

Mission

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Donors help dream come true with new van

Sr. Patricia James Sweeney

Two years ago, in their desire to improve the quality of life for the Mont Marie residents, Sr. Betsy Sullivan, the Health Care Center Staff and its Board of Directors dreamed of obtaining a van. This could be used to transport residents to social events, like dining out, as well as for the more mundane trips to doctors. To facilitate this happening, they decided to use the annual Golf Tournament for initial funding. Once the dream was discussed, many families and other anonymous donors came forward with monetary assistance.

Since certain state and insurance regulations had to be met, it was necessary to shop around for the perfect vehicle for our needs. Finally, the search ended in Johnston, New York with the Don Brown Bus Sales Company. They have extensive experience in dealing with safe, comfortable government - approved transportation for Nursing Home vehicles. The dream is realized, the future has arrived. The 2006, blue, nine-passenger Ford van is here. You will recognize it by the inscription in white print on the side: Mont

Marie Health Care Center. It will accommodate two wheelchairs, six passengers and a driver.

Some features- like a side lift and an additional seat next to the driver, have been installed. Now, as soon as the Registry of Motor Vehicles has issued its handicapped accessible license, the residents will be lining up for a ride, hopefully, by mid-May. Yes, a driver, Lenny Boisjolle, a retired fire fighter with paramedical experience, has been hired on a per diem basis. So, let the good times roll. Congratulations to all who have made this dream a reality!

Mont Marie Health Care Administrator, Betsy Sullivan, ssj, looks on as Mary Lou McKinstry, ssj, leaves the new van,



Sisters Cecilia James and Mary Ferguson were among those gathered to honor Cathedral High School awardees Sisters Patricia James and Catherine Hayes, (Center) See story on page 4.

Weston Raffle-Rama begins

Accepting their recent awards, Shirley Campbell, ssj, and Eleanor Spring, ssj, acknowledged the support and cooperation of the many people who consistently help Weston Center for Women. At the top of this list are sisters and associates who give assistance in various ways, including buying raffle tickets.

The annual Raffle-Rama, one of Weston's most important fund-raisers, is already under way, with tickets on sale until June 23.

For \$20, each ticket-holder has 62 chances to win prizes of \$50 to \$1,000. And winning once is not the end! Tickets are returned to the drum, making multiple prizes a real possibility.

Tickets may be obtained by calling Weston at (413) 533-3022, by writing to Weston, or by using the order form on the annual Weston newsletter.

Team Talk

Brief meeting advances CSSJ regional goals

Kathleen Imbruno, ssj

On March 23, the Mont Marie van, carrying the Leadership Team, boarded the Bridgeport ferry en route to Brentwood on Long Island. Three among us sported aspirins in their navels to ward off seasickness, although, since they had also taken Dramamine, we don't know if the aspirin actually worked. The ferry ride was uneventful, but finding Brentwood was an adventure as poor directions led us astray. However, being women, we weren't hesitant to ask for help. We did finally arrive at the sprawling Brentwood facility where getting lost became the theme of the day for a couple of us.

The 24 hour meeting with the CSSJ Leadership Teams of the Atlantic Region was full and productive. We began with the sharing of the state of our hearts and then the sharing of the order of our houses (congregations). Fact sheets had been prepared ahead of time to facilitate this discussion. You might be interested to know that the seven congregations of the Atlantic Region boast 2871 vowed members, 4 novices, and three candidates. The median age is 73 and we have 993 associates.

In our discussions, among our common features, we enumerated the following: ministries of presence and ministries of influence; new models of adult community life; aging; individualism vs. the Common Good; small numbers of new members; few members in full-time ministry; collaboration and partnership with the laity; finance, property, and housing issues; working for justice; ecology issues; planning for the future; mission effectiveness and a sense of hopefulness.

The evening session on Thursday and the Friday morning gathering were dedicated to looking at the future of the Atlantic Region and deciding what the next steps would be regarding the future. We discussed various ways of collaborating as a region. We thought

In Memoriam

Please remember the following in prayer:

Grayce H. Kelsey, sister of Sister Mary Harvey Marie Gaffney, sister of Sisters Claire and Grace Belforti

it important to begin sharing our resources more through collaborating in ministry, through meeting in smaller regional groups for presentations, theological reflection and other events, through using our collective voice to speak to justice issues, especially in our region; by using the internet to inform each other of job openings, events, retreats, news, etc. We would also like our members to come to know each other.

As a result of our table talk, we agreed on the following next steps:

The establishment of a Home Federation committee in each Congregation, along with the broadening of the regional Planning Committee, which is now made up of one leadership representative from each congregation.

