Celebrating 125 Years of Presence and Service

This year, the Congregation of St. Joseph’s founding community of La Grange Park is celebrating a momentous and joy-filled milestone - 125 years of service and presence in La Grange Park and the greater Chicago area!

The story of the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange Park began in 1899 with Mother Stanislaus Leary (far left), and one year later, with Mother Alexine Gosselin (left) who faced the daunting task of leading a new congregation whose financial resources totaled 33 cents. Under her leadership, the congregation grew and by 1912, there were 80 sisters in the community.

Following WWI and WWII, the congregation prospered and began fulfilling an ever-growing number of requests from area parishes to staff their schools. By 1960, it is estimated that sisters had educated more than 14,000 area elementary and high school students.

Many years later, the La Grange Park Sisters joined with six other communities of Sisters of St. Joseph in 2007 to form one united community - The Congregation of St. Joseph. Today, we continue to serve the community and the world through direct service, outreach, volunteerism, advocacy, prayer, collaboration, and partnerships.

Congregation Celebrates Milestone Anniversary with Community

On Sunday, June 9th, the congregation welcomed over 250 people to Joseph House for an old fashioned Ice Cream Social to celebrate the **125th Anniversary** of our sisters’ service and presence in La Grange Park. The day included music, fellowship, and of course, plenty of ice cream! We thank everyone who helped put this event together, and all who turned out to help us celebrate this milestone with us!
On May 18th, Sister Kathy Sherman (center) participated in the installation ceremony of Chicagoland Christians Care of Creation Declaration. She, along with other members of the clergy, gathered at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago for the ecumenical service, which was followed by a reception. The declaration calls for Christians and all people of good will to protect and preserve Earth, our common home. Bishop Robert G. Casey, Vicar General, gave the homily.

Sisters participated in the CROP Hunger Walk in Oak Park on May 5. The walk raises funds and awareness of ever-present food insecurity issues in Cook County, the U.S., and around the world. Locally, portions of the funds raised went to support Beyond Hunger, Community Fridge, Migrant Ministry, River Forest Proviso Pantry, and First Baptist Oak Park Food Pantry. Internationally, funds raised help support global resilience efforts in 53 countries. From left are Sisters Pat Bergen, Chris March, Mary Jo Curtsinger, Jackie Schmitz, Carol Crepeau, and Kathy Sherman.

Sisters, associates, and friends gather regularly at Joseph House to make blankets for patients at Loyola Hospital in Maywood. Each gifted blanket includes a note letting the recipient know that our sisters are praying for them. Left, the blanket circle hard at work. Right, Sisters Dorothy Randall and Mary Schaefer with their creations.
The following sisters are celebrating Jubilee this year in La Grange Park. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister’s entrance into religious life.

Congratulations to all our sisters celebrating Jubilee across the congregation!

To view sister biographies, visit CSJoseph.org/jubilarians

Sister Michele Elfering, CSJ
Entered into eternal life on February 9, 2024, after 75 years of religious life.
History & Heritage Wall Installed at Joseph House

Just in time for our 125th Anniversary celebration, a history and heritage wall that was years in the making now greets visitors in the lobby at Joseph House.

The wall is a visual representation and timeline of the history of the sisters in La Grange Park, starting in 1899 up until today. It is as beautiful as it is informative, and our sisters, staff, and guests have enjoyed it. We invite you to Joseph House to see the wall for yourself!

Bless You!

We are so very grateful for your kind gifts of financial support. Your kindness helps care for our retired and infirm sisters, continue our ministries, and fosters our mission as we live and work so that all may be one. Here is how we used your contributions for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023:

Ways to Deepen Your Support

- Direct a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA to “Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph,” EIN No: 83-0481134.
- Consider a charitable gift annuity (CGA). For gifts of $10,000 or more, you receive tax advantages and a lifetime stream of income payments – often at above market rates.

Single Life Rates

American Council on Gift Annuities 1.1.2024

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To Learn More, contact Melissa Haley O’Leary, Director of Development at moleary@csjoseph.org or 216-688-3474

The Congregation of St. Joseph cannot give you financial or tax advice, so please consult with your financial advisor before making any final decisions.
Taller de José

On May 19th, Taller de José welcomed guests to its annual Builder’s Day event at the Hyatt Lodge in Oak Brook to celebrate and support the ministry of accompaniment. The Congregation of St. Joseph was the Presenting Sponsor of the event. Taller De José is an agency that offers companionship and personal attention to people who have difficulty finding their way in a complex social services system.

In attendance were sisters, associates, and other partners in mission to support Taller de José and their work of connecting the predominantly Spanish-speaking immigrant community in and around Chicago to health, legal, and social services. The fundraiser supports the free services provided by Taller de José.

Chicago has a large Hispanic population and has seen a tremendous increase in the number of newly arrived immigrants, many of whom have sought services from Taller de José. This past year, over 1,300 individuals and their families were served, a 37% increase over the previous year. The staff have been hard at work attending community events, outreach fairs, and doing presentations at local schools to help make the community aware of all that is available to them at Taller de José.

To learn more, visit TallerdeJose.org

Former Taller de José Executive Director Anna Mayer Diaz, who was presented the Companion Award at the event by Congregational Leadership Team member Sister Kathy Brazda, who is one of the founders of Taller de José.
This year, sisters once again engaged with students from Nazareth Academy in a variety of ways. Several sisters met with and assisted students who are on the Academy's Liturgy Planning Team. They helped them learn how to structure services, write prayers, choose music and art, and how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Composer and musician Sister Kathy Sherman shared ways music can be used in prayer, and even wrote two new songs for the students to use. Artist and sculptor Sister Mary Southard shared her process for creating art with the students, and provided ideas for how to incorporate art in prayer.

In March, Nazareth Academy welcomed sisters as guest lecturers in a variety of classrooms in honor of the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19). Below, Sisters Pat Bergen and Mary Jo Curtzinger, along with others, participated.

These are just a few examples of ways our sisters connect with, share the congregation's mission, and engage with Nazareth Academy students throughout the year.
Spotlight Photo

On April 8th, sisters, associates, staff, and friends gathered in the courtyard of our La Grange Park center to watch the solar eclipse.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email communications@csjoseph.org.

We invite you!

to join us in a truly unique living experience.

If you are looking for a licensed assisted living residence in a warm and friendly community environment for yourself or a loved one, we invite you to consider joining us at Joseph House!

Our residents enjoy:

- Modern, comfortable suites
- Beautiful grounds and walking paths
- Life enrichment and wellness programs
- Volunteer service opportunities
- Mass and prayer offerings

For more information, contact Mark Miron at 708.482.1279, or mmiron@csjinitiatives.org

We look forward to hearing from you!