

GoodWorks

Worldwide Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

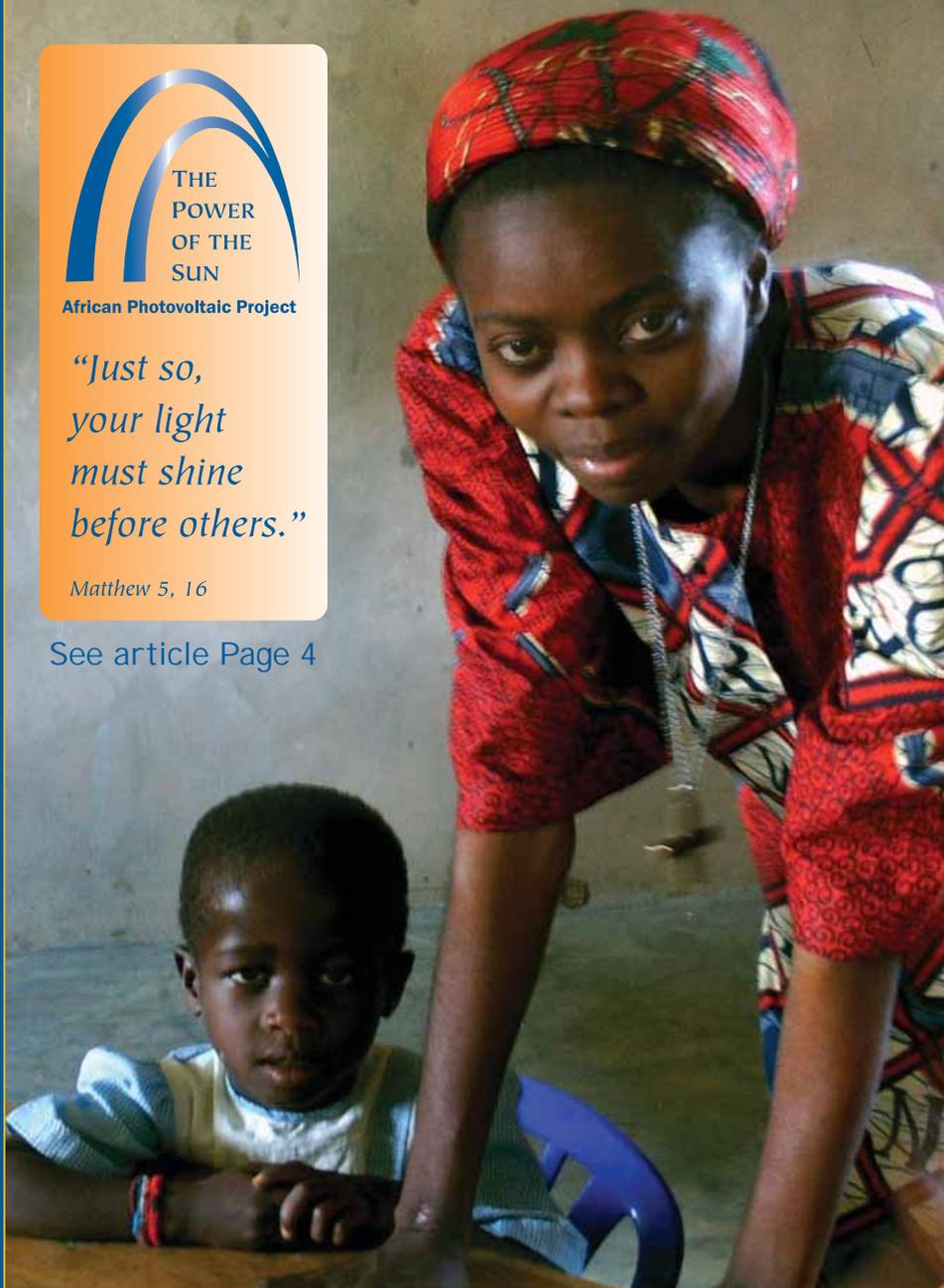


African Photovoltaic Project

*“Just so,
your light
must shine
before others.”*

Matthew 5, 16

See article Page 4





My dear friends of Notre Dame,

As the rain and snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

(Isaiah 55:10-11)