The creation of a regional website that would be linked to the Federation website for communication with one another and sharing of resources.

The extension of the Leadership meetings to provide more time and opportunity for collaboration and action.

The organization of Sunday lunch at the July Federation Event for all members of the Atlantic Region who are in attendance.

You can see from the above that the content of this regional meeting reflected the national Federation theme of "being and acting more as one." The gathering seemed to have lasted much longer than its twenty-four hours. Our team felt that it was time well spent.

Congratulations to Sr. Julie Sullivan

who has been awarded the "She Knows Where She's Going Award" from Girls Incorporated in Pittsfield. The award will be presented to Julie at a dinner at the ITAM Lodge in Pittsfield, on Tuesday, May 9 at 5:30 p.m

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Ann Lynch, SSJ, editor

Communications Committee: Sisters Angela Deady, Mary E. Harvey, Mary Lou Lacey, Ann Lynch, Elizabeth Matuszek, Paula Misitano, Patricia James Sweeney and Jeanne O'Shea.

Speaker sounds call to vision, prayer, action

Ann Lynch, ssj

Sister of Mercy Teresa Kane spoke on *A New Vision for Women in Church and Society* at the 18th annual Women's Spirituality Day, April 1.

She presented the concept of the vision we need to have of ourselves as gospel women, women of the magnificent, and our need to realize that God's time is not always ours. From our vision of church and society comes our passion, or feeling for life. We need to ask, "What is my vision calling me to be?" If I live whatever life I have to the fullest, I have vision and passion – the source of life.

As she explored confronting our realities she presented Margaret Meade's concept of the ages of earth beginning with the ice age, the agricultural revolution (which is still going on) the industrial revolution (which today even in third world countries people have television and radio, but no clothes washer for the women) and the women's movement of the 20th century.

In church history Mary was pedestalized and Eve was demonized. She also noted that, especially in the past, women seldom have a name identity. They usually begin life with their father's name and marry and take their husband's.

Looking at the imperialism of today's world, she noted that when the United Nations was founded there were 50 member nations; today there are 198. She followed this concept by noting that for all we do, we don't have laws against the practice of human trafficking, which is especially exploiting women and children.

As she talked about serving as agents for others she observed that we are made in the image and nature of God. Each one's dignity is an innate quality of his/her life from God. Quoting the Bishops' statement from Medellin, "The poor are to be the agents of their own destiny," she went on to stress that we are God's representatives in this world. We have a sacred responsibility to influence church and

society. This puts the burden on us to work for change, not to wait until we are allowed to make changes. No real change just happens; we have to begin somewhere and build on it in solidarity with women across time.

The afternoon focused on an integration of spirituality and social justice, which are in reality, two sides of the same coin.

As she looked at this country's growing militarization in the light of right relationships, she said, "How much do we have to spend to defend one nation when there are over 6.3 billion people in this world, many of whom haven't the basic necessities?"

Prayer is worship as well as being an advocate for others, she continued. We are women who have a sense of active contemplation who are called to be non-violent in attitude, speech and action. Our level of civilization is determined by the care and concern we have for the poor and oppressed among us.

At the end of the 20th century people expressed less affinity for organized religions and greater for spirituality, she continued, noting that there is a difference between being faithful to the call I hear and being loyal to an institution. If the institution is not a caring community it needs to be reformed. We are called to be ministers (mini-stirrers) How do we inspire (put spirit into) each other. As we work together to form right relationships in solidarity with all humanity, we need to ask why are we doing what we allow to be done to each other? Basic human needs have to be met. Life can't be all consumerism without concern for humankind.

As we move toward advocacy we are a voice for the voiceless in systems that need changing in society and church. We are called to be passionate about the needs of women and children and the poorest of the world. We are called to be a dynamic agent in the catholic community rather than the institution as we look toward a synod that will include women and have credibility discussing issues pertaining to them. We are called to be women of the gospel, magnificent people.

Two Sisters join ranks of CHS honorees

Paula Misitano, ssj

Webster defines *legacy* as *inheritance*. For Cathedral High School in Springfield, *legacy* is built and sustained through the varied contributions of generations of alumni and dedicated supporters. Among this group are the Sisters of Saint Joseph, clergy, and lay who have been honored for their presence and dedication to the school, its values, and its mission.

In 2001, Cathedral High School introduced an Annual Dinner and Award Night at which gratitude and recognition are given to those whose dedication and work has made Cathedral “the proud institution it is today.”

Since then, each succeeding year has bestowed honor on the SSJ community through the recognition of individual community members who have embodied Cathedral’s goals.

