



LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Serving the elderly poor in Pittsburgh since 1872

Mission Statement

Continuing the work of Saint Jeanne Jugan, our MISSION is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.



The newly crowned King and Queen of Mardi Gras Residents Maddy and Buzz Pinkerton.

Mardi Gras

One Last Party Before Lent

This year's Mardi Gras celebration was bigger than ever before. The real party started on the eve of Fat Tuesday with the annual "Coronation Ball." Apartment Residents Maddy and Buzz Pinkerton were named this year's King and Queen. Mother Judith handed over a ceremonial key to the house and gave them "free reign" of the home for a day! After the introductions of the court the party was kicked off by Mother Judith's call to "Let the Good Times Roll."

On hand to join in the festivities of the evening were student volunteers from Duquesne University, the University of Pittsburgh Newman Club, Robert Morris University and Franciscan University of Steubenville. The students helped the Residents prepare for the party with beads, sequins and noise makers. They also kept the party lively by encouraging Residents to dance to the tunes provided by entertainer George Suhon. Their enthusiasm was contagious and helped everyone to have a grand time.

While many Residents were still tired out from the ball, a full day of excitement was planned for the next day—Mardi Gras! Homemade beignets (French donuts) and coffee were served for breakfast in the home's Meet 'N' Treat Cafe in the morning. Then later in the afternoon a parade of Residents decked out with beads, boas, and parasols danced through the halls of the home to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In." The grand finale party in the auditorium included an open mic session and a beautifully decorated Mardi Gras sheet cake donated by Potomac bakery.

By the end of the celebrations all the Residents had their fill of sweets and treats to last them through the entire forty days of Lent. None of these fun moments would be possible without the help and support of our benefactors. The Mardi Gras party is just one example of the many ways we strive to make our Residents as happy as possible!

Save the Dates:

- April 5
Easter Sunday
- April 23-25
Rummage Sale
- May 9-22
Airport Collecting

Little Sisters of the Poor

1028 Benton Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412) 307-1100

Vol. XXIII No.1
Spring 2015

Little Sisters of the Poor



Resident Mary Lindsey reads her note from pen pal Halle.

Pen Pals Exchange Notes

Last Fall the Little Sisters were approached by good friend Kim Herbert, who is also a fourth grade Saints John and Paul Faith Formation instructor, about a unique project. The parish, its parishioners and their faith formation program, like many in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, have always been supportive of the Sisters' mission. Throughout the year they organize a canned goods drive and various collections. The fourth grade teachers wanted to teach their students about "faith in action" so that they learn

more about the elderly living at the Little Sisters. That is when they reached out to our home to initiate a "pen pal" program with the nursing Residents.

The project was truly meant to be since the faith formation fourth grade enrollment perfectly matched the number of Residents living in the nursing home. Every month since October the students have written their pen pals asking fun questions and wanting to know more about the life of the elderly person.

When possible the Residents wrote back on their own or with help from a volunteer or Sister. The first exchange from the students was a hand crafted paper pumpkin for Halloween filled with candy and an accompanying card introducing themselves. Then came the "turkey" decorated box of tissues before Thanksgiving. At Christmas time each student gave the residents a miraculous medal with a photo of the Blessed Mother. The final exchange was for Valentine's Day when the students crafted a flower with their photo made from a washcloth and a pencil stem.

So many wonderful things have come from this experience. Some Residents will continue corresponding with their pen pal even after the class finishes. All the fourth graders were invited to the home to volunteer in March for a special afternoon bingo with the Residents. It gave everyone a chance to meet in person.

"This pen pal program has brought so much joy to our Residents. They love interacting with the younger generation. I hope that this exchange has also helped the students expand their appreciation for the elderly," commented Sister Judith, Administrator.

A Perfect Score!

Every year our home is subject to an inspection by the Department of Public Welfare. We must meet certain standards of care in order to maintain our license as a nursing home in the state of Pennsylvania. The inspection is unannounced and lasts for a few days. This year was very much out of the ordinary when a team of inspectors arrived at our home bright and early on a Saturday morning!

Even with the "surprise" time of the visit

our home was not only able to pass the inspection, but we did so without one single deficiency! It is not just the efforts of the Sisters that make a deficiency free inspection possible. It is the hardwork and dedication of the staff and volunteers who treat our home as their own. It is also the financial support from our friends and benefactors that allows us to operate the way we do! Thank you for your role in ensuring that each Resident is well cared for and loved!



Students from one of the faith formation classes working on their notes and crafts to the Residents.

Around Our Home



Daniel McGrogan, Sister Judith, Brandy Traphagan and Resident Margaret Scanlon.

Order of Malta Pharmacy

Our home recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Order of Malta Federal Association. The funds have been designated to establish the “Order of Malta Pharmacy Fund” for the elderly Residents living here at the Little Sisters. In the photo above Daniel McGrogan, local Hospitaller for the Order of Malta, presents a check to Sister Judith, in front of Resident Margaret Scanlon and employee nurse Brandy Traphagan. Sister Judith and all the Little Sisters are so very grateful to receive this support to cover the unfunded pharmacy costs for their elderly Residents. We are also grateful to all the local members of the Order of Malta who frequently come to our home to volunteer! This grant is an extension of that partnership.

100 Years and Counting

December 8, 1914 was a very special day for Esther King, it was the day she was born in Erie, PA. Esther recently celebrated her 100th birthday at our home. Her family helped the Sisters throw a huge party to celebrate. Esther said it was the nicest party she has ever attended.

