

CALLED BY FAITH

SHARING THE WORK AND STORIES OF CATHOLIC WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN NORTHEAST OHIO

Issue 5 | Summer 2014

A New Look and Name for the Collaboration for Ministry Initiative Newsletter

Welcome to the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland's new Collaboration for Ministry Initiative publication, which has been redesigned and renamed *Called by Faith*. Although there is a new look and name, the purpose of this newsletter remains the same: to share the good work and lift the voices of women religious and lay partners in northeast Ohio. We decided the former name didn't fully reflect the scope and intent of the newsletter, thus the change.

Within this issue, you will find thoughtful reflections by members of the Intergenerational Convention planning committee, Sister Kathleen Flanagan, OSU and Margaret Vogel. In October 2013, 122 religious and lay people gathered at Magnificat High School in Rocky River, Ohio, to build relationships and discover, and re-discover, how we are all "anchors and innovators with a heart of mission."

As noted by the convocation's keynote speaker, Jim Lindsey of Catholic Volunteer Network,

"As all of us – younger, older, religious, lay, married, single – seek to become servant leaders, we must recognize in ourselves the capacity to be both anchors and innovators in a city, a world, a Church in need." Many of us were reminded that day of our own gifts and talents that God has bestowed upon us and how we are needed in our community and world to use them in service to one another.

Through this publication, I have no doubt you will continue to be inspired by the words, vision and dedication of people of faith called to live their lives in a way that brings the Gospel message alive to all they meet. If you have ideas for future issues, contact me at emcintyre@socfcleveland.org with your suggestions.

In the meantime, happy reading!

In gratitude,

Erin McIntyre, program officer

Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

SISTERS *of* CHARITY FOUNDATION
OF CLEVELAND



Intergenerational Convocation brings Women Religious and Laity Together

TWO PERSPECTIVES

INSIGHT FROM A CATHOLIC SISTER

by Sister Kathleen > **Intergenerational Convocation. Networking. Collaboration. Anchors. Innovators. Mission. These words can evoke questions, energy, confusion, excitement.**
Flanagan, OSU, leadership team, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

In late October last year, these words were brought to life through the engagement of women religious and lay collaborators, including young adults. The purpose of the day was to provide a forum where these groups could network, learn from each other, share stories, and become engaged in delving into issues facing anyone striving to be of service in the community.

In the planning stages of the event, women religious were seen as anchors and innovators, not only providing stability, but serving as initiators of new ideas. As a religious woman participating in the planning stages of this event it became clear to me that there were many anchors and innovators sitting around the table. How could we work together to bring about opportunity for addressing challenges facing all of us?

Rather than asking what do women religious bring to the table, it is better to ask what we women religious can learn from those sitting around the table.

Our lay collaborators are struggling with the same issues we have struggled with over the years: How can we meet the needs of those on the margins? What are roadblocks to living a life of service? How can we model communities of peace and hope? How do we live lives of servant leadership? These and many other questions served as the basis for the day. Did we find any answers? Not really. But, we did have engaging and energizing conversation. New friends were made, new groups of support were formed and ideas were generated.

Together we learned that each of us can no longer say, "I can do this myself." We need each other as we move forward in making our community a better place to live for everyone. We need to mentor each other as we strive to live the Gospel life in a challenging and hungry world. We women religious need to acknowledge that our mission, whatever the congregation, will be sustained through the work of our lay collaborators. ♦

◆◆◆◆ (photo) *The Intergenerational Convocation started with a thought-provoking keynote by Jim Lindsey, executive director of the Catholic Volunteer Network. Rep. Marcy Kaptur joined the gathering for the morning session.*

A LAY PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Margaret Vogel, >
board member,
Coalition with Young
Adults

For centuries, women religious have been active disciples, transforming the world through systems of education, health care, advocacy and faith formation.

Today, a new generation of Catholic laity in Cleveland is responding to Christ's call through counter-cultural living. These men and women are embracing sustainable lifestyles, serving as community organizers and ministry leaders, and lifting up their voices as advocates for the world's most vulnerable.

Participants of the Intergenerational Convocation leaned into the example of discipleship lived by the women religious: a discipleship that both anchors and innovates. Participants also leaned into challenges of this age.

Keynote speaker, Jim Lindsay, identified several of these challenges: decreased number of women religious; lack of invitation and inclusion of young adults; and the unmet need for supportive community as young adults attempt to live counter-culturally. As the day progressed, a spirit of community blossomed in the face of these challenges. Mutuality and equality flourished as people were invited to dialogue and share their stories. Together, these contemporary disciples laughed, commiserated and dreamed.

