



Presence

THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF BUFFALO MAGAZINE • SPRING 2019



Sisters Elect
New Leadership Team
to Serve Four Years



Photo by Maureen Brown

"Kites rise against the wind, not with it."

Winston Churchill



The Sisters welcome requests to pray for special intentions or in memory of family and friends.

Please contact the Advancement Office at (716) 759-6893 or bethfinster@gmail.com. Prayer cards are available upon request.

Sister Marie Kerwin, a member of the Sisters' Community Life Team, is Prayer Ministry Coordinator.



Cover:

New Leadership Team
On April 28, Sister Patrice Ryan, at far right, was elected President of the Congregation. Serving with her are, L to R, Sisters Mary Lou Schnitzer, Beth Ann Finster and Janet DiPasquale.

A Message from the Leadership Team



Grateful Parting Thoughts

Dear Friends,

In the Fall 2018 issue of *Presence*, Sister Jean Marie Zirnheld wrote about her five-year term as president of the Sisters of St. Joseph Congregation, which ended in April.

Serving with her on the Leadership Team were Sisters Michele Beiter, Judith Justinger, Patrice Ryan and Karen Shaver. Each Sister expresses a grateful farewell below:



Sister Michele Beiter

“As I look back at the last 10 years of being on the elected Leadership Team, I am grateful for: working as a team sharing responsibilities, engaging in respectful dialogue and planning for the future through processes with the Congregation; journeying with Sisters who enriched my life; opportunities to be part of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and to serve on the Federation Leadership Council and Global Coordinating Group, connecting to Sisters and Associates all over the world.” *“For all that has been, Thank you. For all that is to come, Yes!”* Dag Hammarskjold



Sister Judith Justinger

“For me the experience of elected leadership in this time of transformation in the world and in religious life has been a challenge and a gift. I have been called beyond myself to expand my horizons, to be personally involved in evaluating and responding to an ever-changing reality. I have been gifted with new insights about myself—talents and limitations, and an ever-expanding understanding of the need to let go of past expectations and to welcome the new life that is emerging. I give thanks to God and my Sisters for the challenges and the gift.”



Sister Patrice Ryan

“Spending these last five years with this Leadership Team has taught me collegiality and humility (because... aren't I always right??). Our times ahead are unknowing and require difficult decisions. Throughout our process the support and encouragement for a hope-filled future has been ever present. I have much gratitude to these four women for allowing me to be myself and to grow in the service of our dear SSJ community.”



Sister Karen Shaver

“Transformation is the magic word. I am so grateful for the opportunities of being a participant in both the LCWR and CSSJ Federation which have expanded my outlook on deep critical issues through the input of some great speakers. But the treasure of relationships with so many gifted Sisters and sharing their perspectives has deepened my spirituality, as together we realized the richness of contemplative dialogue. These experiences, then transferred to the Congregation, have indeed made me a better, more understanding religious woman.”

Former MSJA Teacher Heads National Project



This updated article about Sister Ann Oestreich originally appeared on national Catholic websites.

Sister Ann Oestreich has done everything from teaching Spanish and French to serving as sales director of a cable company and now is national coordinator of the National Catholic Sisters Project (NCSP), which includes National Catholic Sisters Week.

She started religious life as a Sister of St. Joseph in Buffalo. Born in Alden, NY, she met the SSJs while attending St. John the Baptist School there. She recalls formation in the post-Vatican II era as “a chaotic time.” She explained: “It was a little bit of the old trying to figure out what was the new, a lot of college courses, a lot of reading, and weekly meetings with the formation director. It was pretty solid. I am grateful for that experience.”

Sister has master’s degrees in education from Buffalo State College and the University at Buffalo, a certificate in social justice and urban ministry from the University of Notre Dame, and a master’s in telecommunications from Michigan State University.

She taught at Mount St. Joseph Academy from 1975 to 1981, when she became pastoral associate/community organizer at then St. Columba’s parish. She served as director of the Center for Justice from 1982 to 1986.

In 1997, Sister Ann transferred from the Buffalo SSJs to the congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) in Monroe, MI. She would become the community’s first communications director. Sister Ann moved to Toronto to work for the interfaith channel, Visions TV, helping to produce a one-hour weekly show about Catholicism. She later served as the first congregation justice coordinator for the Holy Cross Sisters in South Bend, IN.

