

# Seton Associate Newsletter

Vol.10, No. 2

September 2019



Kenyan girls happily open hygiene kits made by Mississippi Seton Associates.

## Congregation's Ministry Grant Supports Teen Girls in Kenya

By Christie Wilson

The Seton Associates in Amory, MS, are trying to make a difference for the young girls in Limuru, Kenya, Africa., thanks to 2019-2020 grant of \$3,000 from the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, to make hand-sewn, washable, reusable sanitary panties for the young women there. *Fikia Dada* is Swahili for *Reach a Girl*. The Setons are doing just that.

The Mississippi Seton Associates learned that 72 percent of the teen girls in Kenya were

not likely to make it into high school because they are forced to miss school one week a month due to menstruation when they sit at home in the sand because there are no sanitary pads available.

The group started a project to address this need one year ago and it has really gained momentum thanks to a grant the Setons received from the Sisters of Charity to sew washable sanitary pads. We also sew cloth hygiene kit bags which contain two of the pads, a bar of soap and two pair of panties.

The Setons have dubbed themselves the 'Mad Padders' and are meeting frequently cutting and sewing flannel, terrycloth and plastic tablecloths to make the pads. Last year the Mad Padders made 400 hygiene kits which were distributed to the teens along with Christ-based sex and self-esteem lessons.

Seton Associate Linda Holden, who has long been connected to Kenya through her annual missionary work there, said when she learned that the girls were not able to go to school because of their periods she decided to take action. She rallied her fellow Setons and the project was begun.

Originally the group relied upon community donations and Setons who had sewing machines used their own. When the group received a grant for supplies from the Sisters of Charity, it moved the project into high gear. We bought sewing machines and lots of fabric and thread. We plan to make at least 1,000 pads this year. Maybe more.

Christie explains: "I sew sanitary pads because I believe that we are all one in this universe. The girls who happened to be born in Kenya without privilege should not suffer because they are females. These young women deserve to achieve a higher education and if there is anything that we can do here in Amory, MS, to make that happen, then we are all in."

Seton Associate Nancy Camp, who also has volunteered in Kenya, said she enjoys working on the sanitary pad project. "It's what we are called to do," she said. Seton Associate Carlos Ann Sanders added: "I'm so glad to be included in this sewing project. It's a blessing to me to help these girls."

While the group remains thankful for receiving the grant, they can always use donations of flannel, cotton or terry cloth, and flannel backed tablecloths and ribbon. Cash donations are also always accepted. Anyone who wishes to begin a sewing group to work in conjunction with the Amory Setons is asked to contact Christie Wilson or Linda Holden. "We ask all Sisters and Seton Associates to pray for this project and for the lives that it

touches. Just keep these young girls in your prayers,” said Christie. “The ultimate goal is for the girls to make it further in school and achieve their potential.”



Mississippi Seton Associates at sewing meeting are (L-R) Melissa Sierra, Carlos Ann Sanders, Peggy Stevenson, Jean Pinkley, Christie Wilson, Linda Holden and Lillie Arrexi.

## **Cardinal Leads Congregation’s 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Liturgy**

His Eminence Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, leader of the Archdiocese of Newark, will officiate at a special Mass in Holy Family Chapel on Saturday, September 28 at 3 p.m. to commemorate the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth. The Cardinal also will deliver the Homily.

Priests and Deacons, who also are Seton Associates, will participate in the liturgy.

Sisters, Seton Associates, and guests will gather for the liturgy followed by a reception in the Academy of Saint Elizabeth Study Hall.

### **Feast of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Mass**

The Congregation will continue its 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the Feast of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton on Saturday, January 4, 2020 in Holy Family Chapel. Guests will include Sisters from the Sisters of Charity Federation, Seton Associates and family.

## Seton Associates Mark 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Commitments in March

Sisters and Seton Associates will come together March 14, 2020 to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Seton Associates. The day-long event begins with a special liturgy in Holy Family Chapel at 10 a.m.

The Mass will include the Rite of Commitments for Candidates for Seton Associate, Lifetime Commitment and Annual Renewals. Members of *Toward Boundless Charity* will participate in a Blessing Ceremony during the Mass as well.

A Celebration Luncheon follows in the Glynallyn Ballroom from Noon to 4 p.m. at The Madison Hotel for Seton Associates, Sisters, *Toward Boundless Charity* members and guests.

A 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Committee will begin meeting to plan the day's details and other activities during this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year that may include ministry projects.

