

• • • Circles of Mercy has more than a thirteen-year tradition of providing hope, hospitality and empowerment to individuals in the Rensselaer Community, especially women and women with children. • • •



SPONSORED BY  
THE SISTERS OF MERCY  
NORTHEAST COMMUNITY

**Mission Statement:**

Circles of Mercy honors the dignity of each person, offers hospitality and provides services to instill hope and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

SUMMER 2011

VOLUME 10

Number 2

**Director:**

Richard Zazycki

**Hours:**

M-F, 9 a.m.– 4 p.m.

**Programs:**

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Computer Training
- Support Groups
- Parenting Classes
- Self Enhancement Groups
- Professional Clothing
- Advocacy
- Catherine's Closet

# Connections

## A Taste of Mercy

Thursday evening, June 16, was a memorable date for Circles of Mercy. The many friends and supporters of Circles made our annual gala an overwhelming success. The signature fundraising event held at Carmela's Banquet House in Rensselaer, raised over \$28,000!

This year Circles of Mercy honored Sister Mary Ann LoGiudice, RSM, Executive Director of Community Maternity Services (CMS), with the annual *Hope and Hospitality Award*, in recognition of her 41 years as a Sister of Mercy. Through this award Circles of Mercy applauds Sister Mary Ann for the support and "works of mercy" she has provided to CMS since 1978 and recognizes her leadership of the organization since becoming its director in 1990. Sister Mary Ann continues to dedicate her life to serving people who suffer from poverty, sickness and lack of education with a special concern for women and children. There is no doubt that Sister Mary Ann "Loves Mercy, has been living justly and walks humbly with God".



Honoree Sister Mary Ann LoGiudice, RSM accepts the Hope and Hospitality Award from Richard Zazycki.

Shown from left to right are the VITA Tax Program Staff – Marilyn Hart, Dick Klee, Joanne Scheibly and Mark Owen, as well as Circles Director Richard Zazycki and Board Chair Kathleen Pingelski.

The *Sister Gail A. Rieth Award for Volunteer Service* had two recipients – the dedicated Volunteer Staff of Circle's VITA Income Tax Prep Program and Eagle Boy Scout Kyle Gorzynski of Colonie who worked to renovate Circle's thrift store "Catherine's Closet". All of these individuals are responsible for supporting efforts to provide much needed hope and empowerment. In addition, they tirelessly give their time and talents, assisting clients who seek our services. Without their efforts we would not be able to afford or staff many of our programs. These volunteers truly make Circles of Mercy possible.

We are grateful to the gala's corporate sponsors and honorary donors, those who attended the gala, those who donated goods and services, and all who provided support for this function. •



Eagle Scout Kyle Gorzynski, shown with his family, holds his Volunteer Service Award.



## Circles of Mercy Board Members

Rose A. Barba  
Sister Barbara L. Dudley, RSM  
Sister Patricia Houlihan, RSM  
Janice Labas  
Nancy L. LaRow  
Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D.  
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## CATHERINE'S CLOSET THRIFT SHOP

11 Washington Street • Rensselaer

Open Monday – Friday  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Tuesdays only, until 5 p.m.  
Clothes & Household Goods

## Connections

A newsletter to promote the mission and values of Circles of Mercy, a program sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy.

Eleanor Guerin, RSM, Editor  
Joanne Scheibly, Editor

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## Honorary Gifts and Memorial Donations

Circles of Mercy gratefully acknowledges the following donations.

### In Memory of:

Hazel S. Jevons – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

Sr. Alva Lucy Mayone, RSM – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

M. Jane Tyrrell, Mercy Associate – by Mary Femia and Richard Zazycki

Don Cerniglia – by John and Vera Carman

Helen Peaslee – by Richard Zazycki

Dawn M. Dominski – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

George A. Stackman, III – by Stephen Zazycki, Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki

James J. McCauslin – by the Zazycki Family

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Mary M. Doran – by Stephen Zazycki, Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki

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Augustus James "AJ" Battaglia – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

Vera L. Carman – by John K. Carman, James and Lori Castro, Doris and Richard Castro, Clara and Thomas Castro, Maureen F. Celler, Audrey and Dominic Cerniglia, David J. Daniels, Karen and Tony Ferrara, Suzanne and Michael Harney, Tricia and Anthony Ferrara, Renee and John Ferrara, Robert and Dorothy Kahnle, Rose and Donald Lyman, Nassau Free Library Book Club Members, Mary Paoletti, Susan Paoletti, Robert and Elsie Raunick, Carmella Rizzo, Helen and Frank Ryan, Nelson and Kathleen Siegel, Emil and Helen Tvrdik, Richard Zazycki and the Terrell Family (Larine, Ron, Joanne, Tim and Vincent) and Marcia and Charles Brooks.

