

Mercy Works

Volume 1 • Number 1

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Northeast Community • Committed to Compassionate Service



Dear Friends in Mercy:

This has been an eventful year for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas serving the Areas of Albany, NY; Connecticut; New Hampshire; Portland, ME; Providence, RI; and Vermont. After years of preparation, we formally inaugurated the Mercy Northeast Community on July 1 so that we might ensure for years to come our ability to respond to the call of our founder, Catherine McAuley, to serve the poor, sick and uneducated.

As the Northeast Community President, I want to express on behalf of the entire Leadership Team our commitment to strengthening our relationship with you and others in the Mercy family who add richness to our lives and ministries. In *Mercy Works*, we want to present to you stories about our varied works and the dynamic people whose efforts help bring Mercy to those in need.

As we prepare for the blessed Advent season, let us pray that the message of God's love may bring peace to the world.

In Mercy,

Ellen Kurtz, RSM, President
Mercy Northeast Community

Making a difference: a reason to celebrate

Thanks to our supporters, \$78,000 was raised for *A Celebration of Mercy*, a Rhode Island event to benefit the ministry fund. "This is the sixth year that we've done the event and it just keeps getting better and better," said Sister Irene Nerney, director of Special Events. Since its inception, the event has raised \$432,295 for the Sisters of Mercy ministry fund.

The gala, held on the grounds of Johnson & Wales University, began with wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres, followed by Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri's presentation of the Governor's Award for Service to Rhode Island to Dr. John J. Bowen, President of Johnson & Wales University.

The award, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, recognizes individuals who have demonstrated the commitment of their lives and resources to improve the lives of those who suffer in poverty, from illness, and or from lack of education.

Adding to the ambiance of the gala, students from St. Mary's Academy-Bay View played soft violin music and greeted guests as they entered the tent. The musicians ended the festivities with a special song dedicated to Dr. Bowen.

Following the reception guests attended a performance of "Annie" at the Providence Performing Arts Center. Sister Pat Combies, former president of the Providence regional community, reminded the guests that because of their generosity, "the sun will come out tomorrow" for the many served by Mercy.

We extend our thanks to the many businesses and individuals who sponsored this event and who help us bring Mercy to the world.



Past President Sister Patricia Combies, Kathie Bowen, Garret Bowen, Dr. John Bowen and Sister Maureen McElroy, of the Mercy Northeast Leadership Team

Warde Health Center residents find love and respect

A safe, loving, and spiritual home where human dignity is respected and personal choice is encouraged.

This statement describes the philosophy of the Warde Health Center in Windham, New Hampshire, a facility for both supported residential and skilled nursing care.

Sister Janice Turner, Warde Health Center Administrator, and the staff work diligently to make the Center a safe, friendly environment. Through their efforts, the Center consistently receives deficiency-free ratings from the State of New Hampshire. The Center was honored recently by New Hampshire Catholic Charities for its fifth consecutive deficiency-free survey.

A raffle was held in May for the benefit of the Warde Health Center, with the proceeds being



Warde Health Center residents and staff enjoy a ride in the new golf cart

used to purchase new carpeting. The raffle was a resounding success, and the carpets have been installed, enhancing the safety and attractiveness of the facility.

In addition to addressing safety issues, there is a busy activities department, headed by Sister Rosemary Burnham, Activities Director. In September, associate Mary Jane Moran, a dedicated member of the activities staff, coordinated a week of special events with a western theme.

Some of these events were horse and buggy rides, panning for gold, and a "Cowgirl Jamboree" with a cast of staff and residents of the Warde Health Center. Previous special activities have included a cruise week and hot air balloon rides. Through the generosity of a donor, the Center now has an eight-seat golf cart that enables residents to ride around the grounds and enjoy the beauty of the environment.

Circles of Mercy changes lives in Rensselaer, New York

Beginning its tenth year of operation, Circles of Mercy continues to offer the key elements of the Mercy Charism — hope and hospitality — to the underserved in the city of Rensselaer. Its special focus is on women of low-income women and women with children.

At Circles, classes are offered in conflict resolution, anger management and parenting. Computer training, resume writing, mentoring and accessing the Internet for job opportunities are also part of Circles' service.

Income Tax preparation and a no-interest loan program have been invaluable to many clients, and Catherine's Closet is an excellent place for clients to obtain

small appliances or clothing.

In addition to a number of creative fundraisers each year — Irish Night, a Community Walk, a

Christmas trip to New York City, and the annual Gala — your continued support helps us to address growing client needs.



Volunteers at Catherine's Closet, from left, Shirley Hart, Barbara Roy and Tita Dringus

New benefit to aging

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you may have a new benefit. On August 17, 2006, President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act of 2006, a law allowing IRAs to be used for charity.

What does this mean? Charitable Americans — and you know who you are! — now have a new tax-advantaged way to give to the causes they most care about. Seniors can now roll over IRA assets of up to \$100,000 per year into their favorite charities, free from tax.

