

AT HOME

Your Health Community Resource

SEASONS OF *Change*

FALL 2009



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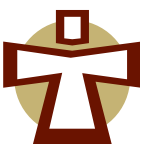
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Franciscan Health Community provides senior housing and services to ensure a quality, fulfilling living experience for the community's older adults.

Christian values are the cornerstone of daily living. Seniors enjoy a loving home in the Catholic tradition—with dignity and self-determination—surrounded by faith, family and friends.

Whether the need is for skilled nursing care, short-term transitional care, independent living or supportive services, Franciscan Health Community is the place seniors and their families trust.



LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

Fall is the season of change, as the cover of this issue of At Home proclaims, and the same can be said for Franciscan Health Community. In this issue you will see some of those changes highlighted, most notably the move of our hospice and home health programs to Our Lady of Good Counsel Home.

This move will allow these two programs to work together in the delicate yet demanding role of providing end-of-life care to our residents. This has been a positive move for both Our Lady and our hospice program, as it will truly provide a more collaborative work environment for these two programs.

Change is also occurring at the board level. What do we want Franciscan Health Community to look like in 10 years? How will the upcoming health care reform impact the mission at FHC? Much of our discussion revolves around the services that we provide and how we deliver those services.

There is no doubt that healthcare will change in the not too distant future. At FHC, we want to be ready so that we can continue to provide the care and quality of life that our elders so richly deserve. We continually explore adding new services that will meet the needs of seniors, whether they are staying in our apartments, our nursing home, or their own homes.

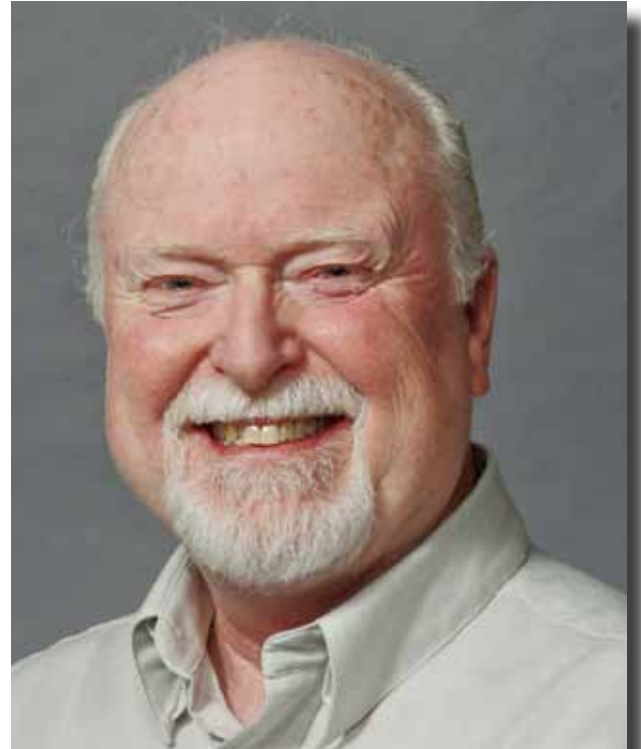
You will also notice subtle changes in our newsletter, as we continue to improve how we communicate with you. We hope you enjoy the news we are sharing and learning more about the work that we do.

Thank you for your ongoing support and friendship. It is important to our mission, and why we work so diligently every day to earn and maintain your trust.

Sincerely,

Steve Nielsen
Board Chair

Joe Stanislav
CEO



Steve Nielsen, Board Chair



Joe Stanislav, Chief Executive Officer

MISSION

Franciscan Health Community continues Christ's ministry of healing and compassion in the 21st century by providing health care, housing and services to seniors.

Franciscan Health Community offers a range of housing and care options, providing the services seniors need—at the level they need—so they may enjoy a fulfilling life regardless of age or infirmity.



FHC HOME HEALTH CARE AND HOSPICE MOVE ONTO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL'S CAMPUS

This past summer St. Mary's Hospice and Franciscan Home Health moved onto Our Lady of Good Counsel Home's campus, an arrangement that provides them with more space and an opportunity to pool resources.

Now hospice and home health is well positioned to respond to growing demand. Four years ago, the average daily census for St. Mary's Hospice was four people. Last year, that number grew to a dozen. This year, it fluctuates around 20.



Nearly 200 people attended a Sept. 10 open house celebrating the new home of St. Mary's Hospice and Franciscan Home Health at Our Lady of Good Counsel. The open house featured Grand Ole Creamery ice cream, live jazz music and sunny weather.