*Even after all this time
The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe me."*

*Look what happens with
A love like that,
It lights the whole Sky.*

(From the Gift of Hafiz)

Friends, these words from the Biblical Prophet and the Eastern Mystic frame the good and the love you share with Notre Dame. You will notice in the articles a few examples of the many ways your generosity nurtures the ministries that make it possible for human beings to "find a way to remain at home in the web of the earth." (Appalachian Ministry)

The loving influence and power of the Word is at work in all of our lives. Thank you for partnering with us in our efforts to let the Word of God shape a world where all are known, loved and serve each other as neighbor, sister and brother.

In solidarity with you in the Word of God,

Teresita Weind, SNDdeN

Sister Teresita Weind, SNDdeN
Congregational Leader

Front Cover:

Sister Angele Nlambi is Principal of Notre Dame Elementary School in Lemfu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This school hopes to be a photovoltaic site in the future and to benefit from solar energy.



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GoodWorks

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Harnessing the Power of the SUN

by Sister Anne Stevenson, SNDdeN

Rationale and Beginnings: African Photovoltaic Project

In 2005, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) initiated a Solar Energy Program in Africa. The program, named “The African Photovoltaic Project,” was first only a dream in 2003. Sr. Lorraine Connell, General Treasurer of the Congregation, conceived an energy brainchild to improve the lives of our sisters and the people they serve in places deprived of life’s necessities. Without electricity, without clean water and without any viable means for communication, life can be not only difficult



Sisters Evelyn Aririatu, Amarachi Ezeonu and Rita Ezekwem celebrate new life and light in two sites in Nigeria.

but at times impossible. Sr. Lorraine spent countless hours in searching for a means of improving electricity, water purification and communications in African countries where SNDdeN are serving. Her discoveries found their center around the sun! Her research led her to experts in the field of harnessing solar energy. She spent the time intervening between her idea and the project’s actualization in consultation, design, site visits and fund-raising.

Realization of a Dream

The creative idea was tested in the summer of 2005 in a prototype built on the campus of Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center, a farm and school in Ipswich, MA. Sr. Lorraine worked assiduously with engineers, Louis Casey and Babs Marquis, to move forward the prototype, before opening in October 2005 the first African site in Fugar, Nigeria. Training sessions for the African sisters with co-workers preceded any construction or installation of systems. The project began by bringing electricity and pure water to three sites: first to Fugar, second to Ngidinga, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in February 2008, and third to Awkunanaw, Nigeria in October 2008. Work on the sites moved relatively slowly due to delays caused by funding issues and in shipping materials.

The Power of the Sun

Harnessing the power of the Sun with solar energy panels and storing the energy in batteries has proven to be an effective means for producing electricity.

The sisters work daily with women, men, children and entire families in schools and hospitals in six countries in Africa. In some countries, electricity is a scarce commodity and clean water is non-existent. People can live without electricity, but life without clean water is impossible. Water-borne illness and other diseases devastate some populations. The mandatory daily task of collecting, purifying and filtering water for consumption is very labor intensive.

Another ministry goal of this photovoltaic project was to improve communications through internet access. A wireless satellite which allows for the monitoring of the system has not yet been perfected but is under review for improvement. While originally intended for better communication with the sisters for congregational business, this internet access has potential to expand educational opportunities for students in the schools and for staff in hospitals and clinics.

Resulting Wonders in Nigeria and the Congo

These energy projects provide continuous, reliable electrical power and clean water in providing dependable energy to each site, twenty-four hours a day, and in attacking disease and persistent health care problems, caused by the lack of potable water. This is now being accomplished in the three sites. Focus on one site shows the progress.

The photovoltaic system in Ngidinga is now moving forward positively. Overcoming the major problems caused by impassable roads and data configuration difficulties, the sisters have already experienced what this project has done for the community. At Ngidinga, an x-ray machine has been installed. The doctor, faculty, staff and students are now learning how



SNDs from Congo, Sisters Gertrude Mwanakasi and Dorothée Moya carry solar panel for Fugar project in Nigeria.

