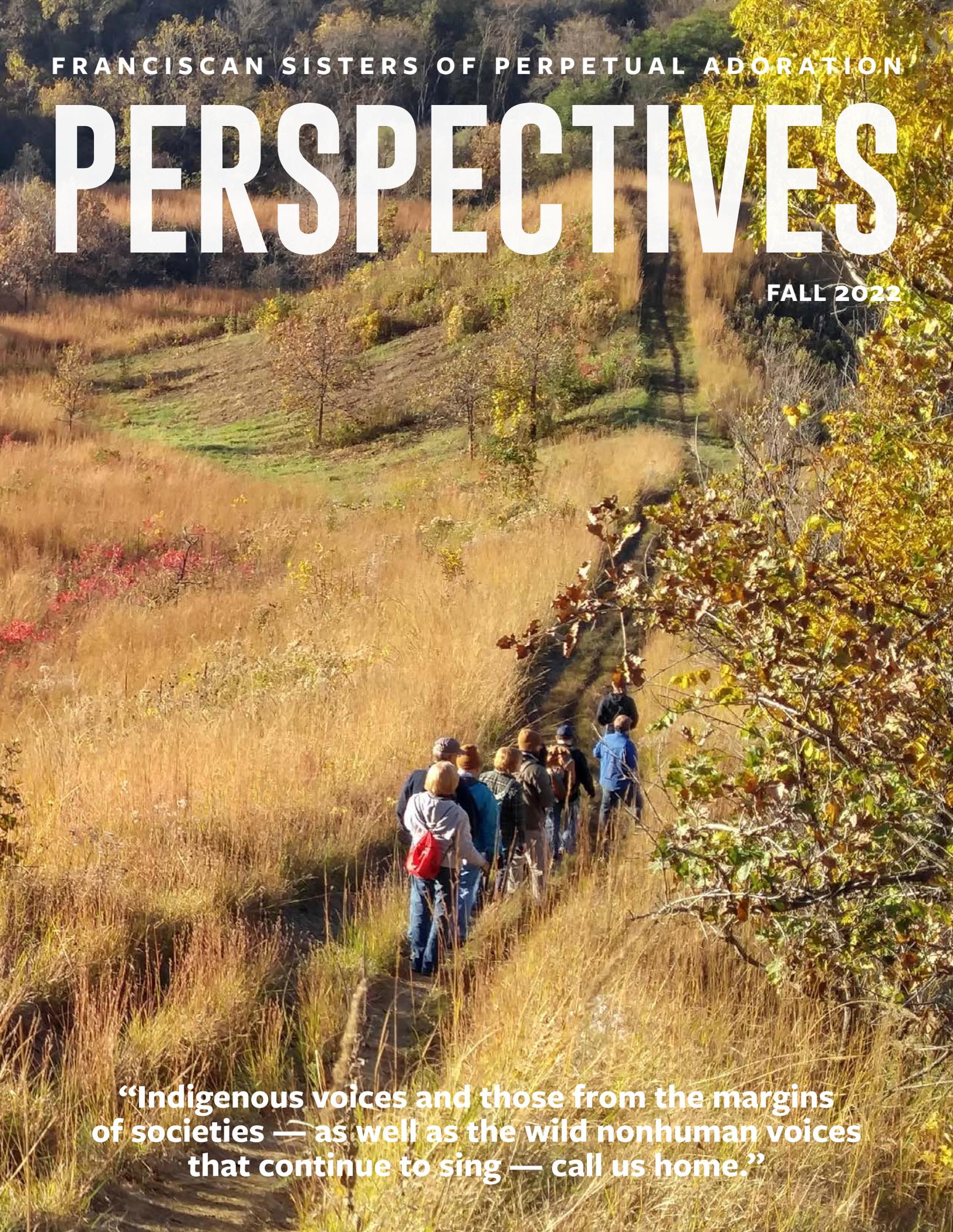


FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

# PERSPECTIVES

FALL 2022



**“Indigenous voices and those from the margins of societies — as well as the wild nonhuman voices that continue to sing — call us home.”**

# FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE



## FSPA Mission and Vision

We are a community of vowed Franciscan women centered in Eucharist, committed to be loving presence through prayer, witness and service.

We proclaim action in the following areas:

We commit to the seven-year **Laudato Si' Action Platform**, intensifying action for greater social and environmental justice, recognizing that everything is a gift from God and embracing our dependence on creation.

We commit to cultivating a culture of humility, joining others to address the racial injustices of society and Church.

We study our history and impact at St. Mary's Boarding School in Odanah, Wisconsin (1883 to 1969), recognizing our complicity in historical trauma by engagement in the implementation of unjust policies and doctrines resulting in the displacement, assimilation and genocide of countless Native American communities.

We educate ourselves and others about the deeper significance of immigration injustices — of people fleeing violence, political corruption and environmental devastation in their homes and countries.

We accept Pope Francis' invitation and challenge to join the solidarity economy — the **Economy of Francesco** — a worldwide movement aimed to change the current economic models and craft a more inclusive and just future. Through Seeding a Legacy of Healing, ministry grants and impact investments, we act on the opportunities and our commitment to transform economies for people and the planet.

We reaffirmed, at the FSPA Mission Assembly in June of 2022, our commitment to the **provocative movements**: building bridges of *relationships* that stretch us to be people of encounter who stand with all suffering in our Earth Community, freeing ourselves through joyful *gospel living* to be transformed in love and goodness for community and mission and celebrating authentic *unity in diversity* by challenging our white privilege and working toward equity and inclusion of all.



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President: Sister Eileen McKenzie  
Vice President: Sister Sue Ernster  
Mission Councilors: Sister Dawn Kutt and Sister Karen Kappell

Editor: Jane Comeau  
Managing editor and writer: Jen Pick  
Designer and proofreader: Brianna Graw  
Proofreaders: Sister Rita Heires and Sister Mary Ann Gschwind

### Perspectives is published by:

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration,  
912 Market Street, La Crosse, WI 54601-4782  
Telephone: 608-782-5610  
Email: [communications@fspa.org](mailto:communications@fspa.org)  
Website: [fspa.org](http://fspa.org)