## Annual Retreat Explores Theme of “Converted by Life”

Father Patrick Griffin, CM, will lead our retreat at Maris Stella October 11-13. His theme is “Converted by Life.”

Father Patrick will focus on Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac who came to their vocations by witnessing the world around them, the needs of the poor, and responding to them with attention and compassion. Nothing that touched upon the lives of the poor escaped their notice. Their conversion came about by the people who came into their lives and whom they allowed to influence their thinking and acting. Father Patrick will identify some of those people and illuminate the ways they drew Vincent and Louise to holiness. Their stories suggest a similar path for us as we identify those who have had an impact on our choices and lives as we embrace and live the Vincentian charism. We each will be encouraged to discuss our own conversion by life and where it is going. Father Patrick also will cover Vincentian devotion to Mary through the Miraculous Medal.

Our retreat starts Friday evening with dinner followed by prayer and an overview of the Saturday and Sunday morning programs. Saturday includes celebration of the Eucharist at 4 p.m. in the Chapel. We will wrap up Sunday morning. We can arrive any time on Friday after 2 p.m. and we should all be on the road Sunday by noon, check-out time. Report to St. Vincent House to select your room.

-more-

The costs per person is \$125. That covers two nights at \$50 each, and all your meals. To register, please email, mail or call in your information. In addition to you name, address, and telephone, we need a contact name and telephone number in case of an emergency. Let us know if you wish to carpool with another Seton Associate. We understand some members of a certain age prefer not to make the drive to Long Beach Island. We will try to accommodate all requests for rides.

Payment: please make your check payable to Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, and on the memo line write Seton Associate Retreat. Mail your check to Seton Associate Office, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, New Jersey 07961-0476. Register by October 7.

## **Orientation to Seton Associates**

The annual Orientation to Seton Associates will be held in Room 110 of the Motherhouse on Saturday, November 2 from 1 to 3 p.m. Candidates for Seton Associate and those Seton Associates making a lifetime commitment will gather for a program of information about the congregation and Seton Associates, discernment, and a visit from Mother Mary Xavier.

Seton Associates who wish to serve on a new Orientation/Discernment Committee may volunteer by calling the Director at 973-290-5336 or email [rcarroll@scnj.org](mailto:rcarroll@scnj.org). Hurry!

## **If you are considering a Lifetime Commitment...**

Making a Lifetime Commitment changes you. It changes you because you stand before all of us, Sisters and Seton Associates, and say Yes to charity. It is a spiritually powerful moment. Your Yes is an acknowledgement that the Divine works through you in helping others, and it is a statement of what you hold dear. It is also a reminder and affirmation to those witnessing you of what we hold dear, too. We are bound together in a beautiful mission and life of service that enriches us in spirit while we touch others in kindness and love. Lifetime Commitment is a decision only you can make. May the Holy Spirit reside in your heart as you ponder this step as a Seton Associate of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

If you feel called to make your Lifetime Commitment as a Seton Associate, please send a letter to the Director by October 30 expressing your desire and why you wish to do so. Your letter does not have to be long; however, it should reveal your passion for the charism of charity and your resolve to let your heart speak in charity to all for the rest of your life. You may wish to discuss your decision with your Sponsor, if she is still alive, or with another Sister, Lifetime Associate or the Director. Email is accepted.

The Rite of Commitments will be held on March 14, 2020 during the Seton Associate 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Liturgy in Holy Family Chapel at 10 a.m. Please send your letter to: Director of Seton Associates, P.O. Box 476 Convent Station, New Jersey 07961-0476

## ***Tuesdays with Tommy* Explores Contemplation**

Last Spring's *Tuesdays with Tony* proved to be a such hit with a corps of weekly attendees, that we are hosting a new series called *Tuesdays with Tommy*. This series features Thomas Merton on Contemplation. The topics of the six lectures include: Introduction by Fr. Anthony Ciorra, Ph.D.; Prayer and Meditation on the Meaning of Life; Monastic Spirituality: Life is a Journey; Cassian on Prayer; God-Centered Prayer; and Religious Silence.

The program meets on Tuesday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon in Room 110 of the Motherhouse on September 10, 17 and 24, and October 1, 8 and 15. Seton Associate Karen Webster, a "graduate" of the *Tuesdays with Tony* series, serves as facilitator.

Sisters and Seton Associates may attend all of some of the sessions to learn more about contemplation to deepen their spirituality.

