

Volume 25.1 Spring/Summer 2022

NEWS

A Publication of THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Neumann University

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Motherhouse

Also in this issue:

- St. Francis House: Easing the Hardships of Those in Need
- People & Places
- Sharing the Good News

Together into the Future:
**A Beneficial
and Natural
Partnership**

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

ALL things work for GOOD for those who love GOD!

Romans 8:28

Our lives are journeys of interconnectedness. As cocreators, we can accomplish more than we ever could alone. Each of us has a mission—God's purpose for us. That mission is revealed through daily faithfulness to prayer and the Gospel and through the stirrings within our heart. The feature articles in this edition of Good News give witness to the goodness of God working in the minds and hearts of ordinary people who believe in and cherish God's love enough to share it with others.



Sister Theresa Firenze, OSF
Congregational Minister

“Together into the Future: A Beneficial and Natural Partnership” expresses the story and significance of Our Lady of Angels' transition to Neumann University. This partnership is rooted in centuries of dedication to the Franciscan charism, enfolded through Mother Francis Bachmann, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, and the extraordinary generosity of people who continue to share our mission. An endeavor such as this partnership requires astute insight to discern our responsibility, to understand what God asks of us at this time. Responding to the challenge of continuous conversion, we have opened and must continue to open our minds and hearts—to relinquish all that impedes love of God, self, and others. Such letting go gives us the freedom to embrace the unknown, confident that God will provide for all of our needs so that we, in turn, can give to others.

Manifestation in behalf of others is possible for those who are attuned to God's call to be instruments of compassion. We read such a story in “St. Francis House: Easing the Hardships of Those in Need.” Fifty-eight years ago, Doris and Stan Michalek sensed an urgency to do what they could to alleviate suffering in their community. What began then with an inspiration to help continues to help many now. Their daughter, Sister Patricia Michalek, OSF, and her staff embody the legacy of selflessness begun by her parents. “A simple clothing bank” has grown beyond what Doris and Stan ever imagined—reflecting that as we collaborate with God as cocreators, we give testimony to the wonderful things that can be accomplished.

*As these stories show, “ALL things work for GOOD for those who love GOD!”
(Romans 8:28).*

May God bless you always and in all ways!

Theresa Firenze, OSF



VOLUME 25.1
SPRING/SUMMER 2022

INSIDE *Good* NEWS CONTENTS

Point of View.....2

**Together into the Future:
A Beneficial and Natural
Partnership 4**

*After much reflection, discussion,
and prayer, the Sisters of St. Francis
decided to transfer some of their
property. Because Neumann
University already shared the sisters'
Franciscan heritage and values—a
perfect partnership developed.*

**Written by Sara McDermott
Photography by Andrea Cipraini-Mecchi**

People & Places.....10

**St. Francis House: Easing the
Hardships of Those in Need 12**

*Sister Patricia Michalek continues her
family legacy at St. Francis House—
a center of compassionate presence
and service offering hope through its
programs and improving the lives of
those in need in East Pierce County,
Washington.*

**Written by Sara McDermott
Photography by Tim LaBarge**

Sharing the Good News18

Focus.....20

Communications Office
609 South Convent Road
Aston, PA 19014
Tel (610) 558-7726
Fax (610) 558-6131
goodnews@osfphila.org

Managing Editor
Florence Smith

Assistant Editor
Winnie Hayek

Editorial Board
Sister Clare D'Auria, OSF
Dr. Joseph Glass
Sister Helen Jacobson, OSF
Sister Eileen Valerie Kulacz, OSF
Sister Mary Lonergan, OSF
Sister Carol Ann Warnke, OSF

Graphic Design
Geneen Pintof

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.

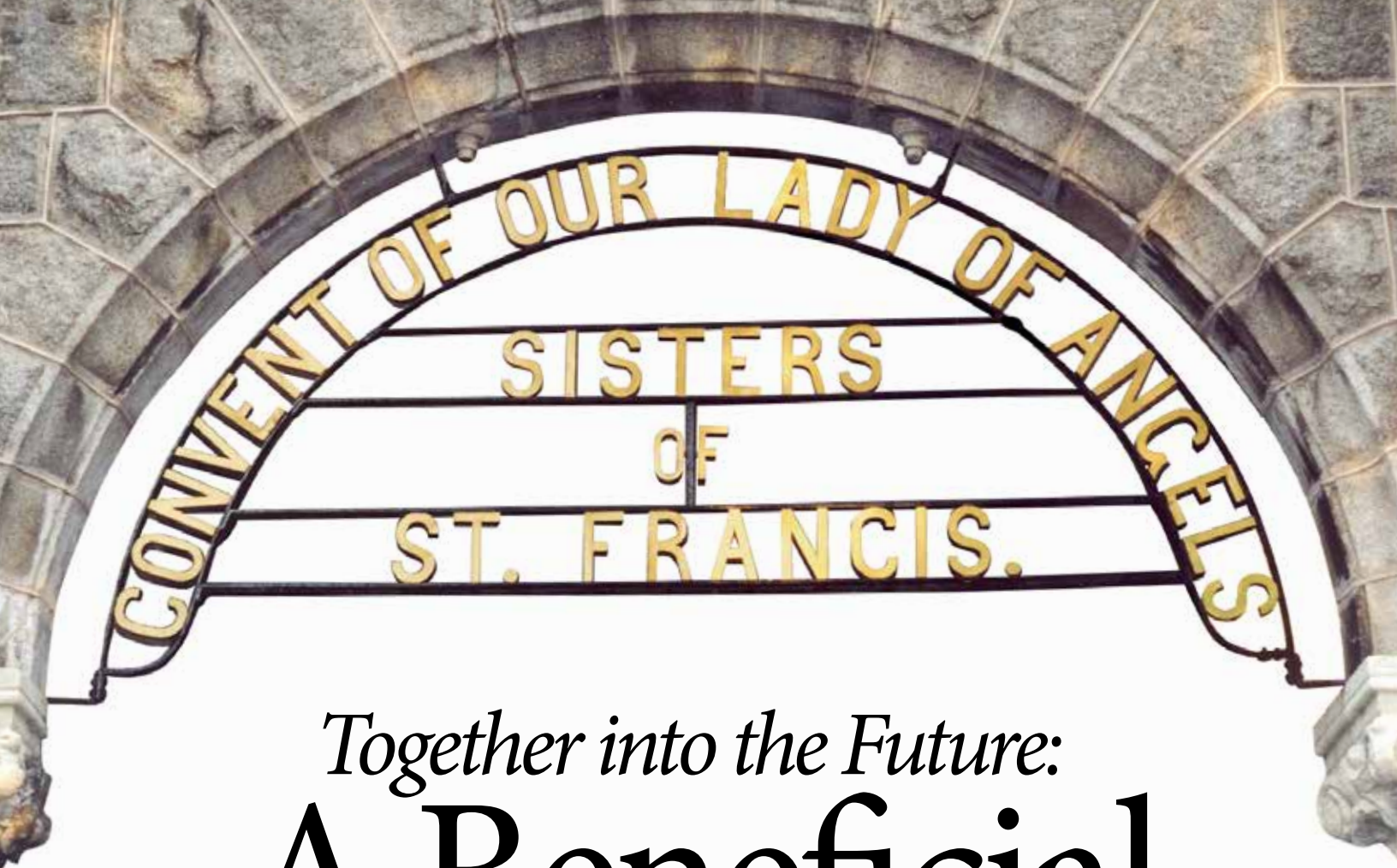
Good News is published twice per year (spring/summer and fall/winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at the address above.

