

*A newsletter of the
Sisters of Divine Providence
Marie de le Roche Province*

S P R I N G 2 0 1 1

PROVIDENCE

Alive!



“When we heal
the earth, we heal
ourselves.”

— David W. Orr

Spring has arrived!

Transitions

**Change: Moving in
the right direction
with confidence and
vision**

In Memory



Spring has arrived!

by Mary Francis Fletcher, CDP, Provincial Director

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COVER :

Providence Heights Alpha School students participate in outdoor Earth Day Service on the beautiful grounds of the Pittsburgh Motherhouse. Cover and other photos in this issue of Alive by Leslie Goodes, creativegoodes.net

FINALLY, SPRING HAS come! What a long, slow period, almost imperceptible, never straight forward! A new season unfolds gradually until one day we suddenly realize the trees, bushes, and small plants have flowered, the sun is warmer, the days longer, and Spring has arrived!

We have all heard the saying, "Nothing is more constant than change!" An ancient philosopher wrote that we can never step into a river in the same place twice. The water continues to flow and constantly moves on, changing the riverbed, the banks, even the rocks as they are smoothed and stirred by its current. Change affects every aspect of our lives. Perhaps it is how we know that we, and all creation around us, are alive and thriving!

This is a year of many transitions for the Sisters of Divine Providence. As we move through the year, we are celebrating the 200th year of birth and the life of our founder, Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. In our community, we are celebrating the vocational call and the courage of two women asking to become full members and to share their lives in vowed commitment with us. What a blessing of Providence these women are to our province and for our future! As we remember

our founder and our history, as we celebrate the many women who came before us, who gave their lives in compassion, justice, and peace, we welcome our newest members to continue that journey with us. Many changes come slowly; others surprise us with a deepened sense of ourselves, our call, God's goodness, and with the joy of a new Spring.

As we consider the needs of our world today, the resources we have, and the people we serve, as we pray and reflect together on where and how God is calling us today into lives of loving service for our world, we are called upon to make decisions related to our present ministries. This summer, our residential camp ministry of 64 years is being transitioned to a full day camp under new program and organizational arrangements. Establishing new governance structures and choosing a president to head Sacred Heart School (62 years old) is also initiating a period of transition for all those involved: Sisters, students and families, employees, faculty and staff alike. These decisions have been made in the hope of bringing greater strength, stability, and service to these two Massachusetts ministries, allowing both the possibility and hope of a new Spring!

The community is anticipating two summer

Chapters, which will affect the identity and future direction of our province and our entire congregation. A "Chapter" is an event in a religious community at which delegates, representing all the members, pray, dialogue, and discern together, making decisions and commitments for the entire congregation (General Chapter) or for the province (Provincial Chapter). At the end of each Chapter, new leaders are elected and those chosen assume the responsibilities of leadership for the congregation/province in the next five years. The decisions of each Chapter bring new changes for the community.

As we have experienced in the past, sometimes it is only as we take action related to the Chapter decisions that we more fully understand the implications and appreciate the magnitude of the changes we are making. It is often clearer then that the Holy Spirit has guided us in our considerations and our commitments. Sometimes we only become aware in retrospect that God's loving Providence has led us to the newness of joy, light, and life for the sake of God's Mission to bring forth the Kin-dom in our midst. Then we know again that Spring is here!

Transitions

by Jean Dennison, Executive Director, Office of Mission Advancement

CHANGE ... CONVERSION ... PROGRESSION ... shift ... upheaval ... evolution ... growth. These are good words to describe the past and also to apply to the future of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Marie de la Roche Province. Though change is necessary for vibrancy and rebirth, times of change are often fraught with anxiety; however, trusting in a Provident God, the Sisters have accepted the changes of the past year, and they reach out to embrace the changes yet to come. This article will share with you some of the transitions that have occurred and those anticipated in the future.

Camp Mishannock Becomes Camp Morning Star

Mishannock is the Morning Star that shines at break of day. These words, from a poem written by Sister Irenaea Slyke in 1946, forever link the past and future of Camp Mishannock, the private residential and day camp for girls owned and operated by the Sisters of Divine Providence in Kingston. Though the sun has set on Camp Mishannock, new life will be brought forth in the form of Camp

Morning Star, a day camp associated with the Sacred Heart Elementary School.

