

Currents of Change

A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of the Sisters of Charity, BVM

Challenge Grant Boosts Ghana Library Project

Like the old front porch of our childhood, the front porch of the BVM residence in Kumasi, Ghana, is a place where both children and adults gather, eager to learn.

In December 2006 Sister Laurene Brady, BVM began sharing donated books with a dozen youngsters who came once a week to the center where she worked in Kumasi. As the numbers grew, three other BVMs soon became involved in this education and library ministry—Sisters Irene Lukefahr, Therese Jacobs and Jackie Cramer.

The sisters now hope to establish and equip a new library and adult education center, and their dream is steadily taking shape. Sister Laurene says, "People in Ghana have such deep faith. They often say, 'by God's grace we will meet the challenge.'"

One such example of God's grace is a matching challenge grant issued by BVM associate Bob Kutter and his wife Lisa, of Saratoga, Calif., through the Kutter Family Fund, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The Kutters will donate \$10,000 to the Ghana Library Project if the BVM Development Office can raise a matching \$10,000



BVM associate Bob Kutter and his wife Lisa have issued a 2010 challenge grant and incentive to raise funds for the Ghana Library Project.

by December 2010.

"The challenge grant is a way of support that provides incentive for others as well as helping the BVM Development group meet their goals for this project," says Bob, a software developer. The Kutter family has played an active role in their local Sacred Heart Community Service Group, involved in projects like providing food and clothing for needy residents.

Bob met Sister Elizabeth Avalos, BVM, while working with this group and later became acquainted with Sister Irene. "She was very positive and upbeat," Bob says.

In August 2009, the Kutters reconnected with Sister Irene. "She explained the library project in Ghana," Bob says. "Lisa works at the Santa Clara County Library Headquarters, helping to get new materials into the system. So naturally, we were interested." The Kutters were looking for

a way to help people to learn and acquire new skills to better their own lives.

Bob became a BVM associate in July 2009. "I really focused on the BVM charism and the emphasis on freedom—especially freedom from fear, so a person can become who he or she really is," he explains. "The BVMs are also very aware of social justice issues and the importance of education."

Challenge Grant Opportunities

For more information about partnering with us to raise this \$10,000 and make the dream of the Ghana Library Project a reality visit WWW.BVMCONG.ORG, or contact:

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We must

be the

change

we wish to

see in

the world.

-Gandhi

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Donor Profile

Sharon Scully . . . Telling the Story

“Donors are some of the best people in the world,” says Sharon Scully, BVM associate. And she should know.

A former teacher and alumna of Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, Sharon has gone on to devote much of her life to “friend-raising.” Listening to her describe her long career in fund development, it’s evident that she has the gift of telling the story.

“The challenges of telling the story of an organization—what it is doing, why it needs help—are inspiring to donors. They share the same values and tell their friends about it,” she explains. Sharon knows that word of mouth from donors is invaluable. “And it’s easier for a donor to pass on the excitement for a cause they believe in.”

With the unique perspective of having been student, faculty and staff member at Clarke College, Sharon has had many relationships with

BVMs over the years. “As the sisters aged,” she says, “our friendships evolved and I saw what ministries they were engaged in outside of Clarke College.” She has many memories of Sister Lucilda O’Connor, BVM. “Sister was at Clarke while I was there. She retired from teaching and worked in the Alumni Department, so we kept in touch. After I was hired as Director of the Capital Campaign at Clarke, Sister Lucy liked to say that she hired me twice, first as a Spanish teacher and later, in ‘institutional advancement.’”

At the suggestion of Sister Xavier Coens, BVM, Sharon became a BVM associate in 2003, and has since played integral roles as consultant/member of the BVM Development Board and member of the BVM Women’s Focus Committee. “The BVMs saved my sanity in retirement,” Sharon says. “Becoming an associate has challenged me in more ways than I can share, with opportunities to grow,

learn and contribute.”

As a BVM Legacy Partner, Sharon has named the BVMs in her will. “For me, and for anyone who knows the BVMs and supports their mission, the question is not whether I will give. Rather, it is how much can I give, by what means can I give and when can I give the maximum?”

Through her years in development, Sharon has garnered key insights. “Responsibility to donors remains a first priority. There are unknown living costs for many donors. They often can’t make a big commitment until they no longer need the money. And for me, the major gift of my life will also come at the end, as a bequest.”

In the meantime, Sharon involves her family and friends in her partnership with the BVMs. This year for Christmas, she shared the story of the Ghana Library Project and donated gifts in their names. “It’s all connected,” she smiles, “with everyone reaching out, together.”

The BVM Legacy Partner Program

BVM Legacy Partners are donors who remember the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in their estate plans through wills, bequests or gifts. Legacy Partners receive annual special recognition in *Perspective*, our annual report to donors; a certificate of recognition; and holiday, birthday and anniversary cards from the BVM congregation.

For more information about becoming a BVM Legacy Partner, please contact:

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Would you Like to Become a BVM Associate?