Visit our website! www.osfphila.org



The environmental savings by printing this document with FSC certified stock on an FSC certified press are:
Trees preserved for the future: 43; Lbs water-borne waste not created: 124.17; Gallons wastewater flow saved: 18,266; Lbs solid waste not generated: 2,021; Lbs net greenhouse gases prevented: 3,979; BTUs energy not consumed: 30,459,240.

On the cover: Aerial photo of the Our Lady of Angels Convent and Neumann University property as it currently stands. The plans have the property changing greatly over the next 15 years; however, the essence of the sisters and their history will always remain.



Together into the Future:
**A Beneficial
and Natural
Partnership**



Stepping into the multipurpose room in the Bruder Center on the Neumann University campus, visitors are greeted by a massive mural displaying the school's "RISES" values: reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship.

The school has incorporated these values throughout its history, since first being founded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in 1965. Originally named Our Lady of Angels College, which the sis-

ters began in a wing of Our Lady of Angels Convent, Neumann University has the sisters' legacy at the heart of the institution.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when the sisters realized it was time to initiate a transition to new ownership for the motherhouse and land currently owned by their community, Neumann would become a prime candidate for the transaction. Perhaps the congregation's most important criterion was that any new owners be respectful of their history and

willing to preserve what the sisters value. In this way, Neumann was an excellent fit.

A Big Decision

The notion of finding new ownership for certain properties first arose at the 2014 Congregational Chapter. A sustainability committee was developed to assess the continuation of keeping Our Lady of Angels Convent and other lands and to address the question of whether or not it was time to transfer the property given the future needs of the sisters.

When the Congregational Assembly took place in 2017, the idea of the transfer was presented. The sisters had seen other congregations make this choice in recent years, so they were prepared to take it into consideration. After about a year of reflection, discussion, and prayer, they affirmed the decision to transition the land to new ownership, and the search for just the right partner began.

Neumann's interest in being that partner intensified in May 2021. Because the university already shared the sisters' values, the partnership developed as a natural and mutually beneficial one. Teams from both sides met regularly to work out the details in respect to the needs of both Neumann and the sisters and to obtain the proper approvals from Aston Township and Church officials.

Letting Go of the Familiar

The transfer of the property to Neumann includes 63 acres of land as well as two residential homes, a two-story residence and office building, multiple outdoor sacred spaces, and, most significantly, Our Lady of Angels Convent—the motherhouse and an iconic Delaware County building.

"The motherhouse is such an enormous building. It's very meaningful to us. Most of us made our vows there. It's home in many ways, but we knew we really wouldn't need it in the future," said Sister Kathryn Dougherty, OSF. When discussions of the transfer got underway, Sister Kathy was the congregational minister. "We want to be about our mission, about serving those who are marginalized, and

continued on page 6

“LETTING GO OF THE FAMILIAR IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT. I WOULD SAY THAT, THOUGH DIFFICULT, THE SISTERS KNOW IT'S THE RIGHT DECISION.”



▲ Sister Theresa Firenze, OSF, congregational minister, and Dr. Chris Domes, president of Neumann University, sign paperwork for the official transfer of land to Neumann University.

► This effort began in 2021 with the then-leadership team led by Sister Mary Kathryn Dougherty (seated) with Dr. Domes, including (L-R) Middle row: Sister Colette Gerry; Sister Mary Farrell; Sharon Laydon, director of finance for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia; Sister Patricia Smith; and Sister Ruth Bernadette O'Connor. Top row: Gene McWilliams, vice president for finance and administration for Neumann University. The official transfer of land took place following months and even years of teamwork.



While touring Our Lady of Angels Convent and discussing plans for renovation and expansion, Dr. Domes happens upon Sister Martha Pooler, who stops to thank him for all that he is doing to preserve the sisters' legacy.

“THE TRANSITION
FREES US TO FOCUS
ON OUR MISSION
AND PROVIDES
FINANCIAL SECURITY
FOR EXTENDING
OUR LEGACY IN THE
DECADES AHEAD.”

▼ A representation of St. Bernadette's visions of the Blessed Mother in Lourdes, France, the grotto—a cherished, sacred space—holds special significance for the sisters. According to Dr. Domes' plans, it will become a focal point in the redesign of Neumann University's outdoor spaces.

► Sisters Eleanor Moore and Marguerite O'Beirne in front of the Mother Francis Monument, which is also the final resting place of foundress Mother Francis Bachmann. This is just one of many sacred spaces that Neumann University has vowed to preserve.

continued from page 5

it didn't make sense to put time, energy, and funding into maintaining a building we didn't need. It's more about 'what's God calling us to do at this point in our life?'"

The current leadership team, who began their ministry in 2021, includes new congregational minister Sister Theresa Firenze, assistant congregational minister Sister Celeste Crine, and three council members: Sisters Marian Leaf, Florence Hee, and Karen Pourby. Speaking on behalf of the team, Sister Theresa shared this statement: "Letting go of the familiar is always difficult. I would say that, though difficult, the sisters know it's the right decision.... We know God is with us, guiding us, and carrying us through, and although we never know what the future will hold, we remain committed to our mission and courageous in our trust in God and in God's faithfulness."



"The transition [of buildings and land] to Neumann University frees us to focus on our mission and provides financial security for extending our legacy in the decades ahead," Sister Theresa added. "We see this as expanding the mission of the congregation through Neumann University's educating students in the Franciscan tradition and values. It's very close to our hearts. It's a wonderful partnership, and I don't think we could have asked for better."

Indeed, while elements of this decision may have felt bittersweet, a sentiment repeated over and over among the sisters was gratitude that Neumann would be the one to take on the property.

The sisters have sponsored Neumann for over 55 years. Were the property going





▲ Another outdoor space that will be left untouched is Our Lady of Angels Cemetery. Dating back to the 1800s, a majority of the sisters are laid to rest in this space. It will remain a place for quiet contemplation to honor the memory of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia who have passed.

to an unfamiliar entity or local developer, it would have felt much more difficult.

An additional comfort is the fact that Neumann is dedicated to maintaining the sacredness of the grounds. Multiple outdoor sacred spaces will continue to be preserved under the university's care, including the grotto, labyrinth, Stations of the Cross, and Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.

A Shared Vision for the Future

The sisters recognize that this transition provides new opportunities for them to fulfill their mission. Many students who attend Neumann are the first in their families to attend college. Education is a vital component in improving the quality of their lives. By allowing this transaction, the sisters are in essence allowing countless future Neumann "Knights" to have greater opportunities.

The congregation is discovering how to serve in a new way. Just as the property is transitioning, their ministry is transitioning away from hands-on activity such as university teaching and retreat leadership and into one of presence, prayer, and mentorship.

Likewise, Neumann University is transitioning as it continues to develop an ever-greater presence. Even during this time of uncertainty, when other institutions are cautious about expansion, Neumann maintains a vision for the future and a focus on serving its students.

Reflecting on the time when the sisters first built the Bachmann building, now at

the heart of the campus, Dr. Chris Domes, president of Neumann University, noted, "That was a leap of faith of the sisters. They didn't know what the future would hold, yet they built this incredible building for a future they couldn't really see at that point. ... The sisters were risk-takers, in the best sense of what that means, being people of faith and being inspired by a mission and a set of values. I think we all at Neumann take our inspiration from the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia."

The sisters have now taken another leap of faith. So has Neumann, towards fulfilling its vision for its students. The board of the university always knew that to develop this vision, more land would eventually be needed, and by 2018, they began to ask more seriously whether or not acquiring some of the sisters' land was something the school could manage.

