



School Sisters of Notre Dame

# *TRUST & DARE*

*a publication for family, friends, and supporters of the School Sisters of Notre Dame*



## **In this issue:**

- Women forge their futures at Caroline Center
- Families gather skills and strength at Whole Kids Outreach
- Students thrive amidst challenges at Hillside International School

## Trust & Dare

Trust & Dare is a publication for family, friends and supporters of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the Atlantic-Midwest Province, Central Pacific Province, and Province of Africa. It is coordinated by SSND Collaborative Communications.

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**On the Cover** Staff members and campers at Whole Kids Outreach (WKO) Summer Camp in Ellington, Missouri, bring it in for a huddle at the start of the day. An affiliated ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province, WKO is led by Executive Director Sister Anne Francioni.

## Dear Friends,

We cannot help but be proud of our charism which, in many ways and through diverse ministries, has transformed, enlightened, and empowered the lives of many people. These people in turn, have contributed positively to the church and society over the 190 years since our congregation was founded.

As School Sisters of Notre Dame, collaboration is part of our history. When we read the letters of Mother Theresa, we realize she worked with church leaders, state officials, lay people, and many more to ensure that her dream would become a reality. We are grateful to all our collaborators and partners in mission. Your support, gifts, and experiences have contributed to the success of our missionary work. Journeying together and looking forward into the future, we are called to deepen our collaborative spirit to enable us to become efficient instruments in the hands of God, still holding aloft our SSND charism.

We are thankful to our many sisters in the ministry of prayer and presence for their spiritual support for the growth and progress of our mission and ministry. To them as well, we wish to commend our efforts in the promotion of vocations, so that their prayers may help bring abundance to our fold. We wish, above all, to thank each sister for her unique witness to God's love by an outpouring of love and dedication in the encounter with God's people in the various places we are and serve.

Indeed, community life has been an integral part of our life as religious women in mission who are committed to living the great commission envisioned by our foundress. Today, the reality of change and its challenges to community life impel us to consciously deepen and intensify our efforts to build intercultural faith communities like that of the early Christian community in the book of Acts. In this year's issue of Trust & Dare, we will travel to Hillside International School in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria; Caroline Center in Maryland; and Whole Kids Outreach in Missouri to encounter our sisters and lay staff who are transforming the lives of others through the services they render. We also will hear about Grace Avila's experience as an SSND associate and sisters' commitment to living out the goals of Laudato Si'.

We hope these stories will deepen our passion and love for God and for the SSND as we build bridges together and become agents of hope, peace, unity, change, healing, and reconciliation.

*S. Antoinette Cornelius*

Sister Antoinette Cornelius  
Provincial Councilor, Province of Africa





# CHANGE Propels Us

Change – the very word evokes many emotions: fear, apprehension, and for some perhaps even hope.

Through 190 years of transformative encounters, the School Sisters of Notre Dame have not merely weathered change, they have embraced it as an opportunity for growth, renewal, and the continual pursuit of their mission to transform the world through education. Known as women of prayer, friends to the poor, and innovative educators, our foundresses Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger and Mother Caroline Friess were, according to an 1893 publication, “bold and courageous in the face of insurmountable difficulties and adapted the Congregation to the new world.” These words still hold true for the congregation today.

In the face of loss and transition, the School Sisters of Notre Dame stand as a testament to resilience, drawing on a legacy that spans nearly two centuries. Their commitment to addressing the challenges of change is marked by a tradition of offering bold solutions and pioneering responses. This steadfast approach reflects a dedication to empowering individuals and families, guiding them toward the realization of their fullest potential.

