



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.

Save the Dates:

- July 18
Motorcycle Ride
- August 6-8
Rummage Sale
- August 22
Spaghetti Dinner

Little Sisters of the Poor

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Apartment Residents Ed Nemeth (with his ukulele) and Frances Turner on the tambourine.

Throwback to the 60s Residents Give A+ Performance

After weeks of practice and preparation the stage was set for the Little Sisters Residents' Spring program. This year the theme was "Songs of the 60s." Mother Provincial Loraine Marie Clare was on hand to see the show's debut along with an auditorium full of Residents, volunteers, employees and family members.

Weeks prior to the show, the activities department scheduled afternoons of crafts, which included tie dying t-shirts for the performance and making homemade floral decorations. Practice for the show involved both the *Chime Choir* and the *Ukulele Club*. The Choir provided accompaniment for the opening number "Let It Be" and then went on to play a beautiful instrumental rendition of "What a Wonderful World." Next, the *Ukulele Club* provided back up on a trio of Beatles tunes which included "I Wanna Hold Your Hand," "A Hard Day's Night," and "All My Loving." The musical talents of everyone

involved were highlighted. Even our chaplain, Father John Geinzer, sang a solo version of "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Resident choir member, Ruth Blaney, also impressed the crowd with a solo performance of "What the World Needs Now."

"Participating in a group musical performance is a wonderful way to engage Residents and foster an increased sense of comradery. We are so very grateful to have such creative and musically inclined Activities employees who go above and beyond to make shows like this so enjoyable for everyone. We look forward to many more extraordinary performances in the future!" remarked Sister Judith, Administrator of the home.

Many thanks as well to the volunteer musicians who offered their time and talents including Kathy Smith on piano, St. Alexis school eighth grader Brooks Sharkins on guitar and Bernie Herr on drums.

Little Sisters of the Poor



Resident Marie Gaver feeding a bird during a field trip to the National Aviary.

Marie & Pilar, A Perfect Pair

Dr. Pilar Fish, Director of Veterinary Medicine at the National Aviary, first encountered the Little Sisters of the Poor while picking up a colleague at the Pittsburgh Airport a decade ago. Over the years she thought about helping the Sisters and decided two years ago it was time to volunteer. Her first day here, she met one of the home's newest Residents, Marie Gaver. It was an instant connection and the start of a beautiful loving friendship.

Pilar, having been raised by her grandmother in a Florida retirement community, always had a respect for the

elderly. Her career had taken her to zoos and animal hospitals all over the world, but once she settled in Pittsburgh, she was pleased to find the Little Sisters and become a volunteer. Over the next two years Marie and Pilar's friendship truly blossomed. They initially connected around their mutual love of nature including flowers and animals but their connection grew and developed as one of mutual respect, joy and sincere love.

Marie's face lit up with a smile every time Pilar visited and Pilar beamed ear to ear when she had the opportunity

to pay Marie a visit and take a break from the stressful job of caring for endangered birds. Together they had many moments of happiness, including the time the Aviary brought birds to visit the Little Sisters and when a group of Residents went on an outing to the Aviary. The pair also made special visits to Phipps Conservatory to enjoy the flowers and after Pilar installed a ramp in her backyard she was able to welcome Marie to her home to see the zinnias and dahlias that were planted because they were Marie's favorites. Pilar even drove to Altoona to find Marie the perfect pet—a canary named *Sparky*. Marie, having very little family, spent every holiday with Pilar. This past Christmas Pilar again welcomed Marie to her house to bake Christmas cookies, listen to Bing Crosby and decorate the tree.

The relationship between Marie and Pilar was so special that even in the final weeks of Marie's life Pilar's presence was a highlight. Their spiritual connection was also strong. Every visit ended in prayer, every interaction was a moment of respectful compassion toward one another. In fact, during the preparation for this story (days before Marie passed away) the two of them held hands while talking about their friendship. When asked if it was ok to share their story Marie gave Pilar's hand an extra squeeze as if to say "Thank you."

Motorcycles, Spaghetti and Rummage Reminders

There are three great upcoming events that we wanted to be sure you, our dear friends, knew about. First, the annual *Teamsters Motorcycle Ride* for the Little Sisters will be Saturday July 18th, contact the teamsters at (412) 526-7646.

The next *Rummage Sale* is Thursday, August 6th until Saturday August 8th 10:00am to 4:00pm daily. There is something for everyone, from clothing and furniture to jewelry and purses, you never know what treasure you will find.

Mark your calendar for Saturday August 22nd for our annual *Spaghetti Dinner*. Enjoy a lovely evening out to benefit our mission. Dinner is served 4:00pm-7:00pm with take-out available. Tickets are sold at the door only at a cost of \$8.00 per adult, \$7.00 per senior (65 plus) or \$6.00 per child ages 2-12. A variety of Chinese Auction Baskets will be raffled off as well.

For more information call (412) 307-1100. Please join us for any or all of these events!



Dr. Pilar Fish with Marie during a visit to Phipps Conservatory.

Around Our Home



Donna Grandinetti with her mother Resident Pauline Zaffina.

Mother's Day Tea

The water was boiled, the tea bags were ready, and the lilac center pieces were set. A beautiful spread of fruit, sweets and cheeses was waiting to be devoured. All of the Residents were encouraged to invite family or friends to an afternoon tea in the home's auditorium for Mother's Day.

