The Center at Donaldson
Recognized for Conservation

By Debbie Palmer, District Coordinator, Marshall County Soil & Water

During their annual conference in January, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) honored farmers, county employees, educators and volunteers for their outstanding work in conservation throughout Indiana. At the awards luncheon, these individuals and organizations received awards for their exceptional commitment to protecting Indiana’s natural resources and for their education and outreach in their communities regarding water quality and soil health. The Center at Donaldson received the Friend of Conservation Award. They were nominated by the Marshall County Soil & Water Conservation District.

“Many thanks to these award recipients as they are the cream of the crop in their conservation practices. They care about our state, natural resources, water quality and about leaving a legacy for generations to come,” states new IASWCD Board President, Roger Wenning.

(L to R): Adam Thada, Sister Mary Baird, PHJC, and Matthew Celmer.
During Catholic Schools Week Poor Handmaids Sisters Connie Bach, Margaret Anne Henss, Joetta Huelsmann, and Germaine Hustedde traveled to Breese, Illinois to share their vocation stories with students at Mater Dei High School.

The Sisters met with the girls in the chapel while the boys met with a priest. For seven periods the Sisters shared with the students their unique stories of how God led them to be Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

There was also time to share specific examples of what religious life is all about. The importance of community life and being a support for one another was stressed as well as how discernment and prayer are necessary to see what God is calling one to. Sister Germaine spoke about the years of formation and the three vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience. Sister Connie shared some history about our foundress, Saint Katharina Kasper who was canonized in October 2018.

It was emphasized that it is important to pray for God’s guidance to help one know which vocation is best for each individual: married life, single life or religious life. A distinction was made between vocation and a profession or career.

Time was also given for the girls to ask questions that included: What is the difference between the various religious communities? Do you have contact with your families? And what is the difference between a Sister and a nun?

Each class has adopted a special mission project which they donate to monthly. The junior class adopted St. Ann’s Hospital in Kenya. So, it was a bonus for the students to learn about the ministry that they support from Sister Germaine who had ministered in Kenya.

Each session ended with a prayer to Saint Katharina as the students went back to their classes.

After seven periods of talking to each of the Religion classes, the Sisters were pleased with the opportunity to share their stories and the attentive responses from the students. It was a special occasion for Sister Margaret Anne to re-visit the school where she taught math for fourteen years. Sister Joetta was also happy to return to her Alma Mater and see the many changes that have taken place at the school.

Joan Peirson was in the third grade at St. Mary School in East Chicago, Indiana when she checked out a library book titled, With Attentive Ear and Courageous Heart, A Biography of Mother Mary Kasper, Foundress of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. In a recent letter, she admitted that she forgot to return the book to the library and wanted to return it now.

Joan was unaware that Katharina Kasper was being canonized and when she heard Katharina’s name while watching the canonization Mass on TV in October 2018, she knew it sounded familiar; so she ran upstairs and found the book. She said for some reason God wanted her to read it again!

Joan fondly remembers Sister Bathilda and Sister Laura who were her teachers while she attended third and fourth grade at St. Mary School. In a recent telephone conversation, Joan said, “Sister Bathilda taught me many life lessons and I still quote her to this day.”

The Poor Handmaids absolve Joan of all late fees!
We grew to love the Sisters as their love for God and their work was apparent in every conversation, each word of advice, or question. Hearing about their education and ministries was captivating and wholly inspiring. Starting off each day at breakfast asking about favorite ministries over eggs and oatmeal soon became a motivating reason to wake up before the sun rose. And painting symbols on our hallway mural to represent our experiences from each day kept us up long after the sun had gone down. There was always one more memory, one more notable piece of our service we wanted to record.

Sister Connie’s guidance in our prayer and service throughout the week helped us open up to doing God’s work, and gave us the energy and brightness to keep going even as the days became long. We were glad to go to bed exhausted each night knowing we were doing God’s work, and learning to appreciate the powerful ways in which God works through others.