"We began a process of planning and looking ahead at the university's future," said Dr. Domes. "We feel very strongly that we have the capacity to do this and that it meets our students' needs. We feel it's very important that we continue to live out our mission and our values; this aligns really well with our future direction."

This property, adjacent to the university, will essentially double the size of the campus, allowing Neumann to develop a number of projects. For example, the school will be able to expand its athletic fields and facilities. Proposed plans include developing a synthetic grass field and track, as well as building an ice rink for Neumann's popular ice hockey team.

continued on page 8



Neumann University has wonderful plans for the future of their campus and what they can offer their students. The Sisters of St. Francis continue to be an integral part of this plan. They offer a presence on campus helping to continue to share and strengthen Neumann's Franciscan values and mission. Many have gone before them, but the current sisters on staff at Neumann include:

Sister Linda DeCero
*Director of Pastoral Services/
Spirituality*

Sister Mary Kathryn Dougherty
Vice President for Mission & Ministry

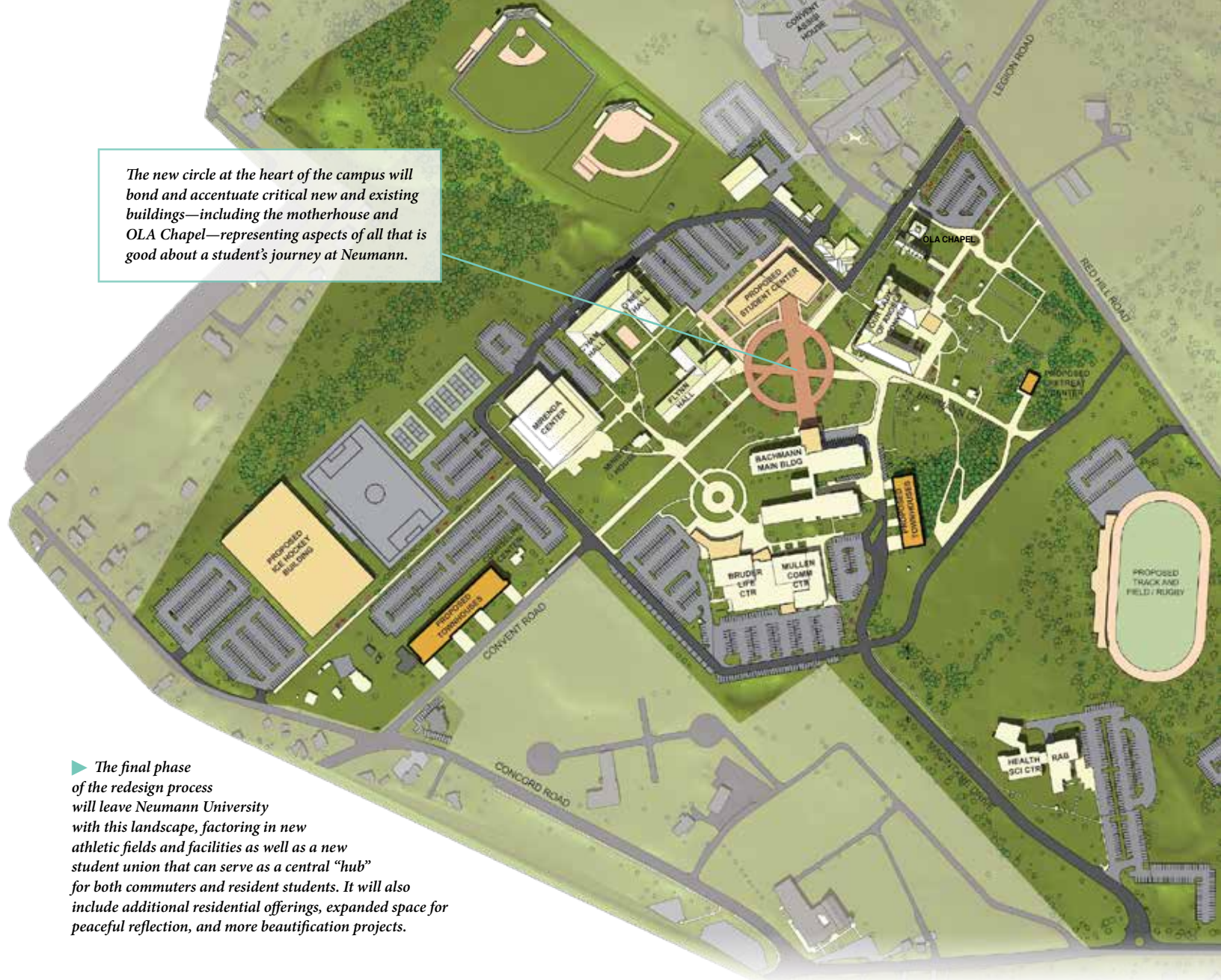
Sister Patricia Hutchison
*Director of Neumann Institute and
Undergraduate Core Curriculum,
Adjunct Professor*

Sister Mary Ann McCarthy
Administrative Assistant

Sister Marguerite O'Beirne
Volunteer

Sister Linda Sariego
Assistant Professor

Sister Corinne Wright
Advisor



The new circle at the heart of the campus will bond and accentuate critical new and existing buildings—including the motherhouse and OLA Chapel—representing aspects of all that is good about a student's journey at Neumann.

► *The final phase of the redesign process will leave Neumann University with this landscape, factoring in new athletic fields and facilities as well as a new student union that can serve as a central “hub” for both commuters and resident students. It will also include additional residential offerings, expanded space for peaceful reflection, and more beautification projects.*

continued from page 7

Another forward-thinking project is to create a Center for Entrepreneurship, supporting a key area of interest for many Neumann students. The center would be affiliated with the School of Business, offer resources for building both nonprofit and for-profit businesses, and be open to any major, student, alum, or even local community member. Providing resources and space for budding entrepreneurs to think creatively and develop their own opportunities is central to the university's mission and aligns with the Franciscan spirit of creating positive change.

Perhaps the most important project, though, is that of creating a student union to strengthen the experience of both

resident and commuter students. Until 25 years ago, Neumann was primarily a commuter school, but then, over the course of several years, it became a more residential campus. However, one element of a residential campus is still missing: a central hub where all students can feel engaged and welcomed.

“Such a hub would focus on four areas,” said Dr. Domes, “leadership development, faith development, community, and fun. It would be a fun place to go. Those are the elements that we see as really important for our student union. It will really solidify our sense of a residential campus.”

These are all ambitious plans, but ones that the university envisions making a reality

over the course of the next 15 years. The benefits of being able to offer all these amenities are undeniable.

“Our mission is more relevant today than ever, and speaks to the needs of a student population that is deeply hungry for this kind of educational experience,” said Dr. Domes. “That mission continues to be lived out on campus thanks to the sisters.”

At the Heart of the Sisters

Another benefit of this partnership is the fact that the sisters won't have to move out of the motherhouse immediately, which likely wouldn't have been the case if the property had gone to a third party. While there is a goal of creating a student

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- **Learn the sisters' history.** The sisters are leaving a legacy that will benefit students for decades to come. Familiarize yourself with the sisters' past to more fully understand and appreciate the gifts they've created for the future.
- **Let go of what you no longer need.** Just as the sisters recognized there was no longer a need for these lands and buildings in their congregation, is there something in your life that you could let go of so it might benefit others? Release goods, money, or even old mindsets that you no longer have use for.
- **Trust God.** Whenever taking a step forward in life while being unsure of the outcome, remember, as the sisters do, to trust in God. God will provide what is needed at the right time.
- **Support the students of Neumann University,** whether it's by cheering them on at events or donating to help fund their education. In this way, you're helping to further education in the Franciscan tradition.



