

Loretto

MAGAZINE

Summer 2026 Volume 67, No. 2

Inside ...

Loretto's history is linked with U.S. history

Loretto's impact cascades through generations

Marian Middle School shapes women for life

Loretto at the UN marks 35 years

We offer our 2025 Impact Report

... and more

More than two centuries of sharing God's gifts



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Front cover:

This basket of vegetables grown at Loretto Motherhouse is a tangible symbol of God's bounty — a bounty that Loretto has been blessed to share for 214 years.

Staff photo



Back cover:

Loretto's ongoing stewardship is reflected in these photos. At left: Anthony Mary Sartorius SL began planting trees at Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky., in 1980, work that continued for decades. She has shared that it was in teaching third- and fourth-graders about Johnny Appleseed that she was first "inspired to plant trees whenever possible."

Staff photo

Pictured at right: The organic yield was abundant in 2005 as seen in a photo of Pat Frueh SL at work in a Loretto Motherhouse garden.

Photo: Peg Jacobs CoL



Loretto
COMMUNITY

Sisters of Loretto • Co-members of Loretto

We work for justice and act for peace because the Gospel urges us.

Loretto Community members teach, nurse, care for the elderly, lobby, minister in hospitals, provide spiritual direction and counseling, resettle refugees, staff parishes, seek to abolish nuclear weapons, work with people who are poor and marginalized and minister to those in need. Our ministries are diverse.

The Loretto Community, founded in 1812 as the Sisters of Loretto, is a congregation of Catholic vowed sisters and co-members. Loretto co-members are those who, by mutual commitment, belong to the Community through a sharing of spirit and values, and by participating in activities that further our mission.

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To make a donation, please use the envelope provided in this magazine or donate online:

www.lorettocommunity.org/donate



www.lorettocommunity.org

Your donations support our sisters and our ministries.
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Dear Friends,

Thank you for your steadfast support of Loretto. Your generous gifts of friendship, prayers, encouragement, time, talent and financial support this past year and throughout the years keep us actively engaged in ministries of

service within Loretto and beyond. As faithful companions, you help ensure the care of our Sisters and the carrying out of our mission. Your generosity is more than heartwarming, and I am deeply grateful for your fidelity to Loretto.

In these days after Easter, I find myself returning to the Gospel story of the Road to Emmaus. Two disciples, discouraged by all that had happened in Jerusalem, walked alongside Jesus without recognizing him. Only later, when Jesus was breaking bread with them, did they recognize him. It makes me wonder about the times I, too, may not have recognized Jesus in those who touch my life and the life of Loretto. Please know of my sincere gratitude for the many ways you reveal Christ's presence among us.

This summer Loretto will walk its own "Road to Emmaus" as many of us come to the Motherhouse for our Gathering. We will celebrate where we have been, honor our ongoing mission and look with hope toward the future. It will be a time to draw strength from one another and renew our "Strength for the Journey," the theme of our days together. Please keep us in your prayers as we seek to recognize Jesus in the work before us and gather strength for the years ahead. We trust these conversations will lead us toward a future guided by our faith and common sense, and we rejoice that we will not walk this road alone.

May the peace of the Risen Christ accompany you on your own journey, as you have so faithfully accompanied ours.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr Mary E. (Buffy) Boesen SL". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sr. Mary E. (Buffy) Boesen SL
President of Loretto

*You visit the earth and water it;
You greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water.*

*The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy.*

Psalm 65: 9; 12



Photo: Christina Manweller

Impelled by Joy Jensen SL, vital Kentucky housing bill is signed into law

I'm grateful for the support of my colleagues in the Senate and for the faith leaders who inspired this effort, especially Joy Jensen and the Sisters of Loretto.

Sen. Jimmy Higdon, R-Ky.



Joy Jensen SL was the inspiration behind a housing bill recently signed into law.

Photo: Loretto Archives

By Joy Jensen SL

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) is the grandfather of the "Yes in God's Backyard" bill. I came across his bill, which was voted down in the U.S. Senate. It allows churches and college institutions to build affordable housing on their property, bypassing zoning regulations. Although Brown's bill did not pass the U.S. Senate, it was passed in New York, California and San Antonio, Texas.