Continued

to use the internet. Future dreams include links between clinics and specialists in Europe. Ongoing research continues into these possibilities.

Envisioning Changes Reality in Ngidinga

Sr. Dorothee Moya sees the system working for the community, clinic and school in Ngidinga. The people have clean water. Electricity enables doctors and nurses to operate at night, to sterilize equipment regularly



Congolese woman holds her newborn in the maternity clinic

and to store medicine with 24 hour access to refrigeration. Emergency medical procedures are no longer dreaded; stored electricity (not kerosene or generators) gives confidence in care. Sr. Dorothee says that community access is encouraging community projects in development. Teachers and school leaders are able to raise the level of education for all students because the children are able to read after 6 p.m. with electrical light in their dormitories.

Links to schools and libraries give new resources to teachers and students. A cyber-café provides internet access for schools and communities. Technology, a dream of the people, is bringing adult education to the wider community.

Future Projects for Health Care in the DRC

Through the gifts of generous donors, our Congregation has erected these three projects. All three photovoltaic sites have raised the level of safety in each place, especially in the clinics, maternity wards and schools. Life is more livable for the sisters and the people.

The sisters hope to bring solar power to three more villages in the Congo: **Kitenda, Lemfu and Pelende**. Each site includes a health care facility and a school, with about 1500 students (primary and secondary) being served at these missions. The SNDs offer health care programs for pre-natal and maternity care, with failure-to-thrive services as well as general health care treatments. On a daily basis at each site, the sisters treat about

50 men, women and children who have no access to health care. An alternative-energy project will provide a continuous and reliable supply of utility-grade electrical power. All related infrastructures, such as water pumping/purification, refrigeration, communications and lighting, need electrical power. The maternity clinics in Congo rely on kerosene lamps for light in most night emergencies and birthing procedures. Generators that are costly, loud and pollution-producing are powered by diesel fuel, brought in barrels by truck. For refrigeration, the source of electrical power must be continuous. The satellite secures an internet connection allowing doctor/nurse consultation options, already happening in Ngidinga. If the SNDs are able to extend the project, the same wonders can happen in the three more villages in the Congo.

Saving Lives through Education

In the Congo since 1894, the sisters have taught the people many means of survival. Today, the sisters search with the people for new ways to enable them to survive in a country which confronts daily the effects of war and poverty. This African Photovoltaic Project has potential to save lives through education and medical care. Often, the only escape from poverty comes through education. Today, primary and secondary educational programs operate with scarce materials for teachers and students. Most education programs rely on rote procedures, some visual materials and the common tools of pencils and paper. Textbooks are old, outdated and difficult to replace. Today, technology is the new way to provide updated and effective materials. The satellite provides an internet connection which allows teachers and students to network with wider educational resources.

Using the power of the sun saves lives. It can provide health for the body, mind and soul for thousands of Congolese people. This project has the potential to reach innumerable undereducated, undernourished, underprivileged each day and to extend life possibilities and expectancy into the future for countless people. The fundraising goal for these projects is one million dollars (\$1,000,000).



For more information, contact us at www.sndden.org
See a new Congo Website: www.snddencongokin.org

Emmanuel College Students Find Amazing Opportunities for Service

by Sister Barbara Jean Kubik, SNDdeN, NDMVA Site Director

The concept of community service currently rekindled and strengthened in the US, is not a new phenomenon for those who know the Sisters of Notre Dame. The program for Notre Dame Mission Volunteers (NDMVA) began with six volunteers in 1992, expanded through partnership with AmeriCorps in 1995, and has recently expanded again to place volunteers working with SNDs in Peru, Kenya and Nigeria. Of the 326 current members, six found their encouragement to serve while they were students at Emmanuel College, Boston!



Michael Durkin, class of 2005, with Sr. Phyllis Cook looking at the lone sleeping cheetah in Malava, Kenya.