Dr. Domes visits the new dormitory for Neumann students in the former Franciscan Spiritual Center. These roomy dorms with great views of the grounds will be the first occupied by Neumann students beginning in fall 2022.

Part of Phase I of the expansion process is the creation of a new ice rink, which is desperately needed by Neumann's popular ice hockey team and for recreational use by students. It will also provide opportunities to serve the broader community.



dormitory in a separate wing of Our Lady of Angels Convent and having a small, select group of students move in by fall 2022, the sisters will continue to rent back living and office space as needed from the university and only gradually transition to new lodging over several years.

"The sisters didn't enter this community for a building," Sister Kathy mused. "We were called by God to serve, and that's what we want to be about." Sister Theresa's leadership team echoed this sentiment: "Our life is about our relationships together and the community we create with one another. While we may have a different roof over our heads, our life together will continue. The essence of being a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia will never change."

Words of Wisdom

With the transition finalized, Sister Theresa reflected on several quotations from the founder of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Mother Mary Francis Bachmann:

"No risk, no gain,' is one. While letting go of the familiar may feel like a risk, the sisters understand that it may open everyone up to greater gains in the future.

"Another, 'Trust in the loving providence of God,' reflects that God provided the perfect partner for this transition. The first founding sisters also moved forward, trusting that God would always provide even when they didn't know what the future

would hold. In both cases, God always provided exactly what was needed.

"Finally, and perhaps most poignantly, there's, 'Even if everything is lost and destroyed, let us be one heart united in love.' A core Franciscan value is that of detachment. Material items and lodgings aren't what's important; what's important is how this community remains united. No matter where the sisters reside in the future, their 'one heart' will stay strong—and continue to serve." ■

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



▲ Sister Maria de Guadalupe demonstrates how she creates her beautifully handcrafted rosaries—a process that takes time, talent, and a lot of love.

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.

PENNSYLVANIA

During her 11 years as a resident of Our Lady of Angels Convent, **Sister Maria de Guadalupe Diaz** has made nearly 1,500 rosaries. The rosaries have gone as far as Kenya, Ireland, and Jamaica. Closer to home they have traveled to New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida. They have served as gifts to Neumann University and OLA employees. The rosaries are varied in color, shape of bead, and type of crucifix. Many of the beads are Job’s tears that come from the backyard of Sister Maria’s sister, Agnes, in Puerto Rico. Sister Maria de Guadalupe not only makes rosaries but also says the rosary several times each day. Her ministry, therefore, has a two-fold effect: the joy that the recipients of the rosaries experience and the prayer of the rosary, which many believe is the most powerful of all prayers.



PENNSYLVANIA

Sister Ann David Strohminger has received a 35-years-of-service award for continuous employment at the St. John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Sister Ann David formerly helped to provide pastoral counseling in the inpatient setting. She was the cofounder of the pastoral counseling department and program director for those with chronic,

► In addition to her service at St. John Vianney Center, Sister Ann David Strohminger serves as delegate for religious for the Diocese of Wilmington in Delaware.

long-term mental health issues. Currently she provides service through the outpatient department as an independent contractor offering lectures and providing vocational and pastoral evaluation services for seminary and religious life applicants.



WORLDWIDE

Led by the **Social Concerns Committee**, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia have donated about \$12,000 to help some of those affected by recent national and world events causing great suffering. On August 14, 2021, Haiti was struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake. In solidarity with the Haitian people, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia raised contributions during liturgy and through funds sent to the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation. During the Christmas season, to help refugees from Afghanistan in resettling locally, the Sisters of St. Francis gave from their collections and gave additional help by choosing soup meals during Advent. Then throughout January 2022, the sisters collected contributions for the Kentucky residents whose lives were deeply affected by the devastating tornadoes striking western Kentucky and neighboring states on the night of December 10-11, 2021. In March 2022, the focus shifted to include help for Ukraine.





◀ Ceremony dedicating the garden at St. Clement Mary Hofbauer Parish in honor of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

MARYLAND

The parishioners in the Rosedale, Maryland, parish of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer and their pastor, Friar Timothy Dore, have welcomed a lovely garden in honor of the **Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia**. The restful garden, dedicated and blessed on October 3, 2021, is located between the former convent for the Sisters of St. Francis and the church and offers benches, picnic tables, and a fish pond, all under the watchful eye of St. Francis of Assisi, whose statue stands on a nearby stone wall. Flowers and shrubs line the garden sidewalks. A newly installed fence bears a plaque dedicating the garden to the memory of the many sisters who ministered in the school and parish from 1932 through 2003.



NATIONWIDE

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia are helping to bring positive change to worker conditions in the meatpacking industry. The Sisters of St. Francis and other investor-coalition partners, especially

Investor Advocates for Social Justice, have prompted action to advance equity within Tyson Foods, Inc., the largest U.S. meatpacking company by sales. The company is among the meatpackers coming under scrutiny during the pandemic for inhumane treatment of the industry's largely minority workforce.

In August 2021, 17 investor members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, including the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, cofiled a proposal for a racial audit within Tyson Foods. For several years, Tyson has been a company of concern in the areas of racial equality and worker rights. In addition to filing the proposal, the investor coalitions have held numerous conversations with Tyson representatives.

The filing and discussions have led to a meaningful outcome. Tyson Foods has agreed to commission a detailed study to determine whether its practices contribute to racial inequities. As a result of the agreement, the participating shareholders, including the Sisters of St. Francis, have withdrawn their proposal.

PENNSYLVANIA

On October 2, 2021, **Red Hill Farm** held its annual Farm to Table Dinner. This year's dinner helped to raise the money needed for a new high tunnel for the farm. In addition to the money raised through ticket sales, the farm received several generous donations. While high tunnels are used throughout the growing season, they are also especially valuable in helping the farm to extend its growing season. Farm employees and volunteers can start plants earlier in the spring when it is too cool outdoors and can keep plants going longer in the fall as well. Red Hill Farm built the new high tunnel in early spring 2022. Learn more about Red Hill Farm on our website: www.osfphila.org/red-hill-farm/.



The additional high tunnel will allow us to grow healthy seedling plants in a climate-controlled environment.

St. Francis House: Easing the Hardships *of Those in Need*



Caleb finds just the right toy while his mother, Sonya, searches for clothing for her family. Not only does the St. Francis House make available gently used clothing and household items for people like Caleb and his mother, but over the years their programs have also grown to include help with paying utilities or rent. There is even a Christmas Adoption program so that members of the community can adopt families in need and provide them with gifts at Christmas.

Client Gail Patterson bikes over to St. Francis House for her appointment at the clothing bank. The nonprofit serves families in and around Puyallup, a community just outside of Tacoma, Washington.

“ST. FRANCIS HOUSE PROVIDES A CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH THOSE WHO HAVE MORE THAN THEY NEED ARE ABLE TO SHARE WITH THOSE WHO HAVE LESS.”

Ever since its inception, St. Francis House in Puyallup, Washington, has expressed and experienced God's love—giving and receiving what is needed, sometimes in ways that seem miraculous. Sister Patricia Michalek, OSF, whose parents founded St. Francis House nearly five decades ago, shared that “The biggest example of this came shortly after I first came on as executive director. An insurance bill had come in, and at the time we didn't have the money to cover it. I thought, ‘We just need \$1,010.’ The next day, we received a check in the mail for exactly \$1,010.”



