

VISION *and Challenge*

Sisters of Notre Dame • California Province

proclaiming God's goodness and provident care

bringing hope within a diverse society

www.sndca.org

Vol. XVI No. 3

Fall 2009

Happy Dog Days of Summer at Notre Dame Center



Top: Katie Kavetsky, her dog Bucky and Sr. M. Therese Kirstein visit in the lounge of the Health Care Center.

Bottom: Sr. M. Immaculette Moose and Bucky give a smile to the camera.

Sisters living in the Health Care Center made a special friend this summer – a fluffy white maltese named Bucky. Bucky's human partner, Katie Kavetsky is a La Reina High School senior earning her Girl Scout Gold Award by designing a program that brings therapy dogs to untraditional settings.

Katie explained that her project evolved from personal experience. "My grandfather's sister had a stroke that impacted the right side of her body. In the hospital she was visited by therapy dogs and encouraged to use her right hand to stroke them. It really helped. But once she got home she didn't have access to that and she started to backslide. We brought Bucky over just for fun, and it seemed to help her. I thought, there are a lot of people in her situation who could benefit but don't have access to therapy dogs."

Katie developed a proposal for her Gold Award application but she needed to collaborate with a community organization. Unfortunately her age and other logistical issues were barriers for some groups. She turned to her religion teacher, Sr. Mary Rebekah Kennedy, for advice. Sr. Rebekah suggested contacting the Health Care Center at Notre Dame Center. Katie's idea seemed like a good opportunity to add some cheer so Sr. Mary Karlynn Werth

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Director of Development

Carmela Anne Burke

Editor

Lisa Helene Donovan

Contributors

Sr. M. Kristin Battles
Carmela Anne Burke
Lisa Helene Donovan
Madalyn Horton
Sr. Valerie Marie Roxburgh

Photographers

Sr. M. Kristin Battles
Lisa Helene Donovan
Sr. M. Lisa Megaffin

Many thanks to Denise Crosby for her
grapevine photograph.

Consultants and Research

Sr. Rose Anthony Ballard
Sr. Betty Mae Bienlein
Sr. M. Sheila Fay
Sr. M. Josanne Furey
Sr. M. Antonine Manning
Sr. Antoinette Marie Moon
Sr. M. Joan Schlotfeldt
Sr. M. Karlynn Werth

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Address corrections and other
correspondence may be sent to:
Sisters of Notre Dame
Development Office
1776 Hendrix Avenue
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
805-917-3714
e-mail: carmela@sndca.org

From the Provincial...

Dear Friends,

This year, 2009, marks 30 years that Notre Dame Center on Hendrix Avenue in Thousand Oaks has been the provincial center for the California Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Many of you have come to see us here for jubilees, special activities such as our Associate Program, fund raising events, visiting our older sisters who in many cases were your teachers or your children's teachers, or even on a daily basis dropping your children off at Notre Dame Learning Center Preschool located in one of the wings of our building.



When we first moved into our new home in 1979 we held an Open House so that all of you, our relatives, friends and benefactors could enjoy seeing the inside of a convent, including those areas that are "cloistered" and not usually open to the public. Now 30 years later we think it is time to once again host an Open House and share a day of hospitality with you and your families. Many young people today have not had contact with sisters let alone toured a convent! Therefore, we are opening our doors and welcoming everyone in for an afternoon.

I am announcing our Open House now so you get the date onto your calendars. The Open House will be held, Sunday, April 11, from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. This event will replace Spring Fling, our annual fundraiser, for this year. Please plan to be with us and enjoy seeing our house and visiting with your sister friends. We will send out formal invitations in the spring and place notices in parish bulletins closer to the event as reminders.

Sincerely,

Sister Mary Kristin

Provincial Superior

DONOR NEWS

Please remember the Sisters of Notre Dame in your estate plan. Our legal title is "The Sisters of Notre Dame of Los Angeles, Inc." and our IRS non-profit identification number is 95-2005867. For further information, call 805-917-3714 or visit our website at www.sndca.org. Thank you and God bless you.

