective destinations, and takes inventory.

Being the first employee at OLA to receive the Charism Award was a total surprise to Al. “I was truly stunned and shocked,” he explained. “I didn’t know what to say. I thought at first that the winner was chosen by the sisters. When I learned that it was also by the vote of coworkers, I didn’t know what to say.” His coworkers, however, knew exactly what to say! To cite just a few: Al “created a bond with both coworkers and sisters,” “calls every person by name when he greets them,” “works well with all departments in a respectful and hospitable way,” “always ready to meet our needs,” displays “simplicity and honesty,” “is a welcome presence and team player.”

The list from coworkers goes on. But how does Al himself feel about working at OLA? “I’m thankful every day,” he said. “The atmosphere is unbelievable. I feel wanted—like part of a family.” Al’s coworkers and the sisters all seem to agree. As one individual who voted for him said, “We are truly blessed to witness his Hospitable Heart every day!”



◀ Al checks supplies and determines what needs to be ordered. As one coworker wrote, “He is a good steward in the way he takes care of food products and farm produce.”

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- Red Hill Farm, Aston PA*



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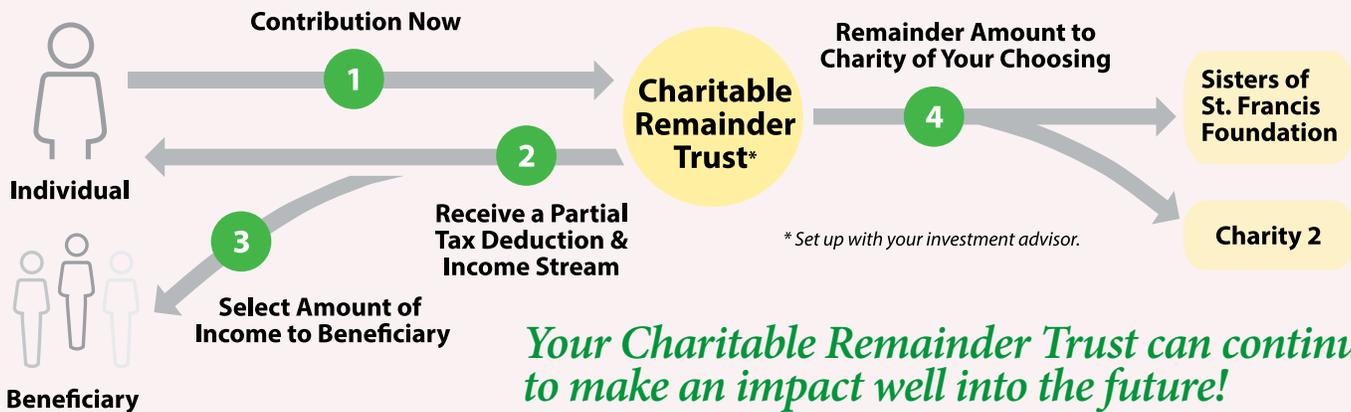
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A Day of Commitment

Within our congregation, we often assign titles to our special days—Profession Day, Jubilee Day, etc. August 5 might well have been titled Commitment Day. During the liturgy Sister Kathy Flood renewed her vows for another year. A number of our companions were also present, including a group from the west coast. They made a formal recommitment of their relationship with our congregation. As is usually part of our celebration, we sang the “Blessing of St. Francis,” indicating our support of Sister Kathy and of our companions as they continue to serve God’s people—each in his or her own way.

◀ *Members of our various Companions in Faith gatherings renewed their commitment and their relationship with the congregation.*

Tacoma Refugee Choir

Sisters Rochelle Lieu and Frances Calhoun are both members of the Tacoma Refugee Choir. Organized by director Erin Guinup, the choir does more than provide entertainment or call attention to refugees’ hopes of being accepted into a new country. Some of the members actually are refugees. Sister Rochelle explained that “Our membership welcomes the refugee...and we all sing together. This experience is heart-



warming and genuine.” Sister Frances agreed, describing the experience as “one of the most personally fulfilling things I have ever done...I’m rejuvenated by the time I spend there.” One of the choir’s most recent performances, “Refugee Stories, Hope in a Divided World,” held on May 12 was recorded by TedX Seattle. Learn more by visiting their website, www.refugeechoir.org.

On September 11, 1871, the current property that houses Our Lady Angels Convent was purchased by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Included in the sale was the house, barn, a buggy, a horse, and a cow among other things. The sisters were fortunate to retain Mr. John Moran in their employ who had successfully run the farm by tending to the orchard and vegetable garden as well as caring for the livestock. In later years, the sisters were charged with helping with this task. It was no unusual sight to see Mother Agnes Bucher wielding the various garden tools with skill and endurance. In those early days, the sisters were attracted to the beauty of the country as well as to the productivity of the soil which was evident in the rich harvest that was waiting to be gathered. Today, Red Hill Farm continues to provide a rich harvest and a peaceful beauty to the sisters and farm members. Read more about the farm on page 4.

