



St. Joseph's Home Journal

St. Joseph's Home of Springfield

March 2011 • Volume 12, Number 1

What's Inside

From the
Administrator
Page 2

Donations
Pages 4, 5, 7,
8, 9, 10, 11

Garden
Therapy with
Ruth Bixby
Page 11

Holy
Family
Center
Projects
Page 11

Canopy
Photo
Update
Page 12

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NEWSLETTER.

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The Century Club at St. Joseph's Home



Pictured left to right: Carmen Besso, Ramona Dunn, Gus Gordon, Pauline Maton, Gertrude Ryan, (not pictured, Mick Toohey and Lucille Whitehead)

This winter, St. Joseph's Home has six members in its "Century Club." These centenarians have each celebrated their hundredth birthday – or even later birthdays – here at the home.

Carmen Besso

Carmen Besso turned 100 on November 5, 2010. To celebrate her centennial birthday, her relatives in Springfield arranged for Carmen to connect with her grandchildren through Skype, a two-way, audio-video Internet connection. In front of a camera connected to his home computer in Zurich, Switzerland, grandson John Ransdell held up a birthday cake and sang "happy birthday." Carmen was able to see him and visit with him "in real time" from a computer at St. Joseph's Home. Carmen's granddaughter Diane in Tucson, Arizona, also participated in the party via Skype.

The "in-person" participants in the birthday party included Carmen's daughter and son-in-law, Sandy and John Ransdell, as well as granddaughter Elise with her husband Ed and children Tia and Ada. Carmen's 85-year-old brother JD Myers and niece Pat Zanders and Pat's husband also came.

But let's back up a hundred years. Born in Vandalia, Missouri, November 5, 1910, Carmen was the first of seven children. Her father wanted boys, Carmen said. She was only 17 months old when her father got his wish, but his son "brought a girl along with him." After those twins, four addi-

– "Centurians" Continued on Page 2



Annual ChiliFest and Raffle Raises Over \$10,000

Several hundred guests joined St. Joseph's Home's families for the annual ChiliFest on Oct. 24, 2010. The chili, made by dietary manager Mark Ciotti, was fabulous, and the fun really got going when the cash raffle prizes were drawn. Congratulations to raffle winners Bette Richey, Sharon Schraeder, Ken Parker, and William Griffith.

Special thanks to the generous sponsors of the ChiliFest: Superior Fire Protection Systems, Inc., Hanson Information Systems, Inc., Martin Engineering Co., Harold O'Shea Builders, Armbruster Manufacturing, and GHR Engineers.

Dates to Remember

May 1, 2011

Carpenter's Club Mass - 10 a.m.

May 14, 2011

Annual Memorial Mass
and Reception - 4 p.m.

June 12, 2011

Ice Cream Social 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

September 11, 2011

Grandparent Day Family Picnic

From the Administrator

March 1, 2011

Greetings and Blessings to all the Friends of St. Joseph's Home! As I sit and reflect on the two years I have been here at St. Joseph's Home, I am often amazed at the overwhelming generosity of the Friends and Benefactors of the Home. I have watched the building of the Holy Family Center (our new dementia center), the paving of the front parking lot, and the building of the canopy over the original entrance. No small feat for a religious institution that has the care of the elderly as its main concern!

The care of the wonderful residents is

something which has always been the greatest concern of the Sisters who were in this office before me, and will remain as my main concern. Each resident here has a history which is both personal to them and their families, but also to the Springfield area. I often marvel at what some of these "youngsters" have seen in their lives. To think that we have six residents who have passed 100 years of life! They were born at the turn of the century or shortly thereafter.



Shantel Rotherham

At this time I would like to take just a moment to welcome Shantel Rotherham as our new development director. She comes to us with a variety of experience which will be an asset to St. Joseph's Home. We are glad she

will be working with us for the betterment of the Home. Welcome, Shantel!

We strive daily to bring quality to the years that the wonderful people who live here at St. Joseph's Home have to live out. The Sisters and I cannot care for your family members and friends alone. The nursing staff strives to care for those with special medical needs. Without the house-keeping/ laundry, dietary, and activity staffs, we would not have these other needs taken care of. The financial help that you, our generous benefactors, give helps us to continue the ministry started over 108 years ago. So we work as a TEAM to care for the precious people who have been placed in our care. Thank you again for your generosity and May God Bless You as only He can!

God bless you,

Sister M. Lenore

- "Centurian" continued from Page 1

tional siblings came, for a total of five girls and two boys.

