



The Wheel - Joined in a Circle of Care

Newsletter of the Marian Woods Community

Winter Issue, 2019

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Long Live Pen Pals

By Sister Marlene Brownette, SHCI

After three years together, in May 2018 we bid farewell to our first group of Pen Pals at a dinner with a festive graduation cake. On October 4, 2019, we greeted our new group of 20 sixth-grade Pen Pals, again, girls from CCMS – Cornelia Connelly Middle School, East Fourth Street, New York City.

The Pen Pal program matches Sisters with students who write to each other throughout the year. The program’s goal is to provide mentoring and support to girls from at-risk families. This year, 20 of our Sisters participated.

On arrival, the girls were welcomed by Sisters and staff, and then departed for a walk to the nearby greenhouse on the Hartsdale Park Preserve. They were fascinated by hickory nuts on the paths—a real discovery for city girls! Then at Mass they joined in our hymns, singing without benefit of music books.

At a picnic dinner of hot dogs, corn, salads and a finale of Klondike Bars they asked Chef Bob to come home with them to cook at school! Sisters and students shared ideas, hopes, dreams—learning from each other—young and old together.

Before leaving the girls sang “Jubilate Deo” (in three parts) and we listened with delight. A final song with gestures and prayerful gusto earned a grand bravo and long applause. Time to say goodbye at the front door with cameras clicking and happy faces smiling.

Now we wait for letters and another visit! Yes, we, young and old do really learn together.



Smiling Faces: Sisters and Pen Pals from CCMS enjoyed a picnic dinner and each other’s company during their visit to Marian Woods on October 4.

Volunteer at Marian Woods!

Marian Woods is announcing a volunteer recruitment program. Let us know if you would like to become involved and share your talents. To learn more, contact Mary James, Recreation Coordinator at 914-750-6030 or mjames@marianwoods.org.



The Wheel



Welcome to Marian Woods’ first issue of *The Wheel*. In naming our newsletter, we’ve chosen a title analogous to the beautiful circle of care our Sisters, friends, donors, leadership boards, and staff are a part of here at Marian Woods.

The center of the wheel, the hub, is symbolic of God, the source of all. We, like the spokes on the wheel, proceed from the center and are held secure as we awaken to new awareness, new friendships and deeper compassion as God invites us to reach out in care to each other, our neighbors and our planet. The rim of the wheel reminds us that we are all held in the loving embrace of our Creator.

This first issue of *The Wheel* invites a glimpse of life at Marian Woods—a sample of the numerous blessings we receive and the creative ways our community reaches out to be a blessing for others.

Blessings of Sun, Rain, Earth and Willing Hands

by Sister Patricia Kenny, RSM

Almost everyone likes a garden: a place where pretty and tasty things grow, a place to wander and admire God’s handiwork in a rose or zucchini blossom.

This spring, thanks to the generosity of our donors, four raised gardens were purchased enabling Sisters to grow lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, zucchini and assorted herbs, which were enjoyed by everyone. With this first season behind us, plans for next year’s efforts are already underway.



Sr. Elizabeth McCarthy holds a basket of vegetables and herbs grown with the encouragement and efforts of Sisters Ellen Marie Robarge, Rose Andrew Egan, Mary Landon, Pat Kenny and Sharon Donohue.

A Greeting from Sr. Aileen Donovan

Dear Friends,

This greeting comes to you as we enter the season of Advent, a season of reflection and inner de-cluttering in order to welcome Jesus into our hearts anew.

As I was preparing to write this message the ancient narratives from Scripture about the entrance of Jesus into human history, kept calling for my attention. What do those 2,000-year-old stories say for my life, our lives, our world today?

It seems to me that the nativity narratives with their characters and elements draw the entire universe into the account. A young maiden and a carpenter ponder and trust disturbing messages delivered in mysterious ways. With their yes, the whole circle of creation is activated. Heavenly choirs of angels proclaim the “glad tidings” and a star leads the way. Shepherds who spend their days on land in human and other than human relationship, are the first to hear of the birth.

In the narratives, we find the poor and the rich, the simple and the mighty, the illiterate and astrologers, visitors from foreign lands and refugees fleeing to Egypt, power and fear gone awry in a king and the massacre of innocents. These ancient stories not only proclaim loud and clear ‘Emmanuel, God is among us’ but even more significant, we see *how* God is among us. Our God is inclusive. No one, no part is excluded. Amazing! Again, what do they say for my life, our lives, our world?

I hope in these weeks of Advent you will be able to steal a few quiet minutes in the dark mornings or evenings to gift yourself and reflect as you prepare for the approaching feast. I wish you and your loved ones abundant blessings.

Sister Aileen

2019 Jubilarians Celebrated



Jubilarians pictured with Fr. Senan Taylor, OFMCA, at a day-long celebration at Marian Woods on October 13, 2019. Left to right, Sr. Dorothy Sagona, RSM, celebrating 75 years; Sr. Catherine Murphy, FSP, 65 years; Sr. Margaret Rogers, SHCJ, 70 years; and Sr. Mary Landon, FSP, 60 years. The special day included Mass celebrated by Fr. Taylor, dinner and entertainment.

Stay in Touch

Send comments, questions to Carolyn Sedotti at csedotti@marianwoods.org, or call 914 750-6046. Website: Marianwoods.org. Write to: Marian Woods, 152 Ridge Road, Hartsdale, NY 10530.

Widening Circles



I live my life in widening circles that reach out across the world. I may not complete this last one but I give myself to it.

Rainer Maria Rilke

In each issue of *The Wheel*, we will bring you accounts of our widening circles--where we've been and where we're going--the lives we've touched and stories of those who have touched us.

Recently, two of our board members, Sr. Jeanne Ronzani, SHCJ and Clare Horn spent time volunteering with immigrants released from detention in San Diego and El Paso.

We had the opportunity to speak with Sr. Jeanne who worked with immigrants awaiting the outcome of their applications for asylum. Her work included helping immigrants with basic needs such as food, clothing and getting to and navigating the airport.

“It was such a moving experience—I was both inspired and humbled to see the gratitude for the meager conditions provided to the immigrants—a safe place to sleep, a cup of coffee or a day-old roll.” Sr. Jeanne said. “I was touched to witness the welcoming of the immigrants by the people of San Diego, who treated everyone with great respect and dignity.”

In the coming months, we will bring you more on Clare Horn's experiences and reflections during the two weeks she spent in El Paso.

Because of You...

- Through the generosity of the Ladies of Charity and many others, Sisters at Marian Woods attend daily worship in our beautiful light-filled chapel, the heart of our life at Marian Woods.
- We are grateful for countless individual donations, the generosity of Louis DiNapoli and gifts from our Sisters' founding congregations. Together, you have helped us purchase a new accessible van that will soon provide Sisters with safe, more comfortable transportation and foster participation in cultural events, trips to varied destinations, shopping, medical appointments and visiting the sick.
- Grants from the Baker, Eckstein, Carvel and Enchanted Life Foundations and New York State have provided much-needed capital repairs, including new heat and air conditioning units in resident bedrooms.
- Our present wish list items include **hallway carpeting, outdoor furniture, and supportive armchairs.**



Marian Woods Residents, Srs. Rose Vermette and Rita Marie Minogue (holding flowers).