The new location cuts down on travel time between clients and fuel consumption, a "huge bonus," Susan says. It allows for the sharing of resources and staff, who worked out a contract to provide St. Mary's hospice medications to Our Lady patients.

The partnership allows for organized fundraising, which hasn't happened at Our Lady before but is much needed, Kathryn says. It also establishes a valuable link, she adds. "Now we can say we work with St. Mary's and you can start there, and a bed could open up [here]. It's a nice continuum."

Beyond these logistical and financial advantages, the partnership is reaping professional ones.

"I see it as an enhancement of both of our programs," Kathryn says. "It helps the whole thing run more smoothly and it really provides better care to our patients."

It spurs on a valuable meeting of the minds, she adds.

(cont. on page 5)

Susan Klang, director of home health and hospice, and Kathryn Wornson, director of Our Lady of Good Counsel Home, sat down recently to discuss the partnership. The two women couldn't stop citing advantages of the new arrangement. It is clear they are on the same page, driven by the same mission, thinking along the same lines. Occasionally, they even finished each other's sentences.



The move and subsequent adjustments went more smoothly than expected, the women agree.



"I am amazed at how well it's gone," Susan says.

"I am too," Kathryn adds.

"We needed the space," Susan explains.

"And we could easily move them in, with some growth potential," Kathryn says.

I. John Shuman and Rita Quigley share a laugh (left), while Fr. George Kinney and Susan Klang catch up at the open house.

OLD FRIENDS AND WEEKLY GAMES PROVIDE COMFORTING ROUTINE

The orange afghan Millie Sheehan’s mom knit decades ago still keeps her warm at night. It blankets her bed at St. Mary’s Home, and, along with a host of belongings arranged around the room, makes the place feel like home.

There are cat figurines by the window and cardinal ornaments near the door. Cross-stitched canvases, a filled bookshelf and a black-and-white photograph of her mother perched on a large knotty-pine dresser Millie bought in 1950.

There are familiar rhythms to her weeks – bingo and bunco, hymn sings and trivia games, morning coffee, 500 on Tuesdays, and the steady stream of large-print mystery novels rolled in on the library cart. The Twins, whose 1991 World Series championship helped Millie cope with her leg amputation, are just a remote control click away. And, of course, there are visits to the chapel. “Here, I can go any day I want to,” she says, “and that’s worth a lot.”

These comforting elements made Millie’s transition from the Riverview Highlands apartment to St. Mary’s two years ago a smooth one. “I used to live across the street, so I know a lot of people

who have come here,” she explains.

The 84-year-old retired bookkeeper, who is German-Norwegian, grew up in the small south-western town of Luverne. She’s made many friends at St. Mary’s, charming residents and staff with her humble presence, soft smile and clear blue eyes.

Millie worked hard for many years. These days, she can sit back and reflect on the eventful life she lived – playing pool during World War II with the few remaining men at the University of Minnesota, learning about her husband’s experiences as a Marine, raising two stepsons, and working at Honeywell. She appreciates the history she witnessed. “I really think we were the greatest generation,” she says, referencing Tom Brokaw’s book. “It’s amazing how much has hap-



Millie Sheehan devours the mystery novels St. Mary’s checks out from the library.

pened in our time.”

Now she’s happy to rest at St. Mary’s. “I’m glad I’m here,” she says. “I’m just glad there is a place like this.”

(cont. from page 4) “We’re very collaborative – among doctors, nurses and social workers. There’s definitely a mutual respect.”

“We do bring in some fresh perspectives,” Susan says.

“And we’ve tried to be open to those new ideas. You get a better outcome when more people are involved and you can weigh and consider. We’ve got young people coming in who want to learn and ask questions.

That has been a positive for our staff. It’s really a convergence of many ideas and different programs. We’re always trying to raise the bar.”

Most importantly, Susan adds, there is a spiritual fit, a shared Catholic heritage. “I think it’s that pastoral care, the spiritual care – a core service in hospice,” Susan says. Those values are palpable at Our Lady. “There is a sense of serenity here. You hear that often. Kudos to the staff here that that has not changed.”



UNDER THE GRIP OF ALZHEIMER'S, THE WORLD CLOSES IN

By Susan Adam, Director of Pastoral Care Services

Occasionally, it happens to everyone. You can't find your glasses. The grocery list is on the refrigerator, and you're at the store. You forget the new neighbor's name. Often, these memory lapses are merely inconvenient. However, they can signal more serious medical conditions, including Alzheimer's disease.