In each province, Africa, Atlantic-Midwest, and Central Pacific, there are hundreds of stories where this realization comes to life. In Baltimore, the Caroline



*Your gifts support our communities of sisters, like these residents of The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri. Sisters living here have the option of residential, assisted, rehabilitative, and skilled care living depending on their needs. Groups of sisters gather for prayer, meals, games, and activities.*

Center has introduced the Women in Construction Initiative that will familiarize students to the construction industry, teach skills such as blueprint reading and applied mathematics for construction and provide women with pre-apprenticeship training that will get them ready for a Registered Apprenticeship Program. In Cape Coast, Ghana, our sisters in the Province of Africa manage the Mary Queen of Peace Catholic School which enrolls children from nursery school through high school, offering a challenging curriculum to prepare pupils for higher education and adult life. In addition to a university, two high schools, an elementary school, and community farms and gardens, sisters in the Central Pacific Province sponsor Notre Dame School in Dallas which educates students with developmental disabilities and facilitates their integration into society.

► **We invite you to continue to partner with us in our mission. If you would like to discuss your commitment to SSND, please contact your provincial development director listed below.**

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*“Mother Caroline took a bold step to come to the United States and do what she did. For many of our women, coming here is a bold step. They are risk takers like Caroline.”*

*- Lynn Selby, Caroline Center executive director*

## *Women forge their futures at* **CAROLINE CENTER**

At Caroline Center in East Baltimore, each day begins with a gathering devoted to prayer and motivation. Staff and volunteers at this educational ministry for women come together in faith and community to ask for God’s blessing and find strength in one another. The practice is grounding, setting the tone for a program that provides a new direction and renewed sense of hope for women working toward a brighter future, often amidst a multitude of other responsibilities and challenges.

Iman Chali, part of Caroline Center’s 67th student cohort, came to Caroline Center to improve life for

herself and her family. She found in the program the structure and support she needed to make a change. “I wanted to have a better income and financial stability for my family,” said Iman. “Also, some kind of educational knowledge I could rely on.” Iman’s story echoes those of many of the women who come to Caroline Center looking to improve their prospects. Founded 26 years ago by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) Atlantic-Midwest Province, Caroline Center grew out of a community-identified need for improved access to job training in the area. It was named to honor Mother Caroline, who came with SSND Foundress Blessed Theresa



*Members of Caroline Center’s 86th cohort pose for a group photo during their Halfway Hurrah. The celebration marks the half-way point of each cohort’s program. Events like this one reinforce the bonds that students create with one another.*



to lead the expansion of the SSND congregation in North America. Caroline's dedication to educating women, and the belief that doing so transforms communities and helps shape future generations, inspires the work that happens at Caroline Center today.

For Executive Director Lynn Selby—Caroline Center's first lay executive director—the legacy of Mother Caroline and the SSND is central to the way the program operates. "We are a faith-based organization aligned with SSND mission, ministry, and charism," said Lynn. "Mother Caroline took a bold step to come to the United States and do what she did. For many of our women, coming here is a bold step. They are risk takers like Caroline."

The programs of study at Caroline Center have evolved throughout the years along with the needs and opportunities of the times. Since its founding, the center has offered programs in upholstery, catering, and childcare, and today focuses on the medical and construction fields. Caroline Center's programs are tuition-free, and its educational approach is holistic. The center provides 15 weeks of individualized instruction that prepare women to work as certified nursing assistants (CNA), certified pharmacy technicians (PhT), and registered construction apprentices. The classes are small, focusing on intensive, hands-on skills training. Beyond the classroom, Caroline Center delivers a host of wrap-around services, supervised clinical work and internships, and most anything else trainees need to learn, grow, thrive, and be successful in the program, their new careers, and their lives. Guest speakers, employer panels, and small group discussion on topics such as stress reduction, financial management, health and nutrition, and compassionate patient care round out the offerings. Trainees can access counseling, social work services, and all of Caroline Center's other resources right on the premises.

One distinctive feature of a Caroline Center education is its commitment to an essential skills training curriculum that instructs students in the soft skills they will need going forward. For Keonna Turnipseed, a CNA student in Caroline Center's 87th cohort and the mother of three children, that instruction has been crucial in helping her to move toward her goals of developing a career and bringing stability to her family. "Caroline Center isn't just



*Learning by doing is an essential part of Caroline Center's training programs. (Above) A PhT student practices sterile preparation. (Below) CNA students work on their CPR techniques.*

teaching me how to be a CNA, it is teaching me so many other skills—how to deal with co-workers, how to speak, how to deal with professional situations, how to use a computer, how to save money. Those things are important, too."