Sister Pat Michalek and program director Laura Anderson stop to share notes about clients on a busy “shopping” day. From its humble beginnings in a donated storefront, St. Francis House has grown to include an acre of land and several buildings.

Another remarkable story concerned a local man who entered the St. Francis House clothing bank to do a bit of shopping. The man had received great news: he'd just landed a job in construction. The catch? He had to have a pair of steel-toed boots in order to do the work. Unfortunately, the clothing bank didn't

have a pair in his size, so he wandered among the racks to give himself time to think. As he was browsing, a person entered and, although it was not within the normal donation hours, donated a pair of steel-toed boots in just the right size.

Through such amazing examples of God's caring and through countless everyday acts, St. Francis House reflects the Franciscan charism, reaching out with kindness to serve all those in need. The original inspiration for the center grew out of the work of the Anchorage-based Fraternity of Secular Franciscans following the massive 1964 Alaskan earthquake. The magnitude 9.2 earthquake destroyed multiple communities. In an embodiment of the Franciscan spirit of collaboration, the fraternity put an outreach program into effect, connecting those who had made it through the earthquake relatively unscathed with those who had lost everything.

At the time, the Fraternity of Secular Franciscans in Tacoma, Washington, was looking for ways to expand their ministry. Moved by what was happening in Alaska, fraternity members Doris and Stan Michalek wondered if they could do something similar in their own town—about 20 minutes south of downtown Tacoma—to connect those living in abundance with those who were struggling. Thus Puyallup's St. Francis House was born.

All in the Family

“It started with a simple clothing bank,” recalled Sister Pat Michalek. When her parents began the center, Sister Pat was living on the East Coast. Whenever she visited her family, however, she witnessed

the ministry's growth and help for a great many people. Both then and now, she explained, “St. Francis House provides a channel through which those who have more than they need are able to share with those who have less.”

After many years of service, Sister Pat's mother, Doris, was no longer able to continue handling all the work that was required. “I asked congregational leadership if I could apply to be the director. St. Francis House did not have a director; my mom was the closest thing,” said Sister Pat. The community agreed, recognizing that the St. Francis House mission was closely aligned with their own, reflecting the Franciscan vision. So in 2001, Sister Pat became St. Francis House's first paid employee; she has led the ministry ever since.

Over the years, several sisters of St. Francis in addition to Sister Pat have ministered at St. Francis House. While a number of these sisters have since retired or passed away, Sister Jude Connelly, OSF, and other Tacoma-area sisters volunteer on occasion. “We are blessed to have a tight-knit community of support,” said Sister Pat.

Humble Beginnings

When St. Francis House was first established, a local couple, the Lewendowskis, donated the free use of a vacant store in Tacoma to house the initial clothing bank. The fruits of their generosity have multiplied. Today, the organization owns an acre of land in addition to several buildings in Puyallup. The clothing bank is set up to resemble a retail store, with clothes

continued on page 14



► Client services assistant Carmen Hernandez speaks with a client and her one-year-old daughter. The process of “shopping” in St. Francis House begins with an intake interview in which families are asked a series of basic questions vital to understanding their level of need. Oftentimes, recipients only need temporary help due to a change in circumstances that has left them overextended.

continued from page 13

hanging neatly on racks to give clients a true “shopping” experience. This design allows them to maintain a sense of dignity—central to the organization’s mission. While the clothes are free, customers still “check out” at the end.

From the clothing bank, other services have grown. For example, the back corner of the original clothing bank used to host a small area where food and coffee were available. Sharing a cup of coffee in this relaxed setting provided an ideal opportunity to talk with clients and assess their needs. As St. Francis House grew and moved to different locations, however, this café was no longer practical and other means of discovering the needs of clients were developed.

St. Francis House now has an intake process for those in need who visit the clothing bank. This process involves a series of

basic questions that lead naturally to additional sharing about the causes and details of visitors’ current difficulties. Their challenges often come from unemployment or underemployment. Individuals may be working

two jobs but still find they can’t make ends meet. In other instances, a change in circumstances, such as an elderly parent coming to live with a family, might be what has overextended that family’s resources.



St. Francis House client Todd Sorenson and his pup, Peter, visit the clothing bank in search of dry clothing and a little food.



Meeting the Greatest Need

As St. Francis House has grown, its services have consistently evolved to meet the greatest need and avoid duplicating services available elsewhere. For instance, when there was a large local migrant community, teaching English as a second language was a priority. Similarly, when it was discovered that many clients were using food money for rent, an evening meal program was developed. When it was realized that some families were facing eviction from their homes, an emergency rent and utilities assistance program was created.

“In implementing the emergency assistance program, we now have a carefully designed process to evaluate and offer help to families where we think it will really make a difference,” Sister Pat said. “If there’s no job in the near future, there’s no point helping with rent for just one month because the next month they’ll need it again. However, it may help them over the hump and they can go on their own after that.” In some cases, something as simple as a car repair might have drained a family’s finances that month and assistance with one month’s rent will keep them afloat. In others, it might be that someone lost a job but has

another lined up in the near future and just needs to bridge the gap.

Another highly successful St. Francis House offering is the Christmas Adoption program, which allows families to adopt other families to provide gifts at Christmas. “Connecting people who have with those who don’t is a basic principle of ours,” said Sister Pat. The adopting families often have adult children. In lieu of gift giving among themselves, they may decide to put money toward helping those less fortunate. St. Francis House identifies families with a pressing need and asks them to make a list of necessities, toys their children want, everyone’s favorite colors, and so on, so that the adopting families know what to give. “The adopting families usually have a glorious time shopping,” laughed Sister Pat. “I honestly don’t know who has more fun: the family who gives or the family who receives.”

While the paired Christmas Adoption families never meet, the adopting family does learn the story of the family they’re helping. One participating family was particularly moved by what they learned, so much so that they have continued to help their adopted family in subsequent

St. Francis House is a single-source stop for all kinds of items, including clothes, shoes, housewares, toys, books, and miscellaneous household goods. It includes a checkout counter (below, right) so that clients feel as though they are having an authentic shopping experience even though what they receive is free of charge. Volunteers support the staff by working tirelessly to stock the clothing bank—here volunteer Jim Compton (below, left) checks to see if electronics are in working order and, if need be, repairs them before putting them out for clients to receive.



years. That family's story is a difficult one: the single mother's sister had come to visit with her four children and then left alone in the middle of the night, never returning. The remaining mother first came to St. Francis House because she couldn't manage the situation: caring for her own children plus four nieces and nephews. This past year, St. Francis House saw 53 families adopted at Christmastime.

God Provides

Despite the fact that Covid-19 meant canceling fundraisers normally vital for funding the ministry, St. Francis House has had tremendous community support from individuals and groups of many faiths and backgrounds. This support has brought the money needed to continue the mission. Now as Sister Pat nears retirement, she trusts God will also provide the right

person to take her place as executive director and continue her work in the tradition of St. Francis. "I hope the best of our Franciscan charism will always continue here," Sister Pat said. "I assure the board as we look to the next chapter, as long as we have been true to our mission of reaching out to God's poor, God has always taken care of us."