God Calls Us Into Relationship

by Sr. Valerie Marie Roxburgh

As I reflect back on the young adult ministry events I attended in this past summer, I am inspired by the desire of Catholics in their twenties and thirties for a closer connection with God and other people. God created us as relational beings that long for emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical connectedness. He invites us into relationship and desires that we open our hearts and minds to embrace His unconditional love.

In our fast paced culture, it is easy to feel disconnected. Our daily “To Do Lists” can overwhelm us, leaving little time to “just be” or to spend quality time with family and friends. Technology has revolutionized the area of communications and new social networks have evolved such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. These are effective ways to communicate but they do not replace the need we have for others to be physically present to us.

The Bible includes numerous examples of how people experience emotional and physical connectedness through their faith community. There is Ruth’s desire to stay with Naomi, the disciples who gathered at Pentecost and received the Holy Spirit, as well as Jesus’ promise “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Jean Vanier describes the importance of community so well in his book *Community and Growth*, “Community is a place of belonging, a place where people are earthed and find their identity.” I am very grateful that I have experienced this gift of community within my family, with the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Church, and in ministry.

The challenge for all of us today is to learn how to effectively connect with God, one another, creation, and our Church. We feed our physical bodies daily, but it is equally as important to feed our spirit, mind, and soul with God’s love. Below are a few suggestions for ways to do this. It is through allowing God to become the center of your life that you will experience a deeper connection with God and other people.



Sr. Annamaria Vasquez, Sr. Val, and Sr. Joan Schlotfeldt visit. You can reach Sr. Val at 424-731-7193 or sistervalsnd@gmail.com.

Answer God’s Call

Daily prayer and quiet meditation

Instead of turning on the radio or television when you wake up, allow time for silence.

Morning can be a perfect time to thank God for the day and His love for you; ask God to guide every part of your day.

Spiritual Reading

As part of your prayer time, consider using *Living with Christ* or *The Magnificat* which contain the daily mass readings as well as inspirational articles and reflection questions.

Books such as *My Life With the Saints* by James Martin, SJ may also be a useful and enjoyable source of spiritual food.

Seek the face of Jesus in each person

Sharing God’s goodness with the people God places in your life each day is another tangible way to grow in your connection with God and others.

A simple way to do this is by offering a smile and being aware of their needs.

Participate in your local parish community

Regular mass attendance is vital to our Catholic faith and spiritual growth. Ask your pastor about opportunities to get involved in your parish.

Sharing your talents is an excellent way to grow in your relationship with God and members of your local faith community.

Pray the Rosary

Praying the rosary is another form of quiet meditation and reflection. Some people like to incorporate walking while praying the rosary.

Many people enjoy listening to a Rosary CD while driving. I have found this helps deal with discourteous drivers and traffic jams in a much more positive fashion.



Carmela Burke with Sr. M. Josanne Furey

Message from the Development Office

In a world that hungers for meaning,
may we come to discover God's boundless love.

In a world that desires unity,
may we build bridges of understanding and hope.

In a world that yearns for justice,
may we be passionate disciples of Christ.

- SND 2009 Congress Prayer Card

Our Sisters, Associates, teachers and collaborators strive to live these principles of our spiritual philosophy. We sacrifice modern comforts to serve at a remote village in Uganda. In Southern California we minister to the sick, elderly, families in dire need and women fleeing human traffickers.

Without a doubt, in challenging economic times, the need is even greater. In our desire to remain faithful to the Gospel, and to bring God's goodness and provident care to others, we pray you will stay connected with us to carry on with our work. Like Southern California, the Sisters of Notre Dame represent a variety of nationalities and cultures. This diversity is further reflected in our many ministries in the community, in the country, and the world.