The post-trip survey asked what my main take-away from the week was, and the first thing that came to mind was all of this love. The feeling was almost overwhelming to me when I first set foot in the Motherhouse Chapel. It’s true that hardly any of us knew each other at the start of the trip. But how could we not come together with all of this camaraderie and reflection, and willingess to pair up and do whatever work was needed? In the words of Sister Eileen, PHJC, “This is all a part of God’s plan.” It is easy, especially as students, to be consumed with school and friends and forget the importance of why we walk with God in our lives. The week impacted me through how vividly I experienced God’s love through those around me, and the connectedness I felt in this opportunity to serve in God’s name. I bring that love back with me, and I only hope others have the joy of experiencing the love and strength of spirit in the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

“A Week of Love and Sisterhood

By Miranda Dam, PHJC Volunteer Program participant

Diving and splashing, nine University of Wisconsin-Madison students, Sister Connie Bach, PHJC, and I relished the warmth of the pool we had been looking forward to swimming in all week. We were approaching the end of our time with the Poor Handmaids and had plans to return to school to meet the end of our winter break. In between all of the laughter and pool antics one of us observed, “There’s really nothing on this trip we haven’t done.” We nodded. We volunteers, at that point, had spent time at MoonTree and served in various ministries including Casa Catalina in Chicago, Nazareth Home, Sojourner Truth House in Gary, and in Ancilla College, Maria Center, Catherine’s Cottage and the Catherine Kasper Home in Donaldson. We cleaned and arranged books, handed out countless cans of butter beans, and sorted mounds of baby clothes while also being able to play with the adorable kids. Having the opportunity to serve in so many meaningful ways, interspersed with conversation and prayer with the Sisters and residents, was what made this experience remarkable and filled with meaning.

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As the Poor Handmaids continue to seek ways to lessen their impact on the environment, they educate themselves on issues affecting their own properties. Lake Gilbraith is a big part of the property in Donaldson, Indiana.

The Center at Donaldson is home to Lake Gilbraith, a remnant of the Wisconsinian Glacial period. This kettle lake is 37 acres in size and reaches 31 feet in depth. It was formed around 19,500 years ago when a huge block of ice fell off a calving glacier and was surrounded by sediment. For the last 22 millennia, it has been very slowly filling in with sediment and organic matter, as all freshwater lakes do. About 159 acres of the surrounding land drain into the lake, including all of The Center’s campus and farm fields. Lake Gilbraith is a public lake accessible by the boat launch.

In 2017, we were blessed to receive a grant from Indiana DNR’s Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. This allowed us to partner with a local ecological contractor, Cardno, to assess Lake Gilbraith’s health.

Data were collected in the lake, its tributaries, and its outflow from April to October 2017. The report was finished in 2018 and presented at a public meeting at MoonTree Studios, where neighbors gathered to hear the results and assess the impact of 20 years of studies and watershed improvements.2

Physical parameters, such as water temperature and pH, were found to be at acceptable levels. Tests for chemical parameters showed that nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations are still too high and have remained more or less unchanged since 1995. We suspect that these excess nutrients are driving the excessive plankton growth (algae and microscopic organisms), reducing water clarity. The sampling we conducted confirmed that Lake Gilbraith overall has poor water quality. Many Indiana lakes continue to face the challenges of nutrient overload.

We were concerned that our geothermal heating and cooling system, which relies on coils anchored in the lake, might be affecting water quality in some way. But the data do not seem to indicate any discernible effect on the lake that would affect water quality.

So what now? Some watershed improvements have been made through the years: wetland creation, excluding cattle from the shoreline and wetlands, shoreline stabilization, rain gardens, and construction of modern wastewater treatment plant. Native wetland vegetation is well established around the lake perimeter, creating habitat for fish, frogs, and turtles.

