‘Birdies’ Fund BVM Remodeling Project

Even though we’re halfway through 2009, we want to again thank the generous donors who partnered with us to help remodel the Marian Hall Dining Room by participating in the 2008 John Deere Classic Birdies for Charity® Fundraiser.

Thanks to the generosity of these 583 donors who participated in this fundraiser, no congregational money was used to fund this project. This entire project was funded by donations received through the Birdies for Charity® Program. The BVM congregation received 100 percent of the donations collected on its behalf, plus an additional 10 percent matching gift from the John Deere Classic.

Marian Hall is “home” to our elderly sisters who need skilled nursing care. With the support of donations through the Birdies for Charity® Program, they now enjoy a more user-friendly and comfortable place to dine, especially our sisters who use walkers and wheelchairs.

Please see the accompanying information about the upcoming 2009 Birdies for Charity® Program, and how you can get involved. One look at the new Marian Hall dining facilities, and you will see, your support does make a difference!

The Sisters of Charity, BVM are pleased to once again be participating in the Birdies for Charity® Program through the John Deere Classic PGA Tournament on July 6-12, 2009, in Silvis, Ill. We invite you to help support the BVMs through this fun and easy fundraising event!

Our goal is to raise enough money to complete two projects: (1) replace a fire door in the Marian Hall Chapel to ensure the safety of the sisters living and worshipping there; and (2) make modest improvements to a sun porch area in the Motherhouse. We hope to make this porch a safe, usable space for the retired sisters, especially those who because of mobility issues have a difficult time going outside. With your help, we can see both of these much needed projects to completion.

Please see the accompanying article about how last year’s Birdies for Charity benefited the sisters at Mt. Carmel, in Dubuque, Iowa, by funding a renovation project in the Marian Hall Dining Room.

Here’s how you can help. Participants, like you, pledge a specific amount for each “birdie” made during the tour-

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Donor Profile
Giving Is the Kirby Tradition

Lou Kirby has been a part of the BVM family since the day she married her husband, Art Kirby. You see, Art's sister is Sister Francilla Kirby, BVM, who resides in Chicago.

Lou and Art were married for 51 years at the time of Art's sudden death five years ago. Lou shares that she and Art always felt a part of the BVM community. She has fond memories of the times Art and their four children spent with Sister Francilla and other BVMs at various events.

Art and Lou decided in 1997 to begin giving annual gifts to the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Since Art's death, Lou has continued that tradition with an annual gift. Lou designated memorials be given to the BVMs in Art's name at the time of his passing, and she remains faithful to the Mt. Carmel Partner Giving Society. This new giving program was established in 2008, and is a way for Lou to partner with the BVMs in line with the giving process that she and Art established over 12 years ago.

As a retired first and second grade teacher, Lou understands and admires the core value of education among so many of the BVMs. “Being a teacher myself, I have a great admiration for the dedication that many of the sisters have to teaching. I can relate to their passion for education and appreciate the work that the sisters have done to educate young people over the years in schools across the country.”

“Art attended St. Paul’s Grade School, in San Francisco, Calif., where he was certainly well taught by the BVMs,” commented Sr. Francilla. His (and Lou’s) desire to donate to the BVMs “may well have been an expression of his gratitude for this fine education.”

Lou’s annual gift speaks volumes about her faith in the work of the BVM community. “I remain in awe of the good work that the sisters do. I am humbled thinking about their service to others and their combined ability to give of self.” Lou appreciates the support of all the BVMs during the time since Art’s death. “I believe it’s important to carry on the tradition of giving that Art and I established a number of years ago.”

Lou volunteers at her parish, St. Jude, in southern California. She also has six grandchildren.

Sister Spotlight

Sister Pat Thalhuber, BVM (Herbert Mary)

I have found through my ministry as a teacher, youth coordinator, community programmer, and Circle keeper that empowering ideas and their implementation comes with heartfelt listening and willingness to change. My work the past 10 years involves initiating Circles, a restorative justice process introduced into the mainstream of society by Native Americans, to address family and institutional needs. I have held Circles within agencies, schools and the criminal justice system.

After holding Circles for seven years for women at a correctional facility in St. Paul, Minn., I and another Circle keeper decided to document the process that brought healing to many. We published a book titled, Building a Home for the Heart, Using Metaphors in Value-Centered Circles. These Circles created a safe space for honest dialogue and helped to develop healthier behaviors.

Restorative justice aims to heal the harm done to the community, the victim and the offender. Mending broken trust is hard work that calls for our best values. Such work, done sincerely and diligently through a process like the Circle, can eventually lead to deeper and more meaningful relationships.