An associate of the BVM community lives the Gospel in a special way. While continuing to live within one’s own life-style, being a BVM associate is an opportunity to:

- Develop a stronger and fuller sense of community
- Deepen one’s spiritual life, personally and as a member of a common faith community
- Collaborate in the BVM mission of “being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in God’s steadfast love”
- Join in living the BVM charism, core values and traditions
- Unite in prayer and serve with BVMs and other BVM associates

For more information about becoming an associate visit our website at WWW.BVMCONG.ORG or contact a BVM Associate Coordinator:

Elizabeth Avalos, BVM: sociateabvm@mac.com | Elizabeth Fitting, BVM Associate: eafitting@g.mail.com | Nancy McCarthy, BVM: nancybvm@aol.com |

St. Joseph Academy Alumnae Remember BVMs

St. Joseph Academy in Dubuque, Iowa, may have closed half a century ago, but its standards live on in the spirit of its alumnae. And the St. Joseph Academy Alumnae Association doesn't just fondly reminisce.

Instead, they've taken action over the years, exemplifying the values they were taught by the BVMs. As president of the Alumnae Association, Betty Frommelt has been an involved member since she graduated from St. Joseph Academy in 1954. "We received an excellent education

from the BVMs at St. Joseph," Betty says. "The sisters were so caring and our lives revolved around our religion."

The strong connections that bond the group are reflected by their annual spring Mass and brunch at St. Raphael Cathedral in Dubuque, another place where BVMs once taught. "And in the fall, we have a meeting to plan our brunch," Betty explains. "That's also the time that we ask Diane Brondyke for suggestions on projects we'd like to donate to. We try to do something each year for the older sisters to make their lives more comfortable."

Since 1987 the Alumnae Association has contributed almost \$55,000 to fill special needs at Mount Carmel,



From 1868-1959 St. Joseph Academy was a high school for girls taught by the BVMs.

projects like a van used by the Wellness Department to transport sisters, lift chairs, a large screen TV for the community room, wireless TV ears, vestments for the priests, liturgical banners and much more.

The sisters are grateful for the generosity and remembrance of the St. Joseph Academy Alumnae Association.

Sister Spotlight

Sister Mary Joan Fitzgerald, BVM (John Raymond)



An Iowa native, Sister Joan Fitzgerald, BVM was born in Des Moines and raised in Boone, where she and her brother and sister were taught by the BVMs at Sacred Heart grade and high school.

Of her years in education, Sister Joan says, "We were the first scholastics. After Mundelein I was assigned to Santa Barbara's new high school, Bishop Garcia Diego, for three years."

In 1962, she was assigned to Xavier College Prepara-

tory High School, where she taught, was treasurer and became principal.

"As principal I have worked with wonderful BVMs, religious and dedicated lay teachers," Sister Joan emphasizes. "Along with our great staff, the students and parents have made Xavier an outstanding college preparatory high school. I have watched Xavier grow from a student body of 17 to 1200."

In discussing her life and ministry as a BVM, Sister Joan shares, "Having young girls come as freshmen and leave Xavier College Preparatory as young women faith-filled, confident and ready to meet their future is most rewarding."

Sister Nan Ross, BVM (John William)



Give Sister Nan Ross, BVM a hammer, a nail and a chance to putter, and she's in her element! If she's not planting flowers in her special gardens around Mount Carmel, or refinishing furniture in her "studio" in the Motherhouse garage, she's pushing wheelchairs for the other sisters or fixing what needs fixing.

In the short six months that Sister Nan has been back at Mount Carmel, she's made a name for herself as the "go-to-gal" when something needs to

be done. Where did she learn so much? "Our father died when I was five," Sister Nan says. "When things needed to be done, we learned by doing because we had to."

Sister Nan loves children and has taught elementary school in Illinois, California and Alaska, in addition to eight years in service to the BVM community and 13 years of volunteer work at a tiny parish in Maloy, Iowa.

"I loved Alaska, especially being a presence at Holy Cross parish on the Yukon River. And Maloy was very special to me as well," she confides. "I am happiest and function best on the fringe—the remote edges."

Currents of Change

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Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need. —Kahlil Gibran (1883 – 1931)

Our Thanks to Sister Kathleen Sinclair, BVM

“We are very grateful for all that Sister Kathleen has done to help further the ministry of development and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.”

Diane Brondyke,
Development Director

During her time as Assistant Development Director, Sister Kathleen Sinclair, BVM hosted donor thank you events in California, Phoenix, the

Chicago area and St. Louis. She oversaw the work of the Sisters’ Development Network and worked directly with these sisters who are involved in their “thank you ministry.”

Sister Kathleen was also in regular contact with our distinguished donors through personal visits, phone calls and written correspondence.

Grateful for her opportunity to further the mission of the BVMs, she feels that her work in development served as a “wonderful blessing” in her own life.

The Development Office staff bids farewell to BVM Kathleen Sinclair, at a gathering in her honor. They are (l. to r.) Jane Schrunk, Sister Kathleen, Diane Brondyke and Lori Hesselting.



New Opportunity to Honor Family, Friends

A Month of Remembrance

There are many ways to honor and remember your family and friends. You can have prayers requested, Masses offered or you can donate to special projects or charities in their name.

Now there is a new opportunity to partner with the BVMs to remember someone you love and want to honor in a unique way.

Your memorial gift of \$175 will provide the wine and hosts used by our sisters for Masses for one month. Mass is celebrated daily on the Mount Carmel campus and at Wright Hall in Chicago.

If interested you may reserve “your” month to remember or honor a family member or friend.

For more information, contact:

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