When Carmen was young, the allure of a prosperous career in coal mining brought Carmen's parents and siblings to Carlinville, Illinois.

In high school, Carmen took shorthand and typing classes. "That was the surest way to get a job in those days," she said. Her first job was working for the man who owned the home which her family rented, and she kept that job for eight years. "That was in the days when a dollar a day was a good job. Our boss liked to pay in one-dollar bills, because you felt like you were getting a real good salary."

Carmen married her husband Mike, a civil engineer with a degree from Notre Dame, in 1937. Eventually he went into World War II, serving stateside. They were stationed in New York as the war came to a close, and were among thousands who rushed into Times Square on May 8, 1945 to celebrate Victory in Europe or "V-E" Day. After the war, Mike and Carmen settled in Springfield, where they stayed until the 1970s. When

Mike retired, they moved to Clearwater, Florida. They stayed in Florida until Mike began showing signs of Alzheimer's disease in the late 1980s.

The couple returned to Springfield, and Carmen selected St. Joseph's Home's round building, the predecessor of the new Holy Family Center, for his care. She found lodging for herself right across the street. Daughter Sandy remembers, "There probably weren't five days in five years when she wasn't here (at the home) with Dad." Mike passed away in 1994 at St. Joseph's Home. Following Mike's death, Carmen moved to Hickory Glen, where she lived independently another 16 years. At age 99½, when she realized she needed more help with the activities of daily living, she came to St. Joseph's Home.



Mick Toohey

Mick Toohey

"The life of the party" is how relatives and friends describe Marcella "Mick" Toohey, 101. Born in Baker, Oregon, August 21, 1909, Mick

spent most of her life in Springfield. She attended Ursuline Academy and Brown's Business College.

Her business education prepared her for a 40-year career with the telephone company, primarily as a supervisor in the accounting department.

Mick was single all her life, and was very close to the family of her sister Lucille Sams. Lucille had three sons: Jim, Bob, and Jerry. All three of her nephews stayed with "Aunt Mick" and their grandmother "Ma" while attending Cathedral Boys High School in Springfield. Mick enjoyed watching Bob and Jerry play football and basketball. Jerry and his wife Barb remain close to Mick today; Lucille, Jim and Bob are now deceased.

Jerry remembers Mick as a fun-loving aunt. "She was a good Irishman," Jerry says. "She loved her beer. She really enjoyed life to the fullest." Comic performing was one of Mick's pastimes. As one of the Gruesome Foursome, Mick sang and performed in minstrel shows. "They whistled and made all kinds of noises" in their performances, Barb says. The other three members of the Gruesome Foursome were Maxine Sterbenz, Lorene Radford, and Mary Carolyn Cochran.

- "Centurians" continued on Page 3





Mick Toohey (3rd from left) and friends.

Mick also loved to travel. While Jerry's late brother Jim was living in California, Mick would travel with her lifelong friend Josephine Ebers for month-long visits with Jim's family.

Mick and her friend Jo were together much of their lives, including renting a home together. In terms of keeping house, "Mick did everything except the ironing," Barb remembers. "Jo did the ironing." In 2005 and 2006, both women came to St. Joseph's Home from the Villa apartments in Sherman.

After retiring from the phone company in 1972, Mick remained very active in the Telephone Pioneers, a retirees' organization. She also was devoted to the YWCA and was an avid bowler.

Gertrude Ryan

A lifetime of interesting moves which traced a figure-eight on the Midwest has brought Gertrude Ryan back to central Illinois. Born August 5, 1909, in Carlinville, Illinois, Gertrude first worked as a stenographer at the Carlinville Water System. She then went to work for a law office in Carlinville, and remembers that her boss was the national chairman of the Democratic Party, leading to an extensive familiarity with the law and politics.

While working in the law office, Gertrude met and married William Ryan. After a few years in the Army, Bill worked as a traveling salesman for the Continental Oil Company (later Conoco).

Bill's career advancements at Continental led them to move to Vincennes and Whiting, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Chicago; and eventually Minneapolis, Minnesota, where they settled. Gertrude says she was very proud of him in his career. When he became ill, she cared for him for five years before his death in 1989.

Gertrude was a generous and doting aunt... and later great-aunt, her niece Barbara Drone recalls. "She would give us dresses, teddy bears, all kinds of gifts. And the same for our children."

One of Gertrude's great enjoyments in life was travel, both before and after her marriage. She visited the west coast, the Dakotas, Louisiana, Michigan, the Smoky Mountains, New York and Colorado.

She loved entertaining, reading, and kept up a lifelong friendship with first-grade pals Marie Mathias of Carlinville and Bernice Tingley of East Alton.

