

# Providence Pages

Published regularly by the Communications Office of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul



*“Come! Come melt  
what is frozen in us.  
Open the buds of  
our longing with  
your gentle breezes.  
Soften the hard  
earth of our hearts  
with your rains.  
Breathe warmth  
upon the cold places  
in us. O Come!”*

— *Joyce Rupp*

This spring 2005 issue of Providence Pages celebrates the theme of rebirth and loss.

Warmer weather injects renewed life into the winter-dormant soil on the grounds of The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. The Heirloom Seed Sanctuary opens its doors to the public.

New life is given to a family visiting room at Providence Manor in honour of our foundress, Catherine McKinley.

While we eagerly greet spring, we bid a fond farewell and celebrate the lives of three Sisters of Providence who returned home to their loving God this year. Sister Barbara Thiffault writes about these dedicated women who served with compassion in Providence.

Sister Margaret Maika makes a return visit to Uganda after a 10 year absence from that impoverished East African country. She shares her emotional reunion on page 8.

Culinary thoughts this season turn to the abundance of ripe juicy berries, other fresh fruits and vegetables — essential to any diet. But for those on restrictive budgets, these foods may not be an option. With current social assistance and minimum wage rates, it is impossible for most low-income families to afford sufficient healthy food. In this edition, our Justice and Peace Office profiles “food security” and how it affects Kingstonians.

Celebrate  
Jubilee

In praise and gratitude for God's love and generosity to our Sisters celebrating 50, 60 and 70 years in the service of God as Sisters of Providence. The women religious will mark 540 years of combined service at a Jubilee ceremony on June 10 and 11.

## McKinley Room dedication

### PROVIDENCE PAGES

**R**ESIDENTS OF PROVIDENCE Manor now have a special place to visit with their families. The Catherine McKinley Room, in honour of the Kingston native and foundress of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, was dedicated April 28. She died 101 years ago. During her life, she worked tirelessly to bring compassion to Kingston's poor, sick and aged.

Sister Marian McCallum, dressed in period costume as Catherine McKinley, gave the keynote address to guests. "Then as now, fundraising was a serious and time-consuming necessity." Sister Marian went on to give historical testimonials of volunteers over the years including an amusing tale about a week-long church Bazaar that collected \$3,400, enough to

pay off all the congregation's debt for one year. The year was 1873!

Located on the main floor of Providence Manor, the McKinley Room features a small library, a piano, fireplace and computer station. Future additions include a tearoom and child's play area.

Sister Kathryn LaFleur, General Superior of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, unveiled a portrait of Catherine McKinley which will have a place of honour in this room. "Catherine McKinley (Mother Mary Edward) has come home and would be delighted to be in the midst of her senior residents and their families," remarked Sister Kathryn LaFleur.

Providence Manor is a long-term care facility founded in 1861.



Sister Kathryn LaFleur, General Superior of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, unveiled a portrait of Catherine McKinley at the April event. Sister Marian McCallum dressed as Sister Catherine McKinley.

Photo reprinted with permission from PCCC CONNECTIONS

# Chapel restoration complete

## PROVIDENCE PAGES

**T**HE RESTORATION OF the Pieta officially ends an ambitious two year renovation project at Providence Manor's historic Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel.

The statue of the Virgin Mary mourning over the body of Christ has been transformed from a creamy beige to hues of blue. A faux marble base matches the altar.

Sister Patricia Ann Ryan, general treasurer at the Sisters of Providence for over 45 years, spearheaded the extensive renovation project. She calls the new Pieta "vibrant and alive."

Restoration artists Ingrid Silver and Adrian Karaguesian were commissioned to repair the Pieta. The Ottawa-based couple say history — 107 years to be exact — guided their vision. While peeling back the old beige paint, they uncovered the original colours which have been incorporated into the new design. "The Pieta now has harmony with the ceiling and art that flanks the altar," says Adrian Karaguesian.

The Pieta was built by Montreal-based sculptor, Tomasio Carli, whose work is seen in churches across the country. According to Mr. Karaguesian, "It is always a joy to discover we are working on one of Mr. Carli's statues."

Due to age and weather, a plan was adopted to return the venerable building to its original splendor.



The newly restored Pieta at Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel at Providence Manor.

Many original features of the church have been restored including the majestic stained glass windows, wooden ceiling, slate roof and the locally quarried limestone exterior.

During renovation, builders discovered historically significant items, including the signature of an artist who created an original stained glass window.

Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel was built in 1898 under the direction of Catherine McKinley. Over a century later, the Chapel still serves its original function as a worship centre.

## Chapel History

Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel is a building of architectural and historical significance. The original chapel was built in 1898.

1898 - October 13,  
First Mass was celebrated

1898 - November 21,  
Official dedication ceremony

1898 - December,  
Mother Edward organized a bazaar to raise funds for organ

1899 - February 20,  
Stations of the Cross, donated by friends and relatives of the Sisters were erected

1902  
interior decoration complete

1939  
three marble altars installed

1959  
major renovation and expansion

2005  
major restoration

**70 Years**

Sr. Kathleen  
Maguire

**60 Years**

Sr. M. Anna Kelly  
Sr. Mary Rosaria

**50 Years**

Sr. Rose-Marie  
Bokenfohr  
Sr. Josephine  
Doiron  
Sr. Avita Kilar  
Sr. Sheila Langton  
Sr. Frances Piasecki  
Sr. Alma Sutton  
Sr. Barbara Thiffault

# Conference: Living our Vows

BY: SR. JUDITH ANN & SR. REINALDA

**O**UR VOWS Through the Prism of Providence was the focus of a recent conference attended by Women of Providence in Collaboration. Sisters Reinalda Kloosterman, Judith Ann Murphy, Rita Gleason and Jeannette Filthaut attended the conference at Providence Centre in Edmonton.

The sessions began and ended with a beautiful prayer ritual led by Sister Linda Hylla, CDP. After the ritual, Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, SP, began her presentation by talking about what it meant for her to become a Sister of Providence.