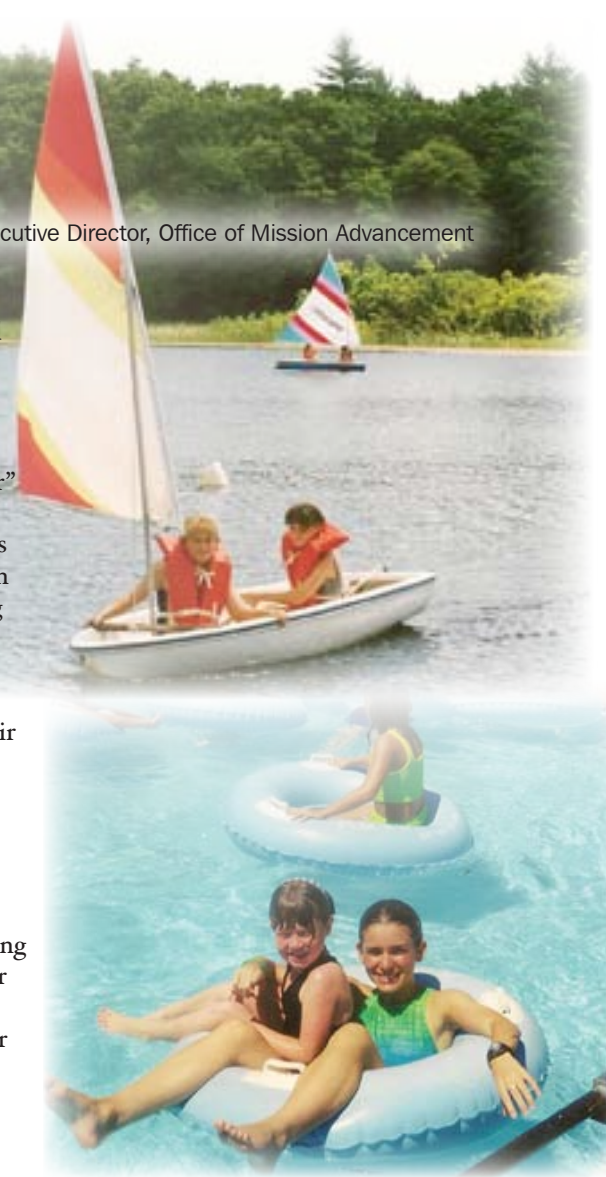
Since its inception in 1947, Camp Mishannock, meaning “morning star” in the Algonquian dialect, has had a positive impact on thousands of girls (ages 5 to 15) from the local Kingston area and around the globe, including many from Mexico and Canada. The camp staff has been dedicated to nurturing young campers, encouraging them to strengthen their physical skills and abilities, while instilling leadership and social skills and teaching them to care for and preserve the natural environment.

The Sisters have been hands-on in their operation of the camp, providing a strong faith-based environment for the girls. According to Sister Lydia Steele, facilities and finance manager for the Sacred Heart Elementary School, “Sisters did everything at the camp for many years. They were counselors, chauffeurs, art teachers, they cooked and cleaned, and they were mother figures to countless numbers of campers through the years. The programs focused on environmental appreciation, the

development of physical skills through recreational activities, and fostered communal responsibility in teaching and practicing respect for God and for others.”

The new Camp Morning Star, administered from the Sacred Heart Elementary School in Kingston, will be a summer day camp for girls and boys from Kindergarten through Grade 8. It will operate from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., from July 4 through August 12. The camp will be staffed by adult international counselors. Campers will have access to the lake for swimming and water sports, tennis courts and fields for all land sports, and arts and crafts.

continued on **page 4**



Transitions

continued from page 3

Welcome, New President

Pamela Desmarais (pronounced Day-moray) has been hired as president of a new governance structure for Sacred Heart Elementary and High School, consisting of the president and a board of directors. The goal



Newly elected Sacred Heart Schools president, Pamela Desmarais

of the new governance structure is to ensure that Sacred Heart School System thrives into the future and continues to educate and develop the moral character of generations of children still to come. It will ensure the involvement and leadership of the Sisters of Divine Providence, with the board of directors and president to reinforce the school's mission. An important role for the new president will be to raise the profile of Sacred Heart School System in the community, to articulate the qualities that set us apart from other schools, and to explore options to ensure the future fiscal sustainability of the schools.