Today, in addition to her full-time ministry with NCSP, she serves on boards including the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, and Sisters Rising Worldwide, which seeks to empower Sisters to address root causes of injustice.

Sister Ann still feels a very warm connection to the Sisters of St. Joseph and said she is blessed to have experienced such a wonderful religious community. At the most recent National Catholic Sisters Project program in Chicago, participants were asked to write the name of a Sister who inspired them. “I wrote that I am inspired by Sister Marion Zimmer, SSJ of Buffalo, NY,” Sister Ann said. “She has had a profound impact on my life. She mentored me in social justice ministry. I still draw upon the lessons she taught me – in words, but even more by example – in my own ministry now.”



Sister Brigid Walsh, SSJ

As Remembered by One of Her Students

By Peter Liberti, Jr.

"Up!" I said in Sister Brigid Walsh's classroom at the Children's Hospital Speech and Hearing Clinic. It was the early 1970s, and I had just said my first word. From this moment on, my mother and Sister Brigid guided me from the silent world of the hard-of-hearing into the noisy "normal" world.

My name is Peter Liberti, Jr., and I was born with profound hearing loss. Without the assistance of hearing aids, I hear almost nothing. It's not necessarily a bad thing. For example, I sleep perfectly every single night! No thunder, sanitation trucks, roosters crowing, or television in the other room to wake me up.

However, with the hearing aids, I do enter a world full of sound quite nearly as regular folks, especially in the lower frequency range. One struggle that I had to overcome was speech: both listening and speaking. This is where Sister Brigid (at school) and my mother (reinforcement at home) enter the stage.



Sister Brigid with Peter

Helen Keller had Miss Annie Sullivan. I had Sister Brigid Mary Walsh, SSJ. If one knows the story of Helen Keller through "*The Miracle Worker*," they can easily visualize the many hours, days and years Sister Brigid worked with me

with pictures, objects and stories to learn not only the word for everything, but also how it sounds and its pronunciation. This process began when I was just one year old and continued all year long with no summers off until I was ready to enter kindergarten in 1975.

I was so well-taught that I was able to enroll in a regular classroom in public school with no need of an aide in the classroom. Ever.

Sister Brigid continued to be a part of my life even after I outgrew the need of her skills. She was part of many wonderful homemade Italian meals at my home with my family. She saw me learn to play the piano and attend St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. Then, as life invariably always gets busier and busier, our contacts trickled to a near stop. After I earned degrees in English, Reading, and Educational Administration from Canisius College and enjoyed teaching experience at Christ the King School, it was time for a change.



Peter Liberti, Jr.

After being hired at Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart, I struck up a friendship with Sister Karen Shaver, SSJ, a fellow English teacher. In conversation, she learned about Sister Brigid's influence on my life. By paths coincident, she also knew Sister Brigid quite well. Sister Karen became the "Twitter" for Sister Brigid and me. We were able to once again keep in touch. It was wonderful to know how proud Sister Brigid was of me now, and she was grateful to know of our everlasting appreciation of her work with me. Sister Brigid is no longer with us on Earth, but a part of her still lives within me as I continue to work hard, be patient with my students, and never give up.

The Puppies are Coming!

What joy is sparked when Sisters who live at the Clarence Residence hear that cuddly little dogs are en route to visit them.

It all began with the Rev. James Walter, sacramental minister at St. John the Baptist Church in Alden, who often brought his dog, Sophie, with him on days he said Mass at the Residence. The Sisters were delighted to visit with Sophie.

For the past four years, Mary Beth, an East Amherst woman who loves, raises and shows golden retrievers, kindly arranges occasional visits with her six-week-old puppies. The dual purpose is bringing enjoyment to the Sisters and providing important socialization for the dogs in their early development.

"It's the puppies' first visit out of the house and it's a win-win all around," Mary Beth said. "The Sisters and the staff are warm and welcoming. I am so grateful that I can go there. It gives me much happiness." She noted that such visits help the puppies become confident, whether they go on to private homes or are in show rings. Albert, a dog the Sisters met, became the first-place champion at a show in Canada.

Kim Cameron, RN, director of health services at the Residence, describes the visits as "a fabulous program." She said that the Sisters wait eagerly in the Community Room to hold, cuddle and pet their small furry friends. Sisters who are more infirm look forward to having the visits in their rooms.