Each participant was given a booklet called "Our Vows through the Prism of Providence" outlining the theology of Providence. "Providence is about God's relationship with the world. God's continuing action in our lives, and in our history. This is more about relationships, webs, and interdependence than the static world of classical theology." (Tomaszewski 2005)

Dawn then presented the group with

reflection questions. This was followed with small group reflection and discussion. Emphasis was placed on relational power, the ability to listen, and being in the right relationship with others. We were touched by Dawn's use of the three L's in relation to vows — listening, loving and living.

**The Vow of Obedience:** the active skill of *listening*

**The Vow of Chastity:** the act of *loving* all that comes into our presence. It is a movement toward inclusion; a commitment toward more loving. Chastity is about cultivating right relationships.

**The Vow of Poverty:** *living* a call paced on the right relationship with the planet. We were encouraged to live the Ecological Model — what is essentially good for the planet.

Sister Jeannette facilitated a business gathering on Saturday. Sister did a great job and we're proud of our own SP! Jeannette invited everyone to take the power of the last days with Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski and bring it forward into the meeting. We thank our leadership team for giving us this opportunity to attend this conference, our lives have been enriched.

While in Edmonton we had the chance to visit some of our Sisters — Sr. Grace Maguire, Sister Anna Kelly, and the Sisters at Rosary Hall. Sister Rita Gleason was our fantastic chauffeur taking us to and from the airport. Wonderful Western Hospitality.



Srs. Reinalda, Judith Ann, Rita and Jeannette.

# Healthy eating at risk

IAN STUTT

**E**VERY WEEK, DEB Greer and a platoon of volunteers serve a hot lunch at the St. Vincent de Paul Society on Stephen Street. The people who eat there at noon are part of the alarming number of our neighbours described by professional dietitians as suffering from “food insecurity.” (see Can This person Afford to Eat Well?)

There’s a nurturing feeling that comes from sharing good food — with strangers or family. Everyone understands the healthy feeling that comes from a nutritious meal. Regular access to a healthy diet should surely be a right of citizenship.



Ian Stutt

But hunger continues to stalk our city. The food banks and hot meal programs are working fulltime to feed hungry people. Intended as temporary solutions, they now seem more necessary than ever.

“There was a 40% jump in food bank use after the cuts to social spending in 1995 and there has been a 5-6% increase per year since then,” says Deb Greer, whose Loretta Hospitality Centre recently increased its hot lunch program from three to four days each week.

The charitable work of the food banks and meal providers is playing a crucial role in meeting the emergency needs of the poor. But we need to keep working to make them

obsolete. As Jamie Swift of the Justice and Peace Office always insists, food programs are “necessary but insufficient.”

There is also a growing concern around the effects that our food system – the production, distribution, and consumption of our food – have on our health. Our food system is becoming less diversified, more centralized.

Fewer large businesses now control how and where our food is produced. Loblaw Companies Limited, for example, owns or franchises more than 1,050 stores in Canada.

As concern for the health of our communities and the environment rises, many people are focusing on how we organize our food system. Several Canadian cities have already taken significant steps to achieve what is often referred to as food security – a situation where all community members have access to good, healthy food all the time.

Having worked with Kingston’s church-based meal providers, the Justice and Peace Office began exploring the possibility of a similar initiative in Kingston. Together with the Public Health Unit and the North Kingston Community Health Centre, we hosted a dinner event at the Loretto Hospitality Centre in early May. We wanted to begin a dialogue on food security with many of Kingston’s community members involved in food issues.

*Continued on next page*

## Food Security

Healthy eating is essential to good health.

Kingston is a food insecure community.

Currently 1,007 Kingston families are on the social housing registry.

Budget items like rent, clothing, and phone bills, sacrifice healthy food as a priority.

Food Security

Factors that threaten food security

- single parent household
- low socioeconomic status
- unemployment
- low education levels

# Food: local verses global

*Continued from previous page*

The vegetarian supper featured locally grown food and brought together church meal providers, public health dietitians, farmers, academics, retailers and other healthy food advocates.



Walter Cheney, who cooks homemade soup for the In From the Cold Shelter, and Sr. Peggy Flanagan, a volunteer with the Salvation Army's Bread of Life meal program.

Sister Peggy Flanagan said it was a valuable opportunity for people to share their ideas:

“With such a range of perspectives on food issues and our food system, we all learned a lot and formed valuable new relationships.”

Our objective was to bring together people involved in food issues to share a meal, get to know each other, and exchange ideas about how to address the issues of hunger, poor nutrition and the environment.

We also discussed the concept of food localism — a movement that began as a reaction to the increasingly global scale of our food system. Some 75 cents of every dollar spent on food goes to processors, packagers, shippers, advertisers, and retailers. Too little goes to the farmers. So it's increasingly difficult for small family farms to make ends meet. Rural communities struggle.

While locally produced food items travel an average of 100 km from field to table, imported food travels an average of 5,400 km – 81 times further. This devours huge amounts of fossil fuel, contributing to the global eco-disaster that is climate change.

What's more, food is bred not for its nutritional value or taste, but efficiency in transportation over long distances. February tomatoes are as tough as golf balls, and this is reflected in their taste.

Food localism focuses on rebuilding direct relationships between farmers and consumers. It holds the possibility of farmers working together with school meal programs, academic researchers and church-based meal providers.

Both food security and food localism offer ideas that can help in our work towards a socially and environmentally just society. By rebuilding relationships within our local food system, we can work together to identify the food-related needs of our community and explore creative ways of addressing them.

Many of our neighbours are going hungry. Yet there is an abundance of food being produced. Farmers can't make ends meet.

Our grocery stores are overflowing with New Zealand apples and shrimp from Bangladesh. Yet we are trying to reduce our fossil fuel consumption so we don't fry the planet. Solutions to these problems are available if we look ahead, organize at the community level...and work together.