I met with Sen. Jimmy Higdon (R-Ky.), our state senator. I wanted his sponsorship of the bill. He arrived at Loretto Motherhouse with Michael Pollack (R-Ky.), our state representative. I explained the bill, provided statistics for the shortage of affordable housing in Kentucky and encouraged them to sponsor a bill.

The bill failed in the House in 2025 but passed in 2026. It allows churches to build affordable housing, warming shelters and homeless shelters. With more prayers, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear signed it into law on April 7.

Loretto Academy students support Loretto Hunger Fund

On Ash Wednesday, Loretto Academy (El Paso) students collected \$2,045.30 to support the Loretto Hunger Fund. Nicole Cobb, school president, wrote to the Loretto Academy community in late February, "This fund, overseen by the Sisters, distributes resources to organizations around the world that address food insecurity and hunger in keeping with the Sisters' commitment to justice and peace. Beneficiaries include both local and global organizations such as the Kelly Food Pantry in El Paso, Francis House Catholic Worker serving the Zuni Nation in New Mexico, Taste and See Ministries in rural Kentucky, the Global Village Children's Project supporting orphans in Uganda, as well as ministries in Mexico, Pakistan and throughout the United States."

Loretto's Hunger Fund was established in 1974. See [page 42](#) of this issue for more, and the [spring/summer 2024 issue](#) for in-depth stories.

"All of us in the El Paso community are very proud of the children, parents, teachers and staff for their commitment to our school value of justice on behalf of those dealing with food insecurity."

Liz Deines SL and Kathleen Corbett SL

Liz Deines SL, Irma Avila SL and Helen Santamaria SL count donations collected by students. The envelopes are decorated with hearts.

Photo courtesy Loretto Academy



Loretto at the UN inspires young women



Beth Blissman CoL shares that she is "deeply grateful" to serve as Loretto's UN representative.

For 35 years, Loretto at the UN has actively advocated for women's and children's issues as well as those of peace, justice and the Earth/environment. Student interns and volunteers have been integral to Loretto's work at the United Nations for decades, and for several years now, Loretto has been partnering with the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Dubuque, Iowa, to advance mutual goals.

Watch a [short video](#) of Beth Blissman CoL, Loretto's representative to the UN, talking with Grace Broome, Loretto at the UN intern since September 2024. Grace has felt challenged to "step into unfamiliar spaces and navigate complex global conversations."

The growth Grace has experienced is typical of Loretto at the UN interns and volunteers. Learn more on [pp. 24-26](#) of this issue. And check out our Spotlight Video page to view Beth and Grace's short presentation: www.lorettocommunity.org/spotlight.

One of the things I've enjoyed most over this past decade is welcoming over two dozen interns and/or Loretto Volunteers to join me in the work of our office.

Beth Blissman CoL



Vector World Maps

The story of Loretto is woven together with U.S. beginnings

The Sisters of Loretto with their purely American heritage and spirit are of the very marrow of American history.

Florence Wolff SL

Editor's note: *In the fall 1976 issue of Loretto Magazine, Florence Wolff SL published "Loretto and the Bicentennial," the story of Loretto's history as it dovetails with the country's. As the U.S. celebrates its sescentennial, we offer an excerpt from Florence's article.*

The year 1776 was an important one in the American colonies; it was also a special one in the family of Sebastian and Petronilla Nerinckx in Flanders when their seventh child, John Henry, was born. Charles, his oldest brother, was, at the time, already beginning his Latin studies preparatory to the philosophy and theology programs at Mechlin and Louvain. Both boys were to be much affected by the revolutionary activities of their lifetime, and both were to become priests and to join in founding religious communities of women engaged in teaching; the one in England, the other in America.