As a lay partner at the planning table, observing these connections brought me great hope. I am a married lay woman in her forties who remembers the parish of her youth. We had four parish priests and a Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine convent on the grounds. Faith flowed like a river from the examples of discipleship around me. That late October day reminded me of the Church I once knew. Our Church is still very much alive; it is female as much as it is male; it is both young and old; and it continues to transform the world.

At the end of the day, participants were invited to leave words of encouragement for one another. Notes left for young adults expressed gratitude for their energy and passion, "I am awed by your service to God's people, your search for deeper meaning," wrote a sister. Some of the notes reflected the pain of marginalization, "We are struggling to overcome the same thing — to be included in community and our Church," wrote a young adult to her peers and sisters.

Many notes to the women religious expressed thanksgiving for the courage of their witness: "Keep living/being/sharing your charism. We need it and we need your joy!" ♦

Catholic sisters and lay people participated in speed networking and a discussion on living a life of service during breakout sessions throughout the day.





Celebrating 10 Years of Collaboration of Sisters in Cleveland and South Carolina

More than 70 sisters gathered in Myrtle Beach last December to participate in the 10th anniversary celebration of the Collaboration for Ministry Initiative (CMI). The celebration was part of the ninth annual statewide conference co-sponsored by the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina and Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland.

Focused on the theme, “Stronger Together with Faith and Gratitude,” the celebration and conference highlighted the impact of the CMI initiatives over the past 10 years. The CMI grant program supports congregations of women religious working together to serve the poor and underserved of South Carolina and northeast Ohio.

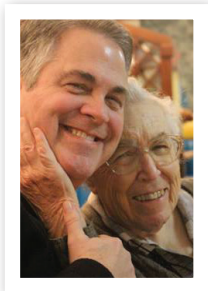
The sisters heard perspectives from three key individuals who had been a part of the two initiatives since their inception.

Sister Judith Ann Karam, CSA, congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, opened the panel saying, “It is very easy for me to reflect on the Collaboration for Ministry Initiative with pride and gratitude for all who have been a part of this wonderful ministry.”

Kathy Csank, a CMI consultant who led the initial research with the sisters 10 years ago shared, “This was one of the most incredible experiences of my lifetime to do this research and to listen to sisters across the state.



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“Each of the Sisters who has been a part of this initiative is so gracious,” said Csank, whose work later became the foundation for the formation of CMI. “They inspire us and give us faith.”

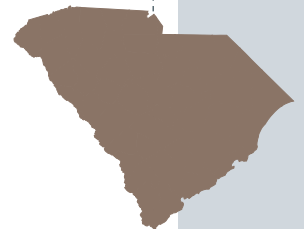
The Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, also joined the sisters for the weekend.

The bishop shared his gratitude for the work of women religious throughout the state, and also spoke to some of the pressing issues of the time, including Catholic education, immigration reform and the need for increased multicultural understanding when serving diverse populations. Bishop Guglielmone also led the sisters in Mass.

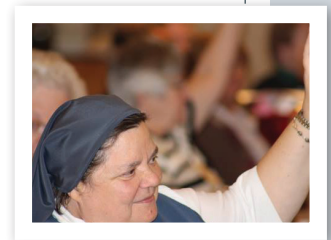
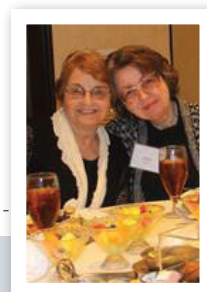
Additionally, the celebration included the unveiling of a book of sister stories, “Stronger Together: Looking Back with Gratitude and Forward with Faith.” The book shared the thoughts and reflections of sisters who have served in ministry in South Carolina throughout the 10 years.

Bishop Guglielmone presented the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina with a plaque of celebration and recognition stating, “I do hereby express my sincere gratitude to the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina and to all the women religious who have participated in the Collaboration for Ministry Initiative over these past 10 years and pledge my support and prayers for its continued success.”

During a time of closing reflection, Sister Nancy Hendershot, CSA, facilitated faith conversations among the sisters. “Faith is the lens that nudges, urges and compels us to the journey,” she said. “As women of faith, we are called to believe in our own ‘enoughness’ as we live faithfully in response to God’s call. We light each other’s lives when we come together.” ♦



STRONGER TOGETHER WITH FAITH & GRATITUDE



Collaborations of Women Religious Succeed in Challenging Times in Two Regions

Research results regarding efforts to sustain the ministries of Catholic sisters in northeast Ohio and South Carolina, and to assist in their efforts of working with the poor and underserved, were published in the new edition of *The Foundation Review*. The study, “Support for Sister-Affiliated Ministries during Challenging Times: Understanding a Foundation Initiative in Two Regions” was co-authored by Robert L. Fischer, Ph.D. of Case Western Reserve University; Mark Small, Ph.D., Clemson University; Lynn Berner, J.D., consultant to the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland; and Stephanie Kripa Cooper-Lewter, Ph.D., Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina.

