

Springs of hope



Fontbonne Ministries
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH, TORONTO
spring newsletter 2008



In the Footsteps of Sister Delphine Fontbonne

IN THIS ISSUE of Springs of Hope you will meet the directors of our ministries. Along with many other Sisters of St. Joseph (pictured above) they provide the much-needed direct contact with our program participants.

From the very beginning of their work in Toronto, the Sisters have ministered to the marginalized. Their tradition of caring, compassionate service began in 1851 with the arrival of Sister Delphine Fontbonne, the namesake of our ministries, along with three other Sisters of St. Joseph.

They came at the invitation of Bishop de Charbonnel to a rapidly growing city bursting with new immigrants, many living in poverty. The four Sisters set to work immediately and soon expanded their ministries as their numbers increased. Thus began the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and their House of Providence on Power Street where the Sisters cared for the most vulnerable.

Little did Bishop de Charbonnel know

what a dynamo he had unleashed: a strong leader whose congregation took root and grew rapidly, adapting quickly to its new surroundings.

Only five years later, while caring for the sick, Sister Delphine herself contracted typhus and died.

For more than 150 years the Sisters have followed in her footsteps, responding to the ever-changing needs of the day with the same commitment and adaptability that Sister Delphine displayed. These responses have taken many forms, including offering shelter and food to those without the bare necessities, creating unique learning environments, providing healthcare and attending to the spiritual needs of those who ask for help.

Today, at our current ministries, Studio on the Hill, In Good Company, Fontbonne Place and Mustard Seed, the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph is often what draws people to Fontbonne Ministries and keeps them coming back.

AT THE ANNUAL SPRING volunteer appreciation event, the Sisters of St. Joseph involved in the different Fontbonne Ministries' programs gathered for a group photograph (see picture above).

They are, back row, left to right: Sisters Georgette Gregory, Anne Marie Marrin, Teresa Garvey, Helen Kluge, Catherine McCarthy, Joanne Daley, Marie Kilcullen, Monica Marie Kelly; front row: Sisters Mary Doreen Smith, Barbara Grozelle, Cecilia Barry, Rosemary McGinn, Mary Fatta and Gwen Smith. Absent from the photo are Sisters Rita Marie McLean, Rita Smith, Elaine Guidinger and Conrad Lauber.

Said Joan Breech, Administrator of Fontbonne Ministries, "We dedicate this issue to all the Sisters of St. Joseph who support Fontbonne Ministries so wholeheartedly."

A newsletter of Fontbonne Ministries, Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto

Fontbonne Ministries seeks to nurture community with the neighbour – welcoming everyone without distinction.



Sister Helen: Language of Clay

“There are no mistakes, only new creations”

“MY PRESENT MINISTRY allows me to be with people in a more relaxed and creative way,” says Sister Helen Kluge, Director of Studio on the Hill. After years of high school teaching followed by work in food services, both of which required great attention to detail, Sister Helen delights in the joy and freedom of the creative process. She had first experienced working with clay during some time off.

“It became a language that I had never experienced before,” she said. “The creativity and freedom of expression were wonderful, so that when the call came for me to choose another ministry, the path had already been paved.” And so, after further training, she began teaching pottery at Providence Centre in 1988, at the same time setting up a studio where she herself worked.

The turning point came in 1996 when the property was sold. Sister Helen found the present location at 967 O’Connor Drive for what became the Studio on the Hill. Now classes of all kinds are held there; all are welcome: men, women and children of all capabilities. Her motto expresses the studio’s culture: “There are no mistakes, only new creations.”

Her association with Fontbonne Ministries began about six years ago. Sister Helen enjoys the support of the Fontbonne Ministries’ team, a pleasant change from her years on her own. She also enjoys access to a number of volunteers who, in turn, are glad to be a part of the Studio.

As a result of the increased assistance, more outreach programs are possible. Sister Mary Doreen Smith helps at the Studio. Sister Marie Kilkullen teaches one seniors’ program at Nisbet Lodge, while another is offered at Bridgepoint Health and Rehabilitation Centre. Sister Mary Fatta’s craft group from Mustard Seed come regularly for pottery classes at the Studio.