Nitrogen and phosphorus remain management issues because of synthetic fertilizer used to grow our crops, as well as manure run-off. A nutrient management plan could help reduce these impacts. Nitrogen is usually soluble in water and moves steadily through aquatic systems. Phosphorus, however, binds to soil particulates and accumulates in sediments.

The LARE study showed that three-quarters of our phosphorus load is internal, trapped in sediments of the lake bed, continually cycling and over-nourishing the aquatic system. It is likely that this load has accumulated from decades of agricultural practices, as well as phosphate-containing wastewater that was routed to the lake before modern pollution controls. Only one-quarter of the lake’s load is coming from external sources that we could potentially reduce.

The difficult truth is that in order to return the lake to ideal health, we would need to reduce total phosphorus load by 80 percent overall, even though only 25 percent is from external sources that we can partially control. There is not a reliable practice to permanently reduce the internal loading, other than the passage of the centuries.

Regardless, we can and should move forward with more water quality projects, as well as continue study of the lake and the watershed. The study is a reminder of how precious our water communities are and how careful we need to be in stewarding them.

2 LARE report www.collab.dnr.in.gov/ connect.ti/LARE/
By Amanda Maynard, Director of Development Operations at Ancilla Systems, Inc. on behalf of Sojourner Truth House

This June, Sojourner Truth House will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Walk for STH. To celebrate this milestone, preparations are underway to enhance the walk to be a COLOR walk this year! What exactly is a color walk, you ask? Registered walkers take on the 1.6 mile walk and are splashed with colored powder at certain points in the walk route. Our walkers start with a white shirt at the starting line and cross the finish line plastered in color. Once the walk is over, the fun continues as participants can celebrate together at the “Finish Fest Celebration.” Music, dancing, and more color throws will make this anniversary celebration one to remember.

Every year, the Walk for STH is the largest fundraising event for Sojourner Truth House. Hundreds of generous people come together to “Take Steps to End Homelessness.” The support comes at a critical time when the nation’s homeless population is on the rise for the first time since 2010, up nearly one percent in the last year alone. Over 1.5 million Americans are homeless and 23 percent of them are children. Participants in the Walk for STH support the mission to provide critical services to families in need in Northwest Indiana.

Registration for this event is free, however, Sojourner Truth House strongly encourages both individuals and teams to raise funds to support the mission. This year, the goal is to raise $115,000. If you are interested in forming a team, or simply interested in raising funds virtually, you may visit www.WalkforSTH.org. Each walker that raises $100 will receive a commemorative T-shirt. Gather your family, friends, co-worker, church friends or neighbors together and walk with us! If you prefer to not be immersed in color throughout the walk, there will be a color-free route. We hope you will join us this year for many colorful memories.
Sustainability has always been a critical component of MoonTree Studios’ mission. Our vision is an Earth community made up of individuals who are mindful, compassionate, and sustainable. Given the course we are currently on as a global community, sustainability initiatives may no longer be enough.

In the world of disaster response and preparedness, resilience is a key term for an individual or group’s ability to respond to and recover from potentially life-altering events. In my work with the American Red Cross, my goal was to help build more resilient communities in Northern Indiana by educating children on what to do in the event of an emergency or natural hazards such as a home fire or severe storm.

In my role as director at MoonTree Studios, my goal is to build not just a resilient ministry that can respond to and recover from social and physical environmental changes, but one that can actually harness them for the process of regeneration; “to give new life or energy to a living thing that has been depleted of its physical vitality or meaning.” To achieve this goal, we began working with Dr. Tamsin Woolley-Barker and her associate, Chris Lopez. Dr. Tamsin is an evolutionary biologist and author who specializes in organizational design. Chris is a regenerative practitioner and longtime permaculturist. Rooted in the growing fields of biomimicry and regenerative design, they utilize a biologically-inspired toolkit to “tap into the deep patterns that appear again and again in nature because they work, making more from one generation to the next.”