Recognizing normal changes, learning risk factors, and assessing signs and symptoms are critical for understanding your memory loss or that of a loved one. If forgetfulness is influencing your everyday life, it is time to learn why.

With my dad I experienced the stages of Alzheimers. For years it was so easy to miss the signs. Now, as I look back, I can clearly see his progression. We spent a great deal of time together and it appeared that slowly his mind seemed to be locked in his own little world and tightly wrapped as the months marched on.

I know that he did try to reach out to the ones he loved, but slowly he shut some of them out as well. His world was closing in on him. He was gracious in accepting this disease, but I saw him grow fearful, tearful and unable to talk about what was reeling in his mind and heart. Dad would try to talk, and I am sure he must have wanted to scream, "Can't you hear me? Aren't you listening?"

I knew that one day he would no longer suffer a loss for words, nor fall forwards or backwards. We talked of the day that he would take the Lord's hand and once again his words would flow and he would enjoy many long walks and peace of mind and heart. Fear would be no more.

Every 70 seconds someone will develop Alzheimer's.

Source: Alzheimer's Association

"Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a serious brain disorder that impacts daily living through memory loss and cognitive changes," reports the Alzheimer's Association.



Susan Adam

"Alzheimer's is a degenerative disease, progressing from mild forgetfulness to widespread neurological impairment and ultimately death. Chemical and structural changes in the brain gradually destroy the ability to create, remember, learn, reason, and relate to others. As critical cells die, drastic personality loss occurs and body systems fail."

Although no single test for Alzheimer's exists, a skilled general practitioner, neurologist, or geriatrician can make a reasonable diagnosis by excluding other causes of your symptoms. Begin by preparing a list of concerns to discuss with your doctor. Ask a family member or friend to go with you to take notes and help you remember your questions. If your doctor suspects Alzheimer's disease and recommends further assessment, ask for support and information from your local Alzheimer's Association while you wait for a diagnosis.

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR BRINGS DAILY FUN TO ST. MARY'S RESIDENTS

As activity director at St. Mary's Home, Diana Johnson is continually inspired by the residents' resilience, grace, wisdom and wit.

There's the resident whose mind is clouded by dementia but still recalls every word to "My Wild Irish Rose" and sings them out with haunting clarity.

There was the avid Twins fan who was physically frail but insisted on participating in last spring's baseball party, saying, "Get this chair out of here so I can take a good swing!"

And there are the residents who willingly give their time each week to work the candy cart.

"We have a lot of people here who feel like they've have a good life and they've been blessed," Diana says. The Cottage Grove mother of two has a deep-seated love of senior citizens that was cultivated by close bonds with her late grandparents.

As head of the three-person therapeutic recreation staff, Diana's job is to bring levity, pleasure and purpose to the residents' lives. "We're the department that gets to plan the fun and then bring that joy to the residents through the groups that we do," she says. "Just because they're in a nursing home that doesn't have to define who they are. They still have lives and interests and hobbies and families who care about them and experiences from their past that they love sharing."

Diana strives to reduce their confinements, fostering a sense of fun and freedom. "In care

conferences I ask, 'Is there anything you'd like to be doing that you aren't now?' When it's possible we sure try to do that."

For one resident, that meant providing knitting needles and assistance getting started. For another, it meant sustaining her commitment to Meals on Wheels. "She used to like delivering meals," Diana explains, "but she couldn't any more, and

she wasn't feeling very useful. But she likes to stamp and makes bookmarks and cards, so we're going to set her up so she can stamp all the bags that go out for Meals on Wheels."

Diana is quick to praise her staff, who plan and provide activities that enhance residents' quality of life. From bingo to

birthday parties, from floor picnics in the summer to the Halloween party, plus outings, exercise, the Tone Chimes musical group and Reminisce. "We wear all kinds of hats – bus driver, master griller, craft planners, aerobics instructors," Diana says. "And when Christmas comes, we're little elves."

The work is truly fulfilling. "We're meeting new people all the time. Even though our residents are dealing with medical issues, we're still able to bring some enjoyment to their lives and highlight their unique personalities."



Dorothy Speranza and Diana Johnson enjoy a playful exchange during lunch.



HAPPENINGS

CHAPEL AND WEEKLY MASS COME TO RIVERVIEW HIGHLANDS

This fall the Franciscan Health Community staff set up a chapel in Riverview Highlands, where Mass is now held every Thursday at 10 a.m. Residents showed such interest that the chapel was quickly moved from a one-bedroom apartment to a two-bedroom apartment that would accommodate more worshippers.