Her niece Barb remembers Gertrude as a very stylish woman. Also, she was always a fast walker, according to Barb's husband Gary: "No one could keep up with her. In the supermarket, she would have the shopping basket up on two wheels."

Gertrude was a member of St. Mary's Church in Carlinville for many years, and enjoys attending mass daily at St. Joseph's Home. Her move from Minneapolis to Springfield was prompted by the invitation of her nieces and nephews including Kathleen LeBlanc, John Gooch, and Barbara and Gary, whom she calls her "angels." But to those who know her and care for her every day, the true angel is Gert.

Ramona Dunn

St. Joseph's Home's Century Club salutes its dean, Ramona Dunn. Born

January 15, 1907, in Gibson City, Illinois, Ramona celebrated her 104th birthday in January. If the Century Club needed a promoter, the friendly and outgoing Ramona would probably volunteer for the job!

After graduating from Gibson City High School, Ramona worked in a candy store. She later worked at the Gibson City State Bank and eventually moved to Springfield. Henry Horner was governor then, and Ramona worked as a stenographer in the governor's office.

The highlight of her life, she says, was meeting her husband Albert. Initially she and Albert would pass on the street downtown every day at lunchtime. Passing on the street led to talking, then to dating, and eventually to marriage. She remembers that it was a wonderful marriage. "If I had my life to live over again, I wouldn't change a thing," she beams.

Her career took her to a secretarial position at the Illinois Hotel/Motel Association, and she remained there as executive secretary until her retirement.

On her 100th birthday – and again on her 104th – Ramona received a special visitor, Gus Gordon of WICS-TV, who serenaded her with songs of her era. This past Christmas, first-graders from Cathedral School dressed as angels – children 98 years younger than she – brought her a special blessing.

A master of clever retorts, Ramona delights in wordplay and conversation. She loves to read and to visit.

Lucille Whitehead

One hundred years ago in February, a couple named Sara and Joseph O'Day wanted a baby just as badly as a baby named Lucille needed parents. They met each other a few days after Lucille was born, February 3, 1911, and a new family came into being. Seven years later Sara and Joseph adopted a baby boy, Bernard, with the help of the Sisters at Guardian Angel Orphanage. Lucille's aunt later

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Thank you to all whose gifts help continue the ministry of caring for the elderly at St. Joseph's Home.

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**The Sisters at
 St. Joseph's Home
 in Springfield pray
 for their benefactors
 on a daily basis.**

May God Bless You.



On February 14, 2011, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki visited with the Sisters who work at St. Joseph's Home of Springfield. Front row: Sr. Judith Morris, Sr. Holly Schultz, Sr. Mary Dries, Sr. Marcelina Casando. Back row: Sr. Barbara Ladd, Sr. Marion Lemon, Sr. Concepta Joerger, Sr. Patricia Masterson, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, Sr. Lenore Highland.



Home Journal

St. Joseph's Home Journal
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would tell her she was always surprised that Lucille did not grow up to be jealous of Bernard, because “your mother always favored him.” Lucille says, “I loved him so much – he was my baby brother!”

The family lived in St. David, Illinois, near Canton. Lucille went to St. Michael’s grade school in St. David, where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception, who would become her life-long friends. She attended high school in Canton, riding the streetcar to school until the streetcar was discontinued. After the streetcar left, some of the St. David boys got cars and she rode to school with them.

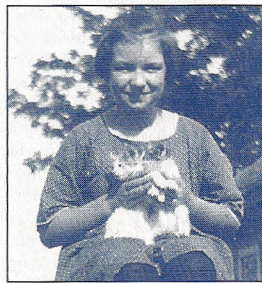
As a young woman, she worked on Saturdays at Kresge’s with her friends, Thelma and Beulah. “Thelma saved all her money and bought a car. Beulah and I spent all ours on eating out and clothes.” The first car Lucille learned to drive was a pea-green Ford, she recalls. Lucille married Lawrence “Cotton” Whitehead in 1933. They lived first with Cotton’s folks, later with Lucille’s parents, and eventually settled in Canton. They had three children: daughter Sara Ann, who lives in Macomb, and sons Robert and Richard, now deceased.

After Robert’s birth, Lucille needed to stay home. Her friend Sr. Pat Ann (a Sister of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception) had an aunt, Sylvia Bailey, who made draperies. From Sylvia, Lucille learned a skill that would become a 20-year career. “I was still doing draperies when I moved into the high-rise (in Canton). One of the guys said, ‘Well, get two apartments – one for you and one for the draperies.’” Since she insisted that one apartment was really enough, her employer, the Andrews Furniture Store, got wood from the lumberyard and built her a large table in the store where she could cut drapery fabric, then take it home and sew it.