Beginning in July 2011, Ms. Desmarais will begin the work of forming a board of directors to chart the course for the future of the schools. Sister Ann Therese Connolly (SH Elementary School) and John Enos (SH High School) will continue as leaders in their respective facilities. Seeing to the students' academic, spiritual, and personal well-being will remain the most important work of the ministry.

Ms. Desmarais, a graduate of Sacred Heart High School ('82), has extensive experience in the field of organizational management and business operations, leadership, financial management, and strategic planning, providing these services most recently through her own consulting firm, and prior to 2009, as president of the North American division of Antenna Audio in Sausalito, CA and chief operating officer of Antenna Audio Worldwide, a worldwide leader in creative educational programming. In addition, she is enthusiastic, personable, and energetic—a leader who has proven to be a good motivator.

Ms. Desmarais is looking forward to her new position. When asked what her hopes are for the future, she said, "I want to bring together the various groups that make up Sacred Heart School, as well as the individuals within those groups, so we are all focused in the same direction. I want to build a fantastic team and a strong strategic plan, a strong foundation for new growth, and the development of exciting new ideas."

In addition to being a Sacred Heart High School alum, Ms. Desmarais earned a B.A. in economics from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester and an M.B.A. from Northeastern University in Boston.

Sisters Sally and Karina

On April 2, Sally Vega Alvarado and Karina Conrad entered the community as novices at a ceremony in Mother of Divine Providence Chapel in Pittsburgh. Sally was born in Cidra, Puerto Rico, and was acquainted with Sister Ana Lydia Sonera Matos, whom she asked



Sisters Carole Riley, Karina Conrad, and Sally Vega Alvarado at the Novitiate Ceremony on April 2

to accompany her on her spiritual journey. While Sally did not believe she wanted to become a Divine Providence Sister, she did pray with the Sisters in Arecibo and Bayamon, participated in retreats, special activities, and dinners. In time she felt called to enter the congregation. Sally has been in Pittsburgh studying English at La Roche College.

Karina was born in Miami, Florida, and became acquainted with the congregation by using the internet and “Googling” Sisters of Divine Providence. She came to know Sister Carole Riley and attended one of her summer retreats. Karina has been working at the Providence Heights Alpha School and, more recently, helping with several community projects, including helping to develop biographies for the Sisters living in the Pittsburgh motherhouse.

A few days after the April 2 celebration, Sisters Sally and Karina moved to the novitiate house in the St. Louis area to begin the canonical year of their novitiate and to participate in an intercommunity program with novices of several other communities. Sister Kathleen Angel will be novice director and Sister Margaret Mertens will also live at the novitiate.

Changes, Big and Small

Transitioning into the electronic age is a continuous and often frustrating process these days. But what a wonderful way to spread the mission of Providence! Most of the Sisters are adept at sending and receiving email and like to stay connected in that way. You are invited to visit our website at www.divineprovidencweb.org and follow the latest news about the Sisters and their ministries. We are also on Facebook and hope you will ‘friend’ us there and help to share the Sisters’ news through social media.

Thanks to those of you who responded to our Providence Alive Reader Survey in the last issue. We are analyzing the results and they will inform our decision about the way we communicate in the future. We expect the next year to bring about some changes in our newsletter process. We are particularly sensitive to the wide range of ages in our circle of friends and the varying levels of technological expertise, and so any changes that occur will have to take into account the best way to keep everyone in the circle.

Among the most exciting changes that are anticipated are the two Chapter meetings that will be held in Pittsburgh this summer. The General Chapter, which involves the worldwide Congregation of Divine Providence, will be held the first two weeks of July (Chapters are held every five years). In addition to looking back and assessing the directions and goals set at the previous Chapter, new directions are set based on current realities. The theme of the General Chapter is *Loaves and Fish: The Dream and Practice of Interdependence*. The Marie de la Roche Provincial Chapter, which also evaluates past goals and sets the new direction on a province-wide basis, will be held the first week of August. The theme for this year is *Risking the Unknown*. Both Chapters will also include the election of new leadership teams that will assume office in January 2012.

The Sisters ask your prayers in these times of transition and, in return, you will be in the prayers of the Sisters as you embrace the transitions in your own life.

Also contributing to this article: Sister Kathleen Angel



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Change

Moving in the right direction with confidence and vision

By Ana G. Schulz, Director of Development, Office of Mission Advancement

IN 2008, THE OFFICE OF MISSION Advancement was formed to facilitate the three regional offices—Pittsburgh, Kingston, and St. Louis—working collaboratively to promote the Providence mission of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Winston Churchill once said, “There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction.” This was a change made in the right direction.

