

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

*Serving the elderly poor
in Denver since 1917.*

Summer 2019

MULLEN HOME
FOR THE AGED
3629 W. 29th Avenue
Denver, CO 80211

303-433-7221

littlesistersofthepoordenver.org



MULLEN HOME FOR THE AGED

WHY I BUILT THE “SECRET GARDEN”

By Cynthia Haws

As an AJJ member and volunteer, it didn't take me long to realize how important the Sisters are in the lives of the Residents. One greatly loved Sister who seemed to know them all, would pop in and out of their rooms to chat or serve them like guests in a fine restaurant. Like St. Francis, Sister also had a great love of animals like Francisco, the dog belonging to the Home, and the garden.

I noted a wonderful view of the gardens one day while making beds on the east side of the building. Sister dreamed of a greenhouse which I happily donated, but told her she would have to get someone to build a floor and put the thousands of parts together! The local rotary accepted the challenge and Sister built a vegetable garden.

Eventually, Sister was transferred to another home where her gifts of hospitality and gardening would continue on. The garden and Francisco the dog were left behind. The vegetable garden was quite the challenge! The weeds had taken over and the ground became rocky. Rototilling it didn't work; I gave up and covered it in a weed protection cloth, built twenty raised beds, shoveled six yards of dirt and rock, built a grape arbor and planted flowers and vegetables. A tea table and a colorful umbrella topped it off. Every day for three months, Francisco and I toiled in the sun. The

Residents waved from the balcony, cheering us on, and others brought us treats. By the end of the summer, the garden was in full flourish because of good soil, watering, fertilizing, and the very essential element of bees. They buzzed about and cross-pollinated all the flowers.

The “secret garden” is a reflection of what goes on daily at Mullen Home. Like plants, elderly Residents need constant tending. They need to be nurtured, fed and looked after carefully in this chapter of their lives. Most of all, they need to be loved. After time, I realized what made Mullen such a special place. If a garden is to flourish, it needs bees to cross pollinate the flowers. And that is what the good Sisters do. They “tend” to their Residents with great love and care in the spirit of their vocation. They “buzz” from floor to floor; room to room. You can see Sister Mary Augustine whizzing down the hall on her motorized scooter, eager to share a joke and to cheer them, or Mother Patricia delivering her signature scones. All about, are Sisters doing various acts of kindness with the Residents. These women in black and white may not look like bees, but they know the secret of how to cross-pollinate the love and affection that creates the atmosphere so very special at Mullen. That is truly the spirit of Saint Jeanne Jugan. When I am asked what motivated me to build the garden, I tell them it was the “bees!”



Association Jeanne Jugan Members Yearly Celebration

On May 1, members of the Association Jeanne Jugan gathered for Mass and their annual renewal of promises. AJJ member, Bernadette Feiten explains, "It is always a humbling experience to make my promises each year, as I sometimes feel not fully worthy, but with the help of Saint Jeanne Jugan and Christ at my side, I made the promise, once again, to help the elderly live with dignity and love."

Another member notes, "Being an AJJ member allows you to share in the mission of the Little Sisters and gives you a much deeper sense of purpose and a spiritual focus...always in the spirit of Saint Jeanne Jugan." Jeanne Jugan Associates say it is an honor to work together with the Little Sisters and their

dedicated staff, to pray with the Sisters and to be grateful for being part of such a positive, open and loving community; one that sees Christ in the elderly.



Associates participate in our mission in many ways, each according to his or her talents, interests and family/professional obligations. They provide welcome and valuable support.

Forms of service are diverse and include being advocates of hospitality; stewards of pastoral activities and supporters of recreational events.

To find out how you can join the Association Jeanne Jugan, please contact Sr. Mary Augustine at comdenver@littlesistersofthepoor.org or by phone at 303-433-7221.

Meet our Development Team!

Longtime employee, Peggy Dietz, is our new Development Director. She wanted to expand her horizons, continuing to do what she loves to do; collaborating with the many wonderful benefactors of Mullen Home. Mostly, she loves the family spirit in her workplace with a never ending occasion to spend time with the Residents who are Mullen Home's family. New Assistant Development Director, Emma Konizeski, describes her first impressions of Mullen Home:

"Mullen Home for the Aged is truly a unique and wonderful place. In my time here I've experienced a small glimpse of the beauty found in the incredible service and love the Little Sisters of the Poor and their staff provide. The Residents cared for here are often times marginalized, forgotten individuals, but walking into the Mullen Home, you would never imagine to describe them that way. The Sisters and the staff know the names of every Resident, greeting them as they walk through the hallways. The atmosphere is palpably cheerful and welcoming. Some may tend to think of old folks' homes as sad, unpleasant places, but Mullen Home is clearly an exception.