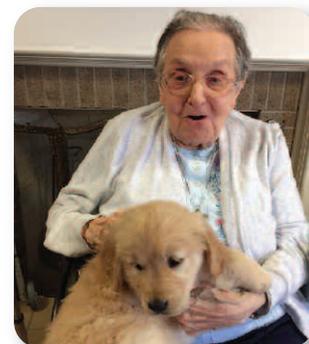
Sister Marie Kerwin, a member of the SSJ Community Life Team and director of pastoral care, notes that pet therapy in retirement has well-established benefits. Some of the Sisters' happiest days are when the sound of "The puppies are coming!" reverberates through the Residence.



Sister Loretta Young



Sister Margaret (Peggy) Gallagher



Sister Philip Marie Cirincione



Sister Phyllis Connors



L to R, Wellness Center aide Pam Juergens, Sisters Marie Kerwin and Mary Glose



*Sister Beth Ann Finster Is
Director of Mission Advancement;
New Leadership Team Member*



Sister Beth Ann Finster returns to her hometown to become director of mission advancement for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, which she entered in 1965. She was elected to the Leadership Team on April 28.

Newly retired after a 33-year pastoral ministry at the University of Detroit Mercy, Sister Beth now heads advancement for the Sisters, including the annual donor appeal. She is eager to spark new and renewed interest in the congregation's ministries and legacy.

Longtime development director Marilyn Peterson will continue to oversee special events, such as Oktoberfest and the annual Mount St. Joseph Alumnae Luncheon.

"It is most exciting," Sister Beth said. "I hope to get the participation of our Sisters to use their talents and interests in new and creative ways as we raise our visibility, help support our current ministries and further

create our legacy." Sister Beth served on the Leadership Team from 1992 to 1997.

Sister Beth was born in Buffalo, grew up in Riverside's All Saints parish and graduated from MSJA in 1965. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Medaille College, a master's in European history from Xavier University in Cincinnati, and a master's in pastoral studies from Loyola University in Chicago.

She first taught at St. Mark and St. Margaret schools before chairing the MSJA History Department.

Sister Beth brings back home a wealth of experience from decades at the University of Detroit Mercy. Her work included student residence life, retreats, liturgy planning, ministry to athletes, and teaching history courses. She served as chaplain to the women's basketball team, then widened her outreach to interface with all student athletes on campus. At her request, team members were able to pray in the locker rooms before games at home and on the road.

She is most proud of introducing Alternative Spring Break trips, during which students donated service in needy communities. Over the past 30 years, the trips drew undergraduates, including athletes, graduate students and faculty/staff to service projects in 26 states, Central America and Jamaica. Sister Beth was directly involved in developing financial support for the endeavor, which grew from one annual trip to multiple trips a year, including Christmas break and end of the academic year.

"We traveled all over the United States – from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, to working with migrants on the border, to lending helping hands for hurricane relief after Andrew, Katrina and Hugo," she explained. "We often did building and were known for putting on new roofs. Varied placements took participants to soup kitchens, work with the homeless, the rural poor, and tutoring assignments."

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That success, no doubt, is due in large part to Sister Beth's deep love for the students. She chose to live in the freshman residence hall so that she could get to know each newcomer. Today, she maintains friendships with numerous graduates throughout the nation.

When she retired, the university planted a redbud tree in her honor and placed a bench near it bearing a plaque with her name.

Now fully embracing her new role in Buffalo, Sister Beth looks forward to meeting the women and men who were taught by the Sisters and to "reignite" their memories and support. Sister Beth may be reached at 759-6893 and at bethfinster@gmail.com.



Future in Our Hands-USA Making a Difference in Kenya



Ellen Dragos at left, Sister Linda at center, and Linet Andia, Center Coordinator, at right, with two high school students being assisted

Sister Linda Glaeser, SSJ, co-founder of Future in Our Hands-USA (FIOH) and SSJ Associate Ellen Dragos returned from recent travels in Kenya, Africa, where they visited FIOH-funded projects in Kisumu and Kisii.

FIOH-USA has received grants for the construction of Angelic Ark Orphanage Center in Kisii, including from the Sisters of St. Joseph (CSJ) of Orange, CA Fund (\$14,887); and the Clarence United Methodist Church (\$5,000).

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, continuing their long support, awarded \$2,000 for other FIOH-USA ongoing expenses.

The Angelic Ark Center being built is a temporary safe home for 20 mainly HIV-positive orphans to live, eat well and learn good habits, such as taking their HIV medication.