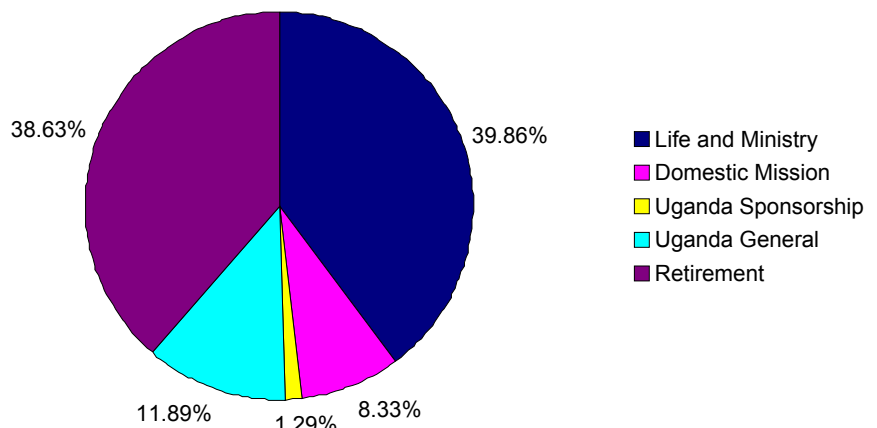
There are many blessings from our association with you to further the mission of Jesus. If you are thinking of giving a gift to the Sisters of Notre Dame of Los Angeles, there are several ways to make a contribution. Our website www.sndca.org/development provides more helpful details. If you are considering or have already remembered the Sisters of Notre Dame in your will or any other special way, please let us know so that we may thank you.

Sincerely

Carmela Burke
Director of Development

Gifts to the Sisters of Notre Dame July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

Total: \$780,410



This pie chart is based on figures available as of August 31, 2009. A formal audit will be conducted and results made available in Winter 2009.

By the way, did you know that we have started a new e-newsletter? It's a great way to stay in touch and get some spiritual refreshment. Simply visit www.sndca.org and subscribe, or include your e-mail address when you send us your next donation. Your e-mail remains private and you can opt out at anytime using "Safe Subscribe." Sign up -- we'd love to keep you in the Notre Dame loop!

Donor Recognition

The Sisters of Notre Dame are grateful to our many friends who have made financial donations to the congregation between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, including those who wish to remain anonymous. We also wish to thank our friends and family who made in-kind donations.

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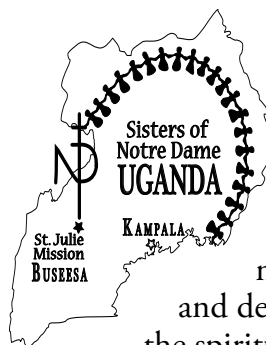
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Sr. Betty Mae Goes to Uganda...



Sr. Betty Mae Bienlein spent several weeks volunteering in Uganda this summer. Her projects involved building the files for the new foundation in Mpala, organizing the files for St. Julie Primary School's new head teacher, Sr. M. Bernarde, and designing a database of the books in the spiritual library the sisters have created in their convent at St. Julie Mission. Missionary sisters have little time for such organizing and paperwork tasks, but it was Sr. Betty Mae's pleasure to share her skills and talents in exchange for a glimpse at the beautiful promise of Uganda.



"I'm filled with awe," she said upon her return. "People will never know to what extent their generosity has empowered so many people. I could talk about it, I could show you pictures, but you can't explain how great what is happening with the mission in Buseesa really is."



The resources poured in by our donors and the sisters combined with the generous spirit of the local people has transformed the area around Buseesa from a 'lost county' to one filled with hope for the future. Today there are more than 400 children attending the boarding schools at St. Julie Mission, learning critical thinking skills along with their catechism, and becoming leaders in their communities. On visiting Sundays, their parents gather for an Open House, school meetings, and an impromptu marketplace where they can sell their wares.



The new Buseesa Community Development Centre has also contributed to the economic growth of the area through its microfinancing project. The teams of women are monitoring repayment of their loans to projects ranging from hair salons and dressmakers to farming. Once the first round of loans has been repaid, those funds will be available for new projects.

"You can see the whole sense of community that they have," said Sr. Betty Mae.

From top left: A student at St. Julie Mission; Sr. Betty Mae visits with preschool students; Pouring rain (left) and the muddy road that follows (right); The informal market at St. Julie Mission one Visiting Sunday; Members of the Buseesa Community Development Centre gather for a meeting.

... and Msgr. John Mary comes to California

This summer sisters at Notre Dame Center were honored to host Msgr. John Mary Kabyanga of Bujuni Catholic Parish in the Kibaale district of Uganda when he visited California for mission talks. Just a few weeks later, he and Sr. Mary Kristin met in Buseesa for the first profession of vows by Sisters Mary Sunday and Leocardia Marie.