"This makes my stay here at the apartments complete," says Mary Cox, a resident of three years. Although the walk to St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church or St. Mary's Home isn't far, some days, she says, the weather or health restrict it. "This is a really smart thing to do."

Jerrie Hadro Wood, a four-year resident, echoes that enthusiasm. "I'm ecstatic," she says. "I come here to God, and he gives me food for my soul."

"This is a boon!" adds Joan Brock, who has been a resident for a year. "It's a comfort, it really is."

On a typical Thursday, 12 to 18 residents attend, and Deacon Jim Clasen presides.

Residents say the chapel provides a soothing presence the rest of the week.

"It's so nice some days to come in and sit here," Cox says. "I can come down here with my Bible anytime," Hadro Wood adds, "and just adore my God."



Deacon Jim Clasen presides at the new Riverview Highlands chapel.

MY CUP OVERFLOWS

Hot bacon, friendly dogs and daily Mass make life sweet

Eileen O'Brien, 89, a St. Paul native, has lived at St. Mary's Home for three years. We asked her to contribute to the inaugural publication of this new department, My Cup Overflows, in which various FHC residents count their blessings.

1. That I can attend Mass every day
2. That I can be assured immediate help at the touch of a button
3. For my daughter, Maureen, who visits every Saturday
4. For the days I'm feeling well
5. For the old friendships I have renewed and the new friendships I have forged since coming to St. Mary's
6. For the furry critters that visit and brighten our days
7. That there is always an activity on the docket
8. For hot bacon and English muffins served at breakfast
9. For quizzes that keep cobwebs out of the upstairs
10. For conversations with residents about cooking and fashion



Eileen O'Brien

Sandy Klas likes to finish what she starts. That's why she decided to return to the Franciscan Health Community board after serving just two years on the board during her first term. "I wasn't able to complete my first term on the board and I always felt bad about that," Sandy explains. "I really believe in the mission of FHC and want to help set the direction for the future of this organization."

Sandy has a wealth of experience helping non-profits achieve their mission. She currently serves on six boards, including Hamline University and DARTS. Her experience and can-do attitude are a great benefit to the FHC board. What appealed to her about serving on the Franciscan board?

"I had friends who stayed at St. Mary's Home and I saw first-hand how they were treated by the staff," explains Sandy. "It was very comforting to see your close friends being well cared for in their time of need."

"What really impresses me is that the Franciscan Health Community allows people to own their own lives. There are a lot of options for people to choose – from daily Mass to daily activities – but our residents are given the option to participate as they like. For an institution, it's an amazing balance to allow that freedom while maintaining a sense of order."

Sandy is a Twin Cities artist, philanthropist, and long-time advocate for persons with special development needs. She and her husband, Robert, may be best known for hosting the annual Tapemark Charity Pro-Am golf tournament that supports those with learning and developmental disabilities. She has served on the boards of many nonprofit



Sandy Klas

agencies for the handicapped, is former president of Learning Disabilities Minnesota, and has been a registered lobbyist with the state of Minnesota.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Two thousand. That's how many people in the past six months chose to support Franciscan Health Community and Our Lady of Good Counsel Home. In today's difficult economic times, that's a pretty impressive number.

Sometimes it's a gift in memory of a loved one who passed away or a contribution affirming the mission of our organization that motivates donors to support one of our programs.

Whether it's providing free end-of-life care, meals to the homebound, housing, hospice and home health care, or skilled nursing services, Franciscan Health Community is caring for our seniors and our community in many ways. At St. Mary's Home alone, we provided more than \$1 million in free care during the past year.

Your support helps to make all of this possible. Without it, providing the level of care we pride ourselves on would be that much more challenging. For Our Lady of Good Counsel Home, it would be nearly impossible, as we do not charge for the end-of-life care provided to our residents.

As we near the end of 2009, I hope you will consider making a donation to Franciscan Health Community and one of the many programs we offer. Your support allows us to continue our mission of caring for our older adults and for those in need. Thank you.

Michael G. Randall, Director of Development and Communications



FACE TO FACE, HEART TO HEART: HOW DEACON CLASEN GIVES SILENT WITNESS

Deacon Jim Clasen has a passion for befriending people and learning their stories. So much so that, twice a week, Deacon Clasen visits Saint Mary's Home to administer communion to residents and spend time listening to them.

"My interest in serving there primarily is that I wanted a program where I could get to know folks," explains Deacon Clasen, "as well as be centered on the Eucharist."

