



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.

WINTER 2009

VOLUME 8

Number 1

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

Something Old and Something New

During late December Circles of Mercy looked like Santa's Workshop. Piles of beautifully decorated packages were numbered and neatly organized. Over fifty families received gifts from a growing number of individuals and groups who adopt a family for Christmas. Our program served a total of 177 individuals, of whom 125 were children. Circles has received some heart warming thank you notes from recipients of your generosity. Thank you for your spirit of love and sharing.



Santa's Workers from the NYS Assembly Program Development Group wrap a portion of the many gifts donated for Circles' Adopt-A-Family Christmas project.

Tax season is right around the corner and Circles of Mercy is gearing up to be a VITA Site again. This service provides free federal and state tax preparation for families and individual with taxable incomes below \$41,000. **Marilyn Hart** is our site coordinator. Last year she had eleven IRS-trained volunteer tax preparers in addition to six business students who came from Catholic Central High School.

We have the capability of free electronic filing, which results in faster refunds. To make an appointment, call Circles of Mercy at 462-0899 after January 21st. Available times include Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The last day for tax preparation is April 2nd. Last year Circles of Mercy Volunteers prepared 370 tax return forms. With this in mind, would you be interested in being trained as one of our volunteers? •

Interns From Siena

Circles of Mercy continues its partnership with Siena College by welcoming Siena interns who assist us in our programs and offer creative ideas for empowering our participants. This year a new program has been added to encourage and enhance community service. The Siena College *Bonner Leaders Program*, initiated by the Franciscan Center for Service and Advocacy, links students with local service agencies. They provide meaningful service and develop new ideas and initiatives to complement existing programs.

This fall we welcomed **Amanda Simone**, a pre-med student from Long Island, as she

began her service to the community of Rensselaer. As a Bonner Leader, Amanda engaged in training, enrichment and reflection with Director, **Richard Zazycki**. She committed an average of six hours a week to this project.

Another Siena student, **Tania Miolan**, worked with us on Tuesdays and Thursdays during her fall semester. She helped with the woman's group, *Catherine's Closet* and other scheduled activities involving clients.

The Circles of Mercy Board of Trustees is most grateful to Siena College and their commitment to providing service experiences for their students. •

Circles of Mercy Board Members

Catherine Owens Arduini
Rose A. Barba
Nancy L. LaRow
Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D.
Kathleen G. Pingelski
Sister Rosemary J. Sgroi, RSM
Sister Jane S. Somerville, RSM
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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.

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Honorary Gifts and Memorial Donations

Circles of Mercy would like to gratefully acknowledge the following gifts and donations.

In Memory of:

Sister Jacqueline Garland, RSM,
by the Circles of Mercy Staff
Gloria P. (Padula) O'Shaughnessy, by Patricia Lizzi Jones, Rita O. Buchanan, Janet and Fred Clark, and Mary and Ted Minissale
Allen Goss, by the Circles of Mercy Staff, Rosemary Horan, Marilyn Hart and Mary Linton
Evelyn A. Wieczynzki – Anonymous
Lawrence J. Wieczynzki, Sr. – Anonymous
Thomas Connolly, by Maureen and Shane Somerville
Lee Somerville, by Maureen and Shane Somerville
Jack Stangle, by Maureen and Shane Somerville
Rose M. Rizzo, by Maureen and Shane Somerville
Deceased Albany Area Sisters of Mercy who would have celebrated their Jubilees this year:
Sisters Agnes Mary Finin, Frances Mesley, Mary Coons, Mary Evangelist and Karen Marcil by Mary Femia, Richard Zazycki, Ed and Nancy LaRow, Sisters Theresa Gottstein, Marilyn Hickey, Sheila Christensen and M. Aloise Almond
Margaret Clark Hoffman, by the Circles of Mercy Staff
Paul M. Ryan, by Maureen and Shane Somerville
Francis, Catherine and Patricia Kelly, by William and Maryann Kelly
Charlene Foster Spampinato, by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki
John T. Pregent, Sr. by Edrie M. Pregent

In Honor of:

Sister Mary Alma Dammann, RSM, who celebrated her 80th Jubilee by Sister Peg Sullivan, Sister Theresa Gottstein and the Staff at Circles of Mercy

Sister Patricia Newell, RSM, by Jane A. Wait
Sister Marian Zimmerman, RSM, who celebrated her Silver Jubilee by Richard Zazycki

Albany Area Sisters of Mercy who celebrated their Golden Jubilee: Sisters Mary Helen Dillon, Elizabeth Dovidio, Laureen Fitzgerald, Kathleen Turley and Julia Mary Werner by Mary Femia, Richard Zazycki, Ed and Nancy LaRow, Sisters Theresa Gottstein, Julia Mary Werner, and Kathleen Pritty

Albany Area Sisters of Mercy who celebrated their 60th Jubilee: Sisters Matilda Druke and June Szumowski by Sisters Marilyn Hickey, Sheila Christensen, M. Aloise Almond, Theresa Gottstein, Julia Mary Werner and Kathleen Pritty; Richard Zazycki, Mary Femia, and Joanne Scheibly

