

SAVE THE DATES FOR 2018

For a list of 2018 volunteer opportunities, visit:
www.bvmsisters.org/volunteer

Oct. 21

St. Mary HS Alumnae All
Class Memorial Mass
Stickney, IL
Contact: Eileen O'Shea
eoshea@bvmsisters.org

Oct. 27-28

BVM Network for
Women's Issues
Felician Motherhouse
Chicago, IL

Nov. 1

185th Anniversary of the
BVM Community

Nov. 3

St. Paul HS Reunion
San Francisco

Nov. 4

Benefactors' Mass
Chicago

Nov. 10

BVM Heritage Society
Mount Carmel
Dubuque, IA
Contact: Jeroma Day, BVM
jday@bvmsisters.org or
563-556-3240

Nov. 18

SOA Watch Encuentro
at the Border
Arizona/Sonora

Nov. 27

Giving Tuesday

Dec. 1

Santa Clara Faith
Formation Conference
Santa Clara, CA

Dec. 8

Renewal of BVM Vows
and Associate Promises

BVM Associate News

will be emailed and posted
on the Associate page of the
members' website. Copies
mailed on request. Contact
bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org.



BVM Associate News

A Faithful Present, a Hopeful Future

F R E E D O M • E D U C A T I O N • C H A R I T Y • J U S T I C E

FALL 2018

Dear Circle of Friends,

It is hard to believe that we are in the final months of 2018. Thank you for sharing your news and photos from your activities this year! They help to make each newsletter extra special.

The annual renewal of promises is nearing, and as you plan your time of renewing your associate promises and sisters their renewal of vows, consider taking a selfie or group photo or clip of your ceremony to share with us! We would like to include a page in the winter newsletter with shots and reflections from you.

What does this time of renewal mean to you? What ways are you sharing the



gifts of association with those around you? Don't feel as though you need to write pages, just a sentence or two will do.

Thank you for the gift you are to us and to all of our circles.

—Eileen, Grace, and Suzie
Associate Coordinator Team (ACT)

Meet the ACC: Kathy Weishaar



I have been an associate for seven years. I attended Marian Catholic High School (Chicago Heights, Ill.) and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a degree in mathematics.

I have three sons and three grandchildren. My oldest son just adopted a 2-year-old boy

and his older sisters are so excited to have him in their lives. My youngest son is developmentally delayed and lives in a group home near me. I bring him home and take him to dinner a few times a week.

I retired from teaching math to 6-12 graders in Illinois and Ohio, including Waukegan (Ill.) High School. I am an adjunct professor at Joliet

Junior College (Joliet, Ill.). I started teaching there when I moved closer to my parents to help them. I also worked at Lambs Farm in Libertyville, Ill., a resident home and work site for people with special needs. I have taught religious education for 40 years.

—Associate Kathy Weishaar
ACC Member

A Reflection on Last Year's Network Meeting

Have you ever exited an event thinking, "That was interesting," and then two weeks later, had a eureka moment when you realized what you had actually experienced at the event?

That happened to me after the 2017 BVM Women's Network meeting that brought women of three different faiths together to discuss their similarities and differences. One of my initial observations was that we had spent a day together in discussion without raising our voices or trying to change minds, customs, or beliefs. Is that a special gift that women have? To share ideas without demanding conformity or conversion?

A few weeks later, during Schola choir practice at Mount Carmel, I made the connection. The world and its people could solve many of our problems if we behaved more like a choir.

Sometimes music calls for a soloist who sings beautifully alone. The single voice rises up for the enjoyment of all. It is complete and pure by itself.



Sisters and associates join in conversation at the 2017 BVM Women's Network meeting.

Then a second voice joins the first and they sing together, in harmony. Singing the same words, but not the same notes. The two are supportive of each other, balancing and making the whole richer. Soon another voice picks up the descant, adding more beauty, strength, and variety—all blending. Sometimes one voice will be featured and others will take

the background. Then they switch. It is glorious.

As marvelous as the individual voices are, however, they only achieve that unified quality if the singers listen to each other and understand what their personal role is in creating the masterpiece. It helps to have a director guiding the process.

The question in some situations is "Can I be more

helpful to the group as a singer or a director?"

If we share, listen, and learn from each other, we can make beautiful music together.

The 2018 BVM Network for Women's Issues will be held in Chicago on Oct. 27–28. See members.bvmsisters.org for more details.

—Associate Sharon Scully

Cluster Klatch: St. Louis

On Sunday, July 22, our St. Louis cluster meeting thrummed to the beat of the power of the unity of sisters and associates gathered together in prayer and sisterhood and possibilities. Initiated by BVM Mary Frances Reis and hosted by Associate Jill Burleson, at her home in Pacific, we shared a meal, joined in prayer and reflection, and formed closer bonds. We enjoyed the great privilege of being led through the BVM Summer Contemplative Prayer 2018 by BVM Mary Nolan. We took turns reading and sharing our insights. Mary Frances invited each attendee to offer an intercessory prayer, and as

we sat in a circle, we offered sometimes more personal, sometimes more global prayers, all meaningful and inspiring in their own way.