A precious document and several rare books link Loretto to the very first days of the new republic. The Treaty of Paris of 1783 extended the boundaries of the Commonwealth of Virginia west to the Mississippi, and thus included the present state of Kentucky. In the Archives, Loretto treasures a preemption treasury warrant, a land grant signed by Patrick Henry, April 1, 1784. [The land grant has since been sold.] In the fashion of these old surveys, the boundaries are indicated by such natural phenomena as specific kinds of trees, surrounding Indian Lick, "on both sides of the Rolling Fork." The grant, no doubt, defines the land at Calvary, which became Loretto's first branch establishment and where an academy was conducted from 1815 until the close of the century.

In 1790 the first Catholic Bible was printed in the new country, giving evidence of cultural and religious independence. Loretto cherishes three quarto volumes of this first edition, beautifully bound in tan leather, and inscribed by Bishop John Carroll to Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin and with the signature of Bishop Chabrat on the inside covers. [These volumes have since been sold.] All three men were



Florence Wolff SL stands beside the land grant signed by Patrick Henry, which has since been sold. Florence served as Loretto's archivist from 1974 to 1987. Prior to this, she served as assistant archivist for many years. *Photo: Loretto Archives*

involved with Loretto's early history: Bishop Carroll, as the first bishop in the United States, welcomed Rev. Charles Nerinckx and assigned him to Kentucky; Father Badin was the first priest ordained in the United States and lived on the site of the present Motherhouse grounds; and Bishop Chabrat succeeded Father Nerinckx as ecclesiastical superior.

While constitutional convention was in session, and John Carroll was setting up his diocesan plans and procedures (1789), Father Nerinckx was beginning his exile from his parish ministry, because of his nonconformity with the revolutionary forces in Europe. Providentially, this disagreement was to be the prelude to his coming to America. He reached that decision in 1803, when the boundaries of the United States were enlarged by the famous Louisiana Purchase under Thomas Jefferson. It was in that territory that Father Nerinckx would later see the Sisters of Loretto make



This seal graced the cover of the 1816 Rule for the Little Society of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross of Jesus, as Loretto was then called. Image: Loretto Archives

their first foundation in the Trans-Mississippi West, and it would be there that he would give back his missionary to His Maker. (Aug. 12, 1823, Ste. Genevieve, Mo.)

It was in Jefferson's administration also, that Father Nerinckx came to America and soon was on his way to the young state of Kentucky to begin his arduous and extensive missionary labors. He rode by wagon trail and horseback over the trails blazed by the early American pioneers who had migrated to that part of the then far west of the United States.

In 1812 these pioneer Kentuckians were congealing into small communities, but being so far away from the Atlantic Coast, they felt little effects of the War between England and their country. It was that historic year, however, that marked the beginning of the Sisters of Loretto on Hardin's Creek. Mary Rhodes, the co-founder with Father Nerinckx, had been born in Maryland during the very year Benjamin Franklin, John Jay and John Adams (1782) were in Paris negotiating the treaty which sealed the War for Independence. It was this young woman who, after her coming to Kentucky and seeing the lack of educational opportunities for the children, received the inspiration to open a school and to found a religious community which would seek the glory of God by praising Him and ministering to His people. From Mary Rhodes's little log cabin school and convent would grow a congregation of American sisters who would thereafter be in the vanguard of American history.



The Rev. Charles Nerinckx, a Belgian priest who emigrated to America, cofounded the Loretto congregation in 1812.

Photo: Loretto Archives



The Rev. Charles Nerinckx's desk and various personal items are displayed in the Loretto Heritage Center in this 2012 photo.

Photo: Peg Jacobs CoL



Our commitment to care for Earth

Image: [NASA/Goddard/Arizona State University](#)

Loretto's longstanding, living commitment to care for and heal Earth includes the following efforts, among numerous others.

Loretto Earth Network

The Loretto Earth Network (LEN) was officially born in 1992 as Loretto members and friends gathered in the Colorado mountains to affirm their dedication to care for Earth.

In these earliest days, Eldon Shields CoL, Marcella Shields CoL, Kathleen Tighe SL and Nancy Wittwer SL came together to act for Earth. Nancy had deeply dedicated herself to working on behalf of Earth a couple of years before this, and Maureen McCormack SL, Loretto president at the time, created a staff position with an Earth focus that Nancy filled starting in 1991. LEN was a natural outgrowth of the personal commitment of individual Loretto members and the Community's growing ecological concern.

