

# UNITED IN MISSION

ATLANTIC-MIDWEST PROVINCE

Transforming the world through education



June 2019



## A message from Judith Schaum, SSND

**Dear Sisters, Colleagues and Friends,**

God's mission flows from God to Christ to the Holy Spirit, who empowers the church, who carries on the mission to the world. The mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent, flows from God's mission. Each of you has been "caught" by the SSND influence and each of you in your own ministries strives to make Christ visible by your very being.

For SSND, the mission is expressed through the ministry of education defined in the broadest sense of the word. SSND is proud and grateful to you for the role you play in our ministries.

We know well that there are urgent critical needs that call to be addressed. In *Love Gives Everything*, the seventh statement challenges us to discern ways to respond boldly to these needs.

In this newsletter, we will learn how some SSNDs are indeed trying to address critical needs.

June 9 is the feast of Pentecost when we recognize and celebrate the gifts and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In the words of Blessed Theresa: May the Holy Spirit preserve you in love and grace.

In my own life, the Holy Spirit has been very active of late. For the past twelve years, I have had the honor and joy of working in Ministry Services (formerly Mission Effectiveness). Through prayer and workings of the Holy Spirit in my life, I have decided to retire

from this ministry. I express my gratitude to the provincial council and to each of you for the privilege of being a part of your lives. I will always remember you in prayer and ask Blessed Theresa to continue to be your inspiration and source of blessing.

Sincerely,

Judith Schaum, SSND  
Ministry Services,  
Associate Director  
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**Dear Sisters, Colleagues and Friends,**

Since the inception of United in Mission in May 2008, Sister Judy has been sharing with our Sisters, retreatants and colleagues about the SSND mission and ministry.

In creative ways she highlighted our ministries, broke open Directional Statements, raised awareness about JPIC issues, including the province's four commitments, and invited the readership to embrace and engage the SSND heritage and mission on a deeper level. With this quarterly publication she not only kept us informed but also focused our call to mission and ministry and demonstrated that the work of mission is what we accomplish together. Indeed, Sister Judy 'united us in mission.'

It is with deep gratitude that I acknowledge Sister Judy's numerous contributions to the work of mission. This newsletter began under Sister Judy as coordinator – later director – of Mission Effectiveness. Under her leadership,

the department and its purpose of forming lay leaders evolved into what is Ministry Services today. With this newsletter she proclaimed the good news and showed how Sisters, ministries and lay collaborators make Christ visible by their very being, and by sharing their love, faith and hope. Sister Judy nourished us with the SSND spirit and empowered us to carry the mission into the future.

Please join me in wishing Sister Judy a carefree and happy retirement. We remain 'United in Mission'.

Yvonne DeBruin  
Director, Ministry Services

## YOU ARE SENT

**the Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, states: "Urged by the love of Christ, we choose to express our mission through ministry directed toward education." When the Congregation was founded 186 years ago, education centered in schools and orphanages. Today this ministry of enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential has evolved and taken shape in many other forms. The following short vignettes describe how Sisters are discerning ways to meet other critical needs. As you read these stories, marvel at how God's grace impels us to respond to new ways of living the SSND educational vision.**

**Then ask yourself, how can I respond the needs of others in my family or local community?**

# KINDOO FAMILY CENTER

No money, no building, no furniture, but a driving passion to address the needs of the immigrants in Indiantown, Florida led us, Mary Dooley and Kate Kinnally, to put flesh on the 2015 Corporate Commitment to Comprehensive Immigration Reform by members of the Atlantic-Midwest Province. This was a strong mandate and stance that required a response.

Having worked among immigrant families in Indiantown, Florida for the past 16 years, we witnessed first-hand the great need to offer life skills, educational opportunities, and protections for the parents living in poverty and fear. Believing that education is the only vehicle to breaking the cycle of poverty, KinDoo Family Center took on a life of its own in October

2015 and is now in its 4th year of operation. Numerous immigrant women are being empowered with skills in language, sewing, using a computer, cooking and nutrition, and – most importantly – a sense of self-esteem, pride, and confidence in themselves and their abilities. The childcare program provides the women with improved parenting skills and enables them to better prepare their children for a future in another country.

KinDoo Family Center is a sacred place where a warm hand is extended to all who come through its doors so they know that they

are valued and welcomed. We thank God that we belong to a religious community of courageous women whose eyes are focused on God's work and God's people, realizing that love cannot wait and knowing that love must give everything again and again daily.

- Mary Dooley, SSND  
and Kate Kinnally, SSND



## ASYLEE WOMEN ENTERPRISES

Current world situations challenge us as SSNDs to become involved and address global and urgent needs. One way we have done that is through supporting Asylee Women Enterprise (AWE). Collaborating with seven other religious communities, SSND supports AWE via funding and housing on the Villa property. Volunteer Sisters and laity give generously of their time and talents by:

- Developing friendships in a caring atmosphere;
- Providing transportation for medical and legal appointments;
- Offering ESL, computer, music and creative arts programs;
- Preparing participants for employment.