Sister Grace Sciamanna, who serves as director of administration at Caroline Center, agrees that those soft skills are essential to graduates' success



*Sister Grace Sciamanna works with a student in the Pharmacy Tech program. "The students amaze me. They are women of deep faith, strength, and hope."*

in the workforce. "You can train someone in the field in six or seven weeks, but the essential skills training that Caroline Center provides transforms that training into a holistic education," said Sister Grace. "We want people to get a job, keep that job, and get promoted. Without the essential skills training it is like a revolving door. With it, you have a professional."

But it is not just what students learn at Caroline Center that makes the difference, it is the environment in which they learn it. Students describe it as a "sisterhood" and many current and former students recommend the program to friends and family members. Keonna herself learned about Caroline Center from a friend who had gone through the program and says that all the good things she heard about the experience are true. "Everyone here is really helpful and the teachers are very hands-on," said Keonna. "We also have groups that study together. If someone misses a day, everyone catches them up. We all support each other."

Powerful support is a hallmark of the Caroline Center experience and, for many women in the program, it is a lifeline. At the half-way mark of each cohort's program, the women take part in a celebration known as the Half-Way Hurrah. During a recent groups' celebration, one of the students ran out of the room crying. When Lynn went after her to find out what was wrong, the woman revealed that she was worried she would lose the connection to Caroline House once she completed the program. "I told her not to worry," said Lynn. "Once a Caroline Center woman, always a Caroline Center woman." That sentiment is more than just words. All resources of Caroline Center are available to alumnae for life. Graduates regularly come back for career advancement advice, guidance in applying to college or completing their degree requirements, opportunities for additional professional certifications, or just to be with each other for fun and informal gatherings.

Nearly all of Caroline Center's 3,000 alumnae work in Baltimore, contributing their knowledge and skills to the local workforce and giving back to both their families and their community. They do so ready for their careers, stronger for their families, and imbued with a piece of the SSND charism in their hearts. "At the closing ceremony you can see that the women are ready for the field," said Sister Grace. "The women who come through here are transformed. They leave here not just with skills, but with hope. They carry on our mission, and they do an incredible job."



*Students cheer for their classmates during the closing ceremony. Support for one another is one of the hallmarks of the Caroline Center experience.*



# Associate Program helps Grace Avila **GROW IN FAITH AND SERVICE**

Associate Grace Avila had never met a Catholic sister before she applied for the job of assistant archivist at the School Sisters of Notre Dame North American Archives in 2019. A senior at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Grace was studying history and theology and was looking for part-time work that lined up with her areas of interest. She got the job—a position that became full-time after a couple of years—but Grace will be the first to tell you that the SSND have given her much more than a nine-to-five.

“As I began working in the archives, I learned the history of the SSND, how they faced so many hardships, trials, and tribulations,” said Grace. “But no matter what they encountered, they carried their charism with them and never stopped working to improve things. As I got to know the sisters and learn about their current ministries, I saw how that spirit carries on. The sisters care about what is happening in this world and are taking action to make things better. That inspired me.”

Although she had heard about the Associate Program and was intrigued by it, Grace found the idea of undertaking the commitment herself daunting. Then, in 2022, Sister Patty Rass and Associate Anne Carey, who serves as co-director of the associate program for the Central Pacific Province, visited the Archives. The two invited Grace to an associate meeting. By the time the meeting



*(L-R) Sister Mary Ann Kuttner, Associate Grace Avila, and Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen visit with Sister Maria Regina Paulinho at Our Lady of the Angels Convent in Greenfield, Wisconsin.*

ended, Grace knew she wanted to move toward becoming an associate herself.

“The group talked about such interesting and important things—human rights, how to walk with the poor, how to combat problems with the environment,” said Grace. “And they invited me to share how I looked at these issues and how they applied to my own life. After that, I told Anne Carey, ‘I’m in!’”