# Can this person afford to eat well?

James Hill is a 20 year old single man with a disability. He has never been able to work. His only source of income is from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Source of Income	Amount per Month
ODSP Shelter Allowance	\$414.00
ODSP Basic Allowance	\$516.00
GST Credit	\$25.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$955.18</b>

Monthly Expenses	Amount per Month
Rent-1 bedroom apt. (utilities included)	\$627.00
Food (\$39.28/week x 4.33 x 1.15)	\$195.60
Laundry (at Laundromat-\$6.00 x 4.33/wk.)	\$26.00
Soap, shaving cream, toilet paper etc.	\$25.00
Clothing/footwear (\$400.00/yr)	\$35.00
Bus	\$44.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$977.60</b>

<b>Shortfall</b>	$\$955.18 - \$977.60 = - \$22.42$
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James Hill does not have enough money to meet his basic expenses. He has no money to spend on home insurance and household supplies, like over-the-counter medicines, bandaids, bank fees, postage, long-distance phone calls, cable, computer, internet services, gifts, church or charity donations, haircuts, recreation, savings, and other necessary items.

*The budget has been reprinted with permission from KFL&A Public Health. For more information on food security visit [www.healthunit.on.ca](http://www.healthunit.on.ca).*



## In From The Cold

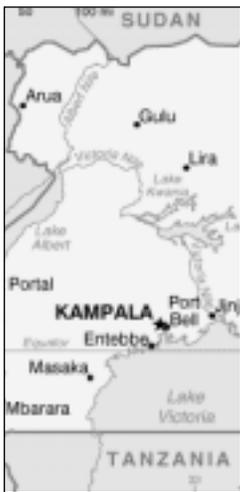
“In From The Cold” is now operating year-round due to an increase in homelessness in Kingston. Sister Alda Brady would appreciate the following donations:

- socks
- deodorant
- tooth brushes
- sugar
- laundry soap
- razors
- shampoo
- peanut butter
- cereal
- cash (tax receipts provided)

Donations can be picked up or sent to:

Housing Help Centre  
 428A Barrie Street  
 Kingston, ON  
 K7K 3T9  
 613-531-3779

## Uganda Facts



### Religion:

33% Roman Catholics

33% Protestant

18% Indigenous beliefs

15% Muslim

### Population:

26,404,543 (estimate July 2004)

### Literacy:

69.9% over 15 years can read and write

### Languages:

English is the official language. Luganda, Swahili, other Bantu and Nilotic languages are spoken.

# Emotional return visit

BY SISTER MARGARET MAIKA

**A**LMOST TEN YEARS after leaving Mary Reparatrix Secondary School community in Uganda, East Africa, it seemed there could be no better time for a return visit. The 25th Anniversary Celebration was scheduled for April 2003. However, plans were suddenly aborted when a US attack on Iraq became imminent in late February 2003, and postponement of international travel was advised. Both Lucy Myers and I were disappointed, as we had excitedly anticipated being present for this event. Plans were suspended temporarily. In the meantime, two significant packages arrived from the new head teacher, nourishing the desire and hope for a return visit.



Sr. Margaret Maika

The first was a video of the 25th anniversary celebration. Deep joy and excitement surged through me as Lucy and I viewed the video. Then the thrilling moment of watching the founding members step forward to receive a certificate. Their commitment and dedication to making their dream for this much needed Secondary Girl's Boarding School had been acknowledged. As we watched the video, I vividly recalled our poverty and struggle in constructing the initial, poor school facilities on the new site

between 1989 and April 1994. Our impoverishment in those years was like a large festering wound that would not heal. Yet four founding members — Kasozi, Ndwadde, Lunagoba and Ssemukya — were fiercely determined to ensure the new school facility would be adequate when we had to vacate the former premises. A few months later, the second package arrived containing a certificate of merit for me! What an overwhelming surprise! I felt humbled but privileged in being acknowledged among the school's founding members!

We began our travel plans again in 2004. Due to work related circumstances, Lucy was not free to accompany me. So I decided to go alone.

Upon arrival at Entebbe airport early on the morning of Friday, September 10, 2004, I was spared the long wait of going through customs. Though I was tired from my long sleepless flight, adrenaline began pumping when I caught sight of my welcoming committee — a small band of students, the head teacher, and a few other teachers. Warm greetings and introductions followed and my hosts soon ushered me into a hired taxi van. Leaving the airport, we were soon traveling along the familiar road overlooking Lake Victoria, surrounded by the lush natural beauty I remembered so well. Even through heavy and sleep-deprived eyes, I could readily see the many positive changes and improvements that had taken place over the past ten years. Soon we arrived at the residence of the

Certificate  
Of Merit

# Positive changes in Entebbe

Sisters of Mary Reparatrix where I had lived during my first two years.

As Sr. Annette brought me to the guest section of the residences, a flood of memories instantaneously came back to me. It was here that I had lived for almost a year upon my return to Entebbe in November 1990 to continue teaching and involve myself more directly in the new School Building Project. Intense Ugandan heat, jet lag, and since my primary purpose was to visit the School and special Ugandan friends, I settled into the “quiet life” in the Sisters’ guest section.

The changes that touched me most deeply related to Mary Reparatrix Secondary School. Words are so inadequate to describe my deep feelings each time I visited the school. Staff and students also participated in a late afternoon tea party held in my honour. Such a mix of feelings at what I witnessed in light of our new school’s desperately impoverished beginnings! In my exhausted state, I had been wondering if giving so much of my life energy and love to the Ugandans for their dream had been worth it? This phantom doubt was quickly eroding.

What was most rewarding for me was that the Ugandans had definitely taken ownership of their school, faithfully carrying on in the same spirit of commitment, dedication and integrity as their Founding Ugandan members!

Mary Reparatrix Secondary School which earlier ranked among the lowest in Uganda, can now boast of its ongoing

accomplishments. With its recent expansion to include levels equivalent to grades 12 and 13, and with enrollment having doubled to 350 and growing, the school provides an opportunity for more female



Sr. Margaret and Laetitia Ddamba enjoying the traditional dance and drumming of the students.

youth to receive a high standard of secondary education. A significant number are accepted for university.

And the school compound? So many significant changes! Directly ahead of me proudly stood the new dining hall facility. For years, its naked foundation lay vulnerable to the elements. Now the completed simple facility provides desperately needed space for two large classes, each of 50 to 62 students. A small extension provides a one-room accommodation for a kitchen staff member, a small office for the dean of students, and a small room for a tuck shop. However the school compound, which I had known so well, now looked strangely crowded, as newly constructed buildings accommodate the growing number of students and staff.

