



Empowering
women to reach
their full potential



Featured Sponsored Ministry: SSND Educational Center

Prayer Intention: Please join us in praying that we will be blessed with the resources necessary to meet the needs of those who ring the SSND Educational Center doorbell!

School Sisters of Notre Dame Educational Center

The SSND Educational Center, located in Southwest Queens, New York, empowers underserved women of all races and faiths to reach the fullness of their potential. Within a safe and welcoming environment the center provides *free* programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) that educate and nurture the whole person. This Catholic-sponsored center is rooted in the belief that women are agents of transformation for the family, society and the world.

Ten Years of Blessings

The SSND Educational Center has been celebrating its 10th anniversary during all of 2014. Eileen Taylor, newly appointed chair of the board of directors and the first lay person in that role, was one of the center's first friends.

"Ten years ago I first met the School Sisters, who were embarking on a GED program for adult women," said Eileen. "School Sisters Cathy Feeney, Janice Algie and Jean McLoughlin explained their mission and the goals for the new educational program. I was impressed with their enthusiasm and dedication to the education of underserved women in New York City! Their strong belief that education would empower their students to improve their self-esteem and develop skills for meaningful employment was right on target."

Varied activities were planned to commemorate the anniversary. The Tenth Anniversary Committee worked diligently with students to produce the cookbook *From Our Kitchen to Yours and All Around the World*, an anniversary memento. Every student who participated chose a favorite recipe from her country, translated it into



Transforming the world
through education



English and determined the measurements to be used. What a great way to apply math skills and to practice English. Margie Forsyth, SSND, checked English grammar on each entry. The students were delighted to receive the finished product and were very proud of their efforts.

The Anniversary Committee also prepared a special student celebration and a lovely pre-meeting supper and prayer for the

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On Tuesday, June 3, 2014, the ESL (English as a Second Language) students of Level 1 through 4 finished their courses and finished the semester with a closing ceremony.

board of directors. A third event was the annual Mardi Gras Fundraiser. The 200 guests who attended could be heard saying, "Remember when the center began!"



S. Jean McLoughlin with graduates from the High School Equivalency Program.

The Educational Center has been blessed by the more than 650 women who came to the center to improve their lives and those of their families. As urgent needs surfaced, new programs were piloted. English as a Second Language (ESL) and computer skills topped the list of needs and have stood the test of time. This past June, 65 women received achievement certificates from the center. Ten of them were High School Equivalency students and they are awaiting city appointments to take the test. Fifty-five ESL students were promoted to the

next level or moved on with communication skills to improve their lives. One of them has been accepted by the NYPD as a school crossing guard. Another is working toward becoming a U.S. citizen.

The SSND mission has remained the rock on which the Educational Center was founded. Sister Jean McLoughlin continues to impart the charisma of Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline to faculty, volunteers and students. Her role is more important than ever. The center witnesses to unity as ethnic and religious diversity are more visible. Hindus, Muslims and Christians share life, learning and prayer at the faculty, student and staff levels. A Sister of Charity and a Sister of Mercy enrich us with their charisms. At the end of the year, an ESL student came to Sister Jean to ask her to provide a prayer time for the students. Ten students participated in this prayer in June.

The board of directors is steering the Educational Center into the future with a strategic plan. The members of four teams (Governance, Staffing, Technology, Marketing/Fundraising) continue to ask, "What do we want to look like in 2018?" as they prepare for the future. Demographics tell us there will be plenty of students. ■