As a fairly new associate, I see that the cluster meetings are vital to our BVM community as a whole. A wonderful way to celebrate the joy of God's love and care and to be present to and for each other, these meetings serenade us: "I am with you on the journey, and I will never leave you."

Read the BVM Summer Contemplative Prayer at members.bvmsisters.org/bvm-leadership.

—Associate Jill Burleson



St. Louis Cluster members (l. to r.) BVM Mary Nolan, Associates Jill Burleson, Mary Clair Wenger, and Theresa Koetting; BVMs Veronica Higgins and Mary Frances Reis; and Associate Christine Middendorf (seated) gather in reflection at Jill's home in Pacific, Mo.

Damien House: Through the Eyes of an Associate and Her Grandson

Recently, I had the privilege of representing Damien House and Annie Credidio, BVM on Mission Sunday at St. Lawrence Parish in Santa Clara, Calif. I was first introduced to Damien House, a home and refuge for persons afflicted with Hansen's Disease (leprosy), and Annie on a BVM-sponsored mission trip to Guayaquil, Ecuador. In sharing this beautiful story of faith, hope, and transformation, I recalled my own visits to Damien House and related stories from my 16-year-old grandson's recent mission trip there.

Damien House is just as Annie describes it: as visitors enter this haven, they find beautiful gardens, colorful murals painted on the walls, immaculately clean conditions, and the welcoming spirit of the residents. Justino, a double amputee, whips around in his wheelchair and greets everyone with open arms, a big smile, and his contagious laugh. Justino tells the story of what it was like when the government owned the property—with rats crawling in through broken sewers, no mosquito nets, and even roaches in the residents' meager food. It's not anything like that today.

Carlos is another resident; he was diagnosed with Hansen's disease when he was seven years old. Instead of treating him with the multiple drug therapy that would have cured his disease within nine months, his mother took him to a witch doctor for

healing. At 17, the bones in his foot were disintegrating, resulting in the amputation of his leg. His mother then abandoned him, and Carlos went into a deep depression. When he found Damien House, the other patients surrounded Carlos with love and welcomed him into the family. One patient, a carpenter, taught Carlos how to work with wood, and today Carlos makes beautiful crosses. As he etches out the designs, he truly identifies with the suffering wounds of Christ. Carlos, like the other residents, has a deep faith and trust in God. They believe that God will provide.

On their visit to Damien House, my grandson, Brendan, and six other boys from St. Matthias and St. Pius parishes in Redwood City, Calif., were asked to take down screens, wash windows, and put the screens back up. None of them had ever done that kind of work, but they caught on quickly. At first, Brendan thought the job was tedious and boring, but then he realized that he was working to help all the wonderful people he had met at Damien House and the job became a pleasure. Brendan learned the joy of service to others. Now Brendan is "hooked" on Damien House and is looking forward to returning, just like his grandma!

—Associate Carmella Huser



Carlos is one of many Hansen's Disease patients at Damien House in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Read more about Carlos and other Damien House patients on the BVM website at www.bvmsisters.org/damien-house.



Associate Carmella Huser helps with the pantry at Damien House.



At Damien House, (l. to r.) Kim Burke, Associate Carmella Huser and her grandson Nicholas Altabet, and Edna Perry help with tortilla making.

Associates in Action



Twenty-two veterans commit suicide per day. Wellness Works, which helps vets cope with depression, hosted a "Not on Our Watch" event in Glendale, Calif. Montrose associates, discerners, and sisters helped with the set up and clean up.



Associates and BVMs meet in Dubuque to help Maureen Frommelt in her discernment process. Among the group are (left photo, l. to r.) Sara McAlpin, BVM; Maureen and her companion Associate Marilyn Wasmundt; (right photo, l. to r.) Associates Sharon Scully, Pat Conzett, and Betty Takes.



On Saturday, July 28, Razia and Kausar Khokhar invited Chicago Area sisters and associates to join their cluster for a home Mass. Bob Sears, SJ, an old friend of Razia and Kausar, celebrated the liturgy. After Mass, the Khokhars treated participants to a delicious home-cooked Pakistani meal.



BVMs from Iowa City hosted a social for their cluster in August. Pictured are (l. to r.) BVM Jeanne Mary Miller, Associate Nancy McCarville; and BVMs Mary Agnes Giblin, Kathleen Mullin, Judith Terese McNulty, Mary Stasia Stafford, and Genevieve Freund.

BVM Mission:

We are the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a community of Catholic women called to live the mission of Jesus through our core values of

FREEDOM, EDUCATION, CHARITY, & JUSTICE.

Check us out online:




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of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 Freed by Love, Acting for Justice
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