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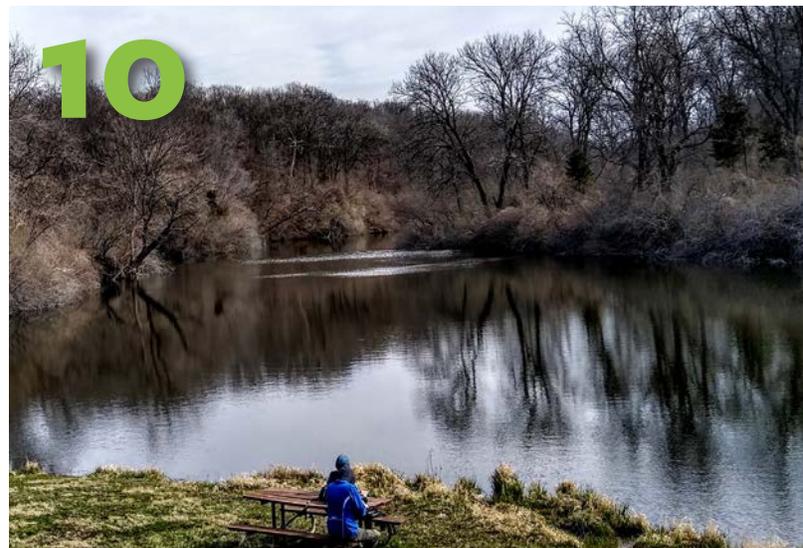
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# HOPE RESTORES: COLLABORATION, FRIENDSHIP, SISTERHOOD



Melanie Banks, Sisters Mary Arnoldussen and Karen Neuser team up with Tashyra Jackson, co-founder of Hope Restores

## By Annette Mikat

Tashyra Jackson grew up an object of racism. She heard it all: “I’m not a racist; I have several Black friends.” “I don’t see color.” “All lives matter.” It has been her experience, too. A white person, finding Tashyra in an elevator, declined to get in. A woman crossing paths with Tashyra clutched her purse extra tight. Each time, these microaggressions inflicted more trauma.

Then came the stream of absolute aggression in 2020. Within just four months of each other, three Black people — Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd — were killed by vigilantes and police officers. That was when it hit Tashyra. Her evolving work with Shamawyah (Mya) Curtis to create Hope Restores, a place to help heal the Black community in La Crosse, Wisconsin, was more than a project. It was a calling.

“Repeatedly seeing someone who looks like you killed — it’s hard. The trauma, tears and hurt are not something that will go away soon. We needed to turn that pain into something more meaningful.”

Ready or not, Tashyra and Shamawyah had no choice but to open Hope Restores as fast as possible.

## Hope Restores

Hope Restores, based in La Crosse, Wisconsin, works with Black families by facilitating support groups and providing access to tools and resources they need to be successful in life. It is a place where clients are not made to feel convicted due to their cultural upbringing or family values but to find their strengths, build resilience and solve the individual and systemic race-based

problems they face every day.

Tashyra says the first step toward healing is to accept that racism is real. “You have to give voice that yes, it happens. Yes, it’s there. Clients need to be heard, so that’s why we have groups. But because trauma looks different for everyone, we have to look at how each person heals and give them permission to do it their own way.”

To that end, Hope Restores offers additional supports, such as transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores and job interviews; drop-in daycare; and a giving cabinet where people can pick up nonperishable food items, toiletries and cleaning supplies.

## A meeting turns into a sisterhood

A few months after opening Hope Restores, Tashyra and Mya appeared on a local news program that Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Karen Neuser was watching.

“I was so impressed with how open and revealing they were: Mya’s description of her family and the situations that occurred at grocery stores, her son being stopped by police for no reason, and all of it happening in this town,” says Sister Karen. “I could not sit there and know it was happening and not do something.” She made an appointment and met with Tashyra.

“Meeting with Sister Karen was like fresh air,” says Tashyra. “I didn’t have to prove our situation to her. She came in nonjudging, open-minded, open-hearted and wanting to learn.” Significantly, says Tashyra, Sister Karen came in “not telling us what she could do for Hope Restores but asking how she could help, truly trying to be part of the healing we want to do.”

And from this collaboration, a friendship has flourished. “This relationship has given me a personal respect and awareness of lives other than my own experience, broadened my understanding of people who are not white Franciscan sisters. I see what my skin color has done to my perceptions and judgments,” says Sister Karen. “Hope Restores’ outreach is a sign of the



Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Karen Neuser and Hope Restores' Tashyra Jackson sit down with WXOW reporter Dustin Luecke to share their "sister" story with La Crosse

Christian love I profess. It goes with my faith."

### **Seeding a Legacy of Healing**

In its first year, Hope Restores needed financial stability and more programs to meet the needs of the community. Sister Karen and other sisters who had come to know Hope Restores applied for a grant from FSPA's Seeding a Legacy of Healing funds.

Seeding a Legacy of Healing is an FSPA grant program that honors the sisters' health care ministry. It redirects proceeds from the sale of the La Crosse Mayo Clinic Health System toward partnerships that address social justice issues, thereby invoking a new kind of healing.

"The biggest thing the grant has done is allowing us to keep our doors open and continue to help people," says Tashyra. "It's brought some much-needed programs to the community and bought us time to work on other sustainability sources."

So far Hope Restores has added an office assistant and maintenance person to their staff. Tashyra says they're now seeking a development person and planning to create education programs and training to serve as continuing sources of income.

### **Representation matters**

M. Anderson, who prefers not to use his first name, is one of many who have partaken in the new programming, specifically the Brothers Battling Barriers group. The group aims to help Black men reconnect with family, network with others, parent their children and increase their general wellness.

"I was looking to get back on my feet. I had no job," says Anderson. "I liked the group. You sit down and have a conversation with guys who look like you, and learn about things that one person has benefited from that might benefit you, too. It's like group therapy."

Today Anderson has a job, has paid off his debts and, with community resources provided by Hope Restores, is preparing to purchase a home. He also finds himself helping others, just as other men did for him. "Being in a better position in life allows you to do better for others," he says.

The new programming is also helping Erin Raymus' family, whose 12-year-old daughter, Emma, is a member of Black Student Leaders, a mentoring, activism and support group program for girls ages 12 to 17. Erin's son, 14-year-old Quinten, participates in Bread, an employment program through which teens apply for jobs, negotiate wages and put their skills to work. By meeting or exceeding job requirements, students have the opportunity to keep those jobs.

Growing from Brothers Battling Barriers is a mentorship program called Cycle Breakers. It is a group for boys ages 9 to 17 who come together, build each other up and learn about important Black leaders they don't hear about in school. It helps instill pride in their identity. Tashyra has seen the results of Cycle Breakers through her own son's experience. "They carry themselves differently. They're just so proud of who they are," she says.

### **Hope on the highest platform**

In addition to helping stabilize and grow programming, the grant has provided "hope on the highest platform. The sisters were the first to really hear what we're saying. We have community with them. I would never have thought in a million years that FSPAs would be my sisters," says Tashyra. "They really feel like family."