Five of these six connected with their former classmates at the NDMVA Mid-Year Conference, "Serving in Solidarity," hosted by Trinity University in Washington, DC. Michael Vitagliano, on leave of absence from Emmanuel College is currently serving at Holy Name of Mary School in New Orleans, LA; Julia White is

serving at Notre Dame High School in Lawrence, MA; Jeremy DeCarli and Hillary Root are both serving in the after school program at the Center for Youth in Hartford, CT.

Michael Durkin is currently serving at the Tumaini Miles of Smiles Centre in Malava, Kenya. He is one of the five NDMVs who are in Africa this year. He teaches fourth graders every day and when he is not teaching English and Christian Religion, he is busy planting corn, painting an orphanage, fundraising, balancing books and feeding the school's two cows, as he says, appropriately named Hope and Faith!

Michael describes the mission of the SNDs with the word "opportunity." He writes, "in a place where opportunity is in short supply, the SNDs are there, teaching young women life skills, providing epilepsy medicine,

raising funds for surgeries once thought out of the question." He sees the sisters as "caring for individuals while never losing the big picture." He lists the many problems that Kenya faces: drought, hunger, violence, AIDS, poverty, illiteracy. Yet he recognizes that "still there is a hope here, a quiet hope. It is as a gentle voice on the breeze, saying 'We're not dead yet despite whatever anxiety or fear has risen.'" Michael is eager to make known his amazing opportunity, and possibly inspire others to consider crossing an ocean to partner with our sisters in ministry. The service given by Notre Dame Mission Volunteers offers many reasons for hope in our world.

We, SNDs, who work with the NDMVs see the volunteers as a contemporary expression of St. Julie's belief in the goodness of God. They choose to forego professional salaries, live simply and willingly work with the poor and disadvantaged. They speak of their experience as transformative and many of the NDMV alums choose professions which allow them to continue to use their skills in the service of others.

On April 21, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which will dramatically expand US national service opportunities to address America's most pressing challenges. This act was so named to honor Senator Ted Kennedy and his family's long-standing commitment to service and their country. Once again, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers will be able to expand further the areas of ministry across the globe. Sister Katherine Corr, Executive Director, is already exploring new opportunities made possible by this Act of Congress.

■ See NDMVA Website: www.ndmva.org

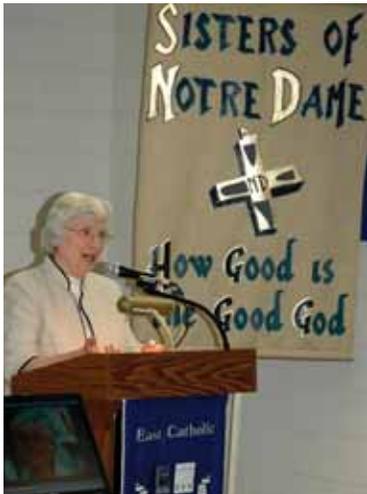


Emmanuel College student and graduates (2008) serve as NDMV: Standing left to right: Michael Vitagliano, Kristin Impastato and Julia White Seated: Jeremy DeCarli and Hillary Root

Spirit of Julie Vibrant in Connecticut High School

By Sister Mary Ellen O'Keefe, SNDdeN

There are two ways in which one can visit East Catholic High School, a diocesan co-educational high school in Manchester, CT – in person or on their Website (www.echs.com). The impression is the same. There is a sense of vibrant welcome, of enthusiastic energy, of Christian community and, most particularly, of commitment to the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame. At one time, 30 SNDs staffed this school; today there are three: Sisters Karen Coakley who teaches history, Peggy Evans, guidance counselor and Marion Raymond Hurley who teaches math and the senior Christian Life course. A member of the Connecticut Province Leadership Team, Sr. Mary Rose Crowley, serves on the school board.



Sr. Elizabeth Bowyer tells the story of Sr. Dorothy Stang to ECHS students on the fourth anniversary of Sr. Dorothy's murder in Anapu, Brazil.

The spirit of Julie is alive in this school of 750 students. The present principal, Christian J. Cashman, believes that “the SND charism and the characteristics of Notre Dame education give form and substance to our educational mission at East Catholic, which, like the SND spirit, is grounded in God’s Goodness, in service to the poor and in education that is vigorous and global in nature.”

