

Dominican Center Newsletter

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www.dominican-center.org

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From the Director: Patricia Rogers, OP

Written by: Fran Bauer



Patricia Rogers, OP
Executive Director

Sr. Patricia Rogers has always wanted to work in a neighborhood much like the one she now serves as the new director of the Dominican Center for Women. The only way to change an impoverished neighborhood is to work with the whole family, she says, helping them gain an education, a voice and finally the confidence to work together for the changes they decide will improve this community.

It's a new experience for Sr. Patricia who used to think of herself as a teacher whose talent was in being able to reach out and connect with teenagers. She started out working with MICAH and local leaders to turn Hopkins Ave. School into a community school.

That's when Sr. Ann Halloran, who co-founded the Dominican Center for Women, asked Sr. Patricia to consider a new opening at the center, created when former director Sara Kierzak announced she was leaving to become the head of the statewide Habitat for Humanity organization.

Sr. Patricia had to change her outlook from teaching children to teaching adults and rehabbing homes. "It was a whole different approach. The Dominican Center for Women affects the lives of families and that can change the whole community," she said.

In January, Sr. Patricia accepted the offer to become the new DCW director, and found herself quickly learning new skills such as how to work with the city to rehab local housing. What Sr. Pat likes best is that the Dominican Center is really listening to the community and coming up with programs that are a direct response to what the community says it wants to do.

"The Dominican Center has to act as a resource as this community gets its voice and continues to rebuild," she said. Sr. Patricia also wants to do more outreach to teenagers and young women, to help curb the very high rate of infant mortality that exists in the Amani neighborhood.

A native of Arkansas, Sr. Patricia graduated from college with a major in math education. But after graduating, she didn't feel ready to start teaching. So she took a job in Chicago at Blue Cross-Blue Shield in the computer department just as computers were beginning to be popular. In her spare time, Sr. Patricia began doing volunteer work with teens and found she had a special gift for working with teens.

So, she left her computer job to become a teacher at a school run by the Sinsinawa Dominicans. When she saw that the Sisters needed help, she felt the call to join the order and commit herself to teach within their system.

Since then, she has earned masters degrees in both education and social work, and served as a grade school social worker, high school counselor and principal at several schools in Alabama and Louisiana. When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, she was coordinating the middle school for St. Mary's Academy there. She also spent six years in Congregation Leadership and another three years as the Vocation Director for the Sinsinawa Dominicans.

Today, her goal is simply to help those whose lives she touches to become more reflective thinkers, in control of their destiny and good neighbors.

Education Program

The education program at DCW keeps getting bigger with four students slated to earn their GEDs by the end of June, according to Sr. Sue Felice who directs the program.

This year, more men have joined the program, thanks to a new partnership with Parson’s House, the community corrections halfway house just around the corner, that encourages its residents to attend. In addition, some new students have brought their families with them to join them in learning.

A new writing curriculum has been developed by Mary Fran Potts that integrates use of the computer to reinforce the math and reading skills the students have been learning. In addition, a few students have come in to brush up on their math and writing before taking college entrance exams or seminary placements.

In May, the center began registering new students for the fall 2011 program. Each student was given a QUIC test so that lesson plans can be tailored to meet the students’ individual needs in math and language arts. Students and staff together evaluate the learning styles of students to set goals and create lesson plans. The results of the QUIC test will be used to help set these goals.

June will be dedicated to honoring volunteers in a June 8 Appreciation Day. June 10th, DCW students will go on their annual retreat under the direction of Sr. Ann Halloran and Jackie Williams.

In August, tutors will be offered two days of orientation before their new teaching assignments begin.

A new brochure is now available describing the center’s education program. The brochure will be available to churches and local centers and will be handed out at the center’s events such as the June 11th Healthy Housing Fair and the Back to School Festival in August.