Visit [hoperestoreswi.org](http://hoperestoreswi.org) to learn more about the organization, and check out [fspa.org/content/ministries/seeding-a-legacy](http://fspa.org/content/ministries/seeding-a-legacy) to see how FSPA is living out the value of relationship globally, nationally and locally.

# SPIRIT OF MINISTRY: RELATIONSHIPS AND RECOVERY REVERED AT RAVE



FSPA affiliates Mary Calkins, Jan Schneider, Mary Snider and Wilma Spaeth, members of the FSPA Franciscan Hearts Affiliate Companion Community

## By Mary Calkins, Jan Schneider, Mary Snider and Wilma Spaeth

“Recovery happens, and everyone who comes here is a testament to that.” This statement comes from RAVE, Independent Living Resources’ Recovery Avenue program. Our FSPA Companion Community, Franciscan Hearts, collaborates with the organization with the aim to add more client stories of healing and success.

Independent Living Resources, by its mission statement, “is committed to community diversity through advocacy, choice and education resulting in empowerment for individuals with disabilities.” RAVE takes these ideals even further: “The power of self is to be emphasized rather than illness,” and strives to “empower with peer support and education in a strength-based environment.”

Those investing themselves in RAVE are adults, 18 years of age and older, living in mental health and/or substance use recovery. Those served include people from all walks of life who benefit from having a safe, recovery-focused environment with access to support systems and services that will aid their individual journeys to recovery.

In addition to recovery, RAVE focuses on providing resources and supporting self-determination. Operating as a drop-in center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, RAVE is unique because it is a peer-run organization: participants have a strong voice in what happens. While staff

members are highly trained, it is not the belief that these professionals will know what is best for an individual. All clients participate by their own free will, and each person’s recovery path is supported, not mandated.

RAVE staff, of which the majority are certified peer specialists, recognize that individuals are experts in their own lives and will learn what works best for them by actually leading the process. Staff members apply their knowledge of the recovery process, along with the individual’s shared personal information, to help each client think creatively about what might be effective coping strategies — how to best implement them in their lives — and evaluate whether or not they are working for them. The combination of extensive community resources and information sharing that happens at RAVE provides clients with comprehensive tools to reinforce positive, productive lives. RAVE also abides by Independent Living’s philosophy which focuses on self-advocacy. This model has proven to be effective: 90% of participants report benefitting from the program as a whole, and 90% say that the opportunity to partake in specific offerings, like support groups, community activities, art club, etc., has aided their recovery process.

As a peer-run program, decisions are made based on what RAVE clients would like to see and find most effective. This is determined through advisory council meetings, surveys, listening sessions and one-on-one

conversations. Feedback from the participants is taken seriously, and all persons are strongly encouraged to take part in the decision-making process as they are comfortable.

The program's administrative costs are covered through ongoing contractual relationships with local agencies such as La Crosse County, United Way and others. This allows all funds from an FSPA ministry grant to be reserved for non-administrative expenses.

For RAVE, fostering relationships with its clients and the La Crosse community, including our affiliate companion community — the Franciscan Hearts — is leading to rewarding endeavors that change lives.

Visit [ilresources.org](http://ilresources.org) for more information about RAVE.

### About Affiliation

FSPA's affiliation community is made up of more than 260 people who are spiritual collaborators joined in sacred relationship and support one another to live the Gospel and transform our world. Each affiliate becomes part of a companion community. Members of the Franciscan Hearts Companion Community include article co-authors Mary Calkins, Jan Schneider, Mary Snider and Wilma Spaeth, affiliates; Deb Hayes, Marilyn Hempstead and Shelly Lamb Vosen, affiliates; and Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Maris Kerwin and Malinda Gerke.

RAVE certified peer specialist Andria Winchel



### Andria's RAVE story

Today Andria Winchel is celebrating her one-year anniversary as a certified peer specialist at RAVE. When Andria first began her recovery journey, she was unaware that peer recovery centers like RAVE existed. Andria states, "If I would have known about RAVE, it would have been really helpful. The last thing you want to do in your recovery is sit alone. Here you are not alone."

Andria began her journey into recovery after a rough path with addiction and mental health concerns which ultimately led to her being placed in an inpatient psychiatric hospital four years ago. Andria was told that to be released she needed to become involved in a recovery-oriented program. She agreed and was enrolled in a comprehensive community services program. Once enrolled, Andria was connected with a peer specialist who helped support her through her early recovery.

Andria's recovery path ultimately led to her enrolling in the human services program at Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where an instructor told her that they thought she would be perfect for the role of peer specialist. Andria enrolled, completed the course and passed the exam to become a certified peer specialist. While she initially worked with children as a peer specialist mentor, she saw an employment ad for RAVE seeking a peer specialist and decided to apply. That was a little over a year ago. Today Andria says that "when I walked through the door [at RAVE], I felt like I was at home."

Andria feels that she benefits as much from working as a peer specialist at RAVE as do the people who come into the drop-in center. When asked why RAVE has made a difference for her, she says, "On my hardest days, it gets me out of bed. I know that I have to be there to open the doors. At the end of the day, I know that I made it through another day." As to why RAVE is so beneficial to the community, Andria shares, "When people come in, we always ask them how they are. Maybe someone hasn't asked them how they are and meant it. We truly care about everyone here. RAVE shows them they are not alone. As peers we are not perfect — we've had the struggles, we've lived the life. If someone wants to change, they can change their situation with time and resources. They just need ideas for what might work."

# GRACE HOUSE: NOURISHING MINDS, BODIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND SOULS



Grace House clients Lisa Scott and Bernard Harbin

We all know someone who lives with a medical diagnosis, be it physical or neurological, and wouldn't dream of turning our backs on them; denying their safety, dignity, advocacy and care for their needs of mind, body and soul. Yet many individuals living with HIV/AIDS find themselves completely shut out of their homes, their rights and their lives.

But there is a place where those living with HIV or AIDS are welcomed with arms full of support and respect — Grace House in Jackson, Mississippi. A few of the people you will find at Grace House include Stacey Howard, executive director, Wes McComas, a licensed master social worker who provides services there, and Mr. Alvin Garvin, a client who accesses the organization's food pantry. From statistics about the need for its programs and reflections of wellness and relationships nurtured

there, they share what's inside Grace House.

## **Stacey Howard, Grace House executive director**

Grace House, Inc., has operated a home for persons living with HIV and sometimes dying from an AIDS-related illness. Grace House began in 1992, accepting persons with HIV who found themselves displaced by families or landlords. When discovering their family member was ill, some in the household forced them to leave home. Others could not continue paying for housing due to loss of work related to their illness.