## **Mass of Remembrance Recognizes Lives of Three Associates**

The Annual Mass of Remembrance will be held in Holy Family Chapel on Saturday, November 2 at 11 a.m. followed by a Reception in the Academy of Saint Elizabeth Study Hall. The Mass recognizes those Sisters and Seton Associates who died during the past year, and celebrates their holy lives lived in the spirit of charity. Seton Associates will remember, in particular, Dorothy Greer, who died February 18, 2019, Catherine D. King, who died on April 25, 2019, and Sister Anne McKeon who died August 28, 2019.

## **Seton Associate Committees Need Volunteers**

The Seton Associate Advisory Board agreed to reestablish two former Board committees, Hospitality, and Spirituality. We seek committee members for those two and the Orientation/Discernment Committee. If interested, contact the Director at 973-290-5336. You will be so glad you answered the call!

~~

**Quote:** "A decent provision for the poor is the true test of a civilization."

~~Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)

## *Toward Boundless Charity* Programs Underway at Three Schools

In June, Seton Associates Theresa Nolan and Coleen Ognissanti invited Director Rosemary Carroll to meet with students at Saint Vincent Academy in Newark to introduce them to *Toward Boundless Charity*. Theresa, who works with Coleen in the development office there, joined Rosemary in discussing the program with all of the sophomores and juniors, and distributed application forms to them. Many signed them. Theresa, an alumna of SVA, is following up with the students, and serving as TBC facilitator.

In July Rosemary met with Megan Knight, director of development at the Academy of Saint Elizabeth, who is responsible for *Toward Boundless Charity* there. Meghan already has re-invigorated the students and scheduled several ministry projects for the year.

The Seton Associate Advisory Board has established that facilitators for *Toward Boundless Charity* groups should be a Seton Associate so the connection between the Seton Associates and *Toward Boundless Charity* members is strong. Because Meagan Knight is not a Seton Associate, veteran Seton Associate Evlynn Jarzabek has volunteered to be a co-facilitator with Megan in nurturing the role of charity in the lives of the Academy students.

Since the untimely death of Seton Associate John Uriarte, *Toward Boundless Charity* at Mother Seton Regional High School had been on hold until a successor facilitator could be named. We are pleased that Seton Associate Alexandra Clark of Clark has agreed to serve as the TBC facilitator. Lexy had worked on occasion with John Uriarte and the TBC group. Lexi taught at Mother Seton. Her daughter Seton Associate Alicia Clark-Barnes also is a graduate of Mother Seton.

## **New Morristown Evening Group Facilitator Found**

Seton Associate Jennifer Kiley Mendrzycki has agreed to serve as facilitator of the Morristown Evening Group. She succeeds Seton Associate Jeanne Nicholls who died last year. Jennifer became a Seton Associate in January of this year.

Jennifer will host a re-organization meeting on Tuesday, October 1 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 110 of the Motherhouse. The meeting will include prayer and discussion, plus a decision on dates and location for upcoming meetings. Please call Rosemary Carroll if you plan to attend at 973-290-5336 or email [rcarroll@scnj.org](mailto:rcarroll@scnj.org).

Generally, the Convent Area Daytime Group includes retirees, while the Morristown Evening Group includes many who work and can only meet at that time.



Sr. Carol Anne Lockwood, SC greets student interns Raf Kader, left, and Muhib Rahman

## Associates Help Student Interns Work at Area Non-Profits

Every summer the Department of Interns and Volunteers provides substantive employment to college students in area charities to introduce them to the non-profit sector.

Director Sheila Tracy launched the popular program several summers ago and says “students complete their six-week internships with a whole new appreciation for charitable organizations and the impact they have on the people they serve.”

Several Seton Associates donated \$1,000 each to underwrite the stipend paid to each student. The match-ups included:

- Seton Associate Mary Ann Motiuk sponsored Kylie Forster who worked at Holiday Express;
- Msgr. Charles Gusmer, a Seton Associate, sponsored Maria Ruiz, who worked at the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs;
- Seton Associate Stephen Priola sponsored Selena Nandiwandi’s work at Manavi;

- Dr. Francine Guastello sponsored Carmen Ruíz who worked at Catholic Charities in Paterson;
- Marie Hogarty sponsored two interns in memory of Seton Associate Jeanne Nicholls: Muhib Rahman who served at Women and Families Ascending Association, and Leslie Lopez who worked at First Friends.