Deacon Clasen has found such an environment at St. Mary's Home over the past year he's been serving there. Married for 35 years, the father of four daughters, one of whom is deceased, grandfather to five kids, and former longtime St. Paul Public Schools educator, Deacon Clasen has a desire to meet people heart to heart. What he's found at St. Mary's Home is a richly spiritual environment where he can do just that.

"There is no question that as soon as you walk in the front entry and through the back door that this is a Catholic-Christian place with an emphasis on bringing people into a greater understanding into the relationship they have as persons of faith in the Catholic-Christian tradition," he says.

It's that Christ-centered environment that has

made all the difference for Deacon Clasen's ministry and the residents' experiences.

"The sharing of faith is not a pushiness; it's a presence," he says. "I think people actually choose this place because of that."

In his time visiting residents, Deacon Clasen has spoken with many believers, who, as they've reached the end of their lives, have rich and profound experiences of faith.

One resident, at the age of 101, still recalls her days of teaching in a one-room school house. She told Deacon Clasen of the isolation and fears that led her to depend solely on her faith during those challenging times.

"I thought that was really profound," Deacon Clasen says. And heroic, he adds. These are the anecdotes we are called to share, the deacon believes.

"As our lives unfold, we need people who are able to listen, to be silent witnesses, affirming where we've been and who we are. That is a special gift we can give each other and a very important process as we age."



Deacon Jim Clasen and his wife, Judy, who is integral to his ministry.

ROSIE GLIDES THROUGH BUCKET LIST IN PURPLE CADILLAC

Tackling her bucket list gained urgency when Rosie Osweiler moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel home last August, but the staff helped her make headway, and in little time she was parading along the Mississippi River in a purple '69 Cadillac convertible.

The 59-year-old La Crosse, Wis., native mentioned her auto aspiration to a couple of nurses, who



Donned in a princess tiara and a purple top, Rosie Osweiler waves to her fans.

swiftly set it into motion. One sunny August Tuesday a car rental employee pulled up in a shining purple Cadillac. Rosie donned a matching purple top, and a staff member crowned her with a tiara.

"It felt funny at first," Rosie admits, "but then I thought, 'You know, I'm special.'" She caught her regal reflection in the door and smiled. The staff and a couple residents circled around her, giving her a noble send-off. A hospice nurse with medication on hand slid into the back seat. Then Rosie buckled up, gave her fans an exaggerated Miss America wave and let the wind tickle her face.

"I'm kind of a ham around the edges," she says. "You have to be to pull off something like that."

Rosie felt like pinching herself during the hour-long ride. "I couldn't believe it. It was kind of like,

'Somebody's doing this for me?'"

That grateful disbelief characterized her entire stay at Our Lady, a place she had never seen before being carted in on a stretcher with a broken leg. "I had never even seen a picture. I left on blind faith. It's been pure faith, and I love every minute of it. This is a gift."

Our Lady has a special aura, she says. "It's hard to put a name on it, but it's there. It doesn't look like a nursing home. It doesn't smell like one. Everybody should see this place."

Rosie's many visitors reinforced her enthusiasm. "People are still walking in with their jaws dropped. They say, 'I can't believe this place!' I still can't. Every day is a miracle. Just the way the staff goes out of their way for you. They all fit in and they all gel. They all have the same mindset of what this is supposed to be."

The experience helped Rosie come to terms with the untimely conclusion of her fulfilling, multi-faceted life – one that included an 8-year period as a Franciscan Sister of Adoration, 11 years working in business administration at Sara Lee and a lot of elbow grease to fund college.

"I've cleaned toilets, I've cooked in a restaurant, I've worked in a Laundromat, I've fitted men for formal wear. You name it, I've done it."

She's grateful for her latest endeavor, earning a master's degree in gerontology from Bethel. "I think it's coming in handy here as I touch other people's lives and as they touch mine."

Rosie has the same positive attitude about her terminal illness. "The cancer got my body," she says, "but it didn't get my spirit."

Editor's Note: Rosie Osweiler passed away on Sept. 30, 2009.



THREE CHEERS FOR RETIRING DOCS: DECADES OF SERVICE CELEBRATED

Without its doctors, Our Lady of Good Counsel would not be what it is today: a place that helps cancer patients make the transition from this world to the next with grace and peace.



(From left) Dr. Wayne Thalhuber, Kathryn Wornson, Dr. John Manion and Dr. Joseph Amberg.