Grace House has grown in service to the community since those early years and now assists, on average each year, 600 households having a qualifying family member living with HIV. Grace House still offers shelter services to the displaced but also can provide ongoing rental assistance, clothing, food and comprehensive case management services. The food pantry, assisted partly by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, offers food boxes to persons referred for nutritional benefits by their medical doctor, case manager or other service providers. Grace House also works closely with an area medical clinic to offer food for immediate consumption that can be distributed to the homeless and hungry when needed at medical appointments. Grace House assists between 50 and 60 households per month with these needed services. In addition to food services, FSPA funding can help provide medications for persons who have yet to qualify for medical assistance and, without the help, would be forced to forgo lifesaving treatment.

Grace House provides housing, nutritional services, clothing, care and compassion to anyone regardless of race, color, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, disability or religion. Unfortunately, the stigma associated with the illness of HIV is still very much alive and well, especially in the southern states, where lack of care and concern continues to allow this illness to rage out of control. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the southern portion of the United States continues to be the hardest hit by new cases of HIV. Jackson, Mississippi, is ranked sixth

in the country in new cases of HIV and second in cases of AIDS. Grace House will continue to work with other organizations in its service area to end stigma and reduce the spread of HIV.

### **Wes McComas, licensed master social worker**

As a social worker for an HIV outpatient clinic, I find Grace House to be a lifesaver for so many people! The food is nutritious and each staff member is par excellence. Many of the people I serve struggle through living in food deserts. Many government assistance programs, like Snap Benefits, are either inadequate or nonexistent. Thanks to the Grace House food bank, our patients can rely on a food box with extra treats when they are in need. Grace House has an open-door policy that allows me to pick up the food box when the patient is unable.

A few months ago I shared with the executive director of Grace House, Stacey Howard, that there have been a lot more people coming into the clinic hungry. Because of our conversation, Grace House is now providing the ready-to-eat snacks which we give to patients who come hungry to their appointments.

I really appreciate the openness and availability of the people of Grace House and the works of mercy the program provides to people living with HIV and their loved ones.

Both Stacey and Wes speak with great gratitude for this collaborator in their mission: Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Dorothy Ann Kunding who has been a presence in their ministry since early in its inception.

Says Stacey: “Sister Dorothy, began volunteering at Grace House during the early years of its founding, offering love, care and hope to persons stripped of all three. Sister Dorothy continues to be a vital part of the Grace House programs today, helping to ensure care for one of our long-term residents, who has some cognitive damage, by assuring his needs are met. Sister Dorothy has been the most consistent relationship in this man’s life and one of the only people whose name he does not forget.”

Wes shares that “There is one person who I consider a friend and a mentor — Sister Dorothy. She has taught me so much about mercy, love and compassion. My understanding of the commands of Jesus — feed my sheep — is much clearer due to my many years of friendship with her.”

To learn more about Grace House, visit [gracehousems.org](http://gracehousems.org).



Grace House client Willie Gaines and staffer Anita Smith



### **Mr. Alvin Garvin, Grace House client**

Grace House has been on point with me receiving a food box each month. I am very appreciative for them. My case manager from Adult Special Care makes sure she send a referral for me. I then call DOT and tell her its time for my box. I dont take long for me to get it one to two days later. The things that's put in the boxes are things that I want to eat. Different choices of meat each month and the cans good really helps out. I have told others about the food boxes so that they can be apart of the blessings that I get. Thanks so much Grace House for doing a GREAT JOB.

Alvin Garvin

# THE NATURALIST SCHOOL: ECOPOETICS OF JUSTICE FOR THE EARTH AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES



“The water we drink, like the air we breathe, is not part of our body but is our body. What we do to one — to the body, to the water — we do to the other.”

In just two sentences, renowned poet, Natalie Diaz, rewrites the narrative of care for the collective — the nurturing of ourselves and all of creation. Instead, from humans to the most infinitesimal of microorganisms, we are all inhabitants of one being.

Such narrative is alive and thriving within The Naturalist School, an organization missioned to bring “people of all walks to a deeper intimacy with the natural world through a consilience of creativity and ecology.” The school’s programming goes beyond prescribed therapies like forest bathing and other outdoor activities. “Rather, as we grow in intimacy with wild communities, we walk, breathe, create and pray in nature as nature.”

One such offering is Earth-house, a TNS series of outdoor workshops deep-seeded in spiritual awareness and the eco-poetics of indigenous, Black and women writers. These literary linguists of the natural world include Natalie, Mojave in heritage and member of the Gila River Indian Tribe of Arizona. The Earth-house series is, in particular, plotted “to help our friends from diverse communities to grow in intimacy with the other-than-human presences that nurture and share our planet and to deeply connect with the generative energy and fabric of the cosmos through our own creativity.”

Emerging in 2004 from the woods of New Hampshire,

TNS is facilitated by Jack Phillips, a nature writer, poet, naturalist and registered arboricultural consultant who serves as the “principal” of the organization. He facilitates Earth-house and other programming, and his “classrooms” are the woodlands, prairies and floodplains of western Iowa and eastern Nebraska.

Together, with Earth-house participants, “we read and write poetry, make ephemeral art, contemplatively and wildly walk, keep vigil by troubled waters and dragonfly broods.”

Through partnerships with nature centers and nonprofits and investments by many supporters and organizations, including the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, TNS now has the opportunity to broaden its breadth of programming that features eco-poetry of women, marginalized communities and diverse geographies and cultures.

Outside the TNS ecosystem, however, grows “an interesting and troubling human paradox that contributes to the global environmental crisis and perpetuates obstacles to meaningful engagement in the work of earth justice,” says Jack. “Everyone seems to ‘love’ nature, yet this love so often increases and preserves our alienation from the natural world and permits the destruction of the wild and mysterious planet that makes human life possible. Humans of ‘developed’ and affluent societies remain apathetic in the face of overwhelming evidence that the global

biosphere is collapsing. There also exists the belief that ‘technology’ will somehow save us.”

Such dichotomy is a call to integral ecology — the guiding force of nature spelled out in Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* that recognizes our interrelatedness is complex and begs a response to the suffering in our world by integrating social, economic and environmental approaches to justice.

At the root of this spiritual crisis, says Jack, is the perception that nature “is something other and apart from human life and community.” In terms of etymology, Jack explains, the meaning of the word ecospirituality is “the sustaining and creative energy of the earth-house.”

Another perplexing disparity Jack perceives is the demarcation of earth justice and social justice. “The flourishing and vitality of every community in our earth-house requires robust and interwoven diversity. The impairment and destruction of global ecosystems often impacts marginalized communities, like those of indigenous, Black and/or female peoples, most immediately and severely. The voices of these communities express an urgency less easily ignored and offer paths to earth-intimacy — primal and clear.”