The Whiteheads loved to travel. After Cotton’s death in 1979, Lucille continued to travel with her friend Daisy, and sometimes with daughter Sara Ann.

In 1991, Lucille moved from the high-

rise to the sheltered care section of St. Joseph’s Home of Peoria. When the Peoria home closed, her next move was to St. Joseph’s Home of Springfield. Sara Ann reminded her, “Mom, you don’t know a soul in Springfield.” “Yes I do,” Lucille corrected her. “I know five Sisters in Springfield.” She has been at the home since December 2004. Today at 100, she reflects and says with conviction, “You know, I do feel like this: Every period of your life, you have something to be thankful for. So you must appreciate what you have when you have it.” She still loves to read, especially the Jan Karon series, knit and crochet.



Pauline and kittens

Pauline Maton

The happiest childhood imaginable is how Pauline Maton’s daughter describes Pauline’s early years. Ramona Metzger says

that her mother Pauline, born December 19, 1910, was raised in the country near Mt. Auburn, Illinois. “Her parents were wonderful people; she dearly loved them.”

The family lived on a farm that had orchards, cattle, chickens, pigs and horses. “She loved the farm. She and her sister, Paula, loved climbing trees. They always had lots of kittens and they would dress them up like dolls.”

Pauline’s father “was always a little ahead of his time. It was a pretty modern farm, with the main house, a coal house, smoke house, and wash house.” They had a car as soon as they came out. However, Pauline and her sister continued to drive the horse and buggy to school.

Around 1930 Pauline went to Kankakee to visit her sister Marjorie. While there, she met Edgar King, who was a cook. They married and for a time ran a restaurant in Kankakee, but times were very tough and the restaurant did not survive the Depression. He had heard there was work to be had in Arizona, so, leaving Pauline and two small daughters in Illinois, he traveled to Arizona and found work cooking for the company that

was building a highway. Eventually, he found a cabin up on top of a mountain, and got settled enough to send for Pauline and their daughters, Ramona, age 3, and Hazel, 1. A very kind aunt and uncle drove the young mother and children across country to join him.

While they were in Arizona, Pauline’s mother became ill with cancer, and the family moved back to Illinois. Edgar helped his father-in-law on the farm and then eventually got a job in Springfield. The girls went to Cathedral Grade School. Meanwhile, Pauline had another child, a boy who died at three days old.

In seventh grade, Ramona and her sister decided they wanted to become Catholic. “I loved the Catholic Church, because they answered lots of questions for me. The Christian Church preached that smoking and drinking were a sin... I knew they weren’t sins!” So Pauline decided that if her girls were becoming Catholic, she would, too.

“Mother mostly stayed home and took care of us. She was a wonderful mother. When we got sick she’d make potato soup and custard in the oven,” Ramona reminisces. When Ramona was 11, her younger sister Paula was born.

Although she was not used to working, occasionally Pauline would go to the St. Nick, where Edgar worked, and help make salads. One memorable visitor to the St. Nick was President Truman. After his meal, he came back to the kitchen to greet the staff. Edgar died in 1951, leaving Pauline with no insurance. Pauline then went to work at the Dew Chili Parlor. After Pauline’s parents died and she inherited part of their farm, she was able to sell some land and buy a home of her own.

When she had been widowed about ten years, Pauline’s brother Roy introduced her to Louie Maton of Taylorville, who owned a flower shop. They eventually married and lived in Taylorville. They spent winters in Florida. “Mother learned to knit in Florida, and she has made beautiful afghans for all of us and our kids.” She also loved to fish and brought her fish from Florida to her home.

Pauline eventually moved to Springfield to be near her daughters, after Louie’s death. She lived 10 years at the Presbyterian Home before moving to St. Joseph’s Home.

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Ruth Bixby, Occupational Therapist & OTA Instructor

Ruth completed her graduate project/thesis entitled "The Effects of Stage Specific Gardening on Residents with Dementia in a Long-Term Care Facility" at St. Joseph's Home.

Are there observable links between sensory stimulation and increased social engagement in older adults? Ruth Bixby, an instructor at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC), designed an occupational therapy research project at St. Joseph's Home to look for such links.