The large chicken pen is expanding beyond the 45 chickens Sister Linda saw there a couple of months ago. Growing in the garden are pumpkin (squash), groundnuts, onions, tomatoes, maize, garlic, and kale. There are banana, coffee, and avocado trees. When the boys and girls leave after an average stay of six months, Angelic Ark follows up to ensure that they have proper care.

For information about how to contribute to Center needs, such as beds, tables and household furnishings, visit www.futureinourhandsusa.org. Checks should be mailed to 5200 Bank St., Clarence, NY 14031.

Center Event Raises \$17,000

Sister Anita Price Baird, DHM, founding director of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office for Racial Justice, addressed the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence's annual fundraiser on April 17 at SS. Columba & Brigid Church.

Sister Anita, who also is minister of the faith community of St. Sabina parish, worked extensively to combat neighborhood violence in Chicago. She served as United States Provincial for her religious community, the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. The speaker talked about racism and inequality and shared an inspirational message with faithful supporters and friends of the Center's nonviolence mission and activities. The event raised \$17,000.



Sister Anita Price Baird



Mount Alumnae Gift

Sister Jean Marie Zirnheld, center, receives a check for \$4,000 raised by 170 attendees and sponsors of the annual MSJA Alumnae Mass and Luncheon, held October 6, 2018 at Classics V Banquet Center. At right is Judy Douglas '63, who coordinated the successful event for several years. At left is Terri Pantano McMullen, '67, who will head this year's luncheon on October 5 at AcQua, 2192 Niagara St. in Buffalo.

12th Annual Camp Peaceprints

Vivian Waltz, Sister Karen Center director, announced that the 12th annual Camp Peaceprints for youth aged 8 through 13 will be held July 15-26 at the St. Mary's School for the Deaf campus, 2253 Main St. in Buffalo. "Discovering Diversity: An Intellectual Adventure" is the theme for the activities, which will include communication, social justice, community organizing and conflict resolution.

Contacts for enrollment or information are (716) 893-0808 or vivian@sisterkarencenter.org. The Center co-sponsors the camp with the Interfaith Peace Network and WNY Peace Center.



...REUNIONS

O'Hern Class of 1962 Annual Christmas Party

The Bishop O'Hern High School Class of 1962 held their annual Christmas Party on December 9, 2018 at the Eagle House Restaurant in Williamsville, NY.

Joanne Zdziarski is seated. First row behind her, left to right, are, Carol Meyer Konter, Lillian Grundner Wozniak, Roseann Ottaviani Cole, Sister Patrice Ryan, Colleen Howard Belsky, and Pauline Ferrara Stalker.

In the last row are: Sister Mary Pat Murphy, who taught at O'Hern; Donna David Bauer, Betty Beilman Braun-Renaud, Sandy Yunke Weiss, Bonnie Baker Piotrowski, Linda Rebmann Wojcik, and Mary Castro.



St. Al parishioner John McMahon

Oktoberfest 2018 Brings Smiles

The Sisters of St. Joseph's 17th annual Oktoberfest raised \$19,000 as more than 250 people gathered at St. Aloysius Gonzaga parish hall on September 30, 2018 for festive German music, dancing and dinner.

The Sisters donated \$2,000 to the parish's food pantry and \$1,000 to the food pantry at Clarence Presbyterian Church. Special thanks are extended to Msgr. Peter Popadick, St. Aloysius pastor, for the continuing support he and his parishioners generously lend to the event.

Sisters Honor Longtime SSJ Associates

Eighteen Sisters of St. Joseph Associates who have served more than 30 years were honored during the St. Joseph's Feast Day observance on March 23 at the Clarence Residence when 13 Sisters also celebrated anniversaries of their profession.

The Associates honored included Jane Burke, Patricia Krasinski, Madeleine Loewer and Diana Weirich, all 31 years; and Donna Mae Braun, William Braun, Msgr. Michael DelVecchio, Nancy Allaire Donohue, Ann Gatti, John Gatti, Mary Ann Gerstle, Rhetta Greenman, Patricia Miltello, Carol Moscati, Gerry Neff, Joe Spina, Joanne Stahl and Sandy Tomasulo, all 30 years.

Lay men and women interested in the mission and work of the Sisters of St. Joseph Associates may contact Maureen Brown at mbrown7627@aol.com or (716) 912-0997.