So Jack and all those at TNS, purveyors and participants alike, will continue to cultivate ecopoetics and integral justice for the one being we share with all in the cosmos. And to that end, with raw clarity, “Indigenous voices and those from the margins of societies — as well as the wild nonhuman voices that continue to sing — call us home.”

To learn more about The Naturalist School and Earth-house program, visit [thenaturalistschool.org](http://thenaturalistschool.org).

## ‘Fate and future are cradled in our hands’

Jack Phillips shares how TNS is intrinsic to his very being.

“I have been walking this primal path since childhood. My father and uncles were most at home in the woods or in a canoe, and my tender experiences instilled a deep connection with wild creatures. After an academic career that took me to Alaska’s Tongass rainforest, the Coptic monasteries of the Sahara, ancient ruins and nature preserves of the Levant, I came home to wander my native woods and rivers. The Naturalist School is the result of this homecoming.

“In the traditions of Matsuo Basho, Annie Dillard, Camille Dungy, Joy Harjo and Natalie Diaz, I have returned to the mysterious and verdant haunts of my youth and the embodiment of the cosmos in a community of creaturely bodies. I believe all humans are called to come home to the wild earth. This is an ancient beckoning that resonates deeply within if we can find the wild silences to hear it. The first letter of the first word of the first verse of Genesis is the Hebrew letter Bet, the pictographic symbol for house. This is the earth-house into which we are born and find our future. It is our cradle, and its fate and future are cradled in our hands.”

Kathryn Sutko Twit, a TNS workshop leader, offers reflection of the sustenance she receives from within TNS.

“My experience with The Naturalist School has facilitated a more acute awareness of aliveness and a deeper sense of connection and belonging to myself and the natural world, as part of the natural world. The opportunities provided by TNS to step out of the hustle and into a different relationship with time and space with a community of beings who acknowledge and honor their own sacredness and that of all life provides vital nourishment. Filling up with Jack, the people he gathers, poetry, conversation and quiet makes my life so much richer.”



# FSPA MISSION ADVANCEMENT: WHAT IS YOUR STORY, YOUR INSPIRATION TO GIVE?

You — our FSPA donors and collaborators in mission — have been telling your giving stories, sharing what inspires you to invest in our ministries.

**“Throughout all these years, my attraction to FSPA has not waned,” says FSPA donor and affiliate, Margaret Bluske. “It has intensified and broadened to include ongoing financial support. I love being part of all the sisters do in as many ways as I can.”**

“Your mission and your powerful prayers,” shares a donor about what led them to invest in FSPA, what inspired their gift of support for our ministries that have included perpetual adoration since 1878.

## Giving Story

**“I love being part of all the sisters do in as many ways as I can.”**

*FSPA Affiliate Margaret Bluske*

## What inspired my gift?

**“I asked for prayers, intentions ... and I wanted to give.”**

### Many other investors have also offered their inspiration for giving:

- “God’s gentile hand.”
- “Difficult times.”
- “Perpetual adoration to the Lord.”
- “GOD.”
- “... conversation with a person sharing the work being done with refugees in Kenya.”
- “There is so much bad in the world — I wanted to support those trying to do good.”

Tell us your giving story — what it is that inspires your investment in our ministries? Connect with FSPA Mission Advancement Director Rochelle Nicks at [rnicks@fspa.org](mailto:rnicks@fspa.org). With your permission, we will share your stories at [fspa.org](http://fspa.org) and on our social media channels to inspire others with your Franciscan goodness!

# FSPA ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

## July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

### DONOR SUPPORT

Total Disbursed  
**\$550,462**



**\$340,078**

Greatest Need | 62%



**\$175,212**

Ministries | 32%



**\$32,072**

Sisters' Retirement | 6%



**\$3,100**

Spirituality Centers

### Funding Income

General Contributions.....	<b>\$461,799</b>	<b>84%</b>
Bequests/Planned Giving.....	<b>\$81,193</b>	<b>15%</b>
Memorial Gifts.....	<b>\$7,470</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$550,462</b>	<b>100%</b>

### GRANTS SUPPORTED

Basic Needs.....	<b>38</b>
Education/Tuition.....	<b>14</b>
Justice & Peace.....	<b>10</b>
Health & Wellness.....	<b>10</b>
Family Strengthening.....	<b>8</b>
Religion & Spirituality.....	<b>7</b>
Ecospirituality.....	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>93</b>

### WAYS TO GIVE

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By mail: 912 Market St.  
 La Crosse, WI 54601

By phone: 608-791-5282



**67** Number of donors enrolled in our planned giving program  
**Perpetual Friends**

**94** Number of donors enrolled in our monthly giving program  
**Faithful Friends**

Join our Friends 608-791-5282

# 2022 JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Collectively, 2022's jubilarians have 980 years of service. They have been living out their vows as Franciscan women centered in Eucharist, committed to be loving presence through prayer, witness, and service, collaborating with the world in care for all creation.

And so we celebrate these women, our jubilarians of 2022, and their ministerial milestones: Sisters Marguerite Bruening and Rita Heires — Class of 1946, 75 years in mission; Sisters Anita Beskar (in loving memory), Mary Ann Gaul, Mary Ellen Huebsch, Clara Mae Kuempel (in loving memory) and LaVerne Raemaker — Class of 1952, 70 years in mission; and Sisters Carol Arenz, Ruth Berra, Georgia Christensen, Theresa Connolly, Eileen Lang, Shirley Morrissey, Fran Sulzer and Marlene Weisenbeck — Class of 1962, 60 years in mission.

We also celebrate our eight affiliates who have served for 25 years as spiritual collaborators with FSPA: Michelle Ahrenholtz, Tammy Barthels, Mary Ellen Baumhover, Roger Baumhover, Dianne Bruck, Kathy Corey, Mary Rose Keil and Marci Madary.

To read reflections and view portraits taken of the 2022 jubilarians, visit [fspa.org/jubilee](https://fspa.org/jubilee).





**“I have been shaped by those who have shared their lives with me in countless ways. Gratitude and beauty overflow in my soul as I continue on this journey of love and service.”**  
*Sister Marlene Weisenbeck*



# MY PERSPECTIVE: FORGING RELATIONSHIPS, “REBUILDING THE CHURCH” AT THE FIREPLACE



The Fireplace Community in Chicago, Illinois

## By Julia Walsh, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration

I entered religious life feeling excited to learn from my Franciscan Sisters and interested in other forms of faith-based intentional community, such as New Monasticism and the Catholic Worker movements. As I grew into my vocation, I felt called to be a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, open to how I might be present to those on the margins and sharing the privileges of religious life with others.