LEN's commitment continues. Last summer, LEN funded the purchase of environmental education curriculum supplies for the New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future summer camp held at Loretto Motherhouse. As Nancy once stated, "Who knows what younger learners may follow in the footsteps of our founders, and what they can do to further the flourishing of Mother Earth."

LEN's current commitment includes extending educational opportunities to Community members. "How Trees and Forests Shape Our Climate," a course made available by Biodiversity for a Livable Climate, was a recent offering.

Julie Kerber CoL, LEN coordinator along with Beth Blissman CoL and Marcella, says that LEN is always looking for ways to connect with Earth and with one another in love and care for Earth. After all, disconnect is at the root of so much that has gone wrong. As Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*, "Our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together."

If you'd like to support and follow Loretto's commitment to Earth, you are welcome to join us. Let us know if

you'd like to be added to our email list. One of our long-time offerings is an online solstice and equinox ritual that is open to all. The rituals are now recorded. Contact LEN by filling out the form at: www.lorettocommunity.org/how-we-serve/environment/len.

Carbon Reduction Fund

The Carbon Reduction Fund offers grants for Loretto- and Loretto-related projects that prevent greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. installing solar panels); sequester greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. regenerating soils and landscapes, planting trees); secure equipment for plantings (e.g. funding irrigation); and provide education on carbon emissions and greenhouse gas reduction/prevention.

Laudato Si' Action Platform

In 2021, Loretto committed to the Platform, based on Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. You can read about Loretto's commitment on our [website](#). Liz Deines SL creates a useful and engaging monthly [Laudato Si' calendar](#).

Earthlinks

Cathy Mueller SL cofounded Earthlinks with Bette Ann Jasper OP in 1996, a ministry to the economically poor that provides connection with nature through gardening, nature crafts and contemplative visits to the mountains. Earthlinks sells the handmade crafts on their [website](#).

Photo, page 9, taken at the Loretto Motherhouse entrance by Earla Volk CoL

The commitment at Loretto Motherhouse

Loretto has lovingly stewarded the land at the Motherhouse in the rolling hills of Marion County, Ky., for 210 years. Nearly 800 acres are cared for by the Community. The Motherhouse composts, recycles and is conducting an energy audit. Earth-wise installations include an electric vehicle charger as well as solar panels at the renovated barn now being used to host events. On this page we share just a few of Loretto Motherhouse's Earth-centric endeavors.

Land Conservancy

"Our commitment to peace and justice not only extends to Earth but is rooted in our understanding that we are of Earth. It is our responsibility to protect our sacred Motherhouse lands." So said Barbara Nicholas SL, Loretto president in 2023 when more than 650 acres of woods, native grasses, pollinator habitat and farmland at the Motherhouse were permanently preserved in a conservancy.

Loretto Woods Cemetery

The 13-acre [Loretto Woods Natural Cemetery](#) offers natural burials free from chemical embalming or cement vaults. Burial is now open to those who are not Loretto members.

"Although trite, the logic remains true: We love what we know and protect what we love. So, let's know our place. Maybe in this way we can reorient ourselves to protection, preservation and healing for Earth."