Wish List for the Dominican Center

QuickBooks	\$ 400
Fundraiser Software	\$2,000
Education software	\$ 500
Educate a student	\$ 100
Upgrade computer software	\$ 500
Paint a house	\$ 400
Repair a porch	\$ 300
Flowers to beautify the neighborhood	\$ 200
Volunteer tutors ... math and language arts	Priceless



Photos from our 2011 Fundraiser - see more photos at our website or on Facebook

Planned Giving

The decision to include the Dominican Center for Women in your estate plans shows a sincere commitment to the community and a desire for your legacy of love to continue for years to come. Estate gifts, commonly called "planned gifts," include bequests, securities, charitable trusts, life insurance, retirement accounts and more.

If you would like to learn more, please call Kelly at the Dominican Center for Women: (414) 444-9930.

Rehab Story

The number of requests for rehab assistance grows by the week. Our biggest challenge came from a single mother of 8. Unadvised, she bought a do-it-yourself rehab home. She decided from her repair notes taken during the home walk-through that the rehab work was doable and within her budget. After the deal was made and the loan was signed, the Mom was referred to DCW for rehab assistance.

Our Rehab staff met the Mom at her new home on the day she planned to have the water and electricity restored to the newly bought home. To the Mom's surprise, the house had no electrical box, no furnace, and all the copper pipes in the house had been stolen. The impossibility of connecting the electricity and water destroyed the Mom's original plans: to house her family in a motel for a few weeks, then move in right away when she found a rehab house within her budget, and start rehabbing room by room with the help of relatives and friends. The extended stay in the motel while looking for a house had exhausted Mom's cash flow and made it impossible for her to do the required electrical work, replace the pipes, and reconnect the utilities.

The Mom's request went from rehab assistance to homeless family counseling and assistance within 6 hours. After Mom and DCW searched several days for a shelter, Mom's church family provided a place for her family to stay. DCW and Mom kept in contact while DCW waited for Block Grant monies to be released. Now that the money has been released, our hope is, with the assistance of other City and local resources, to have this family in their home by July. We will give a family update in the next newsletter.

Dominican Center: Looking Toward the Future

DCW participated in the Community Café gatherings sponsored by Children's Hospital and COA which included Amani residents and other 53206 zip code neighbors. The residents were asked their wishes for the area. The responses included: a clinic for children and families, jobs, transportation, an end to crime, recreation for area youth and affordable housing. These gatherings and conversations led DCW into a partnership with COA, Children's Hospital and the Amani community to improve the health of the community.

The health of the 53206 community is reflected in the number of lead poisoning cases, high asthma triggers, high unemployment and infant mortality ratings for this area. The need for an increase in local services and community revitalization is confirmed by the responses from the Community Café conversations and the health statistics listed above. Therefore, DCW will continue in its commitment to help revitalize the Amani community one block at a time and will focus our efforts for the next six months in:

- gathering area church leaders, resource agencies and resident leaders to plan a revitalization strategy and
- seeking ways to financially consolidate DCW's Rehab Program and the Lead and Asthma Programs into the Healthy Homes and Community Program.

In this difficult economic time non-profit agencies like DCW are needed more than ever to ensure the availability of transportation, quality education, healthy affordable housing and jobs for low income families and those living in poverty and unemployed.

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Thanks to you our donors who make our programs possible!

2011 Fundraiser “Planting the Seed” Donors

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Have a great summer! We thank God for all of you!

Thanks to all who attended the Dominican Center “Planting the Seed” fundraiser at Boerner Gardens on April 29th. The sun was shining and tulips blooming on this very special event which raised nearly \$11,000 to support Dominican Center's education and Healthy Homes and Communities program. Guests competed on a wonderful array of silent auction items generously donated by our sponsors. Thanks to all who participated in the raffle – another chance to win is coming up next year! New this year was the oral auction where intense bidding over five fabulous items made for an exciting auction. Thanks to Bartolotta's for serving delicious appetizers, dinner and scrumptious dessert. Congratulations to all who participated – you are all winners! Be sure to save the date for next year's event, Saturday, April 14th, 2012 at Boerner Gardens in Hales Corners!

Ways You Can Help

Outpost Community Wednesdays

The Dominican Center was selected as the Community Wednesdays group for November. This means that the Dominican Center will receive at least \$1,000 from Outpost. In addition, shoppers have the opportunity to make a donation at the time of grocery checkout. Representatives from the Dominican Center will be present on Wednesdays in November to talk about what we do for and in our community.