Over the next year, Grace continued attending associate gatherings and learned more about SSND history, charism, mission, and ministry. She made her covenant as an SSND associate in May of 2023.

Grace’s participation in the Associate Program has added a new layer to her already rich spiritual life. A practicing Lutheran, Grace grew up in an ecumenical household with her dad, a Catholic, and her mom, a Lutheran. She says that the differences in religion between her and the SSND have never been a barrier to the faith component of the associate relationship.

“The sisters and associates are so accepting and kind. There is no sense of division,” said Grace. “The focus is on how we can build our faith in today’s world and how we can learn from each other.”

One especially meaningful



*(Left) Associate Grace Avila visits with Sister Joseph Marie Flynn. (Above) (L-R) Sister Patty Rass, Associate Grace Avila, and Sister Sue Hetebrueg gather at the May, 2023 SSND Associate Ceremony.*

component of Grace's experience as a SSND associate are her once-a-month gatherings with Sister Paul Mary Draxler and two other associates. The group shares time for reflection and discusses matters of importance. Grace feels grateful to have the opportunity to share with people with similar values.

In addition, Grace has gotten involved in other SSND boards, committees, and initiatives. She is

a board member and development committee chair at Global Partners: Running Waters, an affiliated ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame founded by Sister Jan Gregorcich and the late Associate Dianne Henke that works to provide clean water in villages in Guatemala. She also volunteers on the SSND Peace & Nonviolence Committee and works on the Women's Leadership Luncheon in Milwaukee, an annual SSND event

that recognizes the contributions women make in our world.

"The sisters have given me so many opportunities to keep growing," said Grace. "They live out the SSND charism themselves, but they also invite other like-minded people in and ask, 'How do we carry the charism forward together?' How could I say no to standing beside them and helping to do my part?"

## Want to learn more about the Associate Program?

Associates share with the School Sisters of Notre Dame in faith, prayer, and spiritual growth. Each associate makes a covenant to live the SSND spirit and mission through:

- deepening personal and communal prayer
- participating in SSND spiritual, educational, and social activities
- extending the spirit of SSND in her/his respective ministry and lifestyle
- sharing her/his gifts, faith life, and experiences with other associates and sisters

### Contact an Associate Director

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*“We empower women through education that will improve health outcomes for their children and decrease child abuse and neglect. We are living out those SSND values of going to the greatest need and opening wide our arms.”*

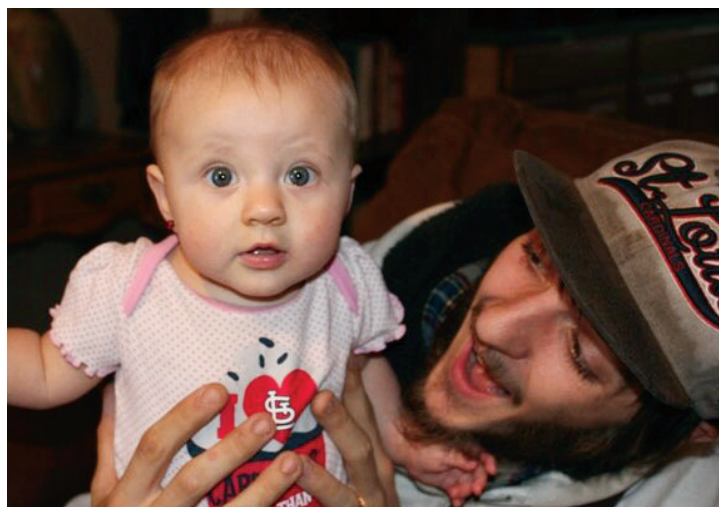
*- Sister Anne Francioni, WKO co-founder & executive director*

## *Families gather skills and strength at* **WHOLE KIDS OUTREACH**

Mallory Sharp travels down a long dirt road to her first appointment of the day. When she pulls up to the trailer, a young mother with a toddler on her leg and an infant in her arms peeks out the door with a smile and small wave. This family knows Mallory well. They have been welcoming her into their home every week for the past two years, developing a relationship that has helped mom, Kylie, adjust to the rhythms and routines of motherhood and supported 2-year-old Jaxon and 4-month-old Willow in reaching important milestones.