*Continued on next page*

Presented to Sister Margaret Maika

“This honour is given to Reverend Sr. Margaret Maika in recognition of her contribution to the establishment and founding of the School. May God bless your work . Given this date 5th April 2003” Signed by The Deputy Chief Justice of Uganda and the Archbishop of Kampala Diocese

Familiar territory

“Soon we arrived in the hub and heat of Kampala. It was readily evident that the people and car population had doubled. or tripled! If it had not been for the driver and companion, I would not have found my way through this formerly familiar area.”

- Sr. Margaret Maika

# Opportunities for students

*Continued from previous page*

One major hurdle remains. The school needs a dormitory to accommodate the boarding students. The students still crowd into two classrooms and two laboratories in the main school building which still doubles as a dormitory. With increasing enrollment, the initial single beds gave way to bunks, and at present triple-decker bunk beds. You can imagine the congested sleeping conditions!

Immediately to the right of the Dining Hall is a newly constructed small L shaped building. It accommodates the new 5 and 6 classrooms and a modest one-room library, sparsely stocked primarily with outdated Canadian books. Adjacent to this building stands another addition — outdoor bath house featuring three additional large water tanks installed nearby to harvest rain water.

Other new construction on the compound caused my heart to leap with gratitude. The original storage building has been replaced by apartment units for three of the full-time teachers.

As I continued around to the main entrance of the school, I felt joyful surprise upon seeing the three small palm sapling trees Lucy and I planted prior to leaving Uganda in April 1994. They now stretch skyward, swaying their welcome. I planted the largest remembering the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul; Lucy planted the second remembering the Providence Associates; I planted the smallest tree, remembering my special

partnership with the Ugandans.

If any doubts lingered in my memory about giving so much of my life energy and love to help this small group of Ugandans realize their dream, or if my earlier conviction that God had lured me to Uganda for a purpose bigger than myself was still questioned, these misgivings have been washed away forever.

Two weeks after arriving, I sadly bid farewell and took my last fleeting glimpse of Uganda before lifting off the Entebbe runway for my long journey home.

Thank you to my congregation — Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul-for supporting me in my work at the school, and for their generous financial assistance towards the school’s ongoing renewal. To Lucy Myers for her generosity of spirit, companionship and her creative teaching and work at the school. To the many family members, friends, students, teachers and



Sr. Margaret Maika and Lucy Myers planted these trees at the school’s entrance in April 1994.

Dream realized

# Entrepreneurial Spirit

specific school boards for their financial support. To the several Canadian and international organizations that also contributed generously. You are a significant piece of a successful and unfolding dream — a needed female Secondary Boarding School in Entebbe, Uganda, East Africa. And on behalf of the many Ugandans who repeatedly express their gratitude to you, “Katonda Alibaweera Abbokola Obulundi!” Thank you!



One class of students listening attentively during the speeches at the tea party held in Sr. Margaret’s honour.

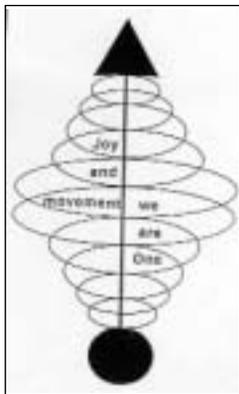
Sister of Providence Margaret Maika returned to Entebbe September 2004 to witness improvements to the school she co-founded.

# Justice advocate in Kingston



Mary Corkery of Toronto recently addressed Kingston area social justice advocates while visiting the Sisters of Providence. “I am moved to see the Sisters of Providence and so many of their friends in the Kingston community,” said Ms. Corkery. Executive Director of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

“Kingston’s ecumenical spirit on the social justice front is remarkable. And the Friday Vigils give public witness to your deep and lasting solidarity with people who seek justice.” Ms. Corkery also visited the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary at Providence Motherhouse, describing it as an “historic effort to protect native seeds from genetic engineering and bio-patenting by corporations.” KAIROS is sponsored by both the Canadian Religious Conference and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.



Sister Kay has many interests including graphic design. She created this logo, which is used to promote her programs.

## T'ai chi chih, art therapy

### PROVIDENCE PAGES

ONTARIO'S FIRST accredited teacher of T'ai Chi Chih has returned to Kingston to offer her specialized programs. Sister Kay Morrell offers sessions at Catherine McKinley Hall at Providence Motherhouse. In the carpeted room on the south side, four classes of T'ai Chi Chih began in April and two more were added recently. Art Therapy got underway in May in the north room.

There are many different kinds of T'ai Chi. Californian Justin Stone designed the 20 moves known as T'ai Chi Chih in the 70's. This practice now has teachers throughout the world. "It is a very gentle form that offers increased health and psychological benefits," says Sister Kay.

Sister Kay developed these two unique programs in Toronto, where she worked for the past ten years at St. Joseph's Health

Centre, St. Michael's Hospital, St. Joseph's College School, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Queen's Park and the Downsview Services to Seniors.

Drawing on her training at Toronto's Art Therapy Institute, she designed her Brief Art Therapy Programs to meet the needs of clients who are not experiencing major psychological problems, but are trying to grow and cope better with daily stress. Both private and group sessions are available. Participants can choose Ongoing Art Therapy if they want support over some length of time.

Participants in Toronto, knowing she was a Religious Sister, asked Sr. Kay to design programs connecting art and prayer. During the course of the year, Sister offers Saturday mini-retreats and longer programs for those seeking spiritual direction or an opportunity to meet with others to discuss questions surrounding faith.

To learn more about the variety of programs being offered, contact Sister Kay at (613)544-4525 ext. 175 and ask for a brochure about the T'ai Chi Chih, Art Therapy, Prayer/Art Retreats and Spiritual Journey programs including a schedule of upcoming dates. Program descriptions are also available at [www.stjoe.on.ca](http://www.stjoe.on.ca) under the link "For Your Health."



Sister Kay Morrell performs a T'ai Chi Chih movement in her studio at Sisters of Providence Motherhouse.