As I deepened my commitment to religious life, I also started to find myself in spaces that blended artistic expression, spirituality and the pursuit for social justice. I taught high school for eight years. I lived and served at a spirituality center and began to enjoy hosting spiritual seekers at our dining room table. And every couple of years, I moved and lived with a different group of FSPA. Sharing life with my older sisters in community allowed me to learn from their example as they listened deeply, responded to inequity, offered warm hospitality and shared sacred space.

When I began working on a graduate school project that focused on young adults and loneliness, several questions and concerns ignited in me. Also aware that

fewer people were affiliated with traditional religion, I began to wonder if the Spirit could be calling modern Catholic Sisters to cultivate new forms of spiritual community; to help decrease loneliness and offer sanctuary; to “rebuild the Church,” as St. Francis was told to do. I wondered what part I was meant to play in this movement.

While at a Catholic literary conference in 2019, I was surprised to hear writers share how lonely they felt. I also heard that those in the arts community long for non-institutional and affordable spaces to gather

and rest. Among other creative and passionate people that included activists, I heard exhaustion and weariness. I was learning that social isolation plagues many populations, and burnout is a serious problem for changemakers. I was realizing that as a woman vowed to FSPA, an intergenerational religious community, I had a great privilege of spiritual community to share.

I started to dream and pray about forming a new intentional community that would offer space for rest and renewal for spiritual seekers, artists and activists. Then in early 2021, together with Sharon Dillon, a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, I founded The Fireplace Community in Hyde Park in Chicago, Illinois. For me The Fireplace was inspired by the energy of the FSPA spirituality centers, dedication to the arts and passion for ending societal injustice — all rooted in Franciscan values. Now I delight in the opportunity to know people of different backgrounds and beliefs as they gather at The Fireplace to share in the ordinariness and sacredness of daily life.

The Fireplace is an intergenerational, inter-congregational and intercultural community offering an antidote to loneliness and burnout, rooted in the shared rhythms of communal life and centered in compassion,



Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis Sharon Dillon, Natalie Warren, Cassidy Klein, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Julia Walsh and Abby Rampone

contemplation and creativity. The Fireplace provides fuel and refuge to spiritual seekers, artists and activists — changemakers. I’ve come to understand that what we’re forming feels like a blend of Catholic Worker house and spirituality or arts center, but we are a community and a sacred space — a home, not an institution.

The five of us who reside here span the generations. We work to share leadership and power and mutual aid. We aim to be a healthy community that is a warmly welcoming refuge for our neighbors and guests.

We host both informal gatherings and public events at The Fireplace. We share our home with retreatants and those who need safe spaces for renewal. Over a span of two weeks this summer, we hosted seven dinners, eight gatherings around the backyard firepit, two board game nights, four prayer services, two overnight retreatants and a half-day writers’ retreat. A lot is happening here!

Each of these occasions was intergenerational and intercultural gatherings that fostered authentic relationships. More importantly, our guests came to know and support each other and share mutual aid and community care. Neighbors gather at our dining table or firepit. Students and activists who are lonely or nearing burnout find joy and connections in our home. I wonder if we are becoming a center of a hub of community.

It has been quite a journey to The Fireplace while living out my vows as an FSPA. Yet in this creative and

compassionate community, my life continues to be enriched and transformed by each encounter. At The Fireplace, the Spirit is our guide and I am thrilled to be present to others as an FSPA while I work to “rebuild the Church.”

Learn more about The Fireplace Community at [thefireplacecommunity.org](http://thefireplacecommunity.org).



Guests gather in the backyard at The Fireplace



# IN MEMORIAM: REJOICE, YOU WHO ARE ALIVE IN CHRIST

## **Sister Geralyn Misura**

**Dec. 16, 1933 – Aug. 21, 2022**



Sister Geralyn Misura, 88, died Sunday, Aug. 21, 2022, at Villa St. Joseph, La Crosse, Wisconsin. She served for 67 years as a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration. She was born to Raymond and Stella (Bien) Misura on Dec. 16, 1933, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and given the name Mary Jane. Her father was a cook by trade but later worked as a dock loader. Her mother worked as a stenographer. Mary Jane, her sister, Monica, and two brothers, Myllin and Mark, grew up in Eau Claire. She attended Sacred Heart Grade School there, taught by the FSPA. She then attended St. Patrick's High School, run by the Benedictine sisters. By the time she graduated, it had become Regis High School. In her early years, Mary Jane began knitting and crocheting, a hobby she carried into her adult life.

In 1953 she was received into the FSPA novitiate and given the name Sister Geralyn. She professed first vows on Aug. 12, 1955. Sister Geralyn earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Viterbo College with a minor in music. She served as a primary school teacher for eight years in Iowa (Mallard and Dedham) and Wisconsin (St. Joseph Ridge, Eau Galle, Ashland and Edgar). In 1977 her ministry took her to St. Joseph School in Prescott, Wisconsin, as a first-grade teacher, choir director and organist. In 1981 Sister Geralyn became principal of the school and later returned to teaching first grade. In 2001 Sister Geralyn retired from teaching but remained in the parish as sacristan and organist, roles she continued until she retired to Villa St. Joseph in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 2017. From 2010 to 2017, she also served as a volunteer organist at Regina Hospital in Hastings, Minnesota.

Community members, family and friends remember Sister Geralyn as a kind, quiet person who always loved children, music and the parishioners at St. Joseph. She was a "people person," warm and giving of her time and helpful to anyone in need. As one parishioner said,

"We have been blessed to have Sister Geralyn in our parish." Sister Geralyn had a great devotion to Capuchin Father Solanus Casey from Prescott, whose cause is in consideration for canonization. She helped found a Father Solanus Prayer Circle and had organized several pilgrimages to Detroit, Michigan, where Father Solanus spent most of his religious life. She was privileged to attend Father Solanus' beautification ceremony in Detroit.

## **Affiliate Vincent Joseph Hatt**

**Nov. 25, 1939 – July 6, 2022**



"The only thing that matters now is the mercy of God," wrote Vince Hatt about his coming death. "I have complete confidence in God's mercy." Vincent "Vince" Joseph Hatt, 82, of La Crosse,

Wisconsin, passed away July 6, 2022, at Mayo Clinic Methodist Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, aware of the love of his wife Janice and many relatives and friends.

Vince was born Nov. 25, 1939, the first child of Vincent C. Hatt and Grace Cira Hatt. He has four siblings: Linda Lundhal, David, Roseanne (Lon) Ewing and Graceanne (Wayne) Hatt. He married Janice Mary Greiner on Sept. 4, 1995, at Roncalli Newman Catholic Church. He was director of the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse for more than a decade until he retired in 2011. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, David.