MSJA Alumnae Set October 5 Event



Sister Bea and Terri meet to plan the annual luncheon

The annual Mount St. Joseph Academy Mass and Luncheon has a new location, new chair and new moderator in 2019. It will take place on October 5 at AcQua, 2192 Niagara Street in Buffalo, on the Niagara River; is headed by Terri Pantano McMullen (MSJA '67) and is being planned with Sister Bea Manzella, moderator. Little Mount graduates are welcome.

Mass will be celebrated by Rev. Andrew R. Lauricella, director of vocations for the Buffalo Diocese. He is a relative of several MSJA alumnae. The event will begin with a silent auction of gift baskets and specials at 11:30 a.m.

Terri invited her classmates to form the committee, but all are welcome to participate. Judy Douglas

(MSJA '63), previous chair, is assisting Terri and the new members. Serving from the Class of 1967 are Marie Beiter Peterson, Sue Sciolino Felser, Kathy Missica Palladino and Gemma Scrivani Donnellan.

Basket items, gift cards and monetary contributions to Mount St. Joseph Alumnae are sought. Checks should be mailed to Gemma Donnellan, 4617 Deerfield Rd., Hamburg, NY 14075.

Sister Bea (Peter Eymard), new moderator, is known by hundreds of former students, their families and the community as a teacher, administrator, religious leader and volunteer. She was a principal of MSJA and also of the Little Mount. Elected president of the SSJ Congregation in 1993, she served through 2002.

TRY Advocate Honored as Unsung Hero

Sister Janet DiPasquale nominated her favorite "unsung hero" – Sister Mary Augusta Kaiser – director of finance and development for the Teaching and Restoring Youth Program (TRY) to appear in the November, 2018 issue of *Buffalo Magazine*. Sister Janet served with her for 18 of Sister Mary Augusta's 22 years at TRY.

Sister Janet wrote: "Many young girls who have been abused, suffered violence (even in their own homes), or been caught in the web of sex trafficking, have been Sister Mary Augusta's concern.

"After raising the money to buy and renovate a building, she created a home and a program for them at TRY. Since 1997, more than 350 young women have been served, provided with a home, health care and independent living skills. TRY gets them back to school or to work on their GED.

"This program could not exist without Sister Mary Augusta's fundraising efforts. She has never received a salary for all the work she has done."



Sister Mary Augusta

Entered New Life



Sister Ruth Haselbauer

Sister Ruth Haselbauer (Mary Francis)

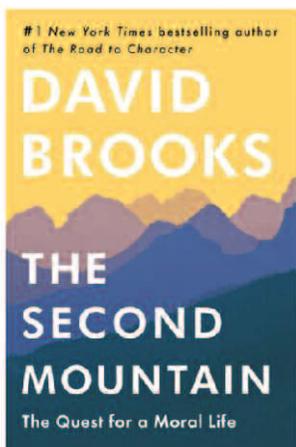
Sister Ruth Haselbauer, a retired Medaille College administrator and professor, died on November 19, 2018 at the Clarence Residence. Sister Ruth, 84, was a member of the Congregation for 65 years and served on its Leadership Team from 1985 to 1993.

A Buffalo native, she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Mount St. Joseph Teachers College. She had further studies at Syracuse University and received her Ph.D. in social sciences from Pennsylvania State University.

During 35 years at Medaille, originally Mount St. Joseph Teachers College, she served in various positions, including director of student affairs and chair of the Social Services Department. When she retired in 2003, Sister Ruth was the last Sister of St. Joseph teaching there full time. She commented then: "I believe the Sisters of St. Joseph will have a lasting influence on Medaille. Our legacy will be serving people with educational needs. The caring atmosphere and personal attention were established by the Sisters."

In retirement, Sister Ruth served as a coordinator of the Clarence Residence.

New Book Celebrates the Joyful Life



David Brooks, author of the best-selling "*The Road to Character*," recently published "*The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life*" (Random House).

The *New York Times* columnist and "PBS News Hour" and "Meet the Press" regular is inspired by those who "radiate joy" and "live for others ... deriving deep satisfaction from doing what they have been called to do."

The second mountain he refers to is found in later life, after climbing the first mountain – educational, family, career and social goals.

Outlining commitments inherent to achieving the second quest, Brooks notes, "It's the journey after. It's the more generous and satisfying phase of life."

Praised in numerous reviews, the book has been called a "heartfelt and earnest pilgrimage" to a meaningful life.