Catholic sisters have established schools, hospitals and social service ministries that have served hundreds of thousands of people throughout the past two centuries. Sister-affiliated ministries fill an important gap in the social safety net for vulnerable populations. There is an accelerating loss of sisters and their ministries nationwide, including northeast Ohio and South Carolina, because of the natural aging of Catholic sisters and a decline in new vocations.

The study describes the efforts of the Sisters of Charity Foundations of Cleveland and South Carolina in their Collaboration for Ministry Initiative (CMI) work, which encourages and

supports collaboration among different religious orders.

The development of CMI was to primarily address the impact this loss has on beneficiaries of ministries, especially those who have few alternatives to sister-affiliated social services.

Previously, sisters in different orders worked independently of each other, but as the number of Catholic sisters dwindles and the average age of sisters increases, the foundations work to assist them in the challenges they face in collaborating to sustain their ministries.

Spanning more than 10 years, the initiatives have drawn on multiple strategies — including convening sisters of different orders, grantmaking, communicating and conducting research — in partnership with sisters themselves to sustain a diverse set of ministries.

CWRU's Fischer has previously been supported by the Sister of Charity Foundation of Cleveland to do other studies on the work of Catholic sisters. A prior study found that 72 percent of Ohio sisters reported being engaged in collaboration of some kind. Collaboration included information sharing, client referrals and cooperative planning, as well as more substantive collaboration through joint programs or shared staffing.

Nearly half of Ohio sisters' ministries were engaged with sisters from other orders and with diocesan organizations. Many were also collaborating with nonprofit or government organizations and faith-based organizations. ♦

To see the full study, visit www.socfcleveland.org.





Prison Ministry Expands Services to Juveniles

By Sister Rita Mary Hardwood, SND

GROWTH is a significant standard used to judge a variety of situations. Today, we are charting the progress of a seed planted through the generosity of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland.

This start of this seed, which was given to establish a prison ministry in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, has developed beyond organizers' many hopes and dreams.

Currently we have more than 300 trained volunteers working in all eight counties of our diocese. And, soon the ministry will be expanding to serve the youth detained in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center.

The volunteers working with adults are teaching GED classes, conducting writing programs and delving into poetry. These dedicated men and women are offering spiritual solace and showing those who feel so broken how to grieve and then heal. Their hearts also hold in prayer the victims of crime and their families. Religious services and one-on-one listening sessions are significant to the inmates.

Collections of clothing and toiletry items allow many more people to become involved in the ministry. Ultimately, the volunteers strive to prepare these vulnerable men and women to face the challenges that they will encounter upon their release.

**HOPES ARE MET AND DREAMS ARE FULFILLED
WHEN A NEWLY RELEASED INMATE CAN ADJUST
TO THE PRESSURES OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD
AND BEGIN TO FLOURISH AS GOD INTENDED.**

We now have the prospect of serving the youth at the Juvenile Center, an extraordinary opportunity! If you are interested in any aspect of prison ministry, please contact Sister Rita Mary Hardwood at 216-696-6525 ext. 2200 or rmharwood@dioceseofcleveland.org. ✦

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

◆◆◆◆ **ABOUT THE SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION OF CLEVELAND**

The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland works to improve the lives of those most in need with special attention to families, women and children living in poverty. The foundation is working to end homelessness and to reduce health and education disparities in Cleveland's Central Neighborhood. As a faith-based organization, the foundation extends the values of Jesus Christ through the mission of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine.

The foundation works to sustain the ministries of women religious through the Saint Ann Legacy grant program, which supports sisters' ministries, as well as promoting collaboration of sisters of different orders and their joint ministries through the Collaboration for Ministry Initiative grant program.

In Future Issues of *Called by Faith*

We look forward to continuing to connect with you. In future issues of *Called by Faith*, we will share information such as:

- News
- Perspectives
- Biographies
- Book reviews
- Upcoming events
- And more

Keep connected and share your ideas for *Called by Faith* with Erin McIntyre at emcintyre@socfcleveland.org or 216.241.9300, ext. 232.



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