Mary Mozell Cunningham – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Patrick E. McCabe – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

Marilyn L. Keefrider – by Richard Zazycki

Judd Owen – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Eugene A. Fisch – by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki, Nancy and Edward LaRow

John J. Karcz – by the Szczepanek, Slonina and Audette Families

Sister Mary Aloise Almond, RSM – by Richard Zazycki and Penny Hill

Vincent J. Spataro – by the Mercy Choir Members

Marilyn J. "Lynn" Lord – by Susan C. Fuss

Sister Jane F. Carr, RSM – by Mary A. Femia and Richard Zazycki

William J. Delaney – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

Marjorie M. Connors – by Mary D. Kerwin

Mary G. Barba – by Staff and Trustees at Circles of Mercy

Sister Mary Patricia Nerf, RSM – by Joan and Jack Nerf and Richard Zazycki

Robert A. Bruso – by Richard S. Zazycki

Robert M. Hoffman – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Grace "Dolly" Marrasso – by the Bishop Maginn School Board

Florence Lalicker – by M. Ann McHenry

Sister Mary Amata McDermott, RSM – by Maureen F. Kelly and Richard Zazycki

Helen J. Grimm – by Colleen Somerville

Dorothy G. Carman, Mercy Associate – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Vicki Mahoney – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Marvin Freedman – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

Ronald McCormick – by Marguerite "Marge" McCormick

Sister Josephine Reynolds, RSM – by Margaret Q. Arborio and Richard Zazycki

Sister Josephine Higgins, RSM – by Richard Zazycki

Sister Loretta Moore, RSM – by Volunteers and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Janice "Jan" Sabatino – by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki

Barbara Grenier-Baldwin – by The Somerville Family

Edith R. Musillo Cohen – by Shane and Maureen Somerville

### In Honor of:

Sister Phyllis Herbert, RSM – by Maureen and Peter Herbert

Rev. John Kelly – by Sisters Jane S. Somerville, RSM and Barbara L. Dudley, RSM

Seven New Mercy Associates: Alice Abrams, Janice Burke, Frank Coco, Margie Gonzalez, Eileen Keegan, Janice Leonard and Kathy Quick – by Richard Zazycki

Sr. Barbara L. Dudley, RSM (Birthday Celebration) – by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki •

"Our charity must be in our hearts and from our hearts..."  
– Catherine McAuley

## Director's Remarks by Richard Zazycki

The mission of Circles continues to occur with not only the help from our financial benefactors and donors, but also by those who support us as volunteers. We need all types of volunteers to contribute their time and talent in order for us to provide the works of mercy envisioned by Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy to the Rensselaer Community. The volunteers that we are so fortunate to be blessed with are a dedicated and generous group of individuals who all work very hard in helping us to help others.

At any one time we have between 75 to 100 individuals who support and assist us in our many programs. Whether it's our volunteers supporting our fundraising events like the Gala, Irish Night or the Community Walk, or those performing the VITA tax prep, staffing Catherine's Closet, teaching our computer classes, or the local elementary, high school or college

students along with the many business employees participating in our "Jeans for Teens", Baby Blessings showers or diaper drives, Cate's Kids Easter Baskets and Back to School programs, or help with our Christmas Adopt-a-Family program. These devoted volunteers demonstrate daily how to live the Mercy mission. Since becoming Director over five years ago, the volunteer efforts here at Circles has grown tremendously and has literally touched and helped over 1,000 children and their families!