Albany Area Sisters of Mercy who celebrated their 70th Jubilee: Sisters Jane Carr, Frances Kosier and Mary Helen Oswald by Sisters Marilyn Hickey, Sheila Christensen, M. Aloise Almond, Theresa Gottstein, Julia Mary Werner and Kathleen Pritty; Richard Zazycki and Mary Femia

Cindi and Stephen Gorzynski, who celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary by friends at Circles of Mercy

Herb and Sue Reilly, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Legnard, who celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary by Maureen and Shane Somerville

John Roman, who celebrated his 80th Birthday by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki •

2008 Irish Night A Resounding Success

Circles of Mercy's annual Irish Night celebration was held on Saturday October 18 at Mercy Center in Albany. Frank Jaklitsch provided the entertainment, playing many Celtic and traditional standards. The 180 people attending enjoyed listening and singing along with Frank.

With the collaboration of many of our friends and benefactors, over \$4,500 was raised to support Circles' work. Through the generosity of over 50 local merchants, a wide array of gifts was available for raffles and door prizes, heightening the evening's enjoyment.

We are grateful to the Irish Night Committee, volunteers, and donors, especially Shea's Restaurant which again donated the food and ran the kitchen for the event. Without their efforts our success would not be possible. •



Sisters Mary Harnett (left) and Eleanor Guerin enjoyed selling chances on the many raffles.

Director's Remarks

One of the privileges I most enjoy is speaking publicly about Circles of Mercy, our programs and services, and the charisma of Catherine McAuley.

I recently spoke to groups of parishioners from the churches of St. John's/ St. Joseph's in Rensselaer, St. Mary's in Clinton Heights and Holy Spirit in East Greenbush. I was invited to gather with them for liturgy prior to giving my presentation. Initially, I wasn't sure what I wanted to say, even though I had prepared materials to share. So there I was in Church, trying to think of some different way to tell parishioners about how to continue what most are already doing – generously sharing their time, talent and treasure. The Gospel from the Liturgy gave me my focus. The reading was from Matthew about the greatest commandments, "...to love God, and

to love your neighbor as yourself..."

God's commitment to love and bless us is never-ending and limitless. The same should be true of our love and gifts in service to our neighbors. Circles has truly been blessed with many friends, both individuals and groups who recognize and take seriously, their responsibility of sharing lovingly in justice with their neighbors in need.

Please know that at Circles we work at being good stewards of all the precious contributions received. Each day, all involved in this ministry consciously choose to show God's presence in our world and more specifically, in the Rensselaer community, by loving and helping to support our needy neighbors. We are truly grateful and at times simply amazed, by how our friends and donors show

the courage of their commitment, through the outpouring of their generosity and responding though simple acts of kindness.

My thanks to you for continuing to help us to help love our neighbors! During these difficult economic times, our clients need your support more than ever. Thank you for all you do to help support Circles and the mission of the Sisters of Mercy Northeast Community. Mercy is alive and well. Our Circle of Mercy continues to grow, ever widens, is never ending and is always in need of friends. •



Richard Zazycki

Make a Gift to Circles of Mercy

Is there a loved one who 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) _____

In memory of: (deceased) _____

PLEASE SEND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

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

Yes No

"Try to meet all with peace and love"

— Catherine McAuley

Volunteer Spotlight

Colleen Cain began working with us as a result of her involvement with the Social Concerns Committee at Holy Spirit Church in East Greenbush. She recently retired after more than twenty years teaching in the Computer Information Systems Program at Hudson Valley Community College. Colleen is a perfect fit to teach beginning computer classes to our clients.

Colleen has lived her entire life in East Greenbush. She earned both her bachelors and masters degrees from Russell Sage College and taught in public education for 18 years before choosing to expand her horizons. The experience of working for the FBI and the IRS before and during college motivated her transition into computer and information technology. Although officially retired, she still teaches online courses in computer applications for Hudson Valley.

Colleen's love of travel has taken her to Russia and in November she spent a fast-paced week in China with a tour led by the Albany Chamber of Commerce. She enjoys outdoor activities, particularly gardening. We will be seeing more of Colleen in the weeks ahead when she will be preparing income tax returns with our other volunteers as part of the VITA Tax Program.

Colleen's mother was a nurse at St. Peter's Hospital. Through that connection to the Sisters of Mercy she was drawn to Circles of Mercy. She believes we are called by God to reach out to those less fortunate. She finds it gratifying to help women fulfill their goals in improving their life situations. •



Colleen Cain

Save The Dates!

Donations for *Cate's Kids Easter Basket Program* will be received from March 9th to April 8th.

The VITA Program will run from after January 21st to April 2nd. Call for an appointment at 462-0899. Tax prep services available on: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

Freihofer Community Walk
In Memory of Sister Gail Reith, RSM
– Saturday, May 30th from noon to 2:00 p.m., Empire State Plaza

"Taste of Mercy" Gala will be held on Thursday, June 11th at Casey's Banquet House from 5:30 to 7:p.m.