Planning for all these activities keeps Sister Helen busy but she draws energy from the personal satisfaction of her students as they become aware of the joy of creating. She says, “Spring lives every day at the Studio.”



Sister Helen Kluge (left), Director and Teacher of Studio on the Hill, and Sister Georgette Gregory, Director of In Good Company and Assistant Director of Mustard Seed, attend the Fontbonne Ministries Volunteer Appreciation event to recognize and thank the many volunteers who assist in their ministries.



Sister Georgette: Advocate

“I like ... constantly being challenged”

NOT SURPRISINGLY, ‘Choose life’ is the favourite saying of Sister Georgette Gregory, Director of In Good Company, a program that links visitors to people who are isolated in their homes and living all across Toronto. As well, she is the Assistant Director of Mustard Seed. Her remarkable background has enabled her to help many people in difficulty.

“Both my roles involve outreach and advocacy – I like a challenge and in these ministries I am constantly being challenged,” Sister Georgette says.

Among other things, she has worked in community nursing, visiting people in their homes; run a clinic as a nurse practitioner for marginalized women; organized and managed health clinics; and served as a nurse at St. Michael’s Hospital, St. Joseph’s Health Centre and the Sisters’ infirmary.

She is steeped in her ministry. “Because I have been working for over 20 years with the homeless, street people and drug addicted individuals, I know the social service system very well, and have built up a large networking group whom I can contact and ask for help and information when I need to,” she says.

“My volunteer work on a community health bus helps to keep my nursing skills active and I have a good rapport with the clients, many of whom also come to our drop-ins at Mustard Seed.”

Her work also keeps her connected to the community and she is a member of many committees.

She has lived in Toronto since 1947, when her father moved the family here from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. An outgoing, vivacious woman who “always wanted to be a nurse,” she was attracted to the simplicity of the Sisters of St. Joseph of

Toronto who had taught her.

There is another phrase that keeps her centred: “I know the plans I have for you, plans for peace and not disaster.” *Jeremiah 29:11* This helps her, she says, because, “I find it very affirming that God is in charge and not me.”



Sisters' Spirit in the Ministries



Sisters Rita Marie McLean and Rita Smith are active in the In Good Company ministry.

FONTBONNE MINISTRIES is blessed to have so many Sisters of St. Joseph as ministry directors and ministry volunteers. Their gifts

are considerable. Sisters Marie Kilcullen and Mary Doreen Smith support Sister Helen Kluge at Studio on the Hill in a variety of ways.

In Good Company, directed by Sister Georgette Gregory, includes friendly visitors Sisters Cecilia Barry, Joanne Daley, Mary Fatta, Barbara Grozelle, Catherine McCarthy, Rita Marie McLean and Rita Smith. All but five of the program's visitors are Sisters of St. Joseph.

At Mustard Seed, Director Sister Gwen Smith is aided by Sister Georgette Gregory as Assistant Director. Sister Rosemary McGinn's foot care skills have benefited both Mustard Seed and In Good Company par-

ticipants. Sister Barbara Grozelle runs the sewing program and Sister Mary Fatta coordinates a craft program. Sister Teresa Garvey serves on reception while Sister Monica Marie Kelly keeps Fontbonne Place functioning like a well-oiled machine.

Sisters Conrad Lauber and Elaine Guidinger will be assisting Sister Anne Marie Marrin, Director of the new ministry in Etobicoke.

The Sisters bring to Fontbonne Ministries the same care and compassion that distinguished them in health care and education, ensuring that all are welcome – each person a unique and treasured gift to be respected and nurtured.



Sister Gwen: Welcoming All

BORN IN TORONTO'S East End during the Depression years and growing up in the her grandfather's family-filled home, Sister Gwen Smith learned valuable lessons about helping, respecting, conserving and reaching out. As Director of Mustard Seed, where participants develop life skills as varied as cooking, sewing, computer know-how and spirituality, Sister Gwen has shared these lessons.

At the University of Toronto, her sights were set on advertising when participation in

the Young Christian Students and the influence of media guru and professor Marshall McLuhan led her to change course.

"I realized that people are the beloved of God and don't need to buy anything to gain this love," she said. Having admired her former teachers, she became a Sister of St. Joseph, her new mission in life to tell people they had a different kind of status and love.

