

# School Sisters of Notre Dame

MANKATO PROVINCE

*Transforming the World Through Education*

## Profiles In Service



### Sister Midge Breiter, SSND

Retirement Fund for Religious, Spring 2010 Newsletter, used with permission

Sister Midge Breiter, SSND, is the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) coordinator for the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis and is deeply committed to raising awareness about the needs of senior religious. Here she discusses the trials and triumphs of inspiring archdiocesan parishioners to *Share in the Care*.

#### Tell us about some of your experiences with RFR donors.

**Sister Midge:** I am always moved when parishioners share with me the moral or intellectual impact that religious have had in their lives. Often they will recount how much they treasure the kindness and support that religious offered them.

In the parish I attend, the pastor wrote an article prior to the collection and explained that religious were given a modest stipend for their services, never a salary or benefits. As a response to his article, one of the parishioners asked to have a Saturday evening meal at the parish and invited people to enjoy the meal and make a free-will offering. The evening was well attended, and the parish collection and the dinner raised over \$20,000. Words have power.

“Midge” continued on page 3

### Sisters Mary Tacheny and Lalande Hennen

People of Jordan, Minnesota receive ministry of presence from retired sisters

Sisters Mary Tacheny and Lalande Hennen have nearly 50 years of combined experience in classroom teaching and administration along with decades of pastoral and advocacy work. They are now retired and their ministry is volunteer service at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church, in Jordan, Minnesota.

“Once I retired, it didn’t mean my ministry ended,” said Sister Lalande. “Because I no longer have the responsibility of administration, I have the opportunity to be with people in a relaxed atmosphere where I’m not on a tight schedule. Prayer and relaxation have been such a blessing of retirement.”

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Local Harvest Alliance members Ann Houghton, Sister Mary Tacheny and Jennifer Jensen. The Local Harvest Alliance is a group of local food producers in Scott County whose goals are to promote the preservation of agricultural land and open spaces, support local food production, develop a vibrant local food economy and ultimately realize food security through local food production.



# Development Office

## Dear Friends,

School Sisters of Notre Dame are engaged in education that transforms. The highly successful *Retirement Fund for Religious* is an example of the longevity of our influence as educators. Serving you these six years as development director has been an educational-adventure for me. Promoting our educational ministries, our missionary extensions and our sisters in retirement has been a privilege, a blessing and a challenge. Now, my commitment to the SSND educational mission has led me to serve in another capacity beginning July 1.

I offer heartfelt gratitude to our professional staff members, development board and committee members, and to you, our many donor friends. As generous benefactors of SSND, each one of you enables SSND transformative education to continue. As Blessed Theresa Society members, you honor SSND with your legacy gift. It's been a great joy for me to serve the mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame through our mutual development efforts. For all that has been, thanks be to God!



Lynore Girmscheid, SSND  
Development Director

## Dear Friends,

Dag Hammarskjöld once proclaimed in a moment of change, "For all that has been, thanks, Lord, thanks; to all that will be, yes, Lord, yes!" For us, as School Sisters of Notre Dame in the Mankato province, now is one of those kind of moments. We come with deep gratitude and eager anticipation to this moment in the life of our Development Office. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sister Lynore Girmscheid as she completes six years of ministry as our development director. She has blessed us with her generous sharing of her gifts and skills, her presence and attentiveness to every detail and delight of this ministry! As she moves on to give herself to other ways of being about the Mission of Jesus, we pray God's blessing and grace be with her. For all that has been, thanks, Lord, thanks!



At one and the same time we have the opportunity to welcome Sister Dianne Perry as our new development director. Sister Dianne comes to us with a wealth of experience that has taken her into schools and parishes, here in the United States as well as in Kenya, Africa. In our next newsletter we will give you a glimpse into who she is and what gifts she brings to us. Please join us in welcoming her to the adventure of development at this time in our history! To all that will be, yes, Lord, yes!