Those who are served and those who serve at St. Francis House are clearly experiencing and reflecting God's love. Ever true to the Franciscan charism of cooperation and kindness in service to others, the St. Francis House employees and volunteers live by Jesus' commandment at the heart of the Gospel: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ■

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



◀ *St. Francis House runs strictly off donated goods. Donors are generous and back stock often exceeds the clothing bank's ability to absorb the donations. For this reason, there is a highly organized storage system in place on site. Off-season and surplus items are stored in giant plywood bins that can only be accessed via forklift. Here, staff member Trisha Frey expertly maneuvers a storage bin into place.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- **Consider making a financial contribution.** Organizations like St. Francis House survive based on the generosity of their communities. If it's within your means, offer a monetary gift.
- **Donate goods.** Whether or not you live near St. Francis House, there are sure to be organizations in your area looking for donated goods so they can provide services similar to the clothing bank's. Round up items you no longer need to give to those who can use them.
- **Volunteer time.** If you have the time and feel called to do so, consider volunteering or engaging in other opportunities (such as the Christmas Adoption program) where you can directly impact those in need.
- **Get inspired.** Just as Doris and Stan Michalek were first inspired to found St. Francis House when they heard about the work happening in Alaska, seek inspiration in your own life for how you might be of service—then act on that inspiration!

What's New with St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Improving for Families

▼ Shelter residents have told volunteer Lois Ashworth that they feel St. Mary's is "a homey, comfortable place." Prior to the recent expansion, each family had a private room, like this one, for the duration of their stay at the shelter.



WE OFFER FAMILIES
"ALL THE SUPPORT
THEY NEED TO GET
BACK ON THEIR FEET.
WE HELP BREAK THE
CYCLE OF POVERTY."

Among the more than half a million Americans experiencing homelessness on a typical night, families and their needs are too often overlooked. Yet about 30 percent of those without a home are adults and children living as families.¹ Determined to help families without adequate shelter, in 1987, Sister Marie Patrice Feeney, OSF, and Sister Margaret Jones, OSF, founded St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families. The former Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, convent of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, in St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, was renovated to provide a home for five families at a time for up to eight weeks each.

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter is a nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer advisory board and guided by the spirit of the Gospel and Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi. The shelter's mission is to provide a safe,

peaceful, temporary refuge for homeless families; to create a community environment; and to foster dignity, self-esteem, and independence. Although in 2015 the shelter was divested from the Sisters of St. Francis, they remain actively involved as shelter supporters, advisors, and members of the board of directors. Currently, Sister Eleanor Moore, OSF, is a member of the board. The shelter also collaborates with local agencies and more than two-dozen area churches that are generously and actively involved, especially in providing meals for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter residents.

On September 23, 2021, St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new transitional housing unit on the grounds of the existing shelter. St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter founder Sister Marie Patrice Feeney, OSF, and Sister Mary Teresa Coll, OSF, who served the shelter for more than 20 years, were present for the ribbon-cutting. The new facility, which was converted from a former schoolhouse in a

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, endhomelessness.org.



Located in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, 30 miles west of Philadelphia, St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter opened its doors in 1987 and has helped more than 640 families get back on their feet.

► Sister Marie Patrice Feeney (L), founder of St. Mary's Shelter, along with Sister Mary Teresa Coll (R), who served at St. Mary's for 20+ years.



HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- See stmarysfs.org for a list of needs and information about making donations to help support St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter and its residents.
- To keep up with St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter news, subscribe to the shelter's quarterly newsletter.

Life Experiencing Homelessness



◀ Michele Giacomucci, vice chair of St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter's board of directors, is joined by Deacon Mark Nowakowski, of St. Basil the Great Parish, and Sister Bernadette Dougherty during the Sept. 23 ribbon-cutting for the new transitional housing unit.



◀ The ribbon-cutting event was attended by many and included a blessing of the building by clergy and tours of the unoccupied apartments.

six-year renovation project, provides four transitional housing apartments that offer families the needed security, resources, and time to find long-term or permanent housing.

The new transitional-housing apartments each include two bedrooms—with beds donated by the Sisters of St. Francis—a living and dining room, a bathroom, and a galley kitchen with new appliances. Families are able to remain in these St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter apartments for 18 to 24 months, during which time the families receive personal case management and onsite coaching to support them in reaching their housing, employment, and other significant goals. Apartment

residents are offered onsite training in parenting and in household and time management. The adults are also asked to pursue education in a field with the income potential required for them and their families to reach independence. Sister Bernadette Dougherty, SSJ, the executive director of St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter, explains that the shelter gives the resident families "all the support they need to get back on their feet. We help them break the cycle of poverty."

A few facts help to illustrate the notable difference that St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter is making in the lives of the families they serve. While only 18 percent of the shelter's residents are employed when they arrive, more than 60 percent have jobs at

departure. And while the national home-placement average for formerly homeless individuals and families is 12 percent, close to 40 percent of St. Mary's residents find permanent homes.² Since 1987, more than 640 families have been guests at St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families, which has provided these guests with more than 120,000 nights of shelter and 345,000 meals. ■

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

² Cited by St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter, stmarysfs.org.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Everyone has within a piece of good news.

— Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at www.osfphila.org

Neumann University's Knights' Pantry: Seeking to End Student Food Insecurity



Our sisters join Neumann president Dr. Domes at the blessing of the Knights' Pantry.

Neumann University has opened the Knights' Pantry, a food bank whose mission is to provide resources to alleviate food insecurity, improve health and well-being, ensure a reduction in food waste, and promote sustainability on campus. All Neumann University undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to use the pantry, which offers nonperishable food and personal hygiene items. Rina Keller, a Neumann University professor of social work, and Mary Beth Davis, a counselor at Neumann's Counseling Center for Wellness, saw the need for a food bank on their campus. They created and implemented a plan that led to the opening of the Knights' Pantry, which will increasingly become a student-run project. While ongoing donations remain crucial to the success of the Knights' Pantry, the pantry has received generous support from individuals and community partners, including Red Hill Farm.

In the Franciscan Tradition: Bringing Light to Need

An article by Mike Lang in the Diocese of Wilmington *Dialog* highlights the history and the new location and name for Wilmington's Amanecer Counseling and Resource Center. As the January 27, 2022, article explains, the center under its original name—the Family Counseling Center of St. Paul's—was founded in 2003 by Sister Theresa Elitz. To honor Sister Theresa's vision and extended contributions, dedication of the center's new location and celebration of its new name took place this fall on her birthday. For much of the center's history, Sister Theresa and her staff met with about 300 clients from across the region in the rectory for Wilmington's St. Paul Catholic Church, a small and busy space. After briefly relocating to a building on South Harrison Street, the center has a welcoming new home at Third and Van Buren Streets—across from St. Paul's—in a house purchased from the Franciscan friars' Holy Name Province.



Rob McCreary, the center's executive director, seen here with Sister Theresa, explained that Amanecer's mission is "to see Latinos heal, grow, and thrive by providing behavioral health and resources that empower individuals and families."

The center's new name, *Amanecer*—Spanish for *dawn*, *sunrise*, or *awakening*—represents both the center's hope for its clients and its desire to illuminate the unmet or insufficiently met need for mental health resources for the area's Hispanic population.



Assisi House Welcomes Sister Kate McCarron

Sister Kathleen Francis McCarron has joined Assisi House as the retirement convent's administrator. Sister Kate brings impressive background to her new position. She holds degrees in sociology, psychology, and social work and also is a Licensed Social Worker. Sister Kate has ministered as a social worker, as a counselor, and as a director of pastoral care in several different institutions and ministries. An experienced leader, she served as a member of the congregational council from 2002 to 2008. Our elder sisters are indeed in good hands. Welcome, Sister Kate!