Monsignor has known the Sisters of Notre Dame since they first explored establishing a mission in Uganda. He and other area leaders expected the sisters to choose an urban location closer to modern conveniences. “When they chose Buseesa, it was a surprise to us. It was isolated, a place nobody had been. They took a place that was left to die. Now there is a transformation.”



During his mission talks at St. Raphael and St. Paschal Baylon, Monsignor shared some of the challenges his area faces, but he was also impressed by the faith he witnessed.

“I’ve been touched by the way people pray,” he said. “The people come. They know their Creator and they pray. The churches are packed for six Masses.” The two-week visit gave Msgr. John Mary a chance to explore American culture and the beautiful state of California. The diversity, entrepreneurial spirit and respect for the law that imbues our country impressed him as something Ugandans could adopt in their own way.



From top right: Sr. M. Colette meets with a family at St. Julie School; Sr. M. Kristin visits with Ugandan novices Sr. M. Hilda (l) and Sr. M. Rozaria (r) at the East African novitiate in Tanzania; Progress on the new House of Study and Initial Formation House in Mpala, Uganda; Sr. Mary Sunday celebrates her first profession with her family; Sr. Leocardia Marie and her mother at her first profession.



Honoring Our 2009 Jubilarians

Sisters Mary Anita Hornack, Mary Clara Roling and Mary Lynn Liederbach have given 195 years of service to their beloved Jesus and the Church. They renewed their vows during a community celebration at Notre Dame Center in July.



Msgr. Joseph Hernandez accepts the offertory gifts from (l-r) Sr. Valerie Marie, Sr. Mary Kristina, and Sr. Mary Amy. Sr. Kris entered the novitiate in a private ceremony before the liturgy (see story p. 11).



Sister Mary Anita Hornack Jubilee of Joy ~ 75 Years

Sr. Mary Anita Hornack was born in Merrill, Michigan but raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Her parents were named Mary and Joseph, something that always made her proud. Baptized Helen, she was the third youngest of eight children. As a child, one of her favorite activities was to play school and she wanted to be a teacher before she thought of religious life. She was also a tomboy who later loved to dance and date, but when she heard God's call to her vocation she started making many chapel visits at her high school, Notre Dame Academy in Cleveland and eventually entered the community. Sr. Mary Anita taught elementary school in Ohio and California for several decades and became an administrator. She enjoyed teaching the children to dance and continued playing baseball and other games with the boys.

As a teacher, she managed large classes with a loving but firm hand and much preparation that drew upon her expertise as well as childhood experiences pretending to teach. "For the week before school started, I would stand in my classroom and imagine how every detail of the day

would work, like getting coats, passing out papers or lining up," she remembered. Sr. Anita's generous heart led her to a philosophy that emphasized honesty and fairness over punishment. After her retirement from the classroom in 1995, she worked as an office aide at Our Lady of Assumption in Ventura. Since 2000, she has lived at Notre Dame Center where she still serves in adoration ministry and loyally continues to follow the St. Bonaventure High School football team. She continues to share her wisdom and love of Jesus with the sisters and her many friends. Her older sister, Sr. Mary Florette Hornack and her niece, Sr. Florette Marie Adams, also became Sisters of Notre Dame.



Sister Mary Clara Roling
Iron Jubilee ~ 65 Years

Sr. Mary Clara Roling was born in Elyria, Ohio, and named Gladys Mae. She was the youngest of seven children raised by Louise (Velber) and Henry Roling. When she was three, her oldest sister entered the Sisters of Notre Dame and became Sr. Mary Lyntia. Gladys did not know her sister well, but she began exploring religious life and became an aspirant at Notre Dame Academy in Cleveland. After she entered the community and took the name Sr. Mary St. Clara, she learned that she had been presented to the sisters in their refectory convent on the day of her baptism. “A sister said ‘you just had to enter because you had already been in the cloister,’” she remembered.

Like many sisters her age, Sr. Mary Clara witnessed the vast changes in religious life during the last century. At the time she entered the convent, sisters were not allowed to return home for any reason including the death of a family member. When her parents died, a busload of sisters supported her by being present at their funerals.