Sister Susan M. Coler, BVM

As an attorney and partner of the Minneapolis office of Sprenger + Lang PLLC since 1989, Sister Susan Coler’s firm litigates national employee class and collective actions on behalf of plaintiffs in the areas of discrimination, wage/overtime claims, employee benefits and international human rights.

“I am most energized by the potential of this work to create systemic change and by the courage and perseverance of our clients who are challenging large corporations and making them accountable for creating workplaces that are fair and inclusive.” (See www.sprengerlang.com.)

To unwind from the challenges and time demands of her work, Sister Susan enjoys time with friends, reading, movies and travel. “The backdrop of all this is living BVM life fully and contributing what I can to the mission we share and the richness of our lives together.”
BVM Prayer Association Supports BVM Ministries

When looking through our Currents of Change newsletter, you may have noticed the insert for the BVM Prayer Association. Through this order form or by going online to www.bvmcong.org/benefactors&alumni/bvm-prayerassociation/prayerassociationcards you can enroll members of your family or friends in this spiritual association.

Through the enrollment, your loved ones will be included in the Masses and prayers of the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Please see the insert for specific instructions on how to enroll individuals in this meaningful gift of prayer.

Donations received through the BVM Prayer Association are used to help support the mission and ministry of the BVM congregation.

One of the ministries supported by the BVM Prayer Association is that of Sister Laurene Brady, a BVM who ministers in Kumasi, Ghana. Thanks to your partnership and support, Sister Laurene has worked diligently there to establish three libraries for the students in the area.

One is a small library for 15-20 neighborhood children (grades K-8) on the front porch of the BVM House in Kumasi, where Sister Laurene lives. A second larger library at St. Hubert’s High School is used by 55-60 high school students. The third and largest library at St. Hubert’s serves 160 students in K-8.

“I keep very busy trying to be a loving and compassionate presence to the people. I tutor 16 students in subjects ranging from literacy to higher math and English on a 1:1 basis.” Her library project, too, helps in educating these young people so they can have the opportunities they need to eventually become educated and working citizens in their country.

Sister Laurene shares, “The people in Kumasi, Ghana are friendly, loving, simple folk. I see them not as poor, but free, holy, beautiful and very appreciative.”

Please remember Sister Laurene and her students in your prayers. Thanks to your partnership and prayers, our Sisters can continue to make a difference in this world by doing the work of the Gospel.

Credit Card Update

For donors who like the convenience of using a credit card as their method of giving, we have good news. In addition to using MasterCard and Visa, you can now use your Discover card to make a donation to the Sisters of Charity, BVM.

We hope this provides an additional and helpful option for you to consider when making a donation.

You can always make online donations through our secure website, at www.bvmcong.org or mail your donation to the BVM Development Office, 1100 Mt. Carmel Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52003-7991.

John Deere to Match Donations

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If you would like to contribute to Birdies for Charity®, complete the form to the right and mail to the Development Office in the envelope provided. Please note that to be eligible for the prize drawings, your pledge form must be received no later than July 10, 2009.

For more information about the Birdies for Charity® program or to request additional brochures, contact: BVM Development Office 563.588.2351 ext. 5554 or development@bvmcong.org
Guide to Giving

The BVM Development Office has recently published a booklet, “A Guide to Giving.” This publication is designed to help you, our donors, understand your varied options and rewards of giving.

When giving to an organization such as the Sisters of Charity, BVM we feel it is important for you to design a giving plan that fits your personal needs, and allows you to reap benefits from making such a gift. In addition to the satisfaction that comes from knowing you have made a difference in the lives of others, the best gift plans improve your financial and tax situation—often right away.

This booklet allows you to explore opportunities that combine philanthropic giving with your financial needs and tax-planning strategies. Through creative gift planning you can secure your own financial future, as well as ours.

In the booklet you will find helpful information and tips about:

• Wills,
• Charitable trusts,
• Cash gifts,
• Donating assets, real estate or life insurance plans,
• Retirement planning,
• And a wealth of other information about planned giving.

To request a free copy of the “Guide to Giving” booklet, please complete the form provided and mail to the BVM Development Office.

___ Please send me the FREE brochure, “A Guide to Giving”
___ I am considering making a gift to the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Please call me. The best time to call is ______AM/PM
___ I have not previously informed you, but I have already included the Sisters of Charity, BVM in my estate plan through:
   ___ my will ___ my retirement plan assets
   ___ a trust arrangement ___ an insurance policy
   ___ other ____________________

(Please print)

Name __________________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________
City, State, Zip _______________________________________________
Phone ______ Email _____________________________________________

This information is strictly confidential.

Please mail completed form to:
Development Office
Sisters of Charity, BVM
1100 Carmel Drive
Dubuque, Iowa 52003
Or email information to: development@bvmcong.org