This is indeed a time of great transition and exciting new happenings in the life of our province. We ask for your ongoing support and prayers as we gratefully say yes to whatever God calls us to be and become!

Our prayers and support,

Marjorie Klein, SSND  
Provincial Leader

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Ruth Shanklin Jackson, Editor

Our newsletter is published by the Office of Development and Communications. It is designed to promote greater understanding of the life and ministries of School Sisters of Notre Dame. We invite readers to become involved in the works of our community.



*Transforming the World Through Education*

“Midge” continued from front page

**How did you get involved with the RFR? How long have you been a diocesan coordinator?**

**Sister Midge:** A while ago I was leaving another position, and my community asked me to consider being the coordinator for the Retirement Fund for Religious. I have been in this position for almost three years.

**Tell us a little bit about your background and ministries.**

**Sister Midge:** My parents nurtured ten lively children in rural Minnesota. We learned at a very young age to care about others. Responding to religious life was a natural vocation, having grown up in a faith-filled family.

My relationship with religious started long before I became a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND). I was educated by the SSNDs from first grade through college. They were much more serious about educating me than I was about being educated! Years later I realize the gift of learning they instilled in me.

My vocation took me through years of teaching in elementary schools followed by pastoral ministry in several parishes and finally as a parish administrator. In 1991, I volunteered to be the administrator at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Kisumu, Kenya, East Africa.

Presently, I am employed as a caregiver for homebound people in addition to my RFR ministry with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. I volunteer at a women’s shelter and serve on the SSND Development Board and the board of East Side Learning Center, an SSND sponsored ministry that provides one-on-one tutoring to low income children.

**What do you find the most challenging aspect of being a diocesan coordinator? What aspect is most rewarding?**

**Sister Midge:** The annual collection is entering its 23rd year, and the challenge is to keep the need alive as numerous women and men religious communities are still well below being fully funded. When a collection has this kind of history, it may be tempting to think “how much longer?” The reality is that more religious require care today than when the RFR started and at a much greater cost. I really try to communicate the ongoing need.

To coordinate the appeal each year, I am blessed with the support of Archbishop Nienstedt, who encourages the priests and laity to support the collection. I have the expertise of the staff at our archdiocesan paper, *The Catholic Spirit*, with articles and ads. Many of the priests realize the need and write informative articles in their parish bulletins. The generosity of the parishioners is spectacular. It is rewarding to see so many people coming together to assist elder religious, and I am grateful for their support.

**What do you see as the biggest challenges for the RFR in the coming years?**

**Sister Midge:** As I mentioned before, communicating that there is still significant need is a great challenge at the local level, and I imagine the same is true at the national level. It’s easy for me to say, but we have to find a way to produce materials that will speak to the hearts of the donors while giving a picture of the continued need.

**What do you wish more people knew about the RFR and/or senior religious?**

**Sister Midge:** Many of the people who have been influenced by women and men religious are now reaching retirement age and some are even approaching the end of their lives. I wish more people knew that it is possible to remember the Retirement Fund for Religious in their wills. I know from NRRO’s annual report that many people do include the RFR in their estate planning, but it would help if more donors were aware of this option.

And I hope that people know that retired religious pray for them—that they never stop praying for them. ☩



Sister Midge at the celebration of the School Sisters of Notre Dame 175th Anniversary.

## “Profiles” continued...

The sisters serve in many capacities including teaching grade school religion, responding to the needs of the school, and visiting the homebound and sick, to name a few. Their letters and cards to nursing home residents or those experiencing hardship let parishioners know someone cares.

In the spirit of Blessed Theresa’s founding educational vision, Sisters Mary and Lalande have also led sessions for women of the parish on the privilege of voting and the role of citizens at the time of elections. A series of discussions on prayer were also provided for the women by the sisters.

Awareness of the local issues is important to the sisters as well. They write letters, make phone calls, and attend City Council Meetings.

Sister Mary further explains, “Retirement gives us the ability to be more involved in the community. The parish has been very welcoming and friendly which has given us many opportunities to be available to address the needs.”