This year’s dinner was held at the high school, April 1. With a large number of relatives, and friends in attendance, the evening paid honor to five Cathedral alumni. Each honoree was called to the podium to receive a Waterford crystal bowl positioned on a wooden plaque. On the front of the plaque, a gold plate indicated the name of the honoree and the year. Among the five for 2006 were two Sisters of Saint Joseph, Catherine Hayes and Patricia James Sweeney, students at the “old” Cathedral and dedicated workers in the field of education for many years. Also honored at the 2006 Award Dinner were three other Cathedral graduates, John W. Powers, Reverend Richard Riendeau, and William J. Wagner.

Catherine’s tenure at Cathedral spans 43 years and is considered the longest on record at the school.

Although she graduated in 1943, Catherine worked in the business field for four years but ultimately responded to “the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit” in 1948 and entered the Sisters of Saint Joseph. In her acceptance speech, Catherine thanked her family and friends for their constant encouragement and support. She reminded everyone that Cathedral’s mission and values are lived out on a daily basis through the many students and groups at the school. Over the years, she has been impressed by her fellow teachers living and teaching the Gospel values. Her focus has always been the betterment of herself, her students and Cathedral High School.

“I am grateful and feel blessed to have had the privilege to teach business skills to so many wonderful students through the years. Nothing is more rewarding than having a positive influence on the lives of young people,” she stated. Like her enduring teaching record at CHS, Catherine emphatically stated, “Cathedral High School...here today...here to stay!” (Her paraphrasing of the Chicopee Savings Bank motto proved ironic as William Wagner, President of Chicopee Savings Bank, also was honored at the dinner.)

The second SSJ honoree, Patricia James Sweeney, ssj, not only was a student at Cathedral, graduating in 1941, but served as its Principal from 1978 to 1992. In her acceptance talk, Patricia expressed her desire to share the award with “the exceptional teachers at Cathedral” with whom she worked and the many students and alumni she encountered. She gratefully thanked her many relatives who were present and who have supported her throughout the years. Her educational teaching career spanned elementary, high school and college classes. Administrative duties included serving as Principal in high schools in North Adams, Worcester and Springfield. In her speech, Patricia praised the student body and many alumni who have made Cathedral a viable institution.

The evening began with a Welcome by Cathedral’s Principal, John Miller. Bishop Timothy McDonnell and Bishop Joseph Maguire were in attendance. Bishop McDonnell briefly addressed the group and offered grace before the meal. After the meal, the Awards ceremony took place, emceed by Paul Stelzer, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

Honorees are selected for having met one or more of certain criteria as stated by the Awards Committee. The criteria shows the honorees have: “Excelled in their professional life; Made the community we live in a better place through service; Made an outstanding commitment to Cathedral High School; Exemplified Catholic values in their life; Displayed good citizenship.” Certainly, the two SSJ Honorees for 2006 have shown their lives to be examples of the stated criteria. We congratulate these two inspiring women and share a collective community pride in their achievements.

Previous SSJ Honorees include Sisters Veronica Brown, Mary R. Lynch, Mary Frances Honnen, Alice Kenney, and Kathleen Keating.

SSJ Charism Day promotes spirit of Congregation

Wendy Hammerle

What can be done to keep the spirit and charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph alive in catholic schools, even though there are fewer



At Elms College's SSJ Charism Day Alyssa Catjakis of Cathedral and David Ribbans of Mt. St. Joseph Academy, Rutland, VT talk with Mary Ferguson, ssj. **Photo by Mark Heck, Catholic Communications**

Sisters teaching and working there?

That was the question put to some 50 high school and college students who attended a day-long program on the topic at Elms College in Chicopee. The students represented several schools including Cathedral HS in Springfield, Holyoke Catholic HS in Granby, St. Joseph Central HS in Pittsfield, Mt. St. Joseph Academy in Rutland, College of St. Joseph in Rutland and Elms College.

They learned the history of the SSJs before discussing ways that they can help promote the spirit of the Congregation back in their respective schools.

One group suggested organizing a school community service day for students, faculty and staff. The students said that going out to meet a need in the community would be living the SSJ mission to unite people with each other and with God.



Adjunct faculty member Ned Young, and Elms students Lea Fitzgerald, Makfire Pajaziti, and Jean-Edouard Gerlus work in the herb courtyard.

Earth Day



Replacing stones on the labyrinth are Elms botany students Shaun Richardson, Todd Petkus and Sr. Cathy Coyne.