This coupled with the hugs, smiles, holding of babies and other welcoming gestures contribute to demonstrating to our asylees that we value them. They are not the only recipients as they continu-

ally express their gratitude for the support and encouragement the SSND and lay volunteers share with them each day.

- John Francis Kearney, SSND



# TUTORING AT CTU



Volunteering as a tutor in the writing center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago has heightened my awareness of the global church and deepened my appreciation for the many ways culture influences one's view of the world and one's practice of religion.

I have come to understand how the deepening understanding of culture influenced the church. For example, a Vietnamese student wrote about ancestor worship, a practice initially forbidden for Catholics but now permitted because it was understood, not

as "worship" but as an expression of reverence for the community of saints.

Attending to the experiences of students from other parts of the world changed my understanding of the US involvement in conflicts in Korea and the Middle East. I listened as an Iranian Sister told the story of how her Christian family, forced by the war in Iran, separated and immigrated to all different parts of the world. I sat transfixed as an Iraqi seminarian described the night the US bombed Bagdad. Wearing winter coats for protection, he and his terrorized brother and sister sheltered in their mother's arms as bombs streaked across the night sky. I had watched that same scene on CNN from the comfort of my US home. Returning to their home, the family found all the windows blown out and rotting food because the power had

been out for days. Their experience of war in Iraq initiated a series of moves ending in Detroit. In working with all of these students, I continue to be touched by the deeply personal ways in which each student is affected by culture; the role the US, as a world power, played in their life; and the way in which globalization and technology impacted their life. Clearly the Directional Statement, is relevant in our world today, and my students challenge me in unsuspected ways to address them.

- Catherine Sarther, SSND

"We discern as a congregation which urgent and critical global concerns we are called to address, and we dare to respond boldly in unexpected ways."

YAS,C 17; GD 36-38



## NATIVE PASTORAL MINISTRY

These past few years, my pastoral ministry among the First Nation, Metis and Inuit people in the Peace Region of Northern Alberta, Canada, has gently, firmly been opening up in the following ways:

- A wider expression of presence of Church rooted in the Gospel, bearing witness to Christ's healing, reconciling power of love;
- A growing consciousness of the present historical situation in Canada, marking anew the oppression of her indigenous people; i.e. the effect

of government imposed residential schools designed to "take the Indian out of the child";

- The need for finding common spiritual ground creating non-threatening, non-judgmental environments to further healing and reconciliation

The call of the Spirit in our beloved foundress Blessed Theresa to wake up the world and further this work of God, is being confirmed through:

- The confirmation of provincial leadership;

- Prayer and solidarity of our sisters;
- Being called to the Elders Conference in Edmonton to engage with indigenous and non-indigenous leaders in furthering healing and reconciliation through education;
- The justice and education initiatives of Rose Mary Sander, SSND and our sisters in Notre Dame Convent in Waterdown, furthering action and solidarity.

- Mary Jeanne Davidson, SSND

# STILLPOINT STUDIO



*Committed to the spiraling quest for beauty through the elements of color and line at the service of humankind, I seek to bring about a more truly human world enhanced by reverence and appreciation of beauty in its many shades and reflections. A world in which existence is sanctified.* This is a part of the mission statement of Stillpoint Studio Creating Art, my ministry for the last 25 years or so.

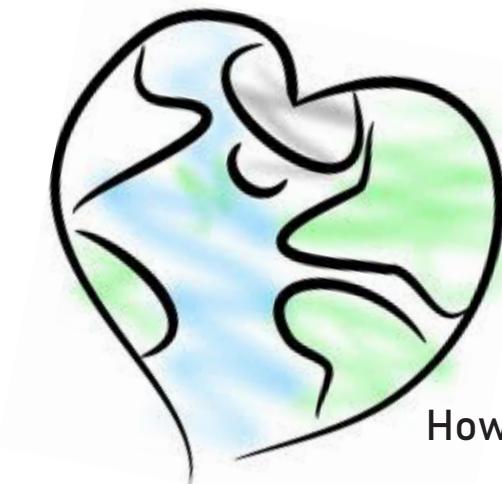


As I have reflected on the Directional Statement, I wondered how providential my ministry fits like a hand in a glove. "We educate, advocate and act in collaboration with others for the dignity of life and the care of all creation." When artists of all ages and abilities walk through the door they are greeted by soft music and the calmness of a large fish tank.... stepping from the chaos into the quiet and the still point where creativity can happen. Where the spirit and body can truly be one. Where the energy of each is enhanced by the other. Where respect for each is both expected and graciously received. Where one can come and expect to be opened in unsuspected ways. It doesn't matter whether you are three years old or 93 years old, all are equally respected, appreciat-



ed and allowed to express themselves as they so desire using all forms of expression.

- Maureen Michael Byrne, SSND



The Sisters who contributed the stories in this newsletter give strong testimony that the Triune God impels them (and us) into the heart of the world to be (people) of peace, hope and love. In the spirit of Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline, each of us is also called to make Christ visible by our very being, as we respond boldly to urgent critical needs.

**How do you feel about being impelled into the world?**

**In what way can you respond to urgent critical needs?**

*United in Mission* is a quarterly publication of the Department of Ministry Services, School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province.



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