As with most changes, the challenge is maintaining the “right direction.” That’s why the Office of Mission Advancement and the Sisters of Divine Providence are introducing the *Marie de la Roche Giving Society*. The *Giving Society* changes and decidedly enhances how we acknowledge you, our benefactors. More importantly, it provides us an opportunity to recognize our faithful supporters, to reinforce the relationship you have with us and to encourage the formation of new ones. Our message acknowledges that donors to the Sisters of Divine Providence are part of something special: a growing partnership dedicated to achieving compassion, justice, and peace in our world.

Giving Society membership is open to all and renews each year on July 1. As of the end of June 2011, we will be recognizing sustaining donors, those who have given to the Sisters for 10 or more years, and those who have contributed in the past year, since July 1, 2010. New is the idea of giving levels; that is, in

addition to the spiritual benefits that our donors receive as partners in mission, Society members will enjoy unique recognition benefits that are designated for each level. They are a way for us to express our appreciation to you and to show the solidarity that exists in working together to achieve a common goal: moving the Providence mission forward.

By joining the *Marie de la Roche Giving Society*, donors will enable the Sisters to continue their work into the future by supporting a variety of projects, including the following:

- Support of Sisters requiring skilled nursing care
- Support of Sisters in active ministry where compensation shortfalls exist
- Provide educational and professional development for newest members who must meet shifting needs of the workforce and the world
- Facility improvements

Helping the Sisters with an unrestricted donation directly contributes to the Community’s long-term sustainability. It is a financial commitment that affirms that what the Sisters have done and continue to do is important to you. It says that the Sisters matter in your life and to the lives they are continuing to touch.

Opportunities for giving and membership in the *Giving Society* are available all year, through one-time

gifts, recurring gifts, and pledges.

They can be made in response to our annual appeal, our Christmas appeal, to our newsletters, or any time as a donation.

So, as we continue moving together in the right direction, we do so with confidence and a vision for the future that embodies a strong commitment between the Sisters of Divine Providence and our donors—partners in mission.

If you would like more information about the *Marie de la Roche Giving Society*, please contact your regional development office.

Pittsburgh, PA

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In Memory



Sister Patricia Roche
December 30, 2010



Sister Mary Jane Kiley
March 14, 2011

The Sisters of
Divine Providence
also remember
Associates ...



Marge Albers
January 1, 2011



Cathy Cullen
April 1, 2011



Memorials in honor of Sisters Patricia Roche and Mary Jane Kiley can be made through the Development Office, 9000 Babcock Boulevard, Allison Park, PA 15101 or the website, at www.divineprovidenceweb.org, by clicking on Donate Now.

A Providence Woman
lives forever
in the hearts
of those who **remember...**



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Marie de la Roche Province

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Mission Statement

We, the Congregation of Divine Providence, impelled by the Spirit of Jesus, commit ourselves to co-create a world of compassion, justice and peace. Guided by the legacy of Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler and Marie de la Roche, we nurture in ourselves and in others a trust and confidence in God's faithful presence.

We further commit ourselves to making God's Providence more visible in our world.

The Sisters of Divine Providence is an international congregation of three provinces (Germany, American-Caribbean, Korea) and one region (Peru) with approximately 750 vowed members and 300 Associates. Since its founding in Finthen, Germany in 1851, the Congregation has expanded its ministries to meet the needs of the times in education, health care, pastoral care, social work, campus ministry, work among those who are poor or homeless, and peace and justice concerns.

Save the Dates

BACKYARD BARBEQUE

Friday, June 17, 2011
Doors open at 4:30; dinner at 6:45

The John Heinz History Center
1212 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Sponsored by:
Providence Connections, Inc.

For more information:
412-766-3860

THE DUELING FIDDLERS (Rock Violin)

Tuesday, June 21, 2011
7:30 p.m.

Sheldon Concert Hall
3648 Washington Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108

Sponsored by:
Room at the Inn
For more information:
314-209-9181

OKTOBERFEST

Saturday, October 15, 2011
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.

9000 Babcock Boulevard
Allison Park, PA 15101

Sponsored by:
The Sisters of Divine Providence
For more information:
412-635-5401