The Sisters do their very best to offer opportunities like this for Residents to welcome their loved ones to visit. Often walker or wheelchair dependence makes it too difficult for a Resident to be transported out of the home easily, so the Sisters provide ways to encourage visitors to come to the home instead. Hosting events at the home removes any physical barriers that prevents a Resident from spending time with their family or friends. The Mother's Day Tea and the Father's Day cook out are two prime examples of this concept in action.

May Crowning

May is Mary's month. The Little Sisters follow the Catholic tradition of crowning the statue of the Blessed Mother each May. Gemma Lamb, an 8 year old friend of Resident Machiko Seto, who had just made her first Holy Communion, had the honor of crowning the statue of Mary in our Chapel.

Daily the Little Sisters say the rosary and confide the intentions of our friends and their families to Mary's maternal care. During the crowning ceremony and in the spirit of the Blessed Mother, we prayed for renewed inner peace, joy and hope for all our friends and benefactors.



Gemma Lamb with Sister Judith following the crowning ceremony.



Development Office volunteers Elaine Christopher and Babs Canary receive their thank you gifts.

Volunteer Luncheon

Day in and day out this home is blessed by volunteer efforts. From organizing the Rummage Sales, helping in the offices, chopping vegetables in the kitchen, visiting one on one with Residents, or planning and carrying out a Resident activity, volunteer work is a central part of the Little Sisters home. While we often thank our volunteers, we also feel it is important to reserve one day a year to formally express our deep gratitude for their loving service.

This past April, 65 of the over 150 devoted Little Sister volunteers gathered in the chapel for a Mass in their honor. Mass was followed by the Annual Volunteer Appreciation luncheon. Each attendee had a chance to win a variety of door prizes and everyone walked away with a lovely set of mixing bowls as a thank you from the Sisters, employees and Residents of the Home.

"Volunteer time is critical to our mission. The 2014 federal rate of a volunteer hour was calculated to be \$23.07. Our volunteers logged over 20,000 hours of service last year. The monetary value of their efforts has saved our home over \$450,000 in just one year! Beyond the cost savings, there is the value of their presence in our home. All of our volunteers bring kindness, support and friendship when they walk through the door! A big THANK YOU to our volunteers for sharing their time and talents with us!" remarked Sister Judith.

If you are interested in volunteering individually or with a group (perhaps as a work place day of service or for a class project) please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Valerie Beam at 412.307.1139 or volpittsburgh@littlesistersofthepoor.org.

A Note From Mother



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

Dear Friends,

During this “Year of Consecrated Life” I wanted to reflect on an important part of our vocation. I am so very grateful for the many years I have lived as a Little Sister of the Poor. I have witnessed many wonderful examples of God’s work in action and I am blessed to be a part of the twilight years of our Residents’ lives.

Something that you may or may not know about is our tradition of watching with the dying. All of the Little Sisters of the Poor feel it is an honor and a special blessing to provide a peaceful, prayerful presence for our dying Residents. We consider it the height of our vocation to be with our elderly in their final moments as they leave this life for their eternal home. While death is a difficult reality for many family members and friends, it is also a moment filled with the love and joy of our Lord.

We, as Little Sisters, are committed to being a loving and supportive presence for our dying Residents. In fact we take turns throughout the night being with them so as not to leave them alone during their grace filled time. Typically we hold their hand, pray with them or simply remind them of God’s merciful and everlasting love for them. Many are not verbally or physically responsive in these moments, but I sincerely believe they are aware of what is happening around them and are comforted by knowing we are there. A Resident recently passed away surrounded by her children, their spouses and about eight Little Sisters singing by her bedside. God called her Home and we all had the privilege to be with her for this eternal moment.

These precious encounters with our dying Residents might not be possible without the support of our friends and benefactors. You have helped us create a home where the elderly poor are cared for with love and dignity up until their last breath. Thank you for being part of our ministry and please join us during this “Year of Consecrated Life” as we continue to pray that more young people say yes to God’s plan and open their hearts to the possibility of a religious vocation.

Gratefully in prayer,

Sister Judith, lsp

WAYS TO HELP

Divine Providence, trusting that God will send us what is needed, has always been part of the Little Sisters heritage. Since we care exclusively for the elderly poor, we must seek support from others to keep our home operating so that we can lovingly care for all our elderly poor Residents.

We depend upon the generosity of countless individuals, businesses and churches to assist us in our work. You can help us in a variety of ways. Gifts of cash, check, stock or even a used vehicle are welcome. Memorials or gifts in honor of loved ones or friends are also appreciated. Donations can be made through our website at www.littlesistersofthepoorpittsburgh.org. Consider stretching your gift by seeking a matching gift from your employer. Some employers will even match gifts from 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 remembering the Little Sisters of the Poor of Pittsburgh in your Will. Oftentimes bequests come at a time when they are sorely needed. Please consider naming the Little Sisters as beneficiary of your Life Insurance or your Retirement Plan.

Each Little Sister considers it a serious obligation to pray for the benefactors. A Sister can devote her life, but without the people who assist us with financial support and volunteer time it would be difficult to care for our elderly in the way that they deserve—with love and dignity. Benefactors are remembered daily in the Sisters prayers and those of our Residents!

Contact Kathleen Bowser 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