Sr. Mary Clara taught in elementary schools for 46 years in Ohio and California. Her gift as a teacher was a great ability to relate to the students and offer them a sense of security. She continued tutoring and teaching CCD classes for many years after retiring from full time classroom teaching. As an ESL tutor, she enjoyed meeting people from many cultures and did not believe that others should be thought of as “different” because of their backgrounds. Another of her ministries included preparing junior high students and teenagers to receive the sacraments. She felt they needed someone to help them know Christ.



Sister Mary Lynn Liederbach
Diamond Jubilee ~ 60 Years

Sr. Mary Lynn was born in Cleveland, Ohio, the oldest of four children of Anne (Pejsa) and Theodore Liederbach. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame after high school and taught social studies and Latin, eventually earning masters degrees in economics and library sciences. In 1960, she arrived at Pilarica College, the novitiate in Hidden Valley where she and another sister prepared novices for their future ministries. Sr. Mary Lynn also assembled and organized 5,000 books for the library. She later taught and served as librarian for 14 years at St. Matthias High School.

After her retirement in 1984, Sr. Mary Lynn continued to serve the community and assisted the RCIA program at St. Jude parish in Westlake Village. Sr. Mary Lynn corresponded with a teenage boy accused of murdering an acquaintance from the RCIA program. After she visited him in jail for many months, he told her that her visits helped him “feel more like a human being.”

Eventually, her detention ministry activities expanded to include writing to 33 jailed men and women, publishing a faith-filled round robin newsletter, fundraising for the Get on the Bus program, and providing trimmed Christmas cards for the women at Camp Malibu to send to their relatives. Recently Sr. Mary Lynn has found a new ministry that she calls dialysis ministry. Three days a week she spends three hours a day at a local renal center where a machine purifies her blood. During that time she prays for the staff and her fellow patients.

Welcoming Five New Associates...

by Madalyn Horton, SND Associate



With a desire to deepen their baptismal call, five new SND Associates made their covenants during a Sunday morning liturgy on June 28 in Thousand Oaks, California. The celebration continued

with a luncheon where Rosie Angeles, Leisa Contreras, Sandy Elias, Yolanda Nunez and Beth Penga were welcomed by the Sisters of Notre Dame, fellow Associates, family and friends.

The new Associates found the sisters to be incredibly welcoming and filled with love. As Yolanda Nunez put it, "They are so nice that you can't help but gravitate toward them."

Leisa Contreras, a parishioner at St. Mary Magdalen Church in Camarillo, discovered the Sisters of Notre Dame through Sr. Mary Prabha Jesudhason of India. Sr. Mary Prabha studied at California Lutheran University where Leisa works.

Sandy Elias began her relationship with the sisters when her daughter became a student at La Reina High School . That was 27 years ago! Through the year-long formation program Sandy discovered a true appreciation for the Divine Office. She has developed her own routine to make the Office a part of her busy day, even when that means taking it to work and reading it on her breaks.

Yolanda Nunez's association with the Sisters has extended over a span of 48 years. Her decision to become an Associate is in part due to encouragement from several of her friends (men and woman) who are also Associates. Yolanda has always been involved with church ministries and currently serves as a wedding coordinator at St. Paschal Baylon where she is a parishioner.

A new class of four candidates began their formation in September. Associate candidates have the opportunity to not only learn about the sisters through the scheduled sessions but also to discover the Notre Dame charism and spirituality while interacting with them in their own community. Lunch is a wonderful time to join the sisters in conversation, learn about their ministries, and how they approach day to day challenges. One can't help but to grow spiritually when they place themselves among the Sisters of Notre Dame.

If you are interested in the Associates program, please contact Sr. Mary Lisa at 805-402-8623 or megaffin@earthlink.net. The formation process is an unforgettable, incredible journey.



From the top: New SND Associates Sandy Elias, Leisa Contreras and Rosie Angeles in chapel; Beth Penga and Yolanda Nunez receive their pins from Sr. Mary Kristin; SND Associates Jeanette and Dennis Longwill.

Our Newest Novice...



Postulant Kris Fuller was received as a novice during a private ceremony that coincided with this year's Jubilee Celebration. She will be known as Sr. Mary Kristina and spend her novitiate at Providence House where she has been living as part of the formation community. Parishioners at St. Cornelius have already taken to calling her Sr. Kris.