Sister Lalande’s volunteer service focus is on a ministry of presence and pastoral care. She is involved in the Befriender Ministry, which is a national, ecumenical organization that provides pastoral care through listening presence.

“They have questions as to whether they are making the right decisions. I’m there to bounce ideas off of and affirm their ideas,” Sister Lalande says of her Befriender Ministry.

Both sisters are members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame’s earth committee. This committee is dedicated to connectedness with the earth and provides a yearly conference to help others understand, respect, and honor the system of life.

“I am passionate about issues that affect rural people,” said Sister Mary. “I am dedicated to working with those who honor the land and farm in a way that respects the earth.”

Sister Mary worked for many years as resource person, educational consultant, and activity coordinator on rural concerns for the Diocesan Rural Life directors and the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota. During ten of those years she served as a lobbyist for them. In the process she got to know, work with, and become an advocate for farmers and other rural people. This work brought her back to her agricultural roots and her passion for advocacy. Later Sister Mary served as a director of the School Sisters of Notre Dame’s Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM).

Lisa Coons, current CESRM director says, “Mary is one of the most inspirational women I have ever known. Her dedication seems to well up from her deep and profound understanding that life on this planet is a gift. She is committed to change and hopeful for the future. Sister Mary models a level of engagement to which I can only aspire.”

Sister Mary continues her commitment to sustainable

land use through the Local Harvest Alliance, which was started by a small group of area farmers. The group was aware of her previous work with rural issues and asked for her help. Sister Mary assists the group by organizing agendas, taking minutes, and facilitating discussions. The Alliance responded to Scott County’s 2030 plan for how land would be treated in the future. The plan indicated that more land would be developed and less farm land would be supported by the county. The Alliance influenced the county and showed that farming needed to be a larger part of the plan. They created the Farmers Advisory Task Force that now works closely with the Scott County Commissioners.

Sisters Mary and Lalande have a keen sense of the need for education and engagement of people in the parish. Sister Mary said, “When they learn, they can influence change. We don’t take over; we work to empower parishioners to be involved.”

## Sister Corrine Dahlheimer

### Hospice ministry provides opportunity for gentle presence

“What supports me as I work with people in the hospice program is my faith,” said Sister Corrine Dahlheimer, hospice team member at Mary T. Inc., Coon Rapids, Minnesota. “I believe I can make a difference, bringing a gentle presence, compassion and guidance as needed.”

Mary T. Inc. seeks to enhance lives by blending rental communities, supportive living, hospice, and home health services. Medical, spiritual and social care is provided during the end stage of life.

Sister Corrine explains, “It is so caring and compassionate, it fits this part of my life. At 71 years old, I am no longer in full time ministry. Service, justice, and dignity for the elderly are things I believe that sisters can offer. Often it’s the little things, our presence of faith, comfort, or simply smoothing the bed linens.”

Sister Corrine began to examine religious life in junior high school while being taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame from Mankato. “My life is one of service to others even as a teacher, so Mary T.’s Hospice program fit my ‘way of life,’” said Sister Corrine.

In addition to hospice service, Sister Corrine has cared for three family members as they approached death. Most recently she spent 5 1/2 years in the activity department of the Memory Care Area at Epiphany’s Assisted Living. She ministered at the Church of the Epiphany for almost 20 years in the capacity of volunteer director, assisting and enabling others to share their time and talent within the larger community.

# Carrying the Mission into the Future

## Sisters Head to Hungary to Teach

“We recognize in our internationality new potential for acting interdependently among ourselves and with all Creation.” (Call to Solidarity)

In the spirit of this call, three School Sisters of Notre Dame from the North American Major Area were selected to participate in the Summer School Language program in the Motherhouse in Hungary. The three sisters are Rose Bast, Thomasette Pittari and Mary Warner (Mankato Province). They will join Elise Silvestri from June 28 to July 9.