Dr. Wayne Thalhuber spent more than 40 years serving at Our Lady. Although he grew up in the neighborhood, he says, Dr. Thalhuber never noticed the place until 1968, when he was a medical

student. The atmosphere of honesty, humility and compassion fulfilled his ideal of a physician.

"The minute I walked through the doors I was just amazed," says Dr. Thalhuber, who retired from Our Lady in June and was among the retiring doctors honored at a Sept. 18 reception. "Every time that I went into that place no matter how tired I was or how stressed I was from my private practice or my personal things, I always felt better after leaving there."

Being a doctor at Our Lady was easy, he says. Whatever and whoever Dr. Thalhuber needed was provided – miraculously so, he adds. The giving spirit of the caregivers was a highlight of his time there. His work at Our Lady helped him become the medical director at hospice organizations,

teaching others about care for the dying.

Still, it was the patients who taught him, Dr. Thalhuber insists. All he needed to do was listen. Gradually, he came to accept his own mortality, learning that death was a part of life. "If you want to learn how to live," he says, "you talk to a dying patient."

Dr. John Manion, who served at Our Lady for 15 years, also listened. When patients were near death, he said, they often shared stories of seeing a deceased spouse or parent.

"There were such wonderful stories that you just said to yourself, 'I hope when it's my turn that I can have a wonderful experience like these patients have had,'" says the doctor, who made his last rounds at Our Lady in March.

An oncologist, Dr. Manion retired in 1995 from the Hubert Humphrey Cancer Center, but loved hospice so much that he was drawn to Our Lady, an answer to the nuns' prayers. Throughout the years he enjoyed watching the nurses in action.

"Everyone received such wonderful care from the nursing staff that I thought it's just not only a pleasure, but it's a life-changing situation for me to be able to help those nurses give that care," Dr. Manion says.

The patients made a powerful impression on him too. Their unassailable belief in life after death reminded Dr. Manion of his own faith in eternal life, he says.

"All of those patients and families understood that this was not the end of the world, this was the beginning of a new adventure for them, a new life."

INCHING TOWARD A WIRELESS NETWORK

Rosie Osweiler is one of the first patients who brought a laptop to Our Lady of Good Counsel, hoping to maintain an online connection to loved ones.

An IT worker set up a wireless router at Our Lady last July. It should allow patients and their visitors to obtain an Internet connection in the meeting room, where a Cat-5 cable can hook into a laptop.

The router marks a technological stride forward, but Plant Manager Greg Deacy hopes to go much further. The Internet has become a fundamental way to distribute information and solicit prayers for someone who is dying, Greg says. The popularity of CaringBridge illustrates that.

There was talk of someone donating computers to Our Lady, which would be much appreciated, Greg says. For starters, he'd like to install a computer at the first- and second-floor parlors so visitors can update CaringBridge sites and send emails while important information is fresh in their minds.

Eventually, though, Greg's goal is to make wireless Internet available in every room. "That would be so great for our residents, especially those who are so dependent on computers now. It's a great way to connect."

To share ideas or resources for beefing up Our Lady's wireless availability, contact Greg at greg@ourladyhome.org.

THREE GENERATIONS OF GEISES VOLUNTEER AT OUR LADY

It's hard for Steven Geis to imagine what else he would do on a Sunday afternoon. He's been using that time to volunteer at Our Lady of Good Counsel for decades, first with his siblings, now with his children.

Steven's late father, LeRoy, paved the way for the enduring tradition. The family practice doctor worked at Our Lady for nearly three decades. He found the work stimulating professionally and spiritually; he stopped in the chapel on his way in and out. Learning that Nathaniel Hawthorne was the father of the founder deepened his attachment to the place.

"We teased him for being over so much," recalls his wife, Dorothy, 76, a retired nurse. "He said it was the closest place to heaven on earth."



Their kids must have picked up on that reverence, because when it came time to plan a Lenten activity – an assignment at St. Albert the Great School in Minneapolis – they suggested volunteering at the cancer home on Sunday afternoons.

"That's what makes it so nice," Dorothy says, "that they thought of it. I don't think they realized the impact it would have."

So Dorothy and Roy loaded up all five kids – Julianne, David, Michael, Steven and Brian – and headed to Our Lady. "I remember Brian being so small he couldn't feed the patients, he couldn't reach them, so he primarily did the dishes and visited patients," Dorothy says.

The kids took to it, singing and dancing for patients and, in quieter moments, holding their hands and praying with them. The Geis family decided to make it a Lenten and Advent practice. Then one day Roy suggested they go every Sunday, year round.