"Sr. Mary Kristina sounds so formal," she laughs, though her friends on Twitter and Facebook, in the community and beyond know how much the title means to her. In fact, the first thing she wanted to be as a little girl was a nun.

A native of Van Nuys, California, Sr. Kris was raised Episcopalian and converted to Catholicism in her twenties. A series of life changing events including her mother's death led her to recommit her spiritual life and to the Church. Over time, she became a member of St. Francis Assisi Parish in Silver Lake, helped found a peace and justice ministry, and became acquainted with the Sisters of Notre Dame who live and minister at the parish.

Before entering the community, Sr. Kris held a variety of creative jobs in photography and design, including set decorating for Hollywood movies. She is now studying graphic design and taking other classes at Long Beach City College while receiving instruction in spirituality and religious life as well as volunteering at St. Cornelius Parish and other organizations.

"It's almost as if your life goes right back where you started from," she reflected. "You start shedding all the silly stuff you put on during your teenage years, your young adulthood. As you mature and move through it all, your original desires, the ones imprinted in you by God himself, come back into clarity."

Many Mansions Hard Hat Day

Recently Sr. Mary Lisa Megaffin (*pictured right*) and SND Associates Marty Garcia (*pictured in sunglasses, bottom left*), Nora Howells, Terri Bond and Rosie Angeles (*all pictured bottom right*) were on hand for the La Rahada Hard Hat Reception sponsored by Many Mansions. The Associates provided snacks and drinks for guests and toured the facility.

Many Mansions, an affordable and supportive housing developer in Ventura County, acquired the La Rahada apartment complex in Simi Valley when it was riddled with mold and rotting wood.

The Hard Hat Reception celebrated progress on remodeling efforts that include new walls, bathrooms, pathways, trees, and balconies as well as an office for counseling staff. Sr. Lisa and Marty Garcia serve on the Many Mansions Board of Directors.



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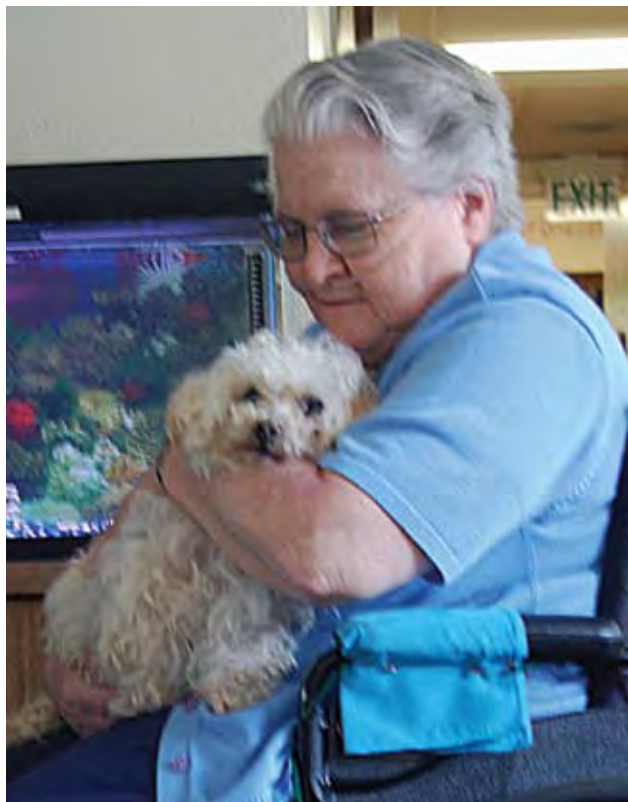
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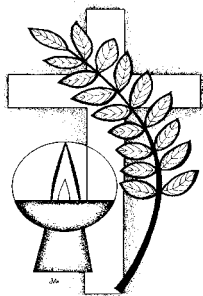
Sr. Dwina Maria Towle and Bucky.

as a potential therapy animal. With the guidance of Sr. Karlynn, Katie made 10 hours of preliminary visits with the sisters. These visitation hours are required to make sure a dog can handle unfamiliar environments that may include noises, machinery and wheelchairs. They also give the dog's human an opportunity to see how the animal interacts with people, and how people respond to the dog. The dog also needs to graciously adjust to being handled for nearly two hours at a time.