Sr. Helen Mary  
Murphy  
(Sister Mary Alma)  
1914 -2005

# Sister shares gift of joy

**S**ISTER MARY ALMA WAS called home to her loving God on January 14, 2005 at Providence Motherhouse.

Mary Helen Murphy, the second of six siblings, was born in Melrose, Ontario where she grew up on the family farm and attended the local elementary school and later Napanee Collegiate for three years. Mary Helen enjoyed a happy, loving childhood with her two brothers and two sisters — one sister died in infancy. The children took turns helping with the chores around the farm before and after school. One of the cherished times for her was going for the cows early in the morning with the sun shining over the dew covered grass and birds singing in every tree. These experiences filled her with joy and gratitude for all God's wonderful gifts.



Sr. Mary Alma Murphy

A religious vocation was often mentioned to her by her aunt. She gave much thought to this state in life. During the summer of 1933 she met Sister M. Bibiana and Sister M. Everildis at her aunt's home in Stoco. Sister M. Bibiana encouraged her to write to the General Superior, Mother M. Ursula right away. Then, with two other young women, Mary Helen entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul September 15, 1933 and made her

First Profession of Vows on August 15, 1935. She was then sent to Maryvale Abbey, Glen Nevis to finish her last year of high school. In September of 1936, Sister M. Alma began the Nurses' Training program at Brockville. The following year, she developed pneumonia and later was diagnosed with active TB. This ended her nurses' training and began a year of bed rest at the infirmary at St. Vincent. The next year she was sent to Moose Jaw where she was on a modified rest treatment and then began helping in the Medical Records Department. In 1946 she obtained her Medical Records Librarian registration. She worked in Medical Records until 1964. Then she was named Administrator and Superior of Providence Hospital, Moose Jaw and later Administrator of St. Mary's Hospital, Camrose. During her sabbatical year beginning in 1981 she took the Credo Program in Spokane, Washington. In 1982 she was named Co-ordinator of the Motherhouse. In 1988 she was assigned to Yale House in Winnipeg to assist with six developmentally handicapped young men. After four years in Winnipeg, Sister was assigned to the Pastoral Care Team at Providence Manor where she remained until she retired to the Motherhouse in 2001. Even in retirement, Sister kept busy assisting in the sewing room.

Sister M. Alma was a prayerful, hospitable and joyful person with keen insight and sensitivity to the staff and patients under her care in our hospital facilities. She always made everyone feel welcome with her warm smile and genuine laughter.

In  
memoriam

Sr. Sarah Gertrude  
McGinn

(Sister M.  
Stanslaus)

1913-2005

## Deep faith amid suffering

**S**ISTER GERTRUDE WENT home to her loving God peacefully on February 8, 2005.

Sarah Gertrude McGinn was born at Fairview Farm on the 4th Concession of Matilda Township, Dixon's Corners, Dundas County on Oct. 7, 1913, the eighth child of James McGinn and Alice (Gibbons). Six weeks later she was baptized in St. Ann's Church, Dixon's Corners. Gertrude was not long to enjoy the loving care of her father for in January of 1914, Jim McGinn died of pneumonia. Then she, too, contracted pneumonia which was to be a recurring illness for many years.



Sister Gertrude McGinn

With the help of Gertrude's four brothers, but especially the oldest, John, her mother struggled to maintain the family farm. During her early childhood growing up on the farm, and while her older siblings were all in school, her companions became the cats and dogs which she dearly loved.

After six years in the local public school, Gertrude insisted on following her sisters' footsteps to Maryvale Abbey at Glen Nevis, where she grew to love plaid and Scottish music. Her love of reading had been initiated by the gift of her first library card from her sister, Dorothy, when she was

eight years of age. Sadly, it was Sister Mary Jerome's hawk eye that prevented her from reading all the books in the little library at the Glen.

When she was either eight or nine years of age, her father's two cousins, Sister Mary Michael and Sister Mary Alexander visited her home. It was then that she decided to enter the convent. When she was sixteen, she plagued her mother until she went to the parish priest, Rev. James Ryan, who said, "The mark is there, you'll have to let her go." Only her immediate family knew, for Gertrude realized that there would be too much opposition to a 16 year old burying herself in the convent.

After three years of high school, she entered the Novitiate at the House of Providence in Kingston, Aug. 15, 1930. After graduating from Ottawa Normal School, she began her career teaching every grade from 1 to 13. Her ministry in teaching took her to Kingston, Tweed, Smiths Falls, Gananoque, Trenton and Belleville. After receiving her B.A. 'cum laude' from the University of Ottawa, she did summer courses at the University of Montreal and Laval in order to become proficient in French which she taught at Nicholson Catholic College in Belleville for nine years.

During her retirement, Sister ministered at the McKinley Centre, worked at the switchboard, was Oratory sacristan, and visited the Day Care at Providence Manor.

Sister Gertrude lived a life of faith in the midst of deep suffering. Her keen mind and loving outreach to her students, to the

# Deep faith at early age

residents of Providence Manor and to the prisoners whom she supported by her prayers and friendship, were an inspiration to all.

Sister Gertrude, was predeceased by her father, James, her mother, Alice (Gibbons), her brothers, John, Wilfred, Henry and Patrick, her sisters, Kathleen McGinn and Dorothy King. She will be dearly missed by her many nieces and nephews. She will also be fondly remembered by her many relatives and friends, as well as by the members of her religious congregation.

The Mass of Christian Burial, held in the Chapel of Mary Mother of Compassion, Providence Motherhouse on Friday, February 11, was presided over by Archbishop Emeritus Francis J. Spence, accompanied by many other members of the clergy. Homilist Rev. Gerald Byrne reflected on how Sister Gertrude, even in her suffering, encouraged the nurses and staff. He spoke of her friendships with the man who delivered her oxygen and the prisoners who moved her wheelchair from the chapel on Sundays.

The theme of National Nursing Week - Patients first. Safety Always.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between the quality of practice environments and patient outcomes.

"We all have a stake in improving the safety of the health system. Registered nurses are involved at all levels of making the health system safer and more effective for patients and their families."