In Memoriam

Sister Clare Agnes Conforti
March 29, 2022

Sister Stella Mary Breen
March 26, 2022

Sister Mary Ellen Farley
(formerly Sister Michael Bernadette)
January 15, 2022

Sister Mary Ann Potenza
(formerly Sister Mary Nicholas)
January 7, 2022

Sister Margaret Mary Lewis
(formerly Sister John Therese)
December 31, 2021

Sister Bernice Pelczar
December 3, 2021

Sister Elizabeth Frances Scully
(formerly Sister Anthony Brendan)
November 14, 2021

Sister Mary Carmel Molloy
(formerly Sister Carmelette)
October 11, 2021

Sister Kathleen Veronica Carroll
(formerly Sister Mary St. Hubert)
September 23, 2021

CELEBRATING

Jubilee

AS SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF
PHILADELPHIA

Congratulations to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia celebrating milestones in their religious life! Join with us in congratulating them on many years of service to the people of God as Sisters of St. Francis.

70 years
Professed 1952

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS

SISTER STELLA MARY BREEN (DECEASED)

SISTER JANICE MARIE HALLACHER

SISTER EMMA ANNA HOLDENER

SISTER CARMEL MAHONEY

SISTER ELIZABETH MARY MURPHY

50 years
Professed 1972

GOLDEN JUBILARIANS

SISTER MARGARET SULLIVAN

Recognize a name? Would you like to reconnect or send a congratulatory note? Send communications to Florence Smith; 609 S. Convent Road; Aston, PA 19014; communications@osfphila.org

Leading The Catholic High School of Baltimore into the Future

For Barbara D. Nazelrod, the 2021-22 academic year has marked her 21st as president of The Catholic High School of Baltimore, the longest tenure for any head of school in the archdiocese. She is also a Catholic High graduate, class of '68. During her two decades as president, Dr. Nazelrod has helped to build a welcoming and academically excellent high school in the Franciscan tradition. As she explained in a recent interview, "We get our identity and our mission and values from the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia."

► Dr. Barbara Nazelrod, president of Catholic High, talks with students between classes. More than 12,000 young women have graduated from the school since it opened in 1939.



FoCUS

“POPE FRANCIS SAID,
'WHENEVER WE DO
SOMETHING TOGETHER,
SOMETHING GOOD,
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL,
EVERYONE CHANGES.'
I AM TRULY GRATEFUL FOR
THE POSITIVE CHANGES
DAVE AND CAROL HELP
TO BRING THROUGH
THEIR FAITHFUL SUPPORT.
TOGETHER WE LIVE THE
GOSPEL, LOVING OUR
NEIGHBORS AND SHARING
THE GOOD NEWS.”

— SISTER DEBORAH KRIST, OSF

► David and Carol
Strohming.



DAVID & CAROL STROHMINGER

David and Carol Strohming are lifelong Franciscans and devoted champions of the Sisters of St. Francis and their charism. Dave, whose sister is Sister Ann David Strohming, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation Board and is on the board's outreach committee.

Dave and his sister Nancy—now Sister Ann David—were taught by Franciscans at Baltimore's Shrine of the Little Flower. Dave credits his Franciscan teachers with giving him an excellent education. At St. Anthony of Padua in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Carol's teachers were also Franciscans. After graduating from the Catholic High School of Baltimore and St. Agnes College, Carol returned to St. Anthony of Padua as a primary-school teacher—becoming the colleague of some of the same Franciscan sisters who had taught her.



▲ The Strohming family: (Clockwise L-R) son Matt Strohming, Dave, Carol, daughter Nancy O'Brien, Sister Ann David, and George Strohming, who was also devoted to the Franciscans.

From 1968 until his retirement in 2010, Dave was a partner in the automotive dealership Schaefer & Strohming. Dave learned the business early, working summers beginning in 1960 to help his father, George, and his Uncle Henry. Dave relates, “The George, Henry, and Lou [Schaefer] team always supported the Franciscans; I continued that support when my time came. Whenever a Franciscan needed to borrow a car, we always said yes, and this was a source of great pleasure for all of us.”

Dave's and Carol's close ties with the Sisters of St. Francis have extended even beyond their education and careers. Both welcome taking part in special events sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis. And in their vacation home on the Magothy River, south of Baltimore, Carol and Dave have celebrated special occasions and had the pleasure of many other visits with Franciscan sisters.

Reflecting on his ongoing enthusiastic support of the Sisters of St. Francis, Dave says, “Carol and I have always liked the objectives of the foundation board, so it has seemed easy to ‘tag along.’ Carol and I believe that the Franciscans really work on their mission to help people and support those in need, so we see our funds being used to further our own goals, as well; the nuns just do it better!”



▲ Santa (also known as David Strohming!) visits the sisters in Assisi House. “My entire life I have been surrounded by the Franciscans. Carol and I have gotten to know and enjoy them, and we’ve seen their fun side: So much fun!”

Laudato Si' Action Platform

"I have done what was mine to do. May Christ teach you what is yours to do."
—St. Francis of Assisi

On December 8, 2021, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia formally committed to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform in support of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. *Laudato Si'* presents a vision of integral ecology and calls on every human being to love, respect, and nurture the Earth as Sister and Mother, as our shared inheritance and home.

In May 2021, Pope Francis announced the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform as an urgent initiative challenging the entire Catholic Church and world community to prepare a better tomorrow for future generations. The platform is a seven-year journey bringing together seven sectors—families, dioceses and parishes, educational institutions, health-care institutions, organizations and groups, the economic sector, and religious congregations. These sectors—all of us—are called to respond to the seven *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals: response to the cry of the Earth, response to the cry of the poor, ecological economics, adoption of sustainable lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality, and community resilience and empowerment.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia stand strongly in support of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* vision. In their 2017 Corporate Stand on Care for Creation, the sisters committed to ecological education for themselves and others leading to concrete individual and communal actions. Under the ongoing leadership of their Care for Creation Committee, the congregation has continued to respond to *Laudato Si'* through education and action. Congregational leadership enthusiastically agreed with the committee's recommendation that the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia formally join the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform: "As Franciscans, how can we not?"

The Care for Creation Committee is now coordinating development of the congregation's *Laudato Si'* Action Plan. This plan will include engaging individuals at both the congregational and the local level to do their part in caring for the Earth and its people by embracing an eco-sustainable lifestyle and society. The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and their Companions in Mission, sponsored and cosponsored ministries, and coworkers and extended community will all play a part in moving toward deeper ecological transformation in care for our common home.



The Laudato Si' Action Platform goals set by Pope Francis ask us to redefine and rebuild our relationship with each other and our common home. They call for a spiritual and cultural revolution to realize integral ecology in a profound act of care.



In Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021, Pope Francis formally opened the Synod on Synodality, a two-year process of listening and dialogue. Through this synodal process, Pope Francis is inviting the entire Church to deep reflection: "By walking together, and together reflecting on the journey made, the Church will be able to learn from what it will experience which processes can help it to live communion, to achieve participation, to open itself to mission." Pope Francis' words on Synod 2021-2023 and a detailed guide to the synodal process can be found at www.synod.va.

For this process, Pope Francis invites the Church's laity, religious, and clergy all to listen, pray, and converse together about the Church through *synodality*—meaning *collaborative discernment*—in preparation for the bishops' synod in 2023. A U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org) document explains that "the decision to 'journey together' is a prophetic sign for the human family, which needs a shared project capable of pursuing the good of all."

Each diocese will complete their input by August 2022. The Sisters of St. Francis are participating in this important process of coming together as a church and people. Stay tuned to learn more in upcoming publications.

► John and Fay McManus contribute to the Sisters of St. Francis both through John S. McManus Inc. and as individuals.