How can we heal the present and give more for the future rather than robbing it of the resources we currently have? The social dynamic of our organization is undergoing dramatic change. And though change can be unsettling, it is an opportunity for growth and transformation. According to Tamsin and Chris; “Every ecosystem requires disturbance to thrive. The Potawatomi knew that and regularly set fire to the prairie, mimicking the way lightning-sparked blazes returned nutrients to the soil, germinated dormant seeds, and opened space for new growth. Deep roots and a profusion of small and diverse wildflower seed ‘experiments’ kept the land vital from one season to the next. “Living systems are complex webs of interconnection. A little thing in one place can have dramatic and unexpected effects somewhere else. Learn to ‘expect the unexpected!’ If one level of the system is in decline or thriving, it affects the whole system. Each level should, therefore, aim to produce strategies and actions that move the whole system towards future robustness and resilience.”

The roots of MoonTree Studios run deep and experimentation has always been a critical element of experiences here. Like the prairie burns, some things have to die in order to make way for new life, for rebirth. As we embark on this journey, we invite all to come and take part. Tell us your story. What makes MoonTree so unique? What is the potential of this place, in the next year, decade, 150 years?

MoonTree is a catalyst for change and a container for personal creativity. We nurture independence, authenticity, bottom-up growth, and fearless exploration. We want to help people feel that something they personally chose to do radically changed the future. Come join us and help create a more prosperous and abundant future for our Earth community.
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (see Matthew 5:43-48). Jesus’ example of loving his enemies and praying for his persecutors while they crucified him reveals the lofty ideal of Christian perfection. Jesus’ urging in Matthew’s Gospel is synthesized by the New Commandment in Saint John’s Gospel:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Countless saints throughout the centuries have inspired us by striving for this lofty ideal, despite the degree of difficulty due to our concupiscient human nature (see 1 John 2:16). Like Jesus, Saint Katharina Kasper and those who were canonized with her, lived as “those who passed from observance of laws to the gift of self,” said Pope Francis during her canonization Mass. True to his Ignatian Spirituality, Pope Francis compares the human heart to a magnet. Either the heart will love God or love the world’s treasures; only one can be chosen.

Of the created world, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the careful planner of the Spiritual Exercises, gives us the following encouragement:

“All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully. As a result, we ought to appreciate and use these gifts of God so as to help us toward our goal of loving service and union with God. But insofar as any created things hinder our progress toward our goal, we ought to let them go.”

In our culture today, there are plenty of temptations that hinder our progress toward God. Thankfully, we don’t have to rely on our own strength in moments of temptation because God’s grace is given to those whose hearts are disposed to receive it. How then do we dispose our hearts to receive God’s grace to reject the treasures of the world for the love of God and neighbor? Just like the saints that have gone before us we must step away from the world and dedicate concentrated time to examine our habits of self-love in place of loving God and neighbor and promoting the common good. Then aspire, with God’s light, to make the resolutions to activate the latter while arresting the former. We call this dedicated time for self-examination and resolution making, a retreat.

Time away from our daily activities for a period helps grant the distance we need in order to reflect upon our habits that reveal our embracing of the world’s treasures, as demonstrated by our self-love. With the help of faith and guidance of a spiritual companion or director, we receive encouragement to make the necessary resolutions to love God and neighbor more faithfully.

There are many ways one could make a retreat, but all retreats should consist of at least the following criteria. First, a retreat should be scheduled at a place and time when you can dedicate yourself to silent meditation. In our information age, silence is hard to come by but necessary to hear God’s appeal to the human heart. Lastly, a schedule should be created that includes one-hour of silent meditation for every four hours of retreat time.