A staff nurse at Whole Kids Outreach (WKO) in Ellington, Missouri, Mallory is part of WKO's Visiting Nurse Program which provides a safety net for families, helping to prevent infant mortality, child abuse, and neglect. Mallory visits pregnant women to provide prenatal education that aims to produce healthy, full-term births, then returns weekly to the homes of new moms to support breastfeeding, assess for post-partum depression and anxiety, educate moms on newborn care, and make sure babies are safe and thriving. Mallory also serves as a liaison between parents and pediatricians, encouraging the mothers in her care to make and keep doctor's appointments.

Nursing visits are just one piece of a constellation of services provided to mothers and children by Whole Kids, an affiliated ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province. Started by Sister Anne Francioni in 1999, the ministry serves 11 counties in rural southeast Missouri, where the average yearly income for a WKO family of four is \$22,500. The program is designed to make sure



*In response to referrals from medical centers, physicians' offices, clinics, social service agencies, and direct requests from families, WKO sends trained nurses to the homes of pregnant women and parents of young children.*



*Since starting Whole Kids Outreach in 1999, Sister Anne Francioni has served as its executive director and as an agent of change in the southeast Missouri region, helping families work toward better futures for their children. She says that some of the most important advice she gives WKO staff members is also the most basic. "Don't give up. Stay in relationships. And listen, listen, listen."*

everybody has somebody to look out for them, a lifeline for those who might otherwise be forgotten.

In an area where isolation is endemic, that connection is critical. For many Whole Kids moms, WKO team members are the only adults they see or talk to for days. Fifty percent of WKO families don't have cell service or internet. Many don't have reliable cars, and those who do are often limited by the cost of fuel. The nearest pediatrician is 60 miles away and there is no public transportation.

In addition to the Visiting Nurse Program, Whole Kids Outreach provides outreach specialists and parent educators who accompany parents on their journeys until their youngest child is 3 years old. The ministry also hosts events that bring families together for play and connection-building, including "Moms Day Out" experiences where WKO provides care for children and programming for moms. "We empower women through education that will

improve health outcomes for their children and decrease child abuse and neglect," said Sister Anne. "We are living out those SSND values of going to the greatest need and opening wide our arms."

For school-aged children, summer can be a particularly precarious time. Without the structure of the school day and the reliability of school meals, kids can find themselves without adequate stimulation and nutrition. Whole Kids works to address this issue with four one-week camp sessions for children aged 4-12. The camps run from mid-June through mid-July. Each week features a different theme, but all include breakfast, lunch, crafts, horseback riding, swimming, and a host of other fun and educational activities.

Mallory is enthusiastic about encouraging families to participate in camp, in part because of her own experience with the program. A "Whole Kids Kid" herself, she started camp when she was 4 years old, eventually working her way up to a position as camp counselor. Her story isn't unique. Many campers become counselors, and some, like Mallory, eventually end up as full-time members of the Whole Kids staff.

Rosy Williams—a former "Whole Kids Kid" who serves as the administrative support and IT manager at Whole Kids Outreach—has been involved with the



*Counselors at Camp Whole Kids are chosen with great care. All of them display the skills needed to keep campers safe and engaged, the desire and ability to mentor young people, and a positive and playful spirit.*



ministry since she was 5 years old. She is adamant that Whole Kids has had a major impact on her life and insists that many people she grew up with feel the same way. "I don't know where I would be if Sister Anne hadn't come down here to start Whole Kids," said Rosy. "I don't know where a lot of us around here would be. WKO has touched so many lives. It has been a real game-changer in the area."

As transformational as Whole Kids programs are, Sister Anne is quick to point out that change doesn't happen overnight. Although the services WKO provides are vital, it is only by addressing the systemic barriers to child well-being that real and lasting change can take place. Despite the abundant love that Whole Kids parents have for their children, the life pressures they face coupled with a lack of adequate support keep the odds stacked against them. They are desperate to do better for their children, but sometimes they just don't know how.