We are very proud and offer our humble thanks to the many individuals for their dedicated service and commitment to Mercy as a volunteer at Circles! As I reported to "Catherine's Circle of Friends" during our recent Gala, the spirit of Mercy is alive, is doing well and is growing at Circles. Our "Circles" of Mercy continues to grow, ever widens, is never ending and is always in need of friends. •

## "Jeans for Teens" Service Project

by Somer Connolly (Guest Contributor)



Throughout the past 20 weeks I have been part of a sophomore Service Learning class at Maple Hill High School. When joining this program, I was initially scared upon

hearing that it required contributing 80 hours of community service. My thought was "how this will ever be possible?" But while involved in this class, I did many different sorts of service tasks and was surprised at how easy it is to do that much community service without realizing it.

The one big project that I worked on was "Jeans for Teens". I came up with this idea after discovering that one out of eight homeless individuals are teenagers. My "Jeans for Teens" project consisted of collecting 200 pairs of jeans at my school and from my soccer team, church and mom's work. I chose two organizations where the jeans could be donated, Circles of Mercy and another non-profit agency in Troy. Both groups were very grateful with the donation.

When I walked into Circles of Mercy, I was surprised by how many individuals and groups they assist. What made me feel great was to see how I had helped people in need.

This was an amazing experience! Service Learning helped me become a better person. It is my plan to continue these types of service projects the rest of my life. I now realize giving back to the community is not hard at all, it's the exact opposite! It's easy, fun and exhilarating. •

## Freihofer's Community Walk

Thanks to everyone who participated this year in the 23rd Annual Freihofer's Community Walk held at the Empire State Plaza either as a walker and/or a donor. As in the past, we walked in memory of our good friends and supporters Sisters Gail A. Rieth and Mary Amata McDermott, RSM. This year four people comprised "Team Circles" walking and raising over \$3,000 from generous friends and supporters. Our budget goal for this event was reached and surpassed due in no small part to everyone's labors and the support from our wonderful benefactors.

Sister Rita Carr, RSM from the Mercy Motherhouse was able to collect a huge contribution totaling over \$500 from all of the sisters and associates.

Sister Mary Albertus Mathis, RSM walked the course again this year as one of the event's "youngest" participant. Sister was accompanied by Maggie Willis, Sister Sue Wieczynski, RSM, and Penny Hill. In addition, Sisters Jane Somerville and Barbara Dudley worked the check-in table and were on hand to meet and greet the walkers. •



## Make a Gift to Circles of Mercy

Is there a loved one whom you would like to remember in a special way for a birthday, anniversary, or even at the time of death? Why not honor him or her with a donation to Circles of Mercy? If you choose, donations will be recognized in future newsletters. We will also send a personal acknowledgement of your gift. Contributions to Circles of Mercy are tax deductible. Please call us at 518-462-0899 for further information.

I am enclosing my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: (living) \_\_\_\_\_

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PLEASE SEND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mention my loved one (name only) in your newsletter:

Yes  No

## Mark Your Calendar!

We have several great fundraisers and programs planned for this year...

This July and August we will collect needed supplies for **Cate's Kids Back to School Program**. This way we can assist the parents with needed items for when their children go back to school this fall. Allison House will again coordinate this important program. Donations are due the week of August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

We will hold our Annual **Irish Night Celebration** on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:00PM to 10:00PM; the venue will be Mercy Center at 310 S. Manning Blvd (across from St. Peter's Hospital). Admission tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door and table reservations are available for parties of eight. We will be offering food, refreshments, raffle and door prizes. Once again we will feature the music of our dear friend Frank Jaklitsch and his associates.

On October 17<sup>th</sup> we will begin to solicit donors for our Christmas **Adopt a Family Program**. With our difficult economy, we will need many people to support this important holiday program for our client families.

On November 21<sup>st</sup> we will begin our **Annual Holiday Appeal**. We are always delighted to receive your end of year contributions to help further the works of mercy at Circles of Mercy.

On January 23, 2012 we will begin our **VITA Tax Preparation Program**. This is a free service offered to those who have limited incomes. Have you ever thought about becoming a VITA Tax Preparer? Come learn how easy it is to help us to help others. For information about any of these programs, please call us at 462-0899. These are wonderful community builders and can be great opportunities to introduce more people to the works of Circles of Mercy and the Sisters of Mercy. Invite your family or friends so that our Circle of Mercy continues to grow!