There are many tangible reminders of the Notre Dame presence at East Catholic. The chapel is now named “Notre Dame Chapel” to honor the service of the SNDs for the past 48 years. A carved Notre Dame cross, used in liturgies, hangs in the Julie Billiart Academic Center. Just this year, students and faculty under the direction of a parent iconographer,

Mary Beth Pfeiffer, spent one evening a week creating icons and one of the first was that of St. Julie. Every year on February 2 there is a special liturgy and luncheon to which all SND former staff members are invited. Mr. Cashman also notes that “every new employee receives an introduction to the life of St. Julie and is provided with the *Remembering God’s Goodness* prayer books for use in class and prayer gatherings.”

For at least four years, students have been hearing about the story of Sr. Dorothy Stang. This year on February 12, the East Catholic community honored Sr. Dorothy by welcoming Sr. Elizabeth Bowyer who shared Dorothy’s life and work with all the students in eight separate presentations! Their response was one of awe and wonder at the compassion and dedication of someone who once was a student

like themselves. They wanted to hear even more! Invited by the principal to this anniversary celebration, Sr. Margaret Mulholland, international Liaison for SNDdeN Education, and Sisters from the Manchester area commented on the impact of Dorothy’s life and death on this teenage



Icon of St. Julie Billiart designed by ECHS students with parent and iconographer Mary Beth Pfeiffer.



Christian Cashman, Principal, and Sr. Mary Rose Crowley, Member of the Board of Directors at ECHS, appreciate the work of volunteer tutors in the St. Julie Academic Center.

“East Catholic desires to be better connected to all aspects of the Notre Dame world – educational institutions, former students, faculty and staff.”

Sister Margaret Mulholland, Education Liaison for the SNDdeN

audience. Likewise, they remarked on the vibrant ND mission integration in this high school.

East Catholic, known for its excellence in academics and sports, incorporates the mission of Notre Dame in many ways, but most especially in the hours of service its students volunteer – in shelters and food pantries, at the Catholic Worker House, at after-school programs, with special needs students through tutoring, Special Olympics and social nights. In gratitude for the service of the Sisters of Notre Dame, one class spends time visiting with our retired sisters at Julie House. Both the students and the sisters find this a rewarding experience.



Sr. Peggy Evans is a guidance counselor; she has been at ECHS as a faculty member and administrator since 1969.



Sr. Marion R. Hurley likes being a Religion teacher, particularly in the Christian Life Course.

to equip the students for life. “In the final analysis,” Mr. Cashman states, “the spirit of St. Julie is always present in a school or ministry where there is even one Sister of Notre Dame or one layman or laywoman who carries on in the spirit of Julie. By proclaiming God’s goodness in all that we do, we live the Notre Dame charism every day. *God is good indeed!*”

Come and see – in person or on the web!

Included in the school’s mission statement are these words:
We seek to develop the whole person and to prepare students to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens with a strong moral foundation, an appreciation for diversity, and a dedication to service, justice, and peace.

These words echo Julie’s challenge to teach whatever is necessary



*Join us
as a vowed member,
mission volunteer or associate*



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US National Vocation Team
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www.SNDdeN.org www.ASKanSND.org

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) welcomed in recent months three new “vowed” members. The sisters from five continents offered prayers and congratulations on the first vow days of [Sisters Ellen McAdam](#), [Consuelo del Rosario Zapata Crisanto](#) and [Joanna Saiko Nakamura](#). These SNDs come from three continents. Each one has experienced first encounters with the sisters in different ways.

Meet Newest Professed Sisters



On November 22, 2008, [Sr. Ellen McAdam](#) made her first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience at St. Isaac Jogues Church in [East Hartford, CT](#). Representing Connecticut Leadership, Sr. Mary Rose Crowley received her vows. Sr. Ellen’s father, a lay deacon from the Providence, RI Diocese, gave the homily at this liturgy. His moving words told of her parents’ gift of releasing Ellen, in giving her to the Notre Dame family.