Silent meditation should begin by making an act of faith towards God, the object of our prayer, followed by slowly reading passages from Sacred Scripture or a different spiritual book of your choice or by looking upon a sacred object or a place within created nature, until your mind grabs a hold of something to consider. During this time, speak with God about your thoughts, feelings, and affections towards God. Remember, and this is key, focus on any spiritual reading or sacred images or an object of nature as the means for beginning to speak to God from the heart. Lastly, journal your experiences directly after your time with a spiritual companion or director with whom you can freely share your meditation experiences. They will help you to confirm the best resolutions to make towards loving God and neighbor more faithfully.

Finally, you don’t have to wait until you are on retreat to experience this form of prayer. A retreat becomes more fruitful when this method of prayer is practiced daily for shorter periods of time, such as 15 minutes.

To schedule a retreat with Lindenwood Retreat & Conference Center, call 574-935-1780 or visit www.lindenwood.org. Private retreat, group retreat, or sponsored group retreats available.

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**Retreat Like a Saint**

By Christopher Thelen, Director of Lindenwood Retreat & Conference Center

Matthew Celmer was born in South Bend, Indiana and graduated from St. Joseph's High School in 2006. He received his bachelor of arts degree in communication with a theatre minor from Loyola University of Chicago in 2010. He received a master of liberal studies degree from Indiana University of South Bend in 2017 with the culmination of his thesis, The Rebel Communication Theory: Existentialism, Naturalism, and Communication in the 21st Century. He spent close to a decade working in the service industry while pursuing his studies, drawn by the opportunity to engage in conversations with strangers every day. He spent a year serving with the American Red Cross through the AmeriCorps Indiana Response and Preparedness Corps. After a year at MoonTree, there is no place he would rather be. He is humbled and honored to serve in his new capacity as director and excited about what the future holds for the ministry.
One of three new buses purchased recently for the Linden Houses of Hobart/Gary, Mishawaka, and Chicago was blessed. The Linden Houses provide affordable residential apartments for seniors and persons with disabilities and are sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

Photos submitted by Sister Mary Ellen Goeller, PHJC.

By J. Chad Kebrdle, Institutional Advancement Associate, Ancilla College

Sustainability initiatives are ubiquitous at The Center at Donaldson. Together with the Poor Handmaids, The Center has been addressing concerns, promoting programs and ideas that raise awareness about environmental issues. Organic fields, solar panels, and wind turbines are only a couple of the many ways that we have been trying to have a positive impact on the environment. Ancilla College, part of The Center at Donaldson, is also doing its share to contribute to the vision.

On top of exploring new environmental degree programs and ways to incorporate environmental issues into course assignments, Ancilla College has recently purchased an electric vehicle (EV). The 2018 Honda Clarity will be used by several departments at the college to help save money, as well as the planet. Because The Center had previously installed an EV charging station, it made the purchase of such a vehicle an obvious next step.

“The EV accomplishes at least two goals for Ancilla,” said Dr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC, Ancilla College President. “Collectively, we reduce our carbon footprint while reducing fossil fuel consumption. At the same time, we create a positive impact on the budget. Presently, with coaches and admissions personnel, we use vehicles daily. Introducing at least one EV, we demonstrate our care for the environment.”

While the vehicle is currently white, design and marketing personnel are hard at work to create an eye-catching wrap that will publicize Ancilla College, as well as the need to reduce the use of fossil fuel energies. Already, scheduling is tight for departments at the college that wish to use the EV; however, relief is in sight. “Our next goal is to introduce one more EV at the college,” said Dr. Dvorak.

Leading by example is one of the best ways to educate our future leaders on issues that may only become worse as time goes on. By implementing environmentally conscious programs, we can instill in our students the need to preserve and protect our planet and her resources.
By the time this article goes into print, Epiphany will be well over, and the three wise men will be tucked securely away with all of the other Christmas decorations. However, it still seems appropriate to consider what “Epiphany” we have or will experience following the canonization of Saint Katharina.

How did those wise men go back to “normal” having followed the star, and encountered the divine? How do we, “pilgrims” who traveled afar (either physically or spiritually), to experience the canonization of Saint Katharina return to our own “normal” lives now that we have had this life-changing or at least a deep spiritually enriching experience? Like the three wise men also, may have experienced, perhaps this state of wonder and awe will carry us for some time.