In August the interns, sponsors, employers and guests came together for a celebration lunch in the Saint Elizabeth Academy Study Hall. Each intern spoke for 10 minutes about his or her work experience. Asked to say what surprised them the most, the universal response from all was “Nuns are cool!”



Sr. Maureen Sullivan, SC and student intern Carmen Ruíz

## ***'Circle of Friends' Groups will Aid Haiti Ministry***

*Dear Seton Associates,*

*I have lived for the past six years in Haiti with Sr. Dianne Moore. As a Seton Associate, it has been a privilege to carry the charism of the Sisters of Charity into the poorest country in our hemisphere. During our ministry in Haiti, we have grown from hosting medical teams and providing free medical care to rural villages to include: goat project, community garden, disaster relief, small business loans, water purification program, and a sewing school.*

*Currently, we are in the process of our biggest project to date by having a school built in Cuvier, a village that hosts most of our programs. After petitioning Food for the Poor for nearly three years, they finally approved construction of a new grammar school for 250 students. These children previously were housed in make-shift huts constructed of used wood and tin. The new school is almost finished but now we have to raise the money to operate it.*

*We invite you to join and be a participant in our Circle of Friends. Each Circle is composed of five friends who each donate \$20. Your Circle's \$100 gift sustains one child in school for one year. If after discernment and prayer you feel led to help sponsor one of our students, please know that our children in Haiti will be forever grateful. Contact Wendy Relation in the Development Office at 973-290-5480 to join! May God bless you.*  
*Dawn Colapietro*

## **Sister Judy Mertz, SC Will Receive Humanitarian Award**

Josephine's Place will present its most prestigious award, The Mother Josephine Marie Humanitarian Award, to Sister Judy Mertz, SC during the charity's Annual Dinner Celebration November 14 at Mayfair Farms. The Humanitarian Award is named for former General Superior, Mother Josephine Marie, whose vision included service to immigrant people. Sister Judy is the founding director of Josephine's Place, a space for women in Elizabeth, NJ, that is a welcome oasis to area women, mostly immigrants, and provides them with lessons in English, computer technology, business skills, and more, and assists women in preparing for the United States Citizenship Exam. Sister Judy stepped down after 17 years when she was elected to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth governing council. Sister Judy serves as the liaison between the governing council and the Seton Associates. Invitations were mailed to all Seton Associates.

~~

**Quote:** "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one should walk with me that merely tell the way." ~Edgar Guest, poet (1881-1959).

## Brenda Vicioso Puts Ministry Grant to Work in Florida

Seton Associate Brenda Vicioso received a 2018-2019 Ministry Grant from the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth to develop programs to assist immigrants in the Miami area. The grant covers communication materials and legal assistance. Brenda reports:

“Thanks to the grant we received last year from the Sisters of Charity, we sparked an interest in creating an immigration group in Miami. Three of us have met periodically to meet with our legislators and to get involved in our community. We coined the name ‘Keys Immigrant Coalition (KIC)’ in February of this year. We have worked closely with and continue working with Catholic Charities to file immigration forms and run legal clinics. We are one step away from becoming a nonprofit.

“Slowly we have recruited more dedicated members and have been able to get closer to nonprofit status for KIC. We created a board in June. Our articles of incorporation were approved in July and we now have a bank account! I already created a simple budget to apply for another grant. It’s just a matter of time for us to finalize our bylaws in order to file for nonprofit status.

“In the meantime, we’ve been active in our community to recruit more members for KIC. We went to Homestead, FL to raise awareness about the children detention center next to the Homestead Air Reserve Base. A group of us knocked on doors to inform people of their rights as a result of the immigration raid scare. Our Catholic Charities ally has been actively seeking to create a nonprofit legal group or legal support so that we can provide legal resources for people. This is not enough, and we’re hoping to recruit more dedicated members to continue to grow. Maybe we can find a grant that will help to pay for someone to be employed as our community organizer so that we can do more.

“Despite having such a small membership, KIC had a big breakthrough. Our biggest accomplishment this year is visiting the ICE detention unit. It took seven months of requesting access, getting our fingerprints processed, and finally going through a volunteer orientation to be approved. In May the sheriff’s department approved the creation of a Reading and Conversation Club and gave us permission to do weekly visitations to the ICE Unit in the Monroe County Jail. Our presence has given the men held in there hope. Most of them already speak English so they really benefit from our social interaction with them.

