

# School Sisters of Notre Dame

## Atlantic-Midwest Province Stewardship Report 2023

*"Kaleidoscope"*


CELEBRATING 190 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION



[WWW.AMSSND.ORG](http://WWW.AMSSND.ORG)

# Stewardship Report 2023

## "Kaleidoscope"



A kaleidoscope consists of a collection of colorful, unique pieces that come together to create intricate patterns. Likewise, Sisters, staff, benefactors, alumni/ae, and associates of AMSSND represent a diverse mix of skills, backgrounds, and perspectives, that come together to generate innovative ideas and solutions. Throughout our Atlantic-Midwest Province we foster creativity and innovation by sharing and building upon each other's ideas, leading to fresh solutions and approaches, all while advancing the mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

# A Welcome Letter From Our Provincial Leader



Dear Friends:

In this 190th anniversary year of our congregation and in the year of our 25th General Chapter, I am reminded of our foundress, Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger. She knew she could not accomplish God's mission alone. She continuously invited others to transform the world, to bring about unity and to build a community of love.

The theme of this year's Stewardship Report for the Atlantic-Midwest Province shares this same goal by highlighting a diverse community of staff, associates, alumnae, and donors who support and advance the SSND mission. Just as a kaleidoscope creates beautiful patterns through the combination of diverse elements, our Province - sisters and laity alike - continue to thrive and progress in a unity of purpose even as our membership changes.

I thank you, our friends and benefactors, for ensuring through your continued support, that the mission and ministries of SSND will continue for decades to come.

Know that our sisters continue to offer prayers for you and yours, now and always.

Gratefully,

*Charmaine Krohe, SSND*  
Provincial Leader

## Mary Ann Urch, SSND

Pinellas Park, Florida

A native Floridian, Sister Mary Ann Urch has spent the last 15 years as a teacher at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Pinellas Park, Florida. The school serves more than 200 students, Pre-K through 8th grade. She attends St. Joseph's Catholic Church regularly with her brother Tom and volunteers as a Eucharistic Minister, Altar Server, and Sacristan at the church.



A product of SSND education herself, Sister Mary Ann attended Saint Joseph's and Most Holy Name of Jesus Catholic schools, and Notre Dame Academy (now Saint Petersburg Catholic High) before entering the convent. She believes her parish of St. Joseph is a beacon of hope in the community and encourages members "not to be discouraged by the small congregation that we are but let our light shine, and God will bring growth." St. Joseph Catholic Church recently honored Sister Mary Ann with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Ministry in Catholic Education and Liturgy.

## Karen Didier, SSND Associate

Franklin Grove, IL

Karen Didier was born 100 miles west of Chicago into a large family. Although she was taught by the Dominican Sisters, it was upon meeting Sr. Marlene Panko in the mid 1980's that she found her SSND passion and became an Associate. Karen retired six years ago after working in the banking industry for fifty years. She has served as the SSND Associate local coordinator in Illinois since 1987. She is also a volunteer bookkeeper for the local Fire Department and the local cemetery association. And if that isn't enough, Karen is also a realtor with Heartland Realtor! When asked to share her experience with SSND, Karen says "When you talk to a sister you are never a stranger. It's hard to put into words how their spiritual guidance has helped me. It is beyond compare. SSND is a second family to me!" Under the guidance of the current Director of Associates, Suzy Blackburn, associates in Karen's area meet four to five times each year, and once a year they meet in person in Franklin Grove for their annual barbecue.



"Since Mother Theresa Gerhardinger and Mother Caroline, the Sisters have focused their work on the education of women and children. They never stopped, so why should we?"

To learn more about associates, visit [www.atlanticmidwest.org/become-associate](http://www.atlanticmidwest.org/become-associate)

# Helen Ramos-Paiz

Executive Director of Caroline House, Bridgeport, CT

I have worked at Caroline House since 2018. Since I joined, I have had the opportunity to support the organization in several different positions, including Development Associate, Program Assistant, and Program Manager before becoming the Executive Director in 2021. All these years and positions gave me a deeper understanding of the urgency in our mission of empowering low-income immigrant women and their families. As an immigrant and a former ESL student myself, I understand the many hardships that immigrant women face, particularly when they lack the language skills necessary to communicate and integrate themselves into the society. I strongly believe in education as a way of finding better opportunities which is why I identify with our mission to provide immigrant women and their children with the educational opportunities they need to reach their full potential. It is truly “transforming the world through education.”