## **Affiliate Joseph John Leuck Jr.**

**May 18, 1938 – July 25, 2022**



Joseph "Joe" John Leuck Jr., 84, of La Crosse, Wisconsin, passed away as a result of pneumonia July 25, 2022, at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse.

He passed away with the love of his family at his side. Joe was born May 18, 1938, to Joseph Sr. and Agnes (Richard) Leuck in Cashton, Wisconsin. He was a 1956 graduate of Cashton High School as valedictorian of his class.

Joe was a worker at heart. He was employed by Brueggen Service Station in Cashton and went on to work for five years at La Crosse Rubber Mills in La Crosse. For much of his life, he was a self-employed carpenter and took great pride in his work. He worked part time for the St. Joseph Public Works Department for 43 years which left him time for his carpentry work. Joe was a Place of Grace volunteer when the organization opened in 1997 and worked there every Thursday where he made desserts — with pumpkin pie as his specialty. His friend since 1976, Tom Thibodeau, stated that “He cuts a piece of dessert as carefully as he cuts a mitered corner on a piece of trim.”

In 1988 he joined affiliation with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and also became a lay minister for the Diocese of La Crosse. He was asked to become the chief builder and overseer of a prayer hermitage project in the woods behind Villa St. Joseph; a project he was honored to be a part of for years. He also gave his time to Habitat for Humanity. Joe had a bumper sticker on the back of his truck that read, “My Boss is a Jewish Carpenter.” This proved to be a perfect example that Joe’s life work was a testament to his strong and resilient relationship with God and his Catholic faith.

Joe was united in marriage to Mary Anne (Savall) on June 10, 1967, in Cashton and shared his life with her for 53 wonderful years. They had one son, Brian. They enjoyed attending many of his school functions and sporting events. Vacations “out West” provided many life-long memories for the family. Joe liked to dine at the Barre Diner and The Hungry Peddler, but his favorite place was Culver’s on the south side of La Crosse. It seemed as though he always had a coupon in his pocket. He loved collecting “Scoopie Tokens” to give to his granddaughter, Maddie. Joe was just Joe. He always had

a story to share. He didn’t try to be anybody else. He was just himself, and that was the gift of Joe.

**Affiliate Shirley Louise Huhn**  
**Dec. 20, 1942 – July 30, 2022**



Shirley passed away July 30, 2022, surrounded by angels and her loving family at the age of 79 after losing her battle with cancer. Shirley worked many years in food service, serving as food service director for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at Villa St. Joseph, La Crosse, Wisconsin, until her retirement. She loved being there with her coworkers and the sisters.

Shirley spent her retirement years doing what she loved: being with family, traveling, sitting in nature, having friends to share poems at lunch, sewing in a circle of costume creators for community theatre, volunteering with the unsheltered and committee work involving care of the earth, food insecurity, immigration and programs to help the unsheltered. Shirley was grateful to be a part of Habitat for Humanity builds and service trips to help repair homes after hurricanes and floods. She made many good and lasting friends through this work.

She had the great privilege to spend her life as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, auntie and friend. Special companions on her journey were her family, dogs, kitties, FSPA sisters and affiliates and many good friends, including her dear friend Helga. She appreciated the phone calls from her kids sharing the moon phases and from her neighbors sharing the sunsets. Shirley was born to Bill and Rose (Kirschner) Erickson in La Crosse. She graduated from Aquinas High School in 1960 and married Carl Huhn Jr. in 1961. They had four children and shared a life together for 38 years until his death in 1999.

“Going Home Like a Shooting Star: Thea Bowman’s Journey to Sainthood” is a documentary that presents the riveting life of Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Thea Bowman. She used her gifts to educate and challenge the church and society to grow in racial inclusivity. The film features interviews and commentary from FSPA and Thea’s family and friends. The documentary is airing on ABC stations; check your local listings. Watch [fspa.org/theabowman](https://fspa.org/theabowman) for streaming opportunities.



# FSPA ELECTS 2022 TO 2026 LEADERSHIP TEAM

In July the 82-member FSPA General Assembly elected new leaders to serve from 2022 to 2026. Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Sue Ernster was elected president. Sister Sue currently ministers as FSPA Vice President. As president Sister Sue is the official representative of the congregation. Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Georgia Christensen was chosen as vice president. Sister Georgia currently serves as FSPA Congregational Secretary. As vice president Sister Georgia will assist the president in governing and assumes the duties of the president in the event of the president's absence.

Three members were elected as mission councilors, who, with the president and vice-president, constitute the FSPA Leadership Team. They include Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Marie DesJarlais, Julie Tydrich and Marcia Baumert.

Considering the welfare of each sister and the corporate good of the congregation, the leadership of FSPA fosters the life and mission in the Church and in the world. They promote the congregation's goals and provide for continual renewal so that the needs of contemporary society can be served. The 2022 Election Assembly was the 24th election assembly for the congregation since 1910. The new team will take office Nov. 1, 2022.



Sisters Marie DesJarlais, Julie Tydrich, Sue Ernster, Georgia Christensen and Marcia Baumert

## REPATRIATION CEREMONY: BAD RIVER RESERVATION

"If I speak for one minute about intergenerational trauma, I will speak for a minute about intergenerational blessings," said Mike Wiggins, chairman of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of the Chippewa, at a ceremony during which 25 paintings, by artist Peter Whitebird, and 14 other sacred artifacts were repatriated to the tribe by FSPA on June 1, 2022.

The event was a step in FSPA's journey of truth and healing and of the history of administering a Native American boarding school, St. Mary's in Odanah, Wisconsin, from 1883 to 1969, during the era in which Indigenous children were assimilated into Euro-American culture. Until the ceremony, held in the tribe's Wake House, not far from St. Mary Catholic Church in what is now New Odanah, the items were archived at St. Rose Convent in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

At the gathering that included members of the Bad River Band's Tribal Council, Repatriation Committee, the FSPA Truth and Healing Team and Peter Whitebird's family, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration President Eileen McKenzie recognized "... that these artworks and artifacts are sacred, a part of your communal cultural expression and creativity," while also noting "... that the Bad River Band did not have agency in deciding where these went or how these were displayed." Learn more about FSPA's ministry of truth and healing at [fspa.org](https://fspa.org) >> ministries >> justice and peace.