- Deborah Tamlyn,  
President Canadian  
Nurses Association

# Nurses recognized for service

## PROVIDENCE PAGES

**N**ATIONAL NURSING week was celebrated at Sisters of Providence May 11, 2005. A tea party was held in honour of the 24 nursing staff employees. In a heartfelt speech, 97 year old Sister Marion Farnand, herself a former director of nursing, thanked the staff on behalf of the Sisters of Providence. The health care team at Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul includes RNs, RPNs, PSWs and students on placement.



Nursing staff at Sisters of Providence pose beside a bouquet of flowers presented to them in honour of Nursing Appreciation Week May 9-13, 2005. Pictured from left to right Lesley Dagleish, Sandi Doyle, Eileen Gouthro, Dana Reed and Vicki Heath.

In  
memoriam

Sr. Mary Agnes  
Grace Dorian

(Sister Mary Adele)

1914-2005

## Endearing Irish charm

**M**ARY AGNES GRACE Dorian came from Belleville, the second of three children born to Edward and Annie (McCormick). She received her early education at Avondale Public School and St. Michael's Academy, attended high school at Belleville Collegiate and Vocational School. As far back as she could remember, she wanted to be a Sister. Her parents agreed.

Her father indicated that the convent was a good place for her. Her mother made her postulant dress and was very happy about Sister Mary Adele's decision, because

her own desire to be a Sister had never materialized. The Sisters who taught her at St. Michael's Academy, as well as her music teachers, were a great inspiration to her.

She entered the Sisters of Providence on August 15, 1933. After 2 years of novitiate, Sister Mary Adele was assigned to the Admitting Office and switchboard at St. Vincent de Paul Hospital in Brockville. While she was there, she recalled going on a collecting tour with Sister M. Antoinette to all the businesses in Brockville to request funds to pay the coal bill.

After one year she was assigned to St.

Mary's Hospital in Camrose, Alberta where she remained for 30 years as business manager. She then went to Providence Hospital in Daysland, Alberta in the same capacity for one year. In September of 1967 she was assigned to the Father Dowd Home in Montreal as Superior, Administrator and Business Manager. In this same capacity, she went to St. Anthony's Home in Moose Jaw in 1973 where she remained for the next five years. Finally in 1978, she was assigned to the Motherhouse Business Office until January 2001 when she retired from active duty.

Sister possessed a calm, efficient ability in her field. Her cheerful, helpful, sympathetic manner, ready laughter and Irish charm endeared her to many.

Sister Mary Adele was called home to her loving God on April 6, 2005 with several Sisters at her bedside.



Sister Mary Adele

# Sr. Mary Adele remembered

*The following Eulogy was given by Sister Patricia Ann Ryan at Providence Motherhouse on April 8, 2005.*

Most of us can remember a time when we've been upset or fatigued and Sister Mary Adele has, through a deliberate touch or a look, expressed great concern.

We know in our bones that at such moments, Sister was revealing her deep feelings for us.

Sister Mary Adele was blessed with a compassionate understanding of the natural world, she chose to express her emotions through behaviour that is virtuous, namely goodness. I mention the word virtuous as Sister lived her vocation to the fullest as a Sister of Providence, woman religious full of love, joy, fervour, dedication, compassion, fortitude, resourcefulness, great generosity – a woman of prayer and suffering.

As I keep reflecting about ways that Sister could choose to do good, I realize that exemplary behaviour didn't always have to be extraordinary, it could also be more quiet and unassuming. Sister had a moral sense to good, she treated people with sympathy, compassion and fairness.

Her beloved family was always uppermost in her thoughts, conversation and prayers. She loved them deeply and they in turn addressed her so lovingly as Auntie Sister, a very endearing salutation.

Sister Mary Adele was most conscientious, always looking out for the needs of others.

She so valued her Community that she was always patrolling the Motherhouse to keep order or look after the personal needs of the Sisters. Her example gave many people nourishment and hope.

In addition to her prayer and ministry life, Sister enjoyed some hobbies and jollies. High on her list of relaxation were crossword puzzles, word find books and reading material from our library. She also loved reading the lives of the Saints and biographies of interesting people. She was very conscious of water conservation and in the summer months she would cover the whole Motherhouse checking out the supply of distilled water in the de-humidifiers. She had a supply of gallon jugs and filled them regularly for use when doing our ironing. Her unique talents for décor and dressing up the tables for festive events was another one of her gifts.

She had a great ability for purchasing and looking for bargains. As you know, she provided the Sisters with the opportunity to purchase attractive boxed cards for Easter, Jubilee and Christmas. Timbits, popcorn and cheesies were always welcome at her table. She loved them, so we kept an inventory on hand. She also shared cheese curd with Sister Gertrude Casey from time to time.

Her big challenge and love was her Ministry, the world of finance. She had a tremendous association with her methods

*Continued on next page*

Lord, now you let  
your servant go in  
peace;  
your word has been  
fulfilled:  
my own eyes have  
seen the salvation  
which you have pre-  
pared in the sight of  
every people:  
a light to reveal you  
to the nations  
and the glory of  
your people Israel.

Luke 2.29-32

Upcoming event

**Guided Retreat:  
Spirituality for the  
Global Citizen**

**Marie Elena Dio, SC**

In turbulent times, an invitation to tap into the wisdom of the contemplative, the sage and the prophet as we engage with global realities. Marie Elena, a Sister of Charity, listens to the world from her vantage point as NGO (non-governmental organization) representative at the UN, and brings to her life and ministry a deep attentiveness to the Spirit of God.

**Wednesday July 6, 4 p.m.-Wednesday July 13, 1 p.m.**

**Register by  
Wednesday June 22**

**Cost \$525**

# Compassionate understanding

*Continued from previous page*

of accounting, she put life and romance into mathematics and magic into her accounting programs. She enjoyed working with figures, reconciling bank and mission accounts. When everything was in balance, you could see her radiant face break out in a beautiful smile. Then she would sit on the edge of her chair and clap her hands in all humility as another month of accounting was in place.

Paperwork was an absolute delight; she was constantly focused, methodical, organized, consistent, absolutely 'no clutter.' Everything in apple pie order and perfection to a 'T.' What a legacy she left us!