Walking with a staff member, I met a very sweet old woman in a wheelchair with a high school

volunteer pushing her outside. I was introduced and told a little about her background. She had worked for the Archdiocese of Denver most of her life, earned 3 PhD's, and loved to sing, expressing herself with her hands. I was told she has aphasia, but this doesn't stop her from being one of the most delightful Residents at the home. Singing together and talking about the weather, we parted with a smile and a blessing. The care and compassion with which I witnessed this Resident being treated was incredibly inspiring.

Through mindfulness and love, the heart of Jesus is visible and tangible to the Residents, making this place a true home and haven for those most in need."

Peggy and Emma are enjoying working together, focusing on prioritizing the beauty of our elders by helping to provide the true needs of our Residents.



Development Director Peggy Dietz and Sister Joseph Marie.



Assistant Development Director, Emma Konizeski.

How do we take on the heart of service? (A note from the volunteer department.)

At the heart of service is the heart of Christ — from whom else would we learn to love than from the source of the greatest love? Do you find yourself wanting to serve others? Find an organization that means a lot to you!

Even the saints remind us how important service is, “It would be considered a theft on our part if we didn’t give to someone in greater need than we are,” said St. Francis of Assisi. We are called to serve the poor in many ways — Jesus taught us this with His corporal works of mercy.

I encourage you to look for a place to offer your time and talent. Once you’ve found an organization with a mission that strikes your heart, call and ask, “How can I be of service to you?” And most importantly, be free to accept the answer for what is needed!

In our Home, we serve the elderly poor, both in visible ways

and through hidden services. Our volunteer network is vast and their works spread through all parts of the Home. Whether you are sitting with Residents, serving meals or planning parties, your work matters!

We have hidden servants as well; like the woman collecting donations for our country store, the woman who brings Residents to their medical appointments, or even the man folding the laundry or cleaning beds. They are different works, but they all feed into the mission of serving our family with dignity, love and respect!

To those presently volunteering, thank you for your works! We truly need you and your efforts. Want to learn more about opportunities to volunteer? Contact Karissa at voldenver@littlesistersofthepoor.org.



Resident, Ann Trebilcox, enjoys friendship with Volunteer, Patrick.



FOCUS Students during a mission trip in Denver assist Resident, Angie Hoof, during an activity.



Even in 1961, our Residents enjoyed a picnic!

A Simple Note

By: Sister Patricia Mary



Dear Friends,

Saint John Paul II once asked his readers to “see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother and sister who have received it directly, but also as a ‘gift for me.’” I have seen and received so many gifts from each of you; Residents and families, staff, volunteers, benefactors, all who come through the welcome doors of Mullen Home. Thank you for the gift of you, your friendship, and your prayers.

We must savor every moment of our life as a gift from God. Recently, I received my obedience from my Superior General to leave Denver and to serve the elderly of our Home in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Our foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan said: “Refuse God nothing...we must do all through love.” I am grateful to the Lord for the many blessings I received here in Denver, but of course there is sadness to leave our Residents and the family of Mullen Home which I have known and loved these past six years. I promise you my grateful prayer always. Thank you!

Many of you know Sr. Agnes Clare who was our collecting sister. Sr. Agnes has also been recently transferred to Jeanne Jugan Residence in San Pedro, California. She too is grateful to you for your friendship and generosity, and promises you a remembrance in prayer.

With joy, I am happy to introduce our new Mother Superior, Mother Mercy Stella Theresa. She has been Mother in Pawtucket at Jeanne Jugan Residence for the past six years. I know she will be welcomed by everyone and witness the family spirit of our Home.

As I remember each of you in my thoughts and prayers, I ask you to do the same for me.

With my deep gratitude for each of you,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

May God bless you,

Sr. Patricia Mary

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Visit us at www.littlesistersofthepoordenver.org

Welcome Mr. & Mrs. Pat and Jean Reefer!

It is always a joyous occasion when we welcome a new Resident and family member to Mullen Home. On April 1, 2019, it was double the pleasure as we welcomed Pat and Jean Reefer, who will celebrate 69 years of marriage on December 2, 2019. Pat is quick to say that when he first laid eyes on Jean, “it was love at first sight!”

At the end of his junior year in high school, Pat enlisted in the Navy and served as a gunner on the Ticonderoga air craft carrier during WWII. He was actually in Tokyo Bay when representatives from the Japanese government and Allied forces signed the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, which effectively ended World War II. After his service, he returned to finish high school at Manuel High School in Denver, working at his parents Tavern while not in school. He would often notice a pretty young gal waiting for the trolley outside the Tavern. “I’m going to marry that girl,” he’d often announce. It didn’t take long for Pat to work up the courage to ask that pretty young gal out. Pat and Jean feel equally blessed to be married so many wonderful years and to have 8 children, 19 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren. As a family, they have enjoyed camping, bowling, fishing, skiing, golfing and sports over the years.

The Reefers are longtime supporters of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Denver, as were Pat’s parents before them. Naturally, they both desired to live their final years at Mullen Home. We couldn’t be happier to have them as our newest family members!



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