Jessie Rathburn CoL

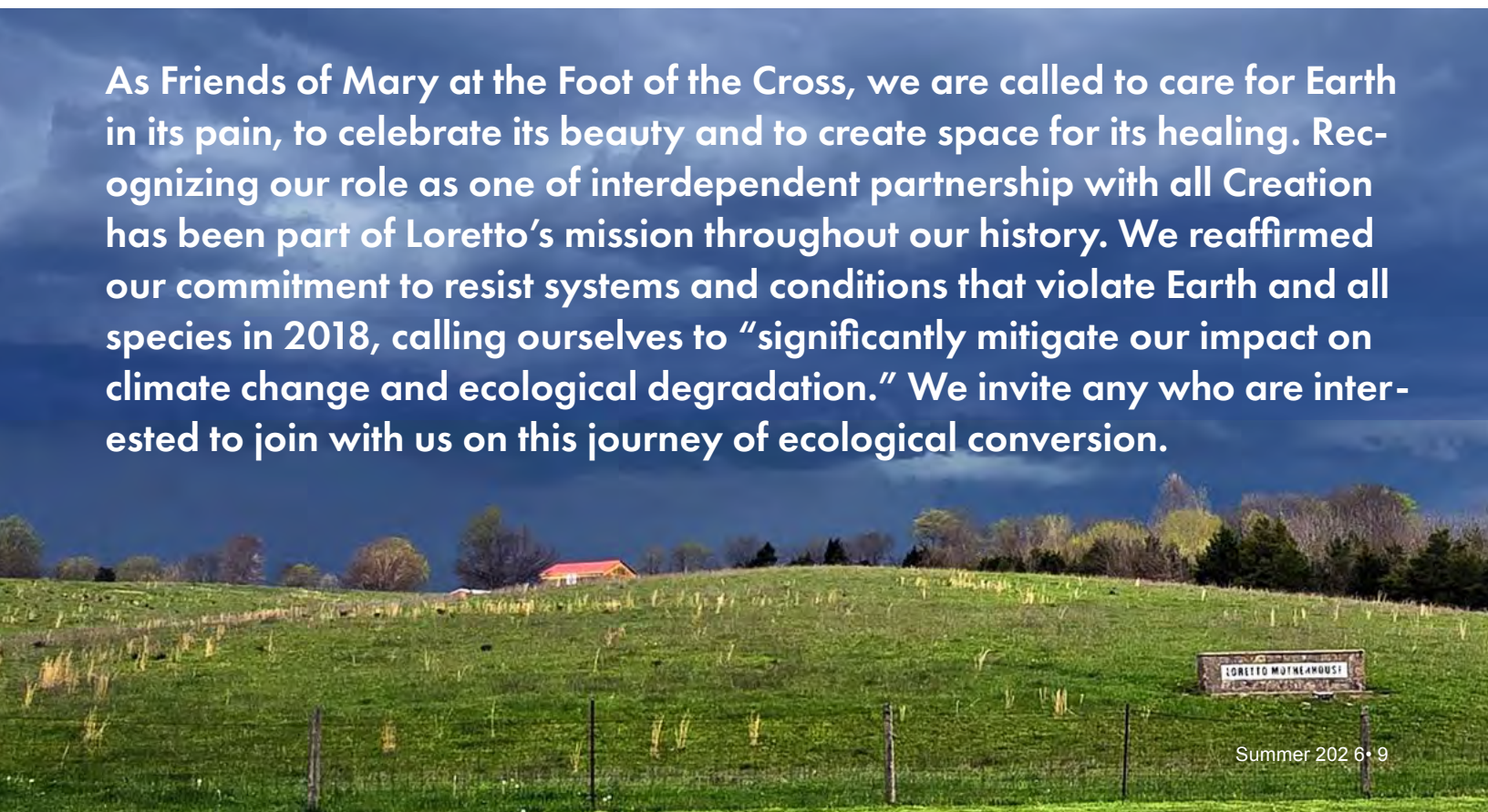
Loretto Motherhouse Farm

The farm's oversight includes acreages of grain crops, cattle pasture, native plantings for pollinators and wildlife, woodlands and lakes, ponds, streams and creeks. The farm intensively rotates cattle, restores native habitat, uses no-till practices and plants cover crops. Regenerating the soil is key. Importantly, the impact of the farm extends to thousands of additional acres on central Kentucky farms through educational events. Read more about the farm [here](#) and [here](#).

Native Tree and Plant Fund

Starting in 1980, Anthony Mary Sartorius SL began planting trees at Loretto Motherhouse, a service she continued for decades, often with the help of student volunteers. The Tree Fund grew out of these efforts. The Fund broadened in recent years to include further plantings. Susan Classen CoL, Loretto's ecosystem manager, shares, "We've learned more about the role, not only of trees, but also of other native plants in mitigating the effects of climate change."

As Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross, we are called to care for Earth in its pain, to celebrate its beauty and to create space for its healing. Recognizing our role as one of interdependent partnership with all Creation has been part of Loretto's mission throughout our history. We reaffirmed our commitment to resist systems and conditions that violate Earth and all species in 2018, calling ourselves to "significantly mitigate our impact on climate change and ecological degradation." We invite any who are interested to join with us on this journey of ecological conversion.



Loretto Justice Fellowship empowers students to serve with heart and soul

Loretto Justice Fellows

Giulianna Alcantarapalai

Carolina Cardoza-Herrera

Daniela Felix

Saul Gutierrez

Deborah Ledesma

Candice Licon

Stephanie Menchey

Elizabeth O'Hara

Luna Palacios

Maxine Perez

Astrid Ochoa

Layla Rivera

Génesis Rodríguez

Leslie Sanchez

Edward Smith

Ashley Vallecillo

By Annie Rosenkranz, director, Loretto Justice Fellowship

The Loretto Justice Fellowship has risen to face the challenges of our times. Amidst federal funding cuts and policy changes that hit the non-profit sector and marginalized communities incredibly hard, our Fellows' efforts have expanded. By the end of our current program year, 16 Loretto Justice Fellows will have contributed over 7,700 hours of service with eight El Paso-based social justice organizations.

We've created innovative community development programming and enhanced support services for people experiencing homelessness; those navigating the immigration justice system and detention; youth and families; and people struggling with substance abuse, addiction and mental health challenges.

To work alongside others who are committed to empowering every person seeking assistance and using their expertise to provide relief, justice and hope to the most vulnerable is one of the biggest privileges I've stepped into.

Maxine Perez



Justice Fellows serving for the 2025-2026 program year come together in community for a spring gathering. Annie Rosenkranz, program director, is in the front at center.

What excites me most about being part of the Fellowship is the opportunity to grow personally and spiritually through meaningful work grounded in justice, service and community. I'm especially eager to learn from others who are equally passionate about social change and deepen my understanding of how to live out my values in both my daily life and long-term commitments.

Astrid Ochoa



Helen Santamaria SL, Sam Forsyth CoL, Buffy Boesen SL and Loretto Justice Fellow Elizabeth O'Hara enjoy a tour of the Philosophic Systems Institute's Alamito STREAM Center, a historic site now providing programming in science, technology, reading, engineering, arts and math. *Photo: Carolina Cardoza-Herrera, Loretto Justice Fellow*

My personal experience fuels a deep commitment to guiding others on their path to recovery through empathy, advocacy and practical care dedicated to creating safe, inclusive environments where individuals feel heard, respected and empowered to reclaim their lives.

Layla Rivera



I am a master of social work student at New Mexico State University and a proud U.S. Air Force veteran. I am passionate about advancing social justice, advocating for marginalized communities and promoting compassionate, informed service. ... I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside others who value humility and purpose, while deepening my commitment to cultural responsiveness, integrity and love.

Deborah Ledesma

Loretto Justice Fellows attend these academic institutions

University of Texas at El Paso

El Paso Community College

New Mexico State University

... and serve these non- profit organizations

Abara

Aliviane

Ciudad Nueva

Estrella del Paso

*Las Americas Immigrant
Adocacy Center*

*The Opportunity Center for
the Homeless*

Philosophic Systems Institute
Villa Maria

Growing up between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, I saw how injustice, especially toward women, is often overlooked or accepted as the norm. That pushed me to speak up, get involved and challenge the systems that uphold inequality.

Daniela Felix



Stepping outside of my comfort zone opened the door to new opportunities, relationships and experiences that shaped me in ways I never expected, while reminding me of the importance of community, compassion and human connection.

Génesis Rodriguez, Loretto Justice Fellowship program coordinator



I came into this experience hopeful but unsure of what to expect, and now, looking back, I realize how profoundly it has shaped me — personally, professionally and spiritually. I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of a community that is grounded in love, justice, compassion and meaningful service.

