



**B**lessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger founded the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1833 in Bavaria, which is now part of Germany. In 1847, she set out for America to help children of German immigrants.

Today, about 2,500 SSNDs minister in 32 countries. They are teachers, social justice advocates, lawyers, pastoral ministers, nurses and much more.

*(The picture is by Sister Monika Schulze of Germany.)*

## ‘I was a Stranger, and You Welcomed Me’

**I**magine being forced to leave your home country with just your family and the clothes on your back!

Everything is different – the food, the people and most of all the language. Refugee children live this way every day. So, students at SSND schools reached out to help.

Students at the Theresia Gerhardinger Gymnasium School in Anger, Germany, organized *Weihnachten für alle* (Christmas for everyone).

They filled wrapped boxes with items that might be needed by arriving refugee children, including gloves, toiletries and treats.

They included notes such as "Welcome to Germany!" and "We hope you'll feel at home soon."

In March, high school students

from Baltimore's Institute of Notre Dame (IND) teamed up with students at Notre Dame Preparatory School of Towson, Maryland, to help refugee students with their schoolwork.

"They were the most enjoyable and chatty little kids who wanted to become my friend and be loved and accepted," said Lucy Wickham, a 10th grader at IND.



**Eight-year-old Dwanna, a refugee from Sudan, works on homework with Institute of Notre Dame student, Lucy Wickham.**

*(Photo courtesy of Kursten Pickup, program coordinator for the Refugee Youth Project. A program of Baltimore City Community College, RYP offers tutoring throughout Maryland.)*

*Are there refugee families in your area? How can your school help?*



## Blessings from Ashes

On a quiet June evening, it suddenly became dark at the Notre Dame School in Mkar, Nigeria. A power outage made the lights go out. A minute later, fire! The dormitory was in flames.

Despite this sad event, the “loving face and hands of God were revealed.”

Neighbors of the school worked together to put out the fire. The local community arrived by foot, car and motorcycle. They were there in this time of need.

Oceans away, students at Notre Dame Kyoto Elementary school in Japan raised money to help with rebuilding the dormitory. They also collected notebooks and supplies to replace those that burned. The Kyoto students even sent letters of love and encouragement.



**Notre Dame School students in front of their new dormitory.**

“They acknowledged that we are all brothers and sisters no matter which part of the world we come from,” said Sister Joyce Nyakwama, former headmistress in Mkar.

## Got the Spirit?



The cheer squad of Notre Dame School of Dallas brings energy to school sporting events as they cheer on their athletes. They even took their spirit all the way to the 2015 World Special Olympics in Los Angeles! There, they cheered for athletes from all over the world and performed dances in front of an international audience.

*Do you have the Spirit? We all have gifts to share. Here is a prayer you can use to ask the Holy Spirit to help show you how you can use your gifts to make a difference in the world:*

***Holy Spirit, Come!  
Dwell in my heart. Illuminate my mind.  
Direct my footsteps. Be my guide.***




**School Sisters  
of Notre Dame**

### To learn more . . .

about the School Sisters of Notre Dame, visit our web site or social media pages:

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### Write to:

*Ms. Julie Gilberto-Brady, Editor  
SSND Collaboration Staff Office  
13105 Watertown Plank Road  
Elm Grove, WI 53122  
[jbrady@ssnd.org](mailto:jbrady@ssnd.org)*

# East Meets West

## Taylor Prince and Eri Nishimura connect in Exchange Student Program



Taylor Prince (left) is an 11th grader at Notre Dame High School in St. Louis, and Eri Nishimura is a 10th grader at Notre Dame Jogakuin High School in Kyoto, Japan.

**Taylor:** I am funny, always joking with the latest slang language and am constantly on the go. I carry the entire contents of my school locker in my backpack.

I met Eri Nishimura, an exchange student from our sister school in Kyoto, when we worked together with a tutor several times per week. Eri is cool, calm and totally organized. She didn't talk

much at first and was very shy. She was totally focused on her assignments. And yet, we became friends.

**Eri:** Taylor flies around the school like a crazy bee. She is so active. She has become my high energy friend who has helped me to be more outgoing and has taught me "cool American slang."

We argue when we are together about music and other points of American culture. She also makes me laugh a lot.

**Taylor:** I am Catholic. Eri is Buddhist and has taught me so much about her life in Japan. Our friendship shows that we can complement each other with our unique cultural and religious values, learn so much from each other, and discover a bigger world picture.

Eri and I are like two distinct fragments of a kaleidoscope that come together, pass and move on to form new mosaics of color in another part of the world. Eri left for Japan in May, but our friendship will continue online.

# Meet My Sister Aunt

## Ethan and Sister Mary Kay

Ethan Waino knows that if he needs anything – a partner for basketball, help with math homework or an audience for his magic tricks - he can count on his great aunt, Sister Mary Kay Brooks, SSND.

Ethan is a sixth grader at St. Joseph's Catholic School in Rosemount Minnesota. He likes basketball, video games, reading and magic tricks. He does not like shopping. But he laughs about the time that Sister Mary Kay tricked him into a trip to the store by telling him that she only needed three things.

"Once we got to the store, she had us going up and down every aisle to see what was on sale!" Ethan said. "But then I made her take me out to lunch. It was worth the laughs we had over lunch."

Sister Mary Kay is a vocation director for the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She lives in Dallas, Texas. With his great aunt, Ethan has come to learn the meaning of "faithfulness." He knows he always can count on his family and Sister Mary Kay for whatever he needs.



# Star Criss Cross



## Win a prize!

Over the years, more than 200 students have won prizes for sending in the completed crossword puzzle. You can too!

Send your finished puzzles with your name, grade, school and address to the address on page 2.

*All the clues can be found in this issue of the Star, so read carefully*

### Across

1. Eri is from this country
6. Fire destroyed this in Nigeria
10. German word for Christmas
11. When Eri and Taylor come together, they form new \_\_\_\_\_

### Down

2. God's people have many \_\_\_\_\_
3. The cheer squad took their spirit to these games
4. A symbol worn to show religious commitment
5. Sisters and nuns take \_\_\_\_\_ and promise their lives to God
7. Children who are forced to leave their home countries
8. Ethan plays \_\_ with Sister Mary Kay
9. Country where the School Sisters of Notre Dame were founded

## Ask a Sister ...

### What is the difference between a sister and a nun?

Both sisters and nuns belong to the Catholic Church and take vows, promising their lives to God. Sisters, like the School Sisters of Notre Dame, are out in the world more, actively working to help people in need. Nuns' lives usually are focused around their convent or monastery, where they spend more time in prayer.

### Why do some Sisters wear a veil?

This was the traditional form of clothing for a member of a religious community a long time ago. Some sisters still prefer to honor that tradition. Others choose a different symbol of their religious commitment such as a special cross, a ring or a pin. You can learn more about the meaning of the SSND pin in our video: <http://bit.ly/star-ssnd-pin>



### *You have the word "School" in your name - does everyone teach?*

When our congregation first began, Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger felt educating girls was an important need at that time. But we also know that God's people have many needs. Today, we say that we are "educators in all that we do." We still teach, but we also work with immigrants and the homeless, in parishes and health care and as social justice advocates.