Pick 'n Save Advantage Card

Use your Pick 'n Save Advantage card and help the Dominican Center! The Pick 'n Save "We Care" program contributes to the Dominican Center for Women based on the number of our supporters who sign up and shop! If you already have an Advantage card and have not designated the Dominican Center, simply stop at the customer service desk at your favorite Pick 'n Save and fill out a new form! You can even download a form today and sign up or update your current charity! Just drop it off at Pick 'n Save next time you're shopping.

The time it takes to sign up will mean additional dollars to support the mission and values of the Dominican Center. The Dominican Center's program code is **#172385!**

The Dominican Center for Women is a United Way Donor Choice organization. Simply designate the Dominican Center for Women on your United Way Donor Choice card to direct your donation to the Dominican Center.



Please join us in congratulating Sister Sue Felice, OSF in the celebration of her Jubilee Year in God's Service. Sr. Sue took her first vows with the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in 1986 with her final vows in 1989. Those final vows were also celebrated in her home parish in Iowa. July, 2011 will mark her 25th year. Her family will be coming from Iowa to participate in the celebration. Sr. Sue taught at and was principal at St. Augustine and also taught at Sacred Heart of Jesus in St. Francis. She was also an Associate Principal at St. Alphonsus. Sr. Sue left the classroom and became the coordinator of the English as a Second Language program at the Milwaukee Achiever Program (now Literacy Services).

Sr. Sue has been at the Dominican Center for the past 8 years coordinating the Education program. "While I have enjoyed all my past ministries, my heart is at the Dominican Center. I am very grateful for Sister Ann's mentoring and I am thankful for my religious life. I love my congregation very much and I have been blessed by being an OSF. I am truly blessed with a wonderful family who supports and loves me. My sisters and brothers with their spouses will be with me to celebrate on July 31st."

Recent Events

National Clean Up Day was a rainy April 16 with the Parsons' house men, Hephatha youth, the Academy of Science basketball team, Lumen Christi youth group and residents of the Amani neighborhood all making a contribution. They covered an area from Hadley to Chambers and 20th to 26th Streets. What an amazing group of people!

Amani Action Day was on May 21. While it was a neighborhood clean up day, the focus was on the Community Garden. St. Margaret Mary parishioners and residents on North 24th Street built flower/vegetable beds, shoveled lots of dirt and planted. This event was sponsored by the 5th District Police Department and the event ended with a cookout at the garden.



2011 Calendar

Senior Meeting: 1:00 p.m.	7/14, 8/11
Home Action Meeting: 8:00 a.m.	8/6
Advisory Meeting: 1:00 p.m.	8/1
Catholic Heart Workcamp	6/20 - 6/23
Student Retreat	6/10
Healthy Housing Fair	6/11
End of Classes (DCW)	6/16
Fall DCW Class Registration	8/16
Fall DCW Classes Resume	8/22
Back to School Fair	8/27
Outpost Community Wednesdays	Wednesdays in November
Boston Store-Bayshore Community Days Sale	October
2nd Annual Bowl-A-Thon	11/6

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For more information about any of the events listed here, please give us a call at 414.444.9930, send us an email at dominicancenterforwomen@gmail.com, visit our website at www.dominican-center.org or check us out on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, you can log in, do a search for us & LIKE us.

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DCW donors are amazing! You have supported the Dominican Center both spiritually and financially because you believe in our Mission - thank you. We depend on your support of our Mission ... to enhance a beautiful, stable, healthy and safe neighborhood... in partnership with the residents. We ask for your continued prayers and financial support as we work with the Amani Community and other partners to provide adult education, family health care services, and strive to build healthy homes and a healthy community.

Dominican Center Mission Statement

The Dominican Center for Women partners with the community to maintain and enhance a beautiful, stable, healthy and safe neighborhood consisting of residents who are community-minded and are striving to be meaningfully educated and employed.



2011 Fundraiser
 More photos are on our website:
www.dominican-center.org



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