"The issues we are dealing with are transgenerational," said Sister Anne. "Many of our moms have experienced trauma and have not seen a good parenting style modeled. We are asking these

moms to choose a whole new way of being, new values, a system that is different than the one they grew up with. That is very difficult for people, and it is why it is so important that we stay with these families."

With support from Whole Kids, families begin first to hope for something better and then to reach goals that make that hope a reality. "What we see with our families is a standing taller, a belief that 'maybe I could be one of those people who is successful, maybe my children will have a better life.' We see them not just begin to believe that they might be able to do this, but to actualize that and to see that they can. They get there. We save lives."



*(Left) WKO is home to a wonderful herd of horses. The program offers individual and group riding lessons for children from elementary through high school age throughout the school year. During summer camp, campers enjoy both riding and learning to care for these gentle, four-legged friends. (Above) Campers develop connections with camp counselors throughout the summer. As they get older, many former WKO campers become counselors themselves.*



*“These children are beautiful to be with.  
They have passion and love.  
I see joy in them and that gives me joy to give to others.”*

*- Sister Maryanne Lawrence, Hillside International School Head Teacher*

## *Students thrive amidst challenges at* **HILLSIDE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

One of Head Teacher Sister Maryanne Lawrence's favorite parts of the day is the time she spends on her daily rounds through the classrooms at Hillside International School. The school, located in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is filled with skilled and enthusiastic teachers, dedicated staff, and more than 280 energetic nursery and primary school students.



*Students at Hillside International School are always happy to see Sister Maryanne in their classrooms.*

Originally founded by the late Mrs. Rosemary Uwemedimo, a British woman and wife of a local patriarch, Hillside brought much-needed quality education to the area in the years after the 1967-1970 Nigerian civil war took its mighty toll on nationalized schools. Today, Mrs. Uwemedimo's goal of bringing high-quality, affordable education to children of poor families in South Southern Nigeria continues in the hands of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Province of Africa who now serve as administrators of the school.

“We are committed to providing learners with the skills and the competence required in a rapidly changing world through character formation and sound, quality, affordable, and holistic education,” said Sister Maryanne. “This is done with the view of producing learners who would compete favorably with their counterparts anywhere in the world.”

Realizing such lofty goals is no easy task in any setting, but in a school located in a region severely impacted by multidimensional poverty, achieving such results takes a particularly herculean effort. When Sister Maryanne began as head teacher at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, she was elated to find 16 desktop computers in the computer lab. She soon discovered, however, that only four of them worked—leaving them with just one computer for every 70 students.

For many students, just getting to school is a challenge. Local buses often don't run consistently, leading to late arrivals and lost instruction time for pupils. And, although Hillside owns its own school bus, the high cost of oil has made it impossible for



the school to operate it. Struggles like this make it imperative that the faculty at Hillside meet students where they are, always challenging them to achieve, while at the same time taking into consideration the obstacles with which they contend.

Sister Maryanne cites active listening as one of the keys to understanding and responding to the needs of families. She knows the parents of her students well and makes time to hear their concerns during PTA meetings and one-one-encounters. "Things are very difficult in this country. It is hard for parents to pay the fees," said Sister Maryanne. "I do whatever I can to be helpful, gentle, and patient."

There have been some big successes at Hillside. When Sister Maryanne arrived, she was disappointed to find that there was no library in the school. Determined to remedy that, she searched storage areas and found several boxes of books, many



*Hillside International School is known for upholding high academic standards.*

of which had been given to the school by Mrs. Uwemedimo. Those, along with other books she gathered from wherever she could, and some newly purchased shelves, tables, and chairs, have transformed an empty space into a frequently visited library. "The pupils love coming in during the day and reading in the library," said Sister Maryanne.

Sister Maryanne also created a school canteen where students and staff can enjoy snacks during the day. Her next goals include developing a home economics and art department outfitted with the tools needed to teach and practice skills such as sewing and knitting, getting more working computers, and acquiring toys for the children to play with.