Since her aunt Madeline is a SNDdeN in the Connecticut Unit, Ellen has known the sisters all her life. She graduated from the Catholic schools in Providence. After completing her degree at Emmanuel College, founded by SNDs in Boston, MA in 1919, Ellen taught elementary school children in Providence. An elementary school teacher at St. Christopher’s in East Hartford, she is committed to the educational ideals of St. Julie Billiart for serving the needs of children, especially the poor.



[Sr. Consuelo Zapata Crisanto](#) professed her first vows in the SNDdeN Congregation on February 18, 2009 in Jesus the Worker Church in Tupac Amaru de Villa, in the suburbs of [Lima, Peru](#). Born in 1983 in Sullana, Peru, Consuelo, first met the sisters in Tambogrande, Peru. She expressed to her parish priest her interest in religious life. Then, he introduced Consuelo to the SNDs whom he knew in Tambogrande. At the first meeting, Consuelo was attracted by the ND spirit and Mission and began her journey in religious life in October 2004.

Sr. Consuelo describes her relationship in Notre Dame simply:

“...my adventure began as I started in a discernment process with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.”

She has followed a three-year course in practical nursing. She will serve the Peruvian people by using her skills and training through compassionate nursing care in a hospital in Lima where she will be living with a new community. She will also continue her studies by taking courses in English at the Center for Religious in Lima.

[Sr. Joanna Nakamura](#), on March 25, 2009, gave a commitment to God to live faithfully the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. She made her first vows in the Chapel at the Province Residence of the Sisters of Notre Dame in [Tokyo, Japan](#).

Sr. Joanna graduated from Notre Dame Seishin High School in Hiroshima, Japan in 1995. Then, she pursued her studies at Hiroshima University where she obtained two degrees, a Bachelor of Education and a Masters in Education. On completion of her academic studies, she returned to ND Seishin High School, her own high school in Hiroshima, as an IT science and home economics teacher until she entered the Novitiate in Tokyo. In recent years, she has received a certificate for teaching Religion from Sophia University.

Sr. Joanna will have the opportunity to study this year in England. She will go to live with the sisters in the Oxford community for one year in order to improve her skills in English and to experience the internationality of Notre Dame. In speaking of Sr. Joanna as well as another new member in the Japan Province, Sr. Marie Cecile Abe, member of the Japanese Leadership Team, said:

“These sisters are real surprise gifts from the Good God.”

Continuing St. Julie’s Mission

In August 2008, five other new members professed first vows in two other countries. There are two new SNDs in Brazil and three in Kenya. During the past year, throughout the Notre Dame world, temporarily professed sisters have pronounced final vows. All SNDs recognize that [God is so good](#) in sending to Notre Dame more women religious to continue the worldwide Mission of St. Julie Billiart.



WOMEN RELIGIOUS COLLABORATE IN APPALACHIA

By Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ

THE CRY FROM APPALACHIA

The cry from the poor of Appalachia resounded loudly through the mountainside of Big Laurel in Mingo County, West Virginia in the mid-1970s. Challenged by the 1975 pastoral letter, *This Land Is Home*



Sr. Kathleen O'Hagan travels up and down the Appalachian mountainside in reaching out to the needs of the people.

to Me, from the Bishops of West Virginia, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, heard the cry from the powerless in the Appalachian mountains. With the Gospel Beatitude of *"Blessed are the poor in spirit"* ringing in their ears, Sisters Kathleen O'Hagan, SNDdeN and Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ opened a mission in Mingo County in 1976. The local people living on the mountain ridge and hollows along the watershed of Marrowbone Creek expressed the need for a school accessible to their children from ages five to fifteen. Understanding the key role that education plays in breaking the cycle of poverty, the sisters

undertook to work with the people in building and staffing a three-room school for the local elementary and middle school children. Today, this ministry involves various aspects of education for life.

THE STORY

In response to the call from the Church for women religious to serve the needs of the poor in the Appalachian mountain range, seven Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, met in 1972 with Bishop Hodges in the Diocese of Wheeling, West Virginia. This initial meeting focused on determining the need for religious in the poorest areas of West Virginia.