Donor Spotlight

JOHN & FAY MCMANUS

▼ Fay and John's sons, Sean and Michael, are leaders in the family company. Fay and John are the adoring grandparents of nine grandchildren.

John and Fay McManus are loyal friends of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Fay's Franciscan ties began with evening courses at Our Lady of Angels College (now Neumann University). Then through a program allowing advanced undergraduates to teach, Fay taught second grade at St. Francis de Sales School in Lenni, where sisters of St. Francis became her colleagues and friends.

After graduating, Fay stayed home with their sons, Sean and Michael. When she was ready to return to work, she entered Neumann's nursing program, and the boys attended the college's Child Development Center. Fay went on to serve for many years as a nurse for area schools. She notes, "My nursing professors included Dr. Rosalie Mirenda," who would become Neumann's president. "I loved being at Neumann because the Sisters of St. Francis are open, warm, and welcoming, and I found them very supportive of all the students. I loved Rosalie, and now President Chris Domes is also doing a wonderful job. He is very considerate of the sisters—supporting them and keeping their mission in the forefront while growing the university."

President Rosalie Mirenda encouraged Fay and John to become involved in Neumann's alumni activities. They are also strong friends of the university through their business. John—who holds a degree in marketing and management from Saint Joseph's University—is the president and CEO of John S. McManus Inc., a family-run company whose roots extend back to the 19th century. Construction projects the company has overseen include Riddle Memorial Hospital's Rothman Institute. For Neumann University, the company built a two-story addition to the Rocco A. Abessinio Building, adding 17,000 square feet to accommodate growth in the university's physical therapy doctoral program and undergraduate nursing and health-sciences programs.

Sister Mary Vandergeest first encouraged John and Fay McManus to become further involved with the Sisters of St. Francis. John has now served on the foundation board for many years. Both John and Fay agree, "We love the sisters and believe it is important that we support them—and we wouldn't miss their annual Franciscan Night! They do so much good for the community, caring not only for the poor but for everyone. We ourselves serve and are served by supporting them."

► John and Fay "will do anything for the Sisters of St. Francis!" and "wouldn't miss Franciscan Night!" Here John joins Sisters Lynn Patrice Lavin and Margaret Egan.



"FAY AND JOHN HAVE BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE SISTERS' ENDEAVORS AND ARE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO LEND A HELPING HAND. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT."

— SISTER MARY VANDERGEEST

Let's Hear From You!

- ____ Please add my name to the mailing list for *Good News*. (This is a secure list to which no other mail will be sent unless you request to receive information.)
- ____ I am receiving duplicate copies of *Good News*. Enclosed is the address label that contains the mailing address to be removed from your mailing list. (Mail card and address label in envelope.)
- ____ Please remove my name from the mailing list; I no longer wish to receive *Good News*.
- ____ Please add my e-mail to your e-list so I can receive my copy electronically. In addition, please remove my address from your hard copy list.
- ____ Please send a copy of *Good News* to the following individual:

Name _____ E-Mail Address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Select areas of interest to receive information about the congregation.

- ☐ Companion Program ☐ Franciscan Spiritual Centers (select one): ☐ Aston, PA ☐ Marylhurst, OR ☐ Young Franciscans
- ☐ Community Supported Agriculture: ☐ Sisters of St. Francis Foundation ☐ Vocations ☐ Young Adult Engagement
- Red Hill Farm, Aston, PA



Join Our E-News Mailing List!

Visit www.osfphila.org to sign up. It only takes a minute to enter your e-mail address to receive prayerful, entertaining, and informative e-news from the Sisters of St. Francis twice per month.



Join us!



Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



SrsOfStFrancis



sistersofstfrancis

Link directly to our pages from our website homepage: www.osfphila.org

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION



- ☐ **Online** – Make a secured gift online at www.osfphila.org.
- ☐ **Check** – Send a check or money order payable to: The Sisters of St. Francis Foundation, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014.
- ☐ **Prayer/Memorial Cards** – Gifts can be made to the Sisters of St. Francis in memory or in honor of a loved one. Contact Sister Kathleen Parisi at kparisi@osfphila.org or (610) 558-7714 to request cards.
- ☐ **Recurring Gift** – Contribute money on a recurring basis. Contact Elaine Twadell at (610) 558-6132 or etwadell@osfphila.org.
- ☐ **Bequest** – Give a gift through your will to help the sisters. Contact Sister Deborah Krist at dkrist@osfphila.org or (610) 558-7713.
- ☐ **Planned Giving** – Tax advantages are available through planned giving, including bequests, securities, life insurance, and other individual retirement withdrawals. Contact Sister Deborah Krist at dkrist@osfphila.org or (610) 558-7713.
- ☐ **Foundation Support** – If you or a family member have a foundation, contributions to the Sisters of St. Francis may be made through your foundation.

I would like to be contacted.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER: ☐ HOME ☐ CELL _____ E-MAIL _____

Please tear out this page and mail completed to: GOOD NEWS, Communications Office, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014-1207 ■ Visit us online at www.osfphila.org or call us at (610) 558-7726

The Sisters of St. Francis
of Philadelphia
609 S. Convent Road
Aston, PA 19014-1207
Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROYERSFORD, PA
PERMIT NO. 539



Visit our website at www.osfphila.org



Above, left: Sisters stuff homemade pillows for Anna's Place in Chester. Right: Sister Theresa Firenze prepares her special chili.

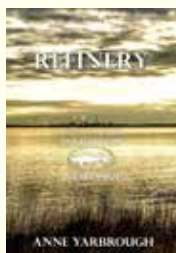
Assisi House Happenings

The sisters at Assisi House continue their missions in corporal works of mercy by helping with projects for Anna's Place in Chester, Pennsylvania. In one project, using fabric



donated by the United Way of Bucks County, the sisters made 60 hand-sewn and hand-stuffed Christmas pillows for Anna's Place. During the fall, Assisi House held their second Sisters Cooking demonstration. Congregational minister Sister Theresa Firenze, Assisi House resident Sister Jean Margaret McDevitt, and former dining services staff member Khalil Clarke each demonstrated and prepared a favorite recipe. Assisi House resident Sister Mary Teresa Coll cohosted the event. Assisi House's 2021-22 first-Friday programs began with Sister Clare D'Auria's first presentation in her series *Dancing with the Spirit: The Seven Joys of Our Lady*. In addition, Sister Anne Amati introduced a seven-week series responding to Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* Action Platform on care for creation.

A Franciscan Mission Recalled in Poetry



In 1879, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia established the St. James Protectory, an orphanage for boys, at Lovering Avenue and DuPont Street in Wilmington, Delaware. Then in 1888, the orphanage moved to a large farm, called Reybold, near Delaware City. The Sisters of St. Francis continued to serve the mission until its closing in 1941.

Delaware poet Anne Yarbrough has published a book of poetry, *Refinery* (Broadkill River Press, 2021), about the Delaware City Refinery region. Four poems in this prize-winning collection chronicle the history of the St. James Protectory and reflect on what life there must have been like for the sisters and boys. In her book, Anne Yarbrough acknowledges Sister Helen Jacobson, archivist for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, for allowing the use of accounts from the sisters' archives. Learn more: www.broadkillriverpress.com.



▲ In May 1964, Reverend Mother Mary Agnes, superior general of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, turned the first spade of earth at the groundbreaking of Our Lady of Angels College. The college on the grounds of the motherhouse was built to allow sisters and novices to attend college without undue hardship. Today, 58 years later, Our Lady of Angels—now known as Neumann University—has acquired property owned by the sisters to both honor the sisters' legacy and grow their campus footprint. Read more about this mutual partnership on page 4.