Teaching high school led her to start a Communications course. An invitation

to help organize the Youth Corps followed; young people heard speakers like Jean Vanier, John Howard Griffin and Mother Teresa.

She next turned her considerable energies to addressing social justice issues. As such, she was a natural to design and run the many Mustard Seed programs.

In the midst of programs that offer hospitality, companionship, skills and spirituality, she recreates that early home atmosphere where everyone is welcome.



A Building with a Mission

SOMETIMES bricks and mortar combine and all that results is a simple brick structure. At other times, the two come together and something really special is born.

At 791 Queen Street East, two floors were added to the bricks and mortar of the former St. Michael's Broadview Clinic to become home for 18 single women in need of affordable housing.

Fontbonne Place is the continued response of the Sisters to nurture community with the neighbour, especially women who are homeless, alienated, economically poor and at risk. The vision behind the House of

Providence, founded in 1857 and operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, was the same: to meet the most pressing needs of the day. Just as the House of Providence provided shelter for 700 people including seniors and the most vulnerable, Fontbonne Place addresses the need for affordable housing at a critical time in our city.

Through Fontbonne Ministries, the Sisters support Fontbonne Place financially and provide opportunities to build and nurture community with the women who live there.

Recently a five-year anniversary party was held to celebrate the arrival of the first



Fontbonne Place is a building with a mission.

tenants to these affordable, rent-geared-to-income apartments. The celebration of the residents and Sisters marked another milestone for this building with a mission.



Fontbonne Ministries
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH, TORONTO

**3377 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, ON
Canada M2M 3S4
P: 416-250-3100
F: 416-222-9816
www.fontbonneministries.ca**

Fontbonne Ministries is a non-profit, charitable organization of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto. True to the charism of the Sisters, Fontbonne responds practically to social needs by nurturing community with our neighbour, especially the homeless, alienated, economically poor and women at risk. Fontbonne Ministries welcomes everyone without distinction and offers opportunities for participants, volunteers and staff to be nourished in body, mind and spirit.

The ministries are funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph and individual donations.

To help support these programs, **call or write:**
Joan Breech at 416-250-3100 or jbreech@csj-to.ca

For volunteer information, **please contact:**
Leanne Kloppenborg at 416-465-6069 or lkloppenborg@csj-to.ca

For further information **or to be removed from our mailing list, please contact:**
Vickie McNally at 416-222-1426 Ext. 249 or vmcnally@csj-to.ca

To contact the editor, call Gisela Côté at 416-250-3119 or gcote@csj-to.ca

Charitable Registration No. 86408 4090 RR001

Initial design: wishart.net



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF TORONTO

Fontbonne Ministries' Volunteer Appreciation Lunch: April 27, 2008



Sister Anne Marie Marrin, Director of our new ministry in Etobicoke, shares the plans with current volunteers.



Sister Annette Lacroix, standing, CSJ Leadership Team member, with Sister Mary Doreen Smith.

The Gifts of Many Hands

THE WORK OF Fontbonne could not continue without the generosity of many. Along with the 18 Sisters of St. Joseph who minister in Fontbonne, and the five Sisters from other communities, there are nearly 60 others who volunteer regularly. Touched by the Sisters' gift of hospitality, they contribute their time, talents and energy behind the scenes so that the programs can carry on.

An Associate group of the Sisters bakes and brings cookies every month. Other friends make casseroles and collect canned goods for the drop-in programs.

Often high school groups, teacher groups, and young adult groups pitch in for a few hours and learn first-hand about the issues of poverty, marginalization and housing that face so many of the program participants. Volunteers collect socks for participants. They prepare the envelopes for Springs of Hope mailings. They maintain the community garden at Mustard Seed, work the land at spring and fall clean-ups and refurbish the residents' decks.

There have been donations of sewing machines in good working order; computers that are passed on to graduates of the computer program; small gifts for the In Good Company clients and drop-in participants; and financial contributions to support the current Fontbonne Ministries programs and our planned expansion to Etobicoke. The generosity of spirit, warm hospitality and kindness of the Sisters inspires others to acts of generosity and compassion.