A big highlight in her life was her weekly visit to the bank. I can see her excitedly clutching her black bank satchel of cash and bank deposits. Our driver would escort her with great vigilance and respect. The bank staff loved her and welcomed her with open arms. Sister touched their hearts and lives in a very special manner. She was their heroine, one staff member at the bank told me: "She is like a touch of the divine."

Sister also had a great love of animals, her

desk blotter was dressed up with pictures of important animal friends from her many years in the West; she had a special relationship with this menagerie. She said they were calming and comforting, and I quote one of her favourite sayings. "An animals sensitivity is usually just a quiet simple gesture." Now doesn't that remind you of our own Sister Mary Adele?

I share these thoughts this evening on behalf of Sister Monica and Sister Yvette. I also feel the presence of the spirit of the late Sister Martha Diethelm, a wonderful Sister and friend. We were blessed to be together in our office team setting for 22 years with Sister Mary Adele. Sister Yvette replaced Sister Martha when she went to Moose Jaw. We are deeply grateful to God to have had this blessed time with her.

We will miss her. Her beautiful eager heart was the size of a whale. The sharp sparkle in her eyes will be a sentinel as we tuck her warmly in our hearts with many fond memories, recalling that 'giving was her reason for living.' It radiated from her soul.

Mission statement

# Eco-spirituality retreat

PROVIDENCE ASSOCIATES

**T**HE PROVIDENCE Associates' spring retreat May 27-29, 2005 began on Friday night with presentations by Sisters Shirley Morris and Theresa Moher. The 30 Associates and Sisters were re-acquainted with Thomas Berry and Teilhard de Chardin through readings and a video. Sister Diane Brennen brought greetings from the Leadership Team and presented Laraine Corbin with a sculpted figure of St. Vincent de Paul in appreciation of her six years of unprecedented work as Co-director of Providence Associates.

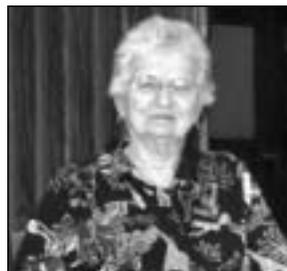
A cosmic walk was offered on Saturday. At certain points along the walk, candles were lit marking historic events in our universe; 250 million years ago when the first dinosaurs and flowers appeared, 1.5 million

***"Nature is not a place to visit, it is home."***  
— Gary Snyder

years ago when humans first appeared and over 2 thousand years since Christ was born. The walk ended with reflection of the planet today and what role we play in its future.

Following the walk, retreatants were lead through two spiritual walks at the Motherhouse and Lemoine Point. Later in the day, participants screened the video "The Unfolding Story" that warned of a looming global crisis, but with the upbeat message that we can reverse the impending damage.

Following a ritual closing of the retreat, using symbols of water, earth and fire, the Associates joined the regular worshipping community at Mass on Sunday.



Retreat presenter Sister Theresa Moher.



Retreat presenter Sister Shirley Morris.



Associates and Sisters watch a video.

Providence Associates are women and men, single or married, who experience a call to deepen their baptismal promise for gospel living by sharing in the charisma, the spirituality and the mission of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, without vowed membership in the congregation.

PCCC mission

Mission week Feb. 14-18, 2005.

Providence Continuing Care Centre is committed to compassionate care and excellence in the provision of complex continuing care, longer term mental health care, long term care, palliative care, geriatric and rehabilitation programs and forensic services of the people of south-eastern Ontario.

Trusting in Providence and strengthened by the spirit and tradition of our sponsors, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, we strive to meet the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of each person. We believe in treating each person with respect, dignity and compassion.

As a teaching centre, we work together with the regional community to provide and advocate for wellness, innovation and excellence in care delivery, education and research.

# PCCC updates donor wall

**P**CCC FOUNDATION unveiled its updated donor wall at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital with a flourish, on February 14, thanking donors for their generosity. Names of individuals, businesses and community groups are displayed for cumulative donations of \$2,000 and upwards. Recognition levels range from Friend (\$2,000-\$9,999) to Patron (\$100,000+). Currently, 296 names are inscribed.

The unveiling was timed to coincide with the first day of PCCC's annual Mission Week, a week reserved to reflect on and celebrate our mission of compassionate care.



Sister Sheila Langton, Sister Kathryn LaFleur, General Superior of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul and Cathy Dunne, PCCC President & CEO.

## PCCC FOUNDATION...WHO WE ARE

The Providence Continuing Care Centre Foundation is the charitable arm of PCCC. It is a separately incorporated non-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of dedicated community members.

The Foundation's mandate is to raise funds to assist Providence Continuing Care Centre by bridging the gap between limited government funding and our hospitals' important equipment and capital needs.

### PCCC Foundation Board:

- Peter Dacin
- Cathy Dunne
- Doug Hogeboom
- Dale Irvine-Shields
- Sister Sheila Langton
- **Gillian Little, Vice Chair**
- Dr. Allan
- **Peter Merkley, Chair**
- Andrea Panet
- Greg Welch
- Barbara Yates



Providence Continuing Care Centre

Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul

*Reprinted with permission from PRISMS, published by PCCC Communications Department*

# Heirloom Seeds for Sale

PROVIDENCE PAGES

**T**HE PUBLIC GOT a glimpse of horticultural history at the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in the spring. Century-old plants and seeds, cultivated at the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary at the Princess Street site, went on sale during a balmy first weekend in May.

The sanctuary, a tranquil plot covering a half acre of land, produces 417 varieties of seeds and plants. But the tomato plants drew the most interest — 94 different varieties harvested at the historic site. You can travel the globe looking for rare Russian or Livingston Paragon tomatoes, but you will find them all in one place at the Sisters of Providence.

The seeds belong to horticulturalists Carol and Robert Mouck who have dedicated their lives to preserving the renowned collection which was originally assembled on Foxfire Farm near Napanee. It's a holistic approach to gardening without the need for chemicals. Open-pollinated plants produce



Robert Mouck explains seed preservation to visitors at the heritage plant sale.