In order to qualify, you must be 70 1/2, the IRA charitable rollovers will be allowed in 2006 and 2007 only, and the gifts may not be from any other type of retirement plan.

While you cannot use the IRA assets to fund a life income gift (charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust), you can choose a non-profit like the Sisters of Mercy to roll your IRA assets into — and leave a legacy today.

For more details on this or other ways to give, please call Doreen Tucker, at 401 333-6333, ext. 15.

Spirituality: it's a trip

Spirituality is for everybody... It's everyone's life journey," says Sister Claire Boissy, Administrative Director of the Institute of Spiritual Development.

Founded in 1982 in Burlington, Vermont, The Institute for Spiritual Development (ISD) responds to the spiritual needs of women and men of all faiths and economic backgrounds. It offers programs and services in a quiet, safe environment that allows insight and enhanced well-being.

While ISD's core program is individual spiritual direction, the ministry also provides special workshops, seminars, and retreats that appeal to spiritual seekers of all kinds. Upcoming events include a day-long workshop, "The Feminine Face of God," and a "Knitters Retreat" weekend.

Retreats are held at Lumen Christi, a charming house set on 31-acres of peaceful, secluded countryside in Benson, Vermont. A light, airy haven that overlooks a pond, pastures, woods and meadows, the facility is used year round for guided, directed and recovery retreats that focus on spirituality and personal development.

A special program at Lumen Christi is Project Transition. Offered at little or no cost to the

participants, Project Transition focuses on the spiritual and psychological needs of women facing major struggles in their lives. Project Transition women may be in recovery from substance abuse, facing separation or divorce, or may be single parents, victims of abuse, unemployed, or formerly homeless.

Project Transition retreatants travel from as far as Connecticut. Twice a year, a group of women from Hartford who are in drug and alcohol recovery, are former prostitutes, parolees and/or victims of domestic or sexual violence, come to Lumen Christi. They receive individual spiritual direction and participate in guided group sessions. Along with intensive spiritual work, the retreat provides the women with a haven from everyday struggles. As one ISD staff member has commented, "I'm always happy to see they're still alive...and they always leave refreshed and renewed. It's such a healing house."

For more information on The Institute of Spiritual Development or a calendar of upcoming events, please call 802 846-7084 or visit www.spiritvt.org.

A Peace Pole and perennial garden add color outside the Lumen Christi Chapel



Mercy WORKS

COMMITTED TO COMPASSIONATE
SERVICE

ELLEN KURTZ, RSM
PRESIDENT OF THE NORTHEAST COMMUNITY

EDITORIAL BOARD:
GERRY P. SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

MERCY NORTHEAST DEVELOPMENT TEAM:
GALE ANDREOTTA; ELLEN BAKER;
BRIDGET CHASE; MARY ALICE CONLON;
IRENE NERNEY, RSM;
TRISH SWEENEY; AND DOREEN TUCKER
DESIGNER: CHLOE VAN AKEN

15 HIGHLAND VIEW ROAD
CUMBERLAND, RI 02864-1124
PHONE: 401 333-6333
FAX: 401 333-6450

Tina Mattingly Levy expresses her gratitude

At first glance, Tina Mattingly Levy appears to be a person who has it all. She is married to a caring man, has two adorable children and is the principal of her own thriving consulting business. She lives in a beautiful home that reflects her love of the environment and the arts.

When she decided this year to make a generous donation, Tina admitted she has wanted to do this for some time.

Tina experienced a difficult childhood in Indiana and she credits her survival largely to the year she spent at St. Michael's Grammar School as a first grader. The sisters who ran the school helped replace her fear and uncertainty about the future with a faith and belief that with God everything would be all right.

The sisters instilled in her a sense of right and wrong that serves to this day as an important part of her value system.

Tina hadn't thought much about the sisters at St. Michael's until several years ago when she came



Out for a family sail, from left, Caroline, Tina, Alexander and Rich Levy

to work on a project for the Sisters of Mercy in the Portland region. When she walked into the Mercy Convent, her memories of St. Michael's came flooding back because of the sensitivity and concern shown by the Leadership Team for her and all aspects of her project.

Since starting this project, Tina said, "I think often about those sisters in Indiana who came to my aid. They still mean so much to

me, but I have lost touch with them. I see the opportunity of getting more involved with the

Sisters of Mercy as a way of expressing my gratitude to the sisters who saved my life."

Expressing Devotion: Seeking the Sacred in Paris

The Sisters of Mercy are hosting a trip to Paris to experience art and architecture created in reverence to the sacred, led by Professor of Religion Sister Aline Paris, May 26 - June 2, 2007.

The tour includes visiting places of worship with their Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic roots; a trip to the Louvre; Sunday Mass at Notre Dame; a tour of Ste. Chappelle; and much more. A daytrip to Chartres Cathedral will include a guided tour of the labyrinth.

For a brochure and the complete itinerary, visit www.parisbydesign.com or contact Trish Sweeney at the Sisters of Mercy at 802 863-6835 ext. 136 or tsweeney@mercynortheast.org.