As part of the Mont's Earth Day celebration Cathy Coyne talks about conserving energy with Myra Robitalle, Diane O'Sullivan and Roberta Mulcahy, ssj



Part of the first floor corridor has become an initial greenhouse for the veggies that will be planted the garden at the Mont. **Photos by Wendy Hammerle**

Elms students share lives, gifts in fields afar

Angela Deady, ssj

The first line of a popular song recorded by Anne Murray, the other famous Canadian vocalist reads: "We sure could use a little good news today."

If Anne Murray were at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in the Office of Campus Ministry, she would hear, over and over again, more than a little good news.

For it is in that office that 14 young men and women said "Yes!" to the invitation to share a week of their lives - Spring Break Week - with the people of Jamaica and Honduras.

This past March, ten students traveled to Jamaica, accompanied by Sisters Maureen Kervick and Patty Hotten: four traveled to Honduras accompanied by Sister Maureen Broughan. Both groups joined Passionist lay volunteers already working in those two areas. The Elms students spent their week tutoring, leading after school activities and being of service any way they could.

What, besides the Holy Spirit prompted these generous young people to spend spring break so far away from home, in circumstances far different than they were accustomed to? In their words: "I always wanted to do something to make a difference."

"I'm very involved with Campus Ministry and was inspired by the video from the previous year." "I have been on service trips before and gained so much, I couldn't pass up the opportunity!"

Each student was enthusiastic about the week, describing it as "eye-opening," "incredible," "strengthening," "exhilarating," "meaningful." Each would also do it again "in a heartbeat."

All of the students agreed that the hardest part of the week for them was leaving. One young woman said: "I wanted to keep giving or to take the kids home with me, but I couldn't." Another thought: "The hardest thing was not being able to give the people everything they needed. You meet the families and get to know them and it's very difficult to have to leave them and not know what will happen to them."

Another student shared this reflection: "as the children were the most enjoyable part of the visit, so too, they are the hardest. To see the condition that these children are in is heart-breaking. One child I met didn't have an entire finger nail; another a hole right through his lip.

Bloated bellies from lack of nutrition, ringworm marks on the arms and legs, and lice crawling through the hair does not go unnoticed. These children are brought up in poverty, hunger, filth and violence. It hurts to make friends with them and have to leave them behind. I'd love to take them all home with me and make them all better."

And what did the Elms students say of the three Sisters of Saint Joseph who accompanied them on their missionary journey? "Wicked cool!" "Inspirational" "They are extremely passionate about helping others." "I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know them."

Yes, we all could use a little good news and fortunately it is not hard to find. The good news at the Elms College is her students - generous, compassionate, reaching out their hands and their hearts to their brothers and sisters in so many ways, at home and abroad.



Elms College student Carrie Allard (left) received the 2006 Sisters of St. Joseph Service Award. Allard, a junior in the Nursing Program, was selected because of her commitment to the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. She has participated in several service missions during spring breaks, and has expressed the desire to change the world one step at a time. The SSJ Service Award was established in 2004 as a way of recognizing Elms College students who exhibit "a spirit that echoes the love of humanity and dedication to service."

Shakuntala Ramtahal (right), a sophomore majoring in social work, has received the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield Scholarship at Elms College in Chicopee. The scholarship is to be awarded each year to a student who is first generation of an immigrant family who works to his or her potential. **Photo by Wendy Hammerle**

Weston Center earns two awards

Mary Lou Lacey, ssj

In April, in less than a week, the founders of Weston Center for Women received two awards for their vision and work. On April 6, Sisters Shirley Campbell and Eleanor Spring were given the Mary Killeen Bennett Award. On April 11, they were honored by Dream, Believe, Achieve: Pathways to Success, with a plaque presented by Bill Cosby. Both events took place at Elms College.

An Elms alumna, Mary Killeen Bennett was a member of the Elms Social Work Advisory Board for 20 years. In the course of her career, Mary had been a public health nurse, a regional coordinator of the Department of Mental Health, and a professor at Springfield Technical Community College where she organized the mental health program. She established the first local resident home for former patients of the former Northampton State Hospital.

After her death, her husband Bill Bennett established a scholarship in her honor, and the Advisory board decided to further honor Mary by creating an annual award in her name. The award is given to a human service worker who demonstrates a commitment to social change and justice. "This is a pattern of what Mary stood for," said Bill Bennett.

The main speaker at the event was Dora Robinson, executive director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, Springfield, and an adjunct professor at Elms. Speaking on the theme of "a call to action," she said that she was awed by Mary Killeen Bennett's life and achievements. "She showed us what it means to be committed, to act on what we believe," she said. "Eleanor and Shirley have responded to a call for action," she noted, "to give women a chance to turn their lives around."