It could be hard to pull the kids away – and the mom. "Sometimes I'd be playing cribbage and I'd get so engaged," Dorothy recalls. So when it was time to head home, Roy would call out, "Metro Mobility is leaving!"

"It was a wonderful place for the children to grow up," Dorothy says. "They learned so much at the home. They became much older than their age. They learned the other end of the continuum of life. They are very comfortable around elderly and terminally ill patients. They are very understanding and empathetic. I always said, 'We receive more than we give.'"

That statement finally makes sense to Steven, 39, the principal of North Trail Elementary in Lakeville. He and his wife, Kathy, bring their three daughters to Our Lady every Sunday afternoon, continuing the family tradition launched in 1981.



For the Geis family, Our Lady of Good Counsel renders the world small. Here, Steven and his daughter Faith visit with Dr. Robert Olson, a patient who worked with Steven's late dad, LeRoy. (Inset) LeRoy and Dorothy Geis with their son, Steven.

"Watching my three little angels go in, they are so in tune," Steven says. "They can be loud and obnoxious, but it's pretty amazing when someone is on their death bed, my girls are just absolutely angelic, and I don't even have to ask them. And now I get to experience that. It truly is a blessing."

All three girls were baptized at Our Lady, and their firstborn, Faith Imelda, now 8, was named after Sr. Mary Imelda. On Sundays Faith goes into

the chapel and prays for the patients, reciting their names. Steven appreciates the Sisters' continued presence after the Franciscan Health Community acquired Our Lady. He believes it can foster vocations.

In addition to earnest prayer, Faith shares school projects, performs a puppet show and distributes treats to patients. "And the girls are good at finishing desserts," Steven adds. "I like visiting the patients," Faith says. "And I like wearing my grandma's volunteer tag."

Steven's siblings also have stayed connected to Our Lady. Julianne and her family help with the 4th of July celebrations, for instance, while David periodically brings his dog to visit patients. "I'm so thankful that they do," Dorothy says. "It makes me feel wonderful."



FAR FROM HOME, MEKONNEN DORI FINDS HIS PLACE

One decade ago Mekonnen Dori, 59, left his home country of Ethiopia with four of his children in hopes of a better life. In those ten years, he has learned English, become a citizen and sent enough money back to his relatives to build two homes, all while finding his calling as a nursing assistant at Our Lady of Good Counsel Home.

"We hear that this is a country of opportunity and that is real. We're lucky to be here and to live freely," says Mekonnen, who was imprisoned in Ethiopia for his vocal disapproval of its dictatorship and support of democracy.

It took Mekonnen some time to adjust to Minnesota and its four seasons. He was surprised that plant life grows back every year because, in Ethiopia, there are only two seasons and the trees die each winter.

"Everybody talks about the weather," he says of life in Minnesota, chuckling.

Mekonnen's transition has been eased by his job at Our Lady of Good Counsel, where daily interactions with patients involve dispensing medication, attending to their needs and speaking with their families.

"I'm blessed to be in a nice place and working with nice people," he says.

Mekonnen has cultivated strong relationships with many of the patients and families he cares for, often sharing warm conversation and hugs. These meaningful bonds have strengthened his faith life. "You grow closer to God because you bring some-

thing to patients who remind you of your own beliefs every day."

Mekonnen's favorite part of his job is giving bubble baths to the patients. "When I see them very comfortable, it makes me very happy."



Mekonnen Dori welcomes a new patient, I. John Shuman, with a drink and a smile.

Even though Mekonnen is approaching 60, he has no plans for retirement. He says he plans to continue his rewarding job as long as he is strong, and he hopes in his lifetime to see a cure for cancer – a disease he has become all too familiar with through his work at Our Lady.

Thousands of miles from his native country of Ethiopia, Mekonnen has found his place in the Twin Cities and at Our Lady. He returns to his job day after day because of the supportive staff and the inspiring patients.

"One should not be working for a living only," Mekonnen says, "but to be happy in your job."

And happy he is.

BI-ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS DRAWS LARGE CROWD

The Nov. 2 Memorial Mass remembering loved ones who died in the past six months drew a large crowd to St. Mary's chapel, where prayers, long-stemmed roses, hugs and hymns gave grieving relatives and friends a measure of peace.

"It is another step in closure for family and friends, more time for sharing and stories and healing," says Susan Adam, director of pastoral care services. "This is an opportunity for family and friends

of our deceased to take another step in bereavement."

The turnout suggests it is a welcome step. "This is always well attended," Susan says, "and people seem to look forward to it." They enjoy the meaningful homily, the simple reception and the rose ritual, when the name of each deceased resident is read, and a family member brings forward a rose and adds it to a vase.