During the intensive two week program, these sisters will work both with individual students as well as small groups. A critical part of the program is to allow the students to converse with SSNDs who cannot speak English. This is the third year that sisters have linked with the Hungarian Province in this program.

In addition, Sisters Irene Feltz and Lucille Dehen will be in the Hungarian Province during the 2010-2011 school year. These sisters have generously responded to the needs in the international congregation. ✚



Sister Corrine Dahlheimer with Mary T. Inc. client, Amanda.



Sisters Lalande (top left) and Mary (seated, second from the right) with some of the women in the parish who hand quilt artistic quilt marvels then auction them off to support parish education programs. Working with this group of women provides the sisters the opportunity for interaction over issues such as immigration, personal spirituality and other religious and community issues as they stitch.

Sister Corrine values being in a position to speak of God’s love and mercy as her clients end their journey. She meets each person where their faith is.

“If the client is Catholic I encourage the sacraments,” said Sister Corrine. “There is beauty in the sacramental life of the church at the time of dying and death. Over and over, the power and grace of these sacraments—Eucharist, Forgiveness, Absolution and Anointing—bring a tremendous amount of peace. It makes my faith stronger to see the power of the sacraments.”

“God puts us where he needs us,” says Sister Corrine. “We are His instruments.” ✚

*Portions of this article are from an interview by Diana Oleskow, Training & Marketing, Community of Caring Billboard.*

## Alive in the Lord

**SISTER MARY ISABEL KATHREIN**  
April 14, 1921 - March 16, 2010  
Professed: July 17, 1941  
Teacher, Librarian

**SISTER M. LILLIAN NOHAVA**  
December 18, 1918 - March 24, 2010  
Professed: July 22, 1940  
Teacher, Administration, Tutor

## Leaving Your Legacy

A legacy gift assures the preservation of the SSND mission and supports SSNDs in retirement and in active ministry.

Bequests, life insurance and retirement plan gifts, charitable gift annuities and trusts of various kinds preserve SSND values dear to your heart.

For more information, please contact Sister Lynore Girmscheid at 507-389-4231.

Office of Development & Communications  
170 Good Counsel Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001-3138

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# Summer Splash

with the Notre Dames

For Daughters and Moms or Significant Female Adult  
(girls completing 6, 7 or 8th grade) June 25-26, 2010.

170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN

School Sisters of Notre Dame invite moms and daughters to “Splash” into the beginning of summer for a little bonding time on Good Counsel Hill in Mankato. Summer Splash includes a blend of activities designed to strengthen the mother-daughter connection and provide an inside look at the sisters’ lives. The camp, open to girls and their moms or significant female adult, will begin at 1:00 p.m. Friday, June 25 and end at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 26. Summer Splash will engage participants in a variety of opportunities for fun, relationship building, and prayerful activities. Highlights include an overnight stay, arts and craft activities, swimming, BINGO with our senior sisters, and prayer in our beautiful Good Counsel Chapel. Cost is \$60 per pair.

Register online at [www.ssndmankato.org](http://www.ssndmankato.org) or contact: Sister Mary Beth Schraml, 507-388-0618 (day) 507-389-4242 (evening) or [mbschramlssnd@yahoo.com](mailto:mbschramlssnd@yahoo.com) The deadline to register is June 15th.

## Upcoming Events...

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| May 15    | <b>SSND Annual Gala</b><br>Good Counsel Hill, Mankato, MN  |
| June 22   | <b>SSND Annual Golf &amp; Card Tournament</b><br>Daytona Golf Course, Dayton, MN<br>WATCH FOR ONLINE REGISTRATION MAY 1. |
| July 11   | <b>Ice Cream Social</b><br>Good Counsel Hill, Mankato, MN  |
| August    | <b>Sales begin for NoFest Octoberfest</b>  |
| October 9 | <b>SSND Annual Craft Fair &amp; Garage Sale</b><br>Good Counsel Hill, Mankato, MN  |