

Serving the Dear Neighbor

NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

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!



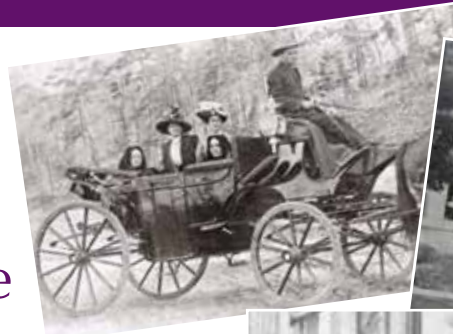
The story of the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange Park began in 1899 with Mother Stanislaus Leary (far left), and one year later, with Mother Alexine Gosselin (left) who faced the daunting task of leading a new congregation whose financial resources

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. ●

On this page are just a few photos that show our sisters living and ministering in La Grange Park and surrounding areas over the years. From top, sisters and friends enjoy a horse and buggy ride, early 1900s. Building of the original Nazareth Academy, 1901. First group of postulants in La Grange Park, 1913. Sister Mary Peter with students, St. Francis Xavier, 1951. Sister Sharon Jakicic with students, St. Anthony, 1975. Sisters Joellen Sbrissa, Marlene Schemmel, and Ann Terese Reznicek, peace march, circa 1975. Sister Ellen Springer with Nazareth Academy student, 1990. Sister Michele Elfering with students, St. Mary School, 1999. Sister Jean Ann McGrath with students, St. John Fisher School, 2002. Sisters attend the annual Builder's Day fundraiser for Taller de Jose, 2023.



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.



Sister Mary Jo Curtsinger, Jewel Yokie, and Alix Basden at the UN Social Development Conference in New York. Jewel and Alix are both involved in the congregation's peace and justice work.

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.

Jubilee

2024

The following sisters are celebrating Jubilee this year in La Grange Park. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister's entrance into religious life.



Sister Ann Terese
Reznicek, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Joanne
Vallero, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Frankie
Dutil, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Celeste
Cotter, CSJ

25 Years



Sister Pat
Bergen, CSJ

60 Years

Congratulations

to all our sisters celebrating Jubilee
across the congregation!

To view sister biographies, visit
CSJoseph.org/jubilarians

IN MEMORIAM †



Sister Michele Elfering, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on February 9, 2024,
after 75 years of religious life.

WE REMEMBER

WE CELEBRATE

WE BELIEVE

History & Heritage Wall Installed at Joseph House



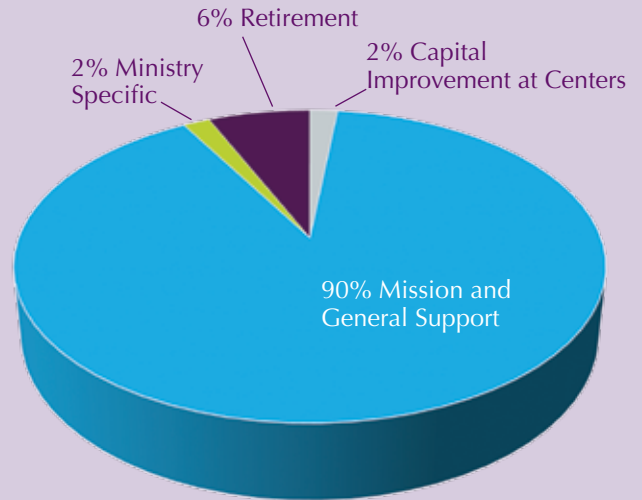
Just in time for our 125th Anniversary celebration, a history and heritage wall that was years in the making now greets visitors in the lobby at Joseph House.

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

Age	Rate	Annual Income \$10,000 Annuity
60	5.20%	\$520
70	6.30%	\$630
80	8.10%	\$810
90	10.10%	\$1,010

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.

Ministry of the Arts

A digital resource for art and music created by our sisters.



Artwork by Sisters Mary Southard, Frankie Dutil, Marie Benzing, and Pat Willems

Visit us at

MinistryoftheArts.org

to browse and request digital art, music, poetry, blessings, and more!

For more information, email **mota@csjoseph.org**.

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.



Nazareth Academy



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 Curtsinger, 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. ●

The Well Spirituality Center

Are you seeking a deeper understanding of yourself, your place in the universe, and wish to deepen your relationship with the Holy?

The Well Spirituality Center welcomes you for a variety of programs, retreats, speakers, and events that will feed your mind and spirit, and where you can find a community of friends, ask questions, and share perspectives on this gift of life. Join us!

Offerings

Sacred Earth Retreats

September 17 and October 4, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Sister Maureen Wild, SC

This series explores teachings within the writings of cultural historian and geologist Thomas Berry as they interweave with the wisdom of nature-centered mystics and of nature-inspired scientists.

Participate in-person or on Zoom.

Spiritual Direction

The Well has trained spiritual directors who are available to walk with you as you integrate your life experience with your deepest spiritual desires.

For more information or to set up an appointment, call 708.482.5048 or visit our website below.

To learn more about these and many more offerings, visit
CSJTheWell.org



CONGREGATION OF

St. Joseph

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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@csjinitatives.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