The gathering allows those in mourning to reconnect with special staff members, who retain vivid memories of their loved ones. It's also an important opportunity for staff members to do their own grieving and pause from their work to remember cherished residents, Susan says.

The Franciscan Health Community used to host the service once a year, but the acquisition of Our Lady of Good Counsel Home and the growth of hospice, along with the popularity of the event, compelled staff to increase the frequency to twice a year. On Nov. 2 family, friends and staff remembered those who passed away between May 1 and Sept. 30.

"It is the honor of Franciscan Health Community to extend an invitation to our Memorial Mass in remembrance of your loved ones and all those from our community who have left this earthly life," the invitation reads. "Please invite family and friends to share in this celebration of remembering."

To learn more about the bi-annual Memorial Mass, contact Susan Adam at 651-696-8423 or at pcare2@fhcare.org.

St. Mary's provides a beautiful, serene setting to remember loved ones.





NEW WEBSITE, DONATE ONLINE!

Have you visited www.franciscancare.org lately? The website has been given a fresh look. All programs and services are fully detailed.

You can easily donate online to support Franciscan Health Community programs that bring a special vitality to daily living.

Visit www.franciscancare.org and click on Giving.
Online donation is completely secure.

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We welcome your gift to support the vital mission serving the community's elders.

Franciscan Health Community is pleased to acknowledge the gifts and memorials from a caring community of individuals, churches, and groups. These gifts were provided between Apr. 1, 2009 and Sept. 30, 2009. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy. If you see an error or omission, please contact Michael G. Randall, Director of Development and Communications, at 651-696-8402.

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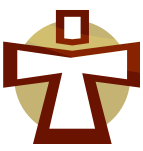
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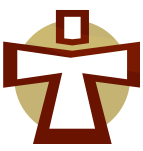
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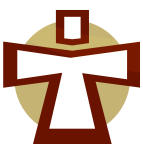
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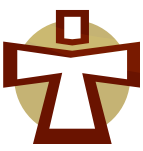
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YOUR LEGACY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A planned estate gift to Franciscan Health Community is a wonderful way to enhance the lives of our seniors and leave a lasting legacy.

Your deferred gift, in the form of a will bequest, living trust or gift annuity, supports a loving home where elders pursue fulfilling, meaningful lives to the greatest

extent possible. Residents enjoy spiritual enrichment and engaging programs, all in a loving home where they know the certainty of God's love.

For more information on planned giving options please contact Michael G. Randall, Director of Development and Communications at 651-696-8402.

FOR YOUR FINANCIAL PLANNER

Here is the official legal bequest language for your financial planner:

"I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP], give, devise and bequeath to Franciscan Health Community, 1925 Norfolk Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116, [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for its unrestricted use and purpose."

Please let us know if you have included Franciscan Health Community in your will. We would like the opportunity to thank you for your generosity.



RESIDENCES

St. Mary's Home
 Skilled care &
 transitional care
 651-696-8400

Riverview Highlands
 Independent living
 with services
 651-696-8420

Highlands on Graham
 Independent living
 with services
 651-696-8500

**Our Lady of Good
 Counsel Home**
 End-of-life skilled care
 651-646-2797

SERVICES & PROGRAMS:

St. Mary's Adult Day Services
 651-696-8415
 Safe, supportive weekday
 socialization for seniors.

Franciscan Home Health Care
 651-696-8548
 Medicare-certified skilled nursing
 care provided in the home set-
 ting.

Pastoral Care
 651-696-8400
 Daily worship opportunities for
 seniors of all faiths.

Southwest Area Meals
 651-696-8439
 Volunteer drivers from local par-
 ishes deliver hot meals. Special
 diets are available. There are no
 eligibility requirements.

St. Mary's Hospice
 651-789-5030
 Comforting care provided in
 the home for terminal patients.
 Bereavement support for family
 members.

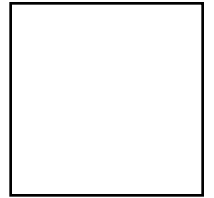
Volunteer Opportunities
 651-696-8416
 Volunteer opportunities available
 for youth and adults.

Highland Block Nurse Program
 651-696-8425
 In-home public health nursing
 care enables seniors 65 and
 older to live independently.



Franciscan Health Community
1925 Norfolk Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116-2699

www.franciscancare.org



..... ——— FRANCISCAN HEALTH COMMUNITY ———

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