Helen Ramos-Paiz, pictured top left, with staff and students

Helen recalled one particular story. “We recently had a student who had moved from New York. She had lost her husband and became very ill herself. She also had a teenage daughter who needed her support. It was heartbreaking, and she knew education was her answer. She started attending Caroline House and quickly became part of our community. The year she joined, we offered a variety of workshops about wellbeing, self-care, and medication, as we noticed our students needed life skills to take care of themselves regardless of their busy lives and limitations. One day at the end of the school year, this student came to me to share what Caroline House had done for her. Caroline House provided her with the educational, emotional, psychological, and financial help she needed in her life. She felt safer because she found herself through our community.”

I have had the privilege of working with many sisters and they have touched my life in many ways: Sisters Peg Regan, Kate Whalen, and Eileen Denny, just to name a few. They have shown me what it means to truly serve others with their never-ending compassion, incredible patience, and resilience as teachers and mentors to our students. They are the personification of love and service, and I hope that one day I can live up to that very same standard.

**Our province has 12 sponsored and co-sponsored ministries of which Caroline House is one.**

Notre Dame Preparatory School (MD)  
Academy of the Holy Angels (NJ)  
Notre Dame of Maryland University (MD)  
SisterHouse (IL)  
Caroline House (CT)  
Caroline Center (MD)

Corazón a Corazón (IL)  
SSND Educational Center (NY)  
Notre Dame Learning Center (NY)  
Marian House (MD)  
Mother Seton Academy (MD)  
Sisters Academy of Baltimore (MD)

## Karen Bunker

Alumna of Bishop Kearney High School, Rochester, NY

Alumna Karen Bunker has fond memories of her school days in Rochester, NY. Sr. Marcian Rotonno, chemistry teacher, was about the same age as Karen's grandmother and she always remembers them meeting at the BK events in which she participated. "They used to send each other flowers because they had birthdays near each other. Sr. Marcian would put them on the altar in the Chapel."



Vice Principal and English teacher, Sr. Mary Ignatius Spencer, had a great tradition that Karen has continued to share with teachers she meets to this day. "Instead of just having the class write an essay, Sister would assign each individual student an essay from some local or national essay contest. By the end of the year almost the whole class had won a prize for their specific essay. I came in 2nd in a national contest for "Irish participation in the 1st Continental Congress put on by the Royal Hibernians. Truth be told we were all afraid of Sister when we started the year, but we all loved her dearly by the end of the year! God bless her soul."

Sister Evelyn Breslin, Notre Dame Learning Center, is also a big part in her and her family's lives as Karen's husband tutors at the Center. Wonderful memories all!

If you would like to share your story or connect with a Sister please contact Laurie Molner at [lmolner@amssnd.org](mailto:lmolner@amssnd.org) or 203 761-9732 x3201.

## George Strauch

Alumnus of St. Leo's and Archbishop Walsh HS, Irvington, NJ

Jamie Shannon, Development Administrator for Planned Giving recently visited with alumnus, George Strauch, who has a very special connection to the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Not only did he receive his education from the SSNDs in Irvington, NJ at St. Leo's and Archbishop Walsh High School, but his sister Margaret is an SSND. Sister Margaret left for the candidature in Baltimore when George entered high school and he has fond memories of visiting her there. He also recalls being held to a higher standard in high school by his teachers because his sister was an SSND. George fondly remembers Sister Margaret as being 'the boss' during those formative years. George entered the Air Force after high school and began his life's journey that took him from New Jersey to Germany to Alaska, making his home in many locations along the way. Sister Margaret also journeyed in her mission as an SSND teacher. After all those years of relocating, they are together again living at The Watermark in Bridgeport, CT. Their closeness is hard to miss as they lovingly care for each other. George remains committed to supporting SSND and became a bequestor. It is truly a joy to see how each of them lovingly support one another at this time in their lives!



George Strauch  
with his sister, Sister Margaret

# Our Province

The mission of the **School Sisters of Notre Dame** is to proclaim the good news, directing our entire lives toward the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. The Sisters make Christ visible through their very being and by sharing their love, faith and hope. The Sisters express their mission through ministry directed towards education.

## PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Sister Charmaine Krohe, **Provincial Leader**

Sister Mary Roy Weiss, **Provincial Councilor/Vicar**

Sister Paula Dukehart, **Provincial Councilor**

Sister Mary Fitzgerald, **Provincial Councilor**

Sister Nancy Gilchrist, **Provincial Councilor**

Sister Margaret Malone, **Provincial Councilor**

## DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS

Suzu Blackburn, **Director of Associates**

Yvonne DeBruin, **Director of Ministry Services**

Colleen Kammer, **Director of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation**