Sr. Margaret Maika selling Heirloom tomato plants.

seeds that can be collected and planted for centuries. The Moucks believe we should try to live in harmony with all Creation, respecting one another. The seeds are a reminder of this spiritual outlook.

Robert, easily identified by a shock of white hair and flowing beard, tends the plants like a loving parent. After a few minutes of conversation, customers realize that he and Carol share encyclopedic knowledge of plants and seeds. The ecology-minded couple have invested a lifetime into this life-giving passion.

This year marks the final public sale. "We need to re-focus on the seeds and not make this a typical garden sale," said Robert. The Moucks hope to carry on the seed saving tradition by meeting with the Heirloom Seed Savers each month at the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary.

Upcoming event

Heirloom Tomato Day

Saturday August 27, 2005 (tentative).

10 reasons to save Heirloom Seeds:

- connection with Earth and mystery of creation
- historical value
- cultural relationship
- sustainability
- adaptability
- diversity
- variation
- taste
- usage
- economics

Upcoming event

Directed Retreat

Rev. Jim Casper, SCJ, Deacon Bill Gervais, Beverley McDonald and Irene Wilson

Friday August 5, 4 p.m.-Friday August 12, 1 p.m.

Register by Friday July 22

Cost \$475 or \$75/day

# A warm welcome

SISTER KATHRYN LAFLEUR

**I**T IS WITH MUCH enthusiasm and hope that I welcome, on behalf of the Leadership Team, the Sisters, Associates and Staff of Providence Motherhouse our new Director of Communications, Christine Tripp.

Christine comes to us with the experience and expertise that prepare her for the responsibility of her position as public relations liaison for the congregation and Director of Communications with its varied tasks and publications.



Sr. Kathryn LaFleur

I trust that everyone will welcome Christine, and help her to feel at home with the characteristic hospitality that is our spirit.

Please feel free to forward to Christine noteworthy items and photos that could be used in future editions of Providence Pages, Providence News or placed on the upcoming revised web-site. We desire to have a broad overview of the congregation's ministries.

Welcome Christine, and every blessing on your journey with us as you share in our mission and ministry.

Serving with Compassion, Trusting in Providence, We Walk in Hope.

*Sister Kathryn LaFleur  
General Superior*

# Easter reflections



The fifty days of Easter celebrate the joyful news of the resurrection. Easter Day has so much meaning in the life of the Christian faithful that it takes fifty days to celebrate it well. One week is not enough. Not even a week of weeks. Rather, it takes seven times seven days, plus one. A fullness of time observes the fullness of Easter. Part of that celebration in the Chapel of Mary, Mother of Compassion, is the reflection of the great themes of resurrection, baptism and light in the environmental accents that surround the sacred space. The season concludes with Pentecost, the fiftieth day of the season.



# New Communications Director

Providence Pages

## PROVIDENCE PAGES

**L**IKE MANY PEOPLE, I've driven past the gates at 1200 Princess St. in Kingston wondering what lies beyond the chain link fence encircling the manicured lawns and stately buildings of Providence Motherhouse. If you drive down the lane, you'll find signs: "Thou shalt not park." It is a reminder that this oasis, right beside one of Kingston's busiest intersections, is a different kind of place.

I discovered this in May when I took on the job of Director of Communications with the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. It's been a busy month of learning new names, getting lost while navigating many hallways, and meeting many Sisters and staff who have dropped by the office to say hello.

I'm excited to begin a new career and take on the many challenges ahead. The first major initiative for this office is the launch of our new website, under construction for months. It will be unveiled soon.

My background is journalism and education. I spent 10 years at CKWS television in Kingston where I produced and co-anchored the 6 p.m. television newscast. In 1994, I decided to stay home and be a full-time mother to Alexandra and Riley.

Four years later, eager to return to full time employment and a new challenge, I turned to teaching. My father is a retired teacher, and the occupation has always appealed to me. In 1998 I attended Queen's University

and earned my teaching certification. I was hired by the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board where I've

worked as an occasional teacher for the past six years. I'll be drawing on these experiences in my new position.

What has impressed me most since joining the staff of Sisters of Providence is the unique environment within this building, which provides a home and setting for the congregation's ministries. The pioneering work started by the Sisters in 1861 continues to this day. While the charitable work has evolved, the Sisters remain committed to empowering others, especially the poor and most vulnerable, to achieve a better quality of life.

I was thrilled to meet up again with my grade 6 teacher Sister Barbara Thiffault. Many years later, the roles have changed. Sister Barbara is now my colleague. When I introduced myself to her last month, she couldn't remember me — upsetting to think I didn't leave an impression. But she assured me, "This is a good thing. It means you didn't give me much trouble." Whew.

On a personal note, weeknights and weekends, you will find me at hockey rinks or soccer fields with my children Alexandra, 16, and Riley, 12, or walking my dog Ralph.



Christine Tripp, the new Director of Communications at Providence Motherhouse.

Providence Pages is produced three times a year: spring, fall and winter.

Submissions for the next publication- Volume #3 Number #2 - are due Monday October 10th.

Providence Pages is published by the Communications Department of Sisters of Providence.



Providence  
Pages

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publication of the  
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Providence of  
St. Vincent de Paul

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## Mission Statement

**W**e, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, are an apostolic congregation of vowed women religious called to be channels of God's Providence in the world through compassionate service in response to the needs of the times. Sharing our individual giftedness, we carry out diverse ministries in a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity in collaboration with others to bring about the reign of God.

Our heritage is rooted in the creativity and spirituality of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, in the willingness of Emilie Gamelin to risk and trust in Providence, in the responsiveness of the Montreal Sisters of Providence to the call of Bishop E.J. Horan, as well as in the courage and pioneer spirit of

Mother Mary Edward McKinley and the original members of the Kingston community.

Impelled by the compassionate love of Jesus and Mary, we seek to empower others, especially the poor and oppressed, to achieve a quality of life in keeping with their human dignity. We strive to be prophetic leaders in our church and in society through the promotion of structures and relationships of equality and mutuality and through attitudes and actions for justice and peace.

Strengthened by prayer, we are bonded in unity and love through our corporate mission.

Serving with compassion, trusting in Providence, we walk in hope.

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