Just imagine the things that she has experienced and lived through over the past 100 years. World War I started the year Esther was born, she was already graduated from high school when the depression began and she was married with children during the second world war. She even clearly remembers her grandfather who was a veteran



100 year old Esther King with her son Bill.

of the civil war.

One of the most special parts of her celebration was the honor of receiving a *Papal Blessing* from Pope Francis. Happy Birthday Esther!



Resident Nancy Regan with volunteer Kathie Swazuk.

Volunteer Spotlight

For many years our home was fortunate to have a devoted volunteer with plenty of style, talent and an eye for design. Dorothy Schaffner worked tirelessly crafting beautiful centerpieces, wall sconces, and holiday wreaths to decorate the home's hallways and to sell in the Gift Shop until she fell ill during the summer of 2013 and went to be with the Lord that September. The Sisters were not sure that they could find a person to carry on the work of decorating with the same commitment and abilities that Dorothy had but sure enough their prayers were answered the day volunteer Kathie Swazuk walked through the door in January 2014.

Kathie, a retired VA nurse, had always had an artistic side. During an “Art and Inspiration” class at a local library her classmate & Little Sisters volunteer Carmella Zielinski told Kathie of our need for help. Kathie had heard of the Sisters from listening to John Cigna on KDKA radio, but had never been to the home. She decided to give it a try and see if the Sisters liked her work. What started out as a “trial run” has turned into a 15 hour plus weekly commitment. Kathie comes almost daily. She loves creating new pieces to help the Sisters but what she likes most is the interaction with the Residents and volunteers.

“It is an honor to be here. I receive so much joy knowing that my creations are helping this home,” explained Kathie. Beyond the work she does here, Kathie is also a published author having recently finished a book of poems entitled “Wartorn Heart” that she wrote during and after her time serving as a nurse in the Vietnam War.

“We are so happy to have gained such a devoted and artistically talented volunteer as part of our family,” shared Sister Judith.

A Note From Mother

Dear Friends,



Sister Judith Meredith, Lsp,
Administrator and Mother
Superior of our home.

The Feast Day of St. Joseph, our patron saint, on March 19th is a very special celebration for the Little Sisters of the Poor. Since the earliest days of our congregation, we have sought the intercession of St. Joseph to help us provide for the needs of the elderly poor in our care. Our Foundress St. Jeanne Jugan knew of St. Joseph's abilities to care for not only the Holy Family, but for every family created in all of the Little Sisters homes. Our prayers are answered time and again.

As a young teenager I often volunteered at the Little Sisters with my classmates. One morning a Little Sister approached me and asked me to help her pray. She had a serious dilemma—there were no “day old” donuts left in the house and she knew how much the Residents enjoyed a donut with their morning coffee. All Sister had left was one half donut. She placed this half of a donut in front of the home's St. Joseph statue and we prayed together.

That afternoon the same Little Sister took me outside to show me another St. Joseph miracle. Apparently a local bakery's donut machine went haywire and started producing half formed donuts. Instead of throwing out the imperfect batch it was suggested to take the donut halves to the Little Sisters. I happily helped the Sister unload the bakery truck and prepare the donut halves for the Residents breakfast. It was the first of many times I have seen St. Joseph's intercession at work in one of our homes!

No matter what the need, St. Joseph is always ready to help our family here at 1028 Benton Avenue. As we celebrate St. Joseph's quiet, humble life of service during the month of March we also celebrate and remember the intentions of friends like you. May he become for you, as he has for the Little Sisters, a great friend, loving provider and powerful intercessor before God.

Gratefully in prayer,

Sister Judith, lsp

MORE WAYS TO HELP

When St. Jeanne Jugan began her work in France over 175 years ago, she knew she must rely on the generosity of people in the local community in order to care for the elderly living with her. In fact, from the very first moment she welcomed Anne Chauvin into her home Jeanne knew she would take on the task of begging. Today, we carry on this tradition in the Pittsburgh area by asking for support from others to help us in the care of our Residents.

There are a variety of ways you can support us in our ministry to care for the elderly poor. Consider sending a gift of cash, check, stock or donating your used vehicle. Tribute gifts in memory of or in honor of loved ones or friends are also appreciated. For your convenience donations are also accepted through our website at www.littlesistersofthepoorpittsburgh.org. To stretch your gift even further, we encourage you to seek matching gifts from your employer, when eligible. Did

you know many employers will match donations 1 for 1 to qualified charities like the Little Sisters from their employees and sometimes even retirees? Check with your Human Resources department before sending in your next contribution.

If you are able, one of the simplest ways to give is in the form of an estate gift naming the Little Sisters of the Poor of Pittsburgh in your Will. Other options include creating a Charitable Remainder Trust, Charitable Gift Annuity or naming the Little Sisters as beneficiary of your Life Insurance or your Retirement Plan. These gifts make a significant difference in the loving care we can give to our Residents.

Please contact Kathleen Bowser in the Development Office at (412) 307-1268 or adevpittsburgh@littlesistersofthepoor.org if you have any questions about how you can help.



Sister Margaret Mary and driver Tom Hamilton unload the begging van after a round of collecting.

**Help keep us going.
Remember us in your will.**

Visit us at www.littlesistersofthepoorpittsburgh.org