Tribal Chairman Mike Wiggins Jr. and FSPA President Sister Eileen McKenzie

# FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION MARY ANN GSCHWIND AND MARIS KERWIN RETIRE

On June 30, 2022, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Mary Ann Gschwind and Maris Kerwin retired from their respective ministries: Sister Mary Ann as congregation archivist and Sister Maris as a volunteer heritage curator at St. Rose Convent in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Sister Mary Ann was appointed archivist in 2002 after serving the ministry of education as a teacher, administrator and teacher educator. She also served two terms as FSPA Vice President. “We’ll miss Sister Mary Ann as our archivist,” says Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration President Eileen McKenzie. “She was so thorough with her knowledge and organization that retrieving any historical document was easy and efficient. She holds a lot of personal history as well as our institutional history.”

Having served as a nurse in Wisconsin, Idaho and Iowa, for 10 years as FSPA Vice President and then as administrator of Villa St. Joseph in La Crosse for 13 years, Sister Maris retired in 2008 and began her volunteer ministry as heritage curator. Says Sister Eileen, “Sister Maris integrated our history, current lives and heritage pieces beautifully. She will be greatly missed!”



Sisters Mary Ann Gschwind and Maris Kerwin

## SISTER ANTONA SCHEDLO HONORED WITH ST. JOHN XXIII AWARD

Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Antona Schedlo is among the recipients of Viterbo University’s 2022 St. John XXIII Award for Distinguished Service. Recipients of the award, the highest non-academic award bestowed by the La Crosse, Wisconsin university, are chosen on the basis of contributions in one or several of the following categories: education, business, philanthropy, peace and justice and religious life.

Sister Antona’s honor is steeped in ministries of social justice served throughout her religious life. They include her three-decade-long mission amidst poverty and civil war in El Salvador and co-founding Centro Latino, an organization serving the Latino community through English as a second language and access to local resources in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She also established the Coulee Region Immigration Task Force, a group whose mission is to welcome, advocate and educate in the service of new, recent and established immigrants.

“You will only be happy if you think of others and not just yourself,” says Sister Antona.



Sister Antona Schedlo

# FSPA CELEBRATES NEW CENTENARIAN, SISTER LYDIA WENDL

Surrounded by sisters, family and FSPA partners in mission, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Lydia Wendl was celebrated in July for her 100th trip around Mother Earth with the planting of a sugar maple tree at Villa St. Joseph in her honor. As she watched, the tree was planted by former FSPA Land Sustainability Coordinator Steve Dewald, who came out of retirement to grab a shovel.

Sister Lydia was surprised and a bit speechless at the event, but now “cannot wait” to go outside to see how her tree is doing. As she told one partner in mission, “You have to live well enough and long enough to have the honor of planting a tree at the Villa.”

Says Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration President Eileen McKenzie, “It was such an honor to celebrate Sister Lydia’s life with her family, FSPA sisters and living community by welcoming Brother Tree to our Villa family! We celebrated throughout the Villa the gift of Sister Lydia and the gift of life we all share.”



Sister Lydia Wendl takes in her 100th birthday celebration, complete with the planting of a sugar maple tree

## EXPERIENCE A NEW COSMOGENESIS STORY: THE “I AM” PRAYER

The 2022 FSPA Mission Assembly, “A Revolution Through Encuentro: Our Journey Into Oneness,” took place June 10 through 12 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Held every four years, FSPA mission assemblies are meetings during which the congregation’s ministerial vision is mapped and goals for mission are set.

This year’s gathering opened with the “I Am” prayer: a Cosmogenesis story that blends images, music and narration by Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Suzanne Rubenbauer and FSPA Partner in Mission Dan Schiffer. The video invites all to a contemplative experience that transcends time and place. We invite you to your own Cosmogenesis experience at [fspa.org](https://fspa.org) >> prayer >> Franciscan Prayers.

**“For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.”**

*Hebrews 3:4*



Cosmogenesis: opening FSPA General Assembly



Scan me to watch

# EXPERIENCE THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTERS



## Franciscan Spirituality Center

La Crosse, Wisconsin | [fscenter.org](http://fscenter.org) | 608-791-5295

### “Experience the Book of Job”

Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and  
Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In many ways, the Book of Job is the perfect story for what so many of us are experiencing today: loss, anxiety and fear. During “When Bad Things Happen: The Book of Job for Troubled Times,” an in-person retreat, we will courageously ask, “What do I do with my pain?” and “Where is God in suffering?” Through quiet reflection, contemplative prayer practices, engaging talks and small-group discussion, we will discover for ourselves how the God of life and love is present to each one of us.

Peter Watkins, M.Div., is a certified spiritual director and retreat leader. He is a faculty member at Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality, where he is part of the formation program for aspiring spiritual directors. Cost and registration details are available at [fscenter.org](http://fscenter.org).

## Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center

Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin | [marywoodsc.org](http://marywoodsc.org) | 715-385-3750

### Experience spiritual renewal

Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center cabins are available to retreatants year-round. From guests who take a 30-day retreat, to guests who come to immerse themselves in writing their books or deep study, to

guests who take time in solitude and quiet prayer for a week — a retreat in the Northwoods is the place to enjoy the sunrise and sunset and all the plants and critters that surround Trout Lake. The four cabins are fully furnished and include fireplaces, Wi-Fi, cozy living rooms and scenic views of the lake. The largest cabin can accommodate eight retreatants. To plan your retreat, visit [marywoodsc.org](http://marywoodsc.org).

## Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center

Hiawatha, Iowa | [prairiewoods.org](http://prairiewoods.org) | 319-395-6700

### Experience “Spirituality in the 21st Century”

Friday, April 28, 2023, 7 to 9 p.m. and  
Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center is pleased to announce the featured speaker for “Spirituality in the 21st Century.” Jeremy Lent! Jeremy is the author of “The Patterning Instinct, A Cultural History of Humanity’s Search for Meaning and The Web of Meaning, Integrating Science and Traditional Wisdom to Find Our Place in the Universe.” He will join us in person, along with our favorite musician-of-Earth, Sara Thomsen.

He will highlight his work on Liology, an integrated, embodied approach to sustainable living and spiritual groundedness. Sara’s soulful music will move us all into sacred, shared “We” space, where our imagination and dreams will meet the world’s great needs. Join us live in person at Wanatee Park in Marion, Iowa, or online via Zoom. The cost is \$90. For more information, visit [prairiewoods.org/spirituality-in-the-21st-century](http://prairiewoods.org/spirituality-in-the-21st-century).

View of Trout Lake from Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center





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GIVING TUESDAY

Nov 29, 2022

**This November 29, the power of your generosity will be multiplied times two by our matching partners. Mark your calendars, visit us at [fspa.org/donate](https://fspa.org/donate) or call 608-791-5282.**

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**Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center** Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin | [marywoodsc.org](https://marywoodsc.org)

**Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center** Hiawatha, Iowa | [prairiewoods.org](https://prairiewoods.org)

**Global Awareness Through Experience** | [gate-travel.org](https://gate-travel.org)