One pilgrim described it, “As a result of the trip, I feel much closer to God, partly because of the many, many spiritual experiences we had during our travels. Also, it’s because I have a real personal connection to a saint and to the individual who lived the second miracle that resulted in the canonization.”

While we await with excitement all the graces that we have yet to discover, we are already hearing beautiful stories of hope, grace, love and perhaps the powerful intercession of Saint Katharina.

A relative of one of our Netherland Sisters wrote about his medical difficulties that left him in need of, but too weak for a much-needed surgery. He believes that after many joined together in praying a nine day Novena to Saint Katharina that perhaps another miracle occurred for him. When he prepared for the surgery and went to the appointment his doctor found him to no longer need surgery which was confirmed by a second doctor.

Similarly, at the end of our canonization trip, our American tour guide’s husband became seriously ill while they were ending their vacation. After six-weeks in the hospital for which he has very little memory of and a diagnosis of cancer that led to beginning chemotherapy, his diagnosis was changed. He was found to have a much more manageable and recoverable diagnosis with medication. He wrote and shared in his Christmas letter the following, “For those that have never experienced the direct healing power of prayer, I can honestly say that I experienced something that I can only describe as miraculous, moving, calming, and powerful shortly before waking up on a ventilator and beginning the positive turn with my health. I truly believe without all of my prayer warriors I would not be here today.”

Saint Katharina is showering her graces down already! Let us look forward to the epiphanies that will occur in each of our lives through the experience of the canonization or the intercessions of Saint Katharina Kasper.

The Spiritual Family of Saint Katharina formally includes the Poor Handmaids Sisters, the members of the Fiat Spiritus Community and the Associate Community. However, we recognize that our co-workers, board members, family, friends, and others also embrace and live the charism of Saint Katharina. Charism is not something we own and then share with others, such as we think of a benefactor maintaining resources and then generously sharing them at will with the needy. Rather we are possessed by the charism (a gift offered by the Spirit of God) and recognize it in others imbued and moved with the same gift of the Spirit.

With that in mind, we want to keep the spirit of the canonization alive by sharing our stories and experiences. If you have a story, experience, or enlightenment that you wish to share through your experience of the canonization, contact Libby Riggs, Director of the Associate Community.
20 Years of Building Healthy Communities Celebrated

By Sherita Brewer, Development and Communications Manager, HealthVisions Midwest

Guests gathered at the Botanical Conservatory in Fort Wayne in December, to kick off a year-long celebration for the 20th anniversary of HealthVisions Midwest (HVM). Over 80 community partners, supporters and honorees joined HVM leaders and the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ Provincial Team to commemorate 20 years of service in Fort Wayne and Allen County. HealthVisions Midwest was founded in 1998 in Fort Wayne to address the needs of the community after the sale of St. Joseph Hospital. The legacy of the Poor Handmaids was solidified in the area through service to minority and underserved residents of the area.

Paula Wills, Executive Director of HealthVisions Midwest, gave special acknowledgment to individuals who were instrumental in the success of the ministry: the late Don Barnes, former president and CEO, Sister Kathleen Quinn, PHJC, Sister Loretta Schieper, PHJC, and Sister Annemarie Kampwerth, PHJC. Renetta Williams, HealthVisions Midwest Fort Wayne Director, was honored for her exemplary leadership of the Fort Wayne office.

A special tribute was also given to the late Joan Baines, who served the ministry as administrative assistant for a number of years.

A proclamation was presented by Deputy Mayor Karl Bandemer recognizing December 5, 2018, as HealthVisions Midwest of Fort Wayne Day. Seven local individuals and organizations were recognized for their support of HVM’s efforts to reduce and eliminate health disparities among minorities and underserved members of the community: Calvin Roberson, Indiana Minority Health Coalition; Chantelle Johnson, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield; Carmen Moore, Parkview Community Nursing; Debi Kennedy, Parkview Center for Healthy Living/Francine’s Friends; Angela Stewart-Martin and Nurse Team; Pastor Timothy Williams, Good Hope Baptist Church; and Council on Senior Services.