As a registered and licensed occupational therapist, Ruth's career has led her to look for therapies that will improve the functioning of those she treats. For her University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) master's degree thesis, Ruth introduced a therapeutic gardening program at St. Joseph's Home and observed whether participation in a multi-sensory gardening activity would stimulate the Holy Family Center residents' engagement and socialization at dinnertime.

Some of Ruth's students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at LLCC assisted her with this project. Students joined her at St. Joseph's Home on Friday mornings. After Mass, residents were invited to participate in an activity that combined music, conversation, and a gardening project selected to stimulate sight, touch and smell. "We'll get our hands into the dirt. We'll scoop out the mushy insides of pumpkins..." Each session included stimulation of all senses, because each resident has different abilities and strengths.

Immediately after their gardening therapy, the residents would go to dinner. Ruth and her students would follow the residents into the dining room and observe them as they ate. They were interested in their engagement during their dining experience after sensory stimulation. "Will they eat better? Eat more? Participate more in their surroundings? Be more independent?"

Ruth hoped to show that multi-sensory therapy increases engagement and independence.



Alice Deffenbaugh is busy at work watering the Peace Garden at Holy Family Center.

"In our culture, our memories of social activities are always tied to food – so when older adults start to withdraw from socialization, they start losing their appetite," Ruth said. "I really want to make sure families understand that sensory stimulation makes a difference," she said.

One of the unexpected outcomes of Ruth's project was an increase in attendance for the scheduled activities in the Holy Family Center. At the beginning of the project, 8-10 residents were regularly attending the therapeutic gardening activities. Five months later, the average group size for planned group activities had grown on average to 15-18 residents, and sometimes as many as twenty or more residents would attend.

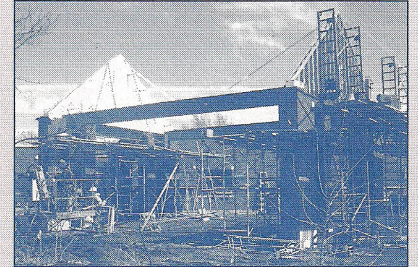
In gratitude for this service-learning opportunity with her students, Ruth graciously offered a year of volunteer work at the Home. She helped design the enclosed garden at the Holy Family Center and worked with staff to establish programs to get both the residents and their families involved in it.

"There are strong connections between sensory outdoor experiences and mental function," she said, "It has been shown that the smell of fresh-cut grass can stimulate memory."

"We want the garden to be peaceful, serene ... a prayer garden ... and also a sensory garden."



Holy Family Center Enhanced entrance & rooms



Recently Deceased Memorials – Continued

John Thoele – Continued

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Virgil Tipton

Mr. Joseph Richiusa

Sam Trapani

J Jean Breiner
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Greg & Liane Hammer
Carl Renken
Alden Dean Van Winkle



Until We Meet Again

Dear benefactors, volunteers, and family members of the residents,

Your many kindnesses to the Sisters, to the residents, and to me have taught me a lifetime of lessons in my 13½ years at St. Joseph's Home. As I move from St. Joseph's Home into the next chapter of my career, I look back with so much gratitude and respect at your amazing generosity...

Those volunteers who have served on the board of directors: God bless you. Your stabilizing influence, wisdom, and vision are pearls of great value.

The volunteer fundraisers, especially the capital campaign cabinet and committees: You first had to convince me that a \$4.75 million campaign was doable in the midst of a recession, and then YOU DID IT!

Those who volunteer in so very many ways: Your devotion inspires me. Your time is a precious gift. Thank you.

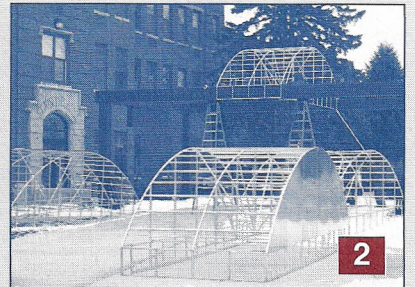
Each and every benefactor who pledged or gave to help build the Holy Family Center ... contributed toward our new entrance canopy ... bought furniture for the residents' bedrooms ... supported our neediest residents through the Continuing Care Fund ... or came through for us when that huge chunk of the chapel ceiling fell onto the pews and organ: You could not have chosen a more ethical, careful, and durable mission to support. (And this is the very last time I will ask you: Have you remembered St. Joseph's Home in your will?)

Philanthropy is a life-touching endeavor. Thank you for touching the lives of the current and future residents of St. Joseph's Home. And mine, too.

- Terri Hempstead
Development Director 1997-2011



Canopy Project Better for Residents & Guests



Thank you for supporting
this project!



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