Henry Kornstedt, **Director of IT**

Laura E. Lang, **Director of Development**

Sister Mary Lennon, **Director of Finance**

Vacant, **Director of Communications**

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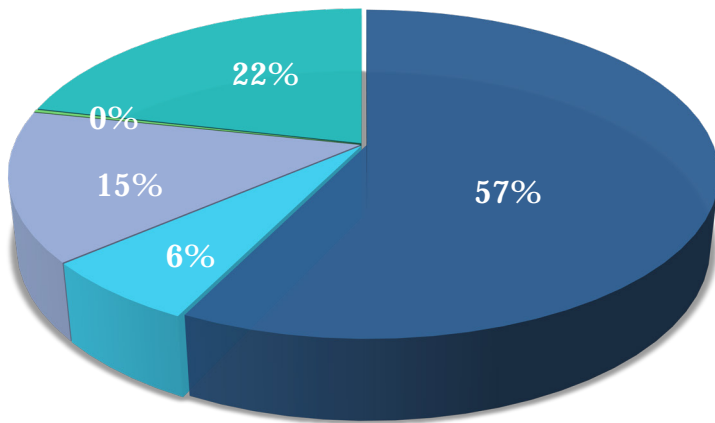
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The Atlantic-Midwest Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame raises funds each year to keep our educational ministries vibrant, keep our global network strong, support our apostolic way of life and provide quality care for our retired and senior sisters. Each year we rely on your support in our mission to respond to urgent local and global needs, sustain the SSND mission and ministries, and to advance the vision of a more unified world. You, our generous and faithful supporters, continue to partner with us in this endeavor. From July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 your gifts to our appeals, retirement, Oktoberfest and special funds totaled \$2,065,304.

**Thank You!**

### 2022-23 REVENUE



■ Bequests	\$1,183,664
■ Oktoberfest	\$131,404
■ Appeals	\$303,847
■ Haiti Support	\$4,897
■ Retirement	\$441,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,065,304</b>



## WAYS TO GIVE

Did you know there are creative ways to support the Atlantic-Midwest Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame - ways in which AMSSND, you, and your loved ones all benefit at the same time? Planning your estate and legacy for future generations, including your charitable interests, takes careful evaluation. Such giving techniques are called "planned gifts", because with thoughtful planning, you create win-win solutions for you and AMSSND.

- Name AMSSND in your will or trust
- Designate and donate stocks and investment accounts
- Give through retirement plan assets: IRA, Donor Advised Funds, 401K & 403B
- Donate tax-free through a QCD – qualified charitable distribution

To learn more please visit our website: [www.atlanticmidwest.plannedgiving.org](http://www.atlanticmidwest.plannedgiving.org). Or contact Jamie Shannon at [jshannon@amssnd.org](mailto:jshannon@amssnd.org) or 203 761-9732 x3207.

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Sisters Carleen Cekal and Mary Oliver Hudon, founders of St. Ann Place were recently honored for their service at a farewell luncheon hosted by the Fortin Foundation of Florida. St. Ann Place has provided services and hope to the homeless population in West Palm Beach for more than 23 years.



Sisters Charmaine Krohe, Carol Shinnick, Nancy Gilchrist, Limétèze Pierre-Gilles and Sharon Kanis (L-R) attended the 25th General Chapter in Rome as the Atlantic-Midwest delegates.



Several members of SSND Sponsored and Co-Sponsored ministries, as well as SSND staff, attended a Ministry Formation session at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore. Among those who attended are (L-R) Carmen Quiñones, Academy of the Holy Angels, Kathleen Walsh, AHA, Colleen Kammer, JPIC Atlantic-Midwest Province, Danielle Holmes, AHA, Deb Litman, Collaborative Communications.



# of Moments

Sister Josephann Wagoner picks the winning Oktoberfest ticket. This year the grand prize was \$5,000! Thanks to our generous donors, we surpassed our goal of \$125,000.



Bishop Walsh Catholic High School paid tribute to the Sisters Kathleen Jancuk, Francita Hobbs, and Phyllis McNally (seated left to right) who have collectively taught young people in the area for over 181 years!



Sister John Vianney Zullo received the John A. Arcudi Columbus Leadership Award in recognition of extraordinary leadership and service in the Greater Bridgeport community and beyond. Sister John (seated right) is joined by some of her fellow Sisters.



Sisters and associates recently gathered in Chicago for the annual reconvening of the Chicago area associates. Shown left to right, Patricia Maccagnano, Sister Caritas Wehrman, Alison Hudson, Sister Marlene Panko and Theresa McVeagh.

Recently, Sister Claire Marie Czerwiec was honored for her many years of service as a SisterHouse board member. Sister Peg Malone looks on.



**K**atie May Haines, known to her friends and colleagues as Caelie, was the Director of Communications for the AMSSND. Sadly, Caelie passed away on September 9, 2023. She was a graduate of the Institute of Notre Dame, Emerson College, and earned her master's degree in Communications Business Management from the University of Maryland. Caelie began working for AMSSND in 2018. She is survived by her daughter, Rybeth, and several family members.



Caelie will be missed by all who knew and worked with her.



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Atlantic-Midwest Province

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