HealthVisions Midwest currently operates in three locations, each of which falls in the footprint of hospitals formerly owned by Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. In addition to Fort Wayne, there are offices in East St. Louis, Illinois (St. Clair County) and Hammond, Indiana (Lake County). Services in the East St. Louis office focus on assisted transportation and information and assistance for seniors to access services, as well as volunteer caregiving and spiritual support. The Hammond location promotes Community Health Worker training and acts as the ministry’s corporate office. Celebrations will be held in each of these locations during this year.

HealthVisions Midwest is proud to support wellness in the communities we serve and looks forward to many more years dedicated to eliminating health disparities and promoting a better quality of life for all. We are honored to walk in the footsteps of Saint Katharina Kasper, foundress of the Poor Handmaids, to minister and provide comfort to those we humbly serve.

Nazareth Home is Now a “Group Home”

By Amanda Maynard, Director of Development Operations at Ancilla Systems on behalf of Nazareth Home

For the last couple years, Nazareth Home board and staff have worked with the State of Indiana to become a licensed group home, instead of a foster home. Most people do not understand the difference, but the designation is great news for the children we care for.

As a group home, we will be able to increase by over 30 percent the number of children in residence we serve each day. Additionally, we maintain the ability to care continuously in a home setting for children from newborn to age six. This is possible because the Indiana Department of Child Services has approved our request to provide care to infants and toddlers, as well as, young children.

As a group home, we can now receive cost relief assistance. Costs were a significant barrier under our old license. Traditional foster care provides a nominal state stipend for “out-of-pocket” expenses to foster care parents who welcome a child into their home. The children who are entrusted to Nazareth Home face extraordinary challenges often being physically, emotionally, and medically compromised. To provide them with the high level of care they need, we employ support staff who provide care around-the-clock seven days a week. This continuous involvement increases the cost of care well beyond out of pocket expenses. Our new Group Home license will help better cover a child’s living expenses plus the cost for specialized services and the all day and all night staffing to meet that child’s needs.

The designation has changed, but the care, love and compassion for the children has not. Nazareth Home is staffed with full- and part-time employees who are there around-the-clock and 43 dedicated volunteers who provide children with the special attention they need. From specialized medical care needed for infants with birth defects, exposure to drugs in utero, fetal alcohol syndrome, or trauma from physical or sexual abuse, to just helping children be children. Babies are cuddled and cuddled, and toddlers enjoy the things that other children their age experience, like birthday parties, outings to the beach, riding bikes, joining t-ball teams, and so much more.

* Due to confidentiality, we cannot show pictures of the children at Nazareth Home, but we can show you their stuffed friend.

Sisters and attendees applaud Renetta Williams (seated in red) for her leadership at the Fort Wayne HVM office.

Nazareth Home is now a “Group Home.”
In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation announced Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic received the esteemed Compassionate St. Joseph Award to fund the Immigrant Outreach Program. The $100,000 grant will help fund a series of informational forums for immigrants about the immigration system, tips on interacting with law enforcement, and tools to enforce their Constitutional rights, regardless of their legal status. The award will be disbursed over the next years. The program will also provide information sessions for non-immigrants including many in the faith and businesses community, addressing immigrants’ personal stories and nonpartisan dialogue about relevant laws and policies. Organizers anticipate offering several forums this year.

The legal clinic’s outreach efforts are needed now more than ever, according to Desiree Koger-Gustafson, an attorney and the clinic’s director. After fleeing Gustafson, an attorney and the clinic’s director. After fleeing wars, famine, crime, and political corruption in the countries from which they came, many immigrants now fear life in the United States. “They face the risk of raids in their homes and workplaces, increased deportations, rapidly changing immigration policies, expiration of work authorization documents, and distressful rhetoric from media and government alike,” she said.