Deacon Bill Toller, retired head of human services at the Jail in Ludlow and present coordinator of volunteers there, introduced Shirley and Eleanor whom he had nominated for the honor. Then the audience had a glimpse of Weston in action through a video of the recent Real-to-Reel segment produced by Catherine Homrok, ssj, a true example of the value of film.

Last year's recipient, Doreen Fadus, presented the award. In response, Eleanor said, "It is clearly an honor to be recognized by one's peers." She spoke of the meaning of a good social work program, and praised the impact of an Elms College education.

Shirley thanked all those assembled, but especially the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph for their continuing support. "We would not be where we are today without this support," she said.

On the following Thursday, Veritas Auditorium was filled with students from Springfield schools, taking part in a *Dream, Believe, Achieve: Pathways to Success* conference. In the afternoon they heard inspirational reflections from speakers Alex O'Neil, retired Springfield Police Officer; Jazabel Bermudez, graduate of Putnam Vocational Technical High School; and Shariff Butler, also a graduate of Putnam.

William Cosby, Ed.D., greeted by loud whoops of welcome, gave the Keynote Address. His talk was direct and serious, and punctuated with humor.

At the conclusion of the program individuals and organizations were recognized for the generosity and inspiration they have provided. Bill Cosby presented a plaque to Shirley and Eleanor, and Weston graduate Jenny Cortes, and explained how he had come to know about them.

Jenny is the mother of Lauren Wilder, one of the young men from Springfield attending college with help from Cosby. In the past two years, Jenny had spoken so much and so well about Weston, that he decided to confer the award. The citation reads:

For helping women
Dream of their possibilities,
Believe in themselves,
And Achieve a bright future.

Jenny thanked Shirley and Eleanor for helping her, and they briefly explained the purpose and beliefs of Weston.

Before leaving the stage, Shirley gave Cosby one of Weston's "signature" Irish shirts with his name on the sleeve. He looked at it with great surprise and said, "Wow! This is nice!"

Pizza, advocacy go together in Rhode Island

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

The latest edition of *Bread For the World* has a wonderful story about a group of fifth-grade students at San Miguel School in Providence, RI. The class learned to be anti-hunger advocates by combining, **information, values and pizza.**

Global and local **information** about hunger and homelessness led the students to write to Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) to cosponsor the Hunger-Free Communities Act, which recommitments the United States to ending domestic hunger and supports groups to ease hunger in their local communities. (First Millen-

nium Development Goal)

Values of the students were obvious as they responded to questions of why we should be concerned with issues of hunger. Their answers reflected compassion and a knowledge of all being one as brothers and sisters. A familiar phrase to all SSJ's!

An advocacy action of baking **pizza** and selling it to other students and faculty produced \$134 which was then given to Bread for the World. We can only hope that the inspiration of these and other children will continue to lead us as a country and individuals to respond to the needs of the poor.

News presents hopeful trends in business

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

The Investment Committee quarterly meetings always remind us that we are involved in the market world with its many complex issues. Part of the balance of being part of that world is our work in Socially Responsible Investing. One organization that helps to keep us on track in SRI work is the Interfaith Center of Corporate Responsibility, now celebrating 35 years of work for justice in the field of finance.

Recent information that came to our office indicates more hopeful trends in business and finance. The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) offers an alternative to the global corporations that now dominate our economy. The Vermont Business for Social Responsibility, a member of BALLE, employs eight percent of the state's workforce who influence public policy and lobby for increased support for renewable energy and healthcare. Global South and the Fair Trade movement are other examples of a concern for economic change.

Our economic culture is often viewed as a culture that takes. The takers are called collectively the "market." The process is called collectively "growth." Little thought is given to the larger picture of the common good, the impact the "taking" does on our social and

environmental health.

Movements such as BALLE and others give hope for an economy that values community, justice and equity.

Letters -- Letters -- Letters

Dear Sisters and Associates,

My sisters, brothers and I thank you for your caring and loving presence during our Mom's illness and death. Your prayers, Mass enrollments, donations and presence at her wake and Liturgy of Christian Burial will always be remembered. Our Mom was a very prayerful and loving woman. How grateful she is for all your remembrances — she is smiling at you with a grateful heart! Our Mom is at peace.

Lovingly,
Dorothy Pilkington, ssj and her sisters and brothers

On behalf of my family I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all. The death of our parents and most recently of my Mother, Patricia, has been a difficult and sad time. Her life was a life of intelligence, integrity, kindness and humor. Our family is adjusting to her absence. We hope to be as loving and kind to all as she was.

Peace,
Ann Keefe, ssj