In 1974, after completing studies in rural sociology, Sisters Mary Margaret Pignone, SNDdeN and Shawn Scanlan, SNDdeN responded to Bishop Hodge's invitation to serve poor people in the diocese of Wheeling WV. At that time, Sr. Gretchen, who was serving the diocese as a representative for women religious, collaborated with the SNDs in making connections with the appropriate Catholic, ecumenical and social justice groups in Appalachia.

After the flood in 1976, Sisters Mary Margaret and Shawn opened the Tug Valley Recovery Shelter. When the people along the ridge at the end of Marrowbone Hollow wanted a school for the children unable to get down the mountain to attend school at the bottom, they were the sisters who spearheaded a fund-raising campaign throughout the USA for the new school in Mingo County. Their vision brought them to solicit funds from administrators and students in schools staffed by SNDdeN all over the country. So, Big Laurel School became a reality in 1976 because other schools, staffed by Notre Dame sisters in the USA, provided a funding source for the construction. It was this educational endeavor at Big Laurel School that joined the efforts of two sisters from different religious congregations, Sisters Kathleen and Gretchen, in a collaborative ministry extending from 1976 until today. What began in a school spread to development programs, such as a craft coop, a food buying program and a monthly newsletter on local culture and heritage. *This unique project reached many children by providing a good education in the area for about twelve years. This signaled also the beginning of community development work in these mountains.*



Sr. Kathleen and Meredith Gibboney, Notre Dame Mission Volunteer, after hard labor on the mountain, rest with volunteer helpers, teachers and students from the St. John Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio.

Continued

The area bishops had expressed the Mission this way in their 1975 pastoral letter: *“The dream of the mountains’ struggle, and the dream of simplicity and justice, like so many other repressed visions is, we believe, the voice of the Lord among us.”* So, the Mission expanded the values of learning and hospitality to simplicity and justice especially for the abandoned. In the late 1980s, Big Laurel School evolved into Big Laurel Learning Center. The sisters were keeping a clear vision on the systemic effects of those who put profits before people in the entire region. They recognized the necessity for programs to assist college-age adults and to provide learning opportunities for individuals as well as parishes.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

In response to a second pastoral letter, *At Home in the Web of Life*, issued by the bishops of Appalachia in 1999, the Web of Life Ecology Center was founded. The bishops asked for the creation of sustainable communities in the region. The new center, located on the Jasmer community land trust, just as the Big Laurel Learning Center, is committed to practices in harmony with the Earth, particularly in the wise use of resources. Project FLOW teaches students and the broader community about the importance of the watershed to maintain pure water. Also, there are outdoor classes and youth camps held from spring through fall.

In addition to Sisters Kathleen and Gretchen, Sisters Maryann Gillespie, SNDdeN and Jean Laufersweiler, OSF, as well as a laywoman, Nancy Hudock, form the foundational team of Big Laurel. Two Notre Dame Mission Volunteers, Meredith Gibboney and Skylar Wilson partner with the sisters from three religious congregations to serve the people in the area. Sisters Kathleen and Maryann reach out to the counseling needs of the people and become involved in Big Laurel programs. The staff in Big Laurel sees the need for transformation in a region which has been plundered for industry, leaving poverty in its wake. It seems impossible but in the words of the Appalachian bishops, in *At Home in the Web of Life*: *“We continue to believe in the spiritual depth and creativity of the people of Appalachia. We believe that they can find a way to remain at home in the web of life.”* And we strive to walk with our people!

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

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Support Our Mission

Your donations energize and sustain our worldwide Mission on five continents.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) is a charitable institution with 501©3 status in the United States. Contributions support our Mission in a variety of ministries across the world.

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For more information, please contact:

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GoodWorks

Worldwide

SNDdeN Mission

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, women with hearts as wide as the world, make known God's goodness and love of the poor through a Gospel way of life, community and prayer.

Continuing a strong educational tradition, we take our stand with poor people, especially women and children, in the most abandoned places.

Each of us commits her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all.



Africa

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Republic of Congo
Congo Brazzaville
Kenya
Nigeria

South Africa
Zimbabwe

Asia

Japan

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