After piloting the model, the legal team has discovered that the educational forums act as a safe place where immigrants and non-immigrants can come together with understanding about evolving legal policy and processes. Participants are also empowered with the knowledge of how they can legally navigate and compassionately assist others.

The immigrant population in greater Fort Wayne totals 28,228 and accounted for 24.7 percent of population growth in Northeast Indiana from 2011 to 2016, according to a report from New American Economy. Of the total immigrants living in the region, 8,429 are undocumented and face additional barriers for employment, enforcing their rights, and navigating everyday life in Allen County.

Currently, the legal clinic and Catholic Charities provide legal services for individual immigrant cases. The new educational forums, however, will offer a proactive and community-wide approach to the issue.

Their outreach makes a personal impact for those they serve. For instance, the legal clinic may help an undocumented worker who feels extreme anxiety after their employer suddenly fires several other undocumented workers. By connecting with the legal clinic where attorneys can explain immigration options, as well as workplace rights and their rights at home – the individual now knows where to find answers for legal questions. He might also be connected to other trustworthy entities such as faith communities, healthcare providers and area non-profits who will support immigrants with vitally needed resources while they learn how to legally navigate American laws and policies.

The award committee was also excited about similarities between today’s Immigrant Outreach Program and the Poor Handmaids’ original mission in the United States to address the needs of German immigrants.

“By Sharon Tubbs, Community Liaison

“It is of interest that the very first Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ mission in the American Province was to assist and relieve the immigrant population,” said Sister Germaine Hustedde, PHJC who served on the award committee. “It is right and fitting that this legacy of our foundress Saint Katharina continues through the Foundation in this way.”

Sister Mary Boby (Mary Frances Hanon), Poor Handmaid of Jesus Christ, died on Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at the Catherine Kasper Home, Donaldson, Indiana.

She was born in Gary, Indiana on December 23, 1923 to Otto and Fannie (Stocking) Hanon who preceded her in death along with her brothers Edward Hanon and George Lewis Hanon and her sisters Vivian Hanon, Vione Kelly, Catherine Flood, and Sister Margaret Hanon, PHJC. She was the sixth child of seven children. Sister Mary is survived by her son, George Boby Jr., her grandchildren Robert Boby, Jay Boby and Trisha Boby, seven great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Sister Mary entered the Poor Handmaid Community in 1944 taking the name Sister Mary Georgia and left the Community in 1954. She then married George Boby, Sr. in January 1956 and adopted his son, George Boby. After her husband’s death in 1995, she re-entered the Poor Handmaids Community in 2001 joining her sister, Sister Margaret Hanon, PHJC. Sister Mary professed her final vows August 3, 2002.

Sister Mary graduated from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois with a bachelor and master degree in education. She was a teacher at St. Anthony School, Beckemeyer, Illinois; St. Monica’s School, Mishawaka, Indiana; and St. George School, New Ulm, Minnesota. When she left the community she continued as an educator at Columbus School, East Gary; St. Francis Xavier, Lake Station, and Meister Elementary, Hobart Township.

She loved playing the organ and after she was unable to play due to her failing eyesight she was observed tapping her fingers to the organ music during daily Mass. From 2002 until 2013 Sister Mary volunteered at the Catherine Kasper Home and continued this ministry after she moved to Catherine’s Cottage in 2006. She officially retired on August 7, 2013 when she moved to the Catherine Kasper Home.

May Sister Mary rest in peace.
Lenten Prayer

Heavenly Father, Your Risen Son claims the Church as his beloved spouse and pours love over all the baptized. Hear our prayers for the church throughout the world. Let this Lenten Season draw us closer to his Sacred Heart in deeper commitment to the mission of proclaiming and living the Kingdom of God.

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