In the meantime, the students are finding success with the resources they have. Enrollment is growing and Hillside graduates are thriving at secondary schools and other advanced educational institutions. In addition to being prepared academically, the students at Hillside are equipped with a deep faith and a confidence born out of knowing they are loved and cared for.

"I get to school, and the students climb all over me and ask me questions," said Sister Maryanne. "They come into my office all the time, knowing I will be happy to see them. These children are beautiful to be with. They have passion and love. I see joy in them and that gives me joy to give to others."



*(Above) A new library is one of the enhancements Sister Maryanne has brought to Hillside International School. (Below) Students line up outside the school.*





# School Sisters of Notre Dame

*sisters, associates, and ministry partners*  
**IN PRAYER, MINISTRY, AND COMMUNITY**

*Sister Evelyn Adondiwo assists children with drawing at Orthopedic Training Center in Nsawam, Ghana.*



*Associate Kathy Sipes, Sister Sharon Slear, and Sister Sharon's former student Cindy Cottone travel to Haiti.*



*Sisters in St. Louis enjoy a Cardinals-Brewers baseball game courtesy of the Serra Club of St. Louis.*



*Sisters, SSND staff, and friends of SSND take part in the Marian House 5K.*



*Sister Mary Odundo and the pupils of St. Clare primary school, Kiptere, Kenya, enjoy an excursion.*





*Sister Gracia Kloch heads out on an adventure.*



*Sister Monica Benedict leads pupils of Corpus Christi School, Anwule, Benue State Nigeria to safety after their school bus broke down.*



*Sister Kim Trong Nguyen traveled from Texas to Chicago to celebrate her 25th Jubilee.*



*Sister LuAnn Jacobs of the Good Counsel Learning Center assists children at the Wild About Reading event in Mankato, Minnesota.*



*Sister Helen Robeck at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, helps tie quilts that will be sent to the Orphan Train Project.*



*Sister Suzanne Moynihan celebrates with a student at Rising Stars, an affiliated ministry of the Central Pacific Province where sisters volunteer their time to tutor Milwaukee area children.*



*Sister Magdalene Umoh gave a talk to the Muslim Jamat Group, University of Makeni in Sierra Leone during Independence Day celebrations.*





School Sisters  
of Notre Dame

## SSND AND LAUDATO SI'

In response to Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', School Sisters of Notre Dame are working toward a better future for our Earth in many large and small ways. Here are just a few:



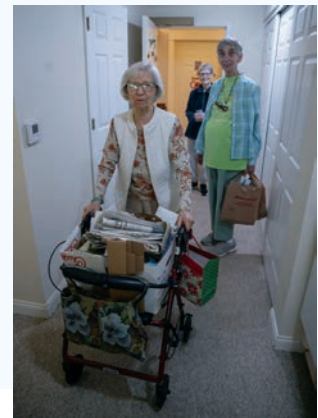
**Sister Sarah Tanjo**  
Bumbuna, Sierra Leone

At St. Matthew Agricultural Secondary School in Bumbuna, Sierra Leone, Sister Sarah Tanjo leads students in a reading club created to increase awareness about what is happening around climate change. Students also monitor littering and use of plastic bags on school grounds and, with Sister Sarah's guidance, have planted a coconut tree to contribute to caring for our common home.



**Sister Cathy Bonfield**  
Sarasota, Florida

A teacher at St. Martha Catholic School in Sarasota, Florida, Sister Cathy Bonfield uses Laudato Si' to educate her students and herself about the importance of ecology. Linking Laudato Si' and the work of Beyond Borders Haiti, Sister Cathy explained the importance of clean water to the PreK-3 and PreK-4 classes, helping them imagine what it would be like to have to find and carry water over long distances.



**The Sarah Community**  
Bridgeton, Missouri

At the Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri, Sister Lorraine Soukup turns her bedroom into a recycling office every Wednesday. Sisters and lay people put their paper and cardboard in bags on their doors for a 9:30 a.m. pick up by recycling team members. The items are brought to Sister Lorraine's "office" where they are sorted and bagged. Sister Betty Meyers delivers the items to a center for recycling.