Fortunately, the senior sisters adored the fluffy maltese and enjoyed his visits immensely. Bucky sat on their laps, played with them, performed a few tricks and enthusiastically ate the doggie treats they fed him. As advisor, Sr. Karlynn filled out an evaluation form after these initial visits. Bucky earned his official badge and vest, which he now wears proudly every time he visits the sisters in the Health Care Center.

"Whichever person they're with, that one's special," said Sr. Mary Immaculette Moose. Though she is known to be generous about most things, Sr. Immaculette's only complaint about Bucky is that she has to share his visits with several other sisters.

Conversing with Katie also brightened the sisters' day. Though Katie had not spent much time with sisters outside of school before this project started, she enjoyed interacting with women her grandparents' age who were willing to share their experiences. "It's given me a new appreciation for life," she said.



The Sisters of Notre Dame offer their prayers and sympathy to Sr. Valerie Marie Roxburgh on the death of her stepmother, Theresa Roxburgh.

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agreed to function as her advisor for the project.

"She's really passionate about this project," said Sr. Karlynn. "You can see she really cares." Sr. Karlynn observed that Bucky brings happiness and laughter to all the sisters who live at Notre Dame Center and enjoy seeing him in the hallways on his way to his "official" visit upstairs. Katie believes that animals can help improve a person's physical health and emotional state. "They just bring joy to people," she said.

However, Katie was nervous that the Girl Scout award committee wouldn't accept her proposal because the number of sisters she would serve with "The Bucky Project" was relatively small. After submitting an application, she was invited to an interview with a committee of seven people. She brought Bucky along to help sell the idea and learned that they loved her concept.

Katie worked with the Love on a Leash Foundation to get Bucky certified. After some basic training in following commands, Bucky was evaluated and approved

Katie and Bucky continue visiting the sisters on weekends now that school has started. Katie is also recruiting other animal therapy teams certified through Love on a Leash to visit during the week.

If you have a therapy animal that would like to participate in Katie's project and visit the sisters at Notre Dame Center, contact Sr. Karlynn Werth at 805-496-3243 or karlynn5522@yahoo.com.

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Corrections

Please accept our apology if we have omitted a donor's name or made a spelling error. Kindly notify the Development Office at 805-917-3714 and/or carmela@sndca.org. We will make the correction in a future issue. Thank you!

California Grapevine

Caritas Convent Opens

We have a new convent! Caritas Convent opened in early September under the guidance of Sr. Mary Regina Robbins, local superior. Living with her are Sisters Mary Amy Hauck, Mary Paulynne Tubick and Valerie Marie Roxburgh.

You can contact these sisters at:
20955 Halldale Ave
Torrance CA 90501
424-731-7193

The happy reason for our expansion to a new convent is that Providence House is filling up with women in initial formation and our new novice, Sr. Mary Kristina Fuller. Next year, formation director Sr. Mary Kathleen Burns and the California province will once again host the National Novitiate for the American provinces. Stay tuned for more details about both these growing areas of our community life.

Books for Buseesa



This summer Sr. Mary Antoinine Manning and candidate Jane Leung (*pictured above*) prepared 26 boxes of books for shipment to St. Julie Mission in Uganda. Among the 500 books were classroom sets of novels as well as prayer books and reference materials for the school library at the mission.

Many of the books were chosen to fill the circulating book shelves with classic tales as well as current science and biography. Children at the mission treasure the opportunity to read and check out books. The library uses a traditional card catalog system so Jane typed up to six cards for each book.

- ☛ This summer Sr. Margaret Mary Scott organized a project called "Vitamin Angels" at Sacred Heart Church in Ventura. Parish children donated vitamins for students at St. Julie Mission in Uganda.
- ☛ Sr. M. Joan Schlotfeldt recently won a box of See's chocolates from Coughlin & Company Inc. for having the closest guess for the Dow Jones Industrial Average as of June 30, 2009. She made her estimate of 8716 in the beginning of 2009 and the actual was 8447.

More news at www.sndca.org/news