“KIC has a couple of goals in Education, Outreach, Advocacy, Recruiting, Legal Resources and Funding. However, we’re really focusing on the sheriff’s department because we feel that is the main problem in our community. We hope to end the Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) that holds people illegally for ICE instead of releasing them when they don’t have a

reason to hold them. Another goal is to eventually remove the ICE unit in Key West. Also, we want to stop the policy of using Customs Border Patrol (CBP) as “translators” at simple traffic stops. Since an election year is coming, we hope to remove the current sheriff who is comfortable collaborating with ICE and CBP. “ ~~Brenda Vicioso



Seton Associate Brenda Vicioso, left, with members of her KIC Board of Directors. Brenda is an alumna of the College of Saint Elizabeth.

~~

### Seton Associates tell us...

**Quote:** “Each time I attend a program sponsored by the Seton Associates, I feel revitalized and closer to Christ. The camaraderie of the Associates is something I need and treasure.”

~Liz Rifino, Lifetime Member  
Plainfield, NJ

**Quote:** “As a Seton Associate, I have a family of spiritual importance. Belonging gives me hope. Prayers, lectures and discussions open my heart and intellect.”

~ Kris Beirne, Lifetime Member  
Wharton, NJ

## Seton Associates Tell Us...

**Quote:** “Our daughter was diagnosed with pre-cancer of the breast this year and decided to have a double mastectomy with reconstruction in November. The first thing Barb and I did was to request prayers from the Sisters and Seton Associates for a successful outcome. We were soon comforted to know that so many were praying for her. We have always prayed for the Seton Associate intentions we receive almost daily by email from Anne Marie Civinkas. There are so many people that are in need of Our Lord’s assistance in easing their life’s pains and burdens, so many that we could be overwhelmed with sorrow. But we have found that prayer and putting our trust in Jesus can strengthen us and pull us together to overcome our adversities, both as a family and as members of the Seton Community.”

~ Peter Rzasa, Lifetime Member  
Seymour, CT.



**Scrub Patrol:** Seton Associates pause during clean up weekend at Maris Stella last May, 1 to r: Margaret Roman, Dolores Banicki (in back), Maria Capozzoli, Heather Porcelli, Nichole Ayala, Elaine Lukenda, Carol Whaselsky, Alicia Clark-Barnes, and Kristina Lukenda Junkroft. Maris Stella Director Sister Mary Morley, SC praises the “army of

workers” who labor from dawn to sunset preparing the houses to welcome Sisters and summer guests.

## And in the end...

...One of the most endearing and enduring qualities of our cherished Sisters of Charity is that they remain true to their call and charism as long as they breathe. Several of our Sisters reside now at St. Joseph Nursing Home in Cedar Grove, NJ, a specialized care and rehabilitation stop for lay people as well as our Sisters. While there, regardless of their own failing health, our Sisters continue to minister to those in need. They will sit and pray with the very sick and dying, both lay patients and sister Sisters. They provide spiritual comfort and calm to those about to die, and to the patients’ families as well.

At Congregation Day last May, our Sisters discussed goals and objectives for the next four years, among them a concentration on homelessness. Even a few added birthdays are no hesitation for determined women of charity to forge ahead to accomplish what they can to serve people who are poor, marginalized and hurting.

Sister Janet Lehmann, Sister Dianne Moore, along with Seton Associate Dawn Colapietro, return to Haiti next month energetic, eager, and sleeves pulled up, with a stamina to teach, provide care, build and create that would daunt workers one-half their ages. Unstoppable.

Our Sister Peggy O’Neill, who continues serve the residents of Suchitoto, El Salvador for more than 30 years, described our commitments in her keynote address before the Sisters of Charity Federation Meeting of the Whole last July in Chicago. She called Sisters of Charity “seasoned mapmakers of uncharted spiritual territories.”

“We really do not think ourselves into a new way of living,” she said. “We live ourselves into new ways of thinking. For us, ministry has been and still is fundamental, our prayer life and community life support our ministry. We have been faithful to our charism, by **living** fully in each context...by staying awake and accepting the challenges presented to us over these 400+ years.”

Sister Peggy prophesied: *“These times beguile us with more questions than answers. However, We Sisters of Charity Know that Love is the Answer. One large Life Circulating through all...Evolving in Harmony with Divine Becoming... We cannot stop the becoming of God...God becomes what God loves. And we love God by continuing the same pattern.”*

Sister Peggy’s words speak of Seton Associates as well. We know that “ministry is fundamental” to us and that “Love is the answer” as we soldier on and continue to touch with charity the lives of those in need. ~~Rosemary Lalevée Carroll, Director and Editor