Candice Licon

There are not enough words to express the gratitude I feel to have found the Loretto Community where I feel loved, seen, heard and taken care of in a time of my life where I needed it the most. Thanks to their support, I am able to chase my dream of helping immigrant communities through healing. ... I cannot wait to continue to be a part of this community for the rest of my life, seeing how my place in the community evolves through time. I am grateful as well for the retreat at the Loretto Motherhouse where we were able to escape from hectic everyday life and learn from others who have dedicated their lives to serving various communities. It was such a transformative experience, something that reaffirmed my commitment and love to social justice. When it may feel that the world is against us or falling apart, we have a community that we can fall back on that can uplift us. It was so refreshing to laugh and cry and experience the beauty of the sisterhood together.

Giulianna Alcantarapalai



Last October Loretto Justice Fellows Elizabeth O'Hara, Luna Palacios, Astrid Ochoa and Saul Gutierrez joined El Paso Inter-religious Sponsoring Organization/Border Interfaith and 650 community members to envision and plan for a reimagined El Paso.

Photo: Annie Rosenkranz

Loretto's impact cascades through generations



Kathleen Fox, former Loretto Volunteer and principal at St. Ann's School in Chicago, poses with students on the first day of school.
Photo courtesy Kathleen Fox

Every child who walks through our doors should know they are loved, seen and known. That's where real learning begins.

Kathleen Fox, principal, St. Ann School

Kathleen Fox, principal at St. Ann's School in Chicago, was educated at Nerinx Hall High School in St. Louis, a Loretto-founded school, and served as a Loretto Volunteer at Marian Middle School in St. Louis in 2012. Her Loretto background has indelibly shaped her journey. Barbara Roche SL served as an early and lasting inspiration. When she got to know Barbara, Kathleen says, she was "struck by her humility." She shares, "Here was this outstanding woman who led a top high school [Nerinx Hall] for over two decades and helped to found Marian Middle School to help break the cycle of poverty through education. She had influenced countless young women's lives, yet there were no airs about her and no ego. Instead, she had a simple focus to get the work done. As the principal of St. Ann, I try to emulate her focus and get the work done that is needed to best serve our community." Kathleen, who advocates for equity in education, serves as a model for her students who come from varied backgrounds. She shares, "At St. Ann, we have our students state our core values each day: 'To serve, to lead and to love with Christ as our model.' I think it aligns very closely with the Loretto mission of 'Work for justice, act for peace.' We try to ensure that these core values are lived and not just said by giving our students opportunities to serve, lead and love others."

Lives of service blossom under Loretto's consistent guidance, send out ripples

By Christina Manweller

The Loretto Justice Fellowship is the latest program offered by Loretto to carry forward the Community's values and mission by providing resources, guidance and community to those embarking on lifetimes of service. The seeds of the Justice Fellowship program were planted 37 years ago in Loretto's rich, affirming soil.

The Loretto Southwest Volunteers program, founded in 1989, was directed by Patricia Jean Manion SL. Volunteers spent a summer working with Sisters of Loretto in Colorado and New Mexico. They served at the Denver Catholic Worker House and at shelters. In 1992, the program was renamed Loretto Volunteers and expanded to cities outside the Southwest, including St. Louis, New York City and Washington, D.C. Volunteers were steeped in Loretto values, intentional living and spirituality. These young adults carried the Loretto commitment to work for justice and act for peace as they went into the world, each serving a nonprofit organization for a year while living in community. With Loretto's support, they worked in shelters, health clinics and other social service organizations; they advocated for those whose voices were silenced; they served with groups supporting migrants and with environmental organizations; they tutored schoolkids and adult learners seeking GEDs. This has been the story of Loretto since 1812: leading the way toward, and fostering, compassion and healing.

In all, there were close to 200 Loretto Volunteers whose lives were indelibly impacted, leading to a ripple effect carrying forward through countless numbers of lives.

Mallory Daily, former Loretto Volunteer coordinator, wrote in 2017, "The volunteer program builds on this strong foundation that has been set by the Loretto Community for hundreds of years. Volunteers are given the tools and the

encouragement to find meaningful work and live compassionate lives. They learn how to cultivate community, how to communicate with their peers in kind and productive ways, how to show up for the causes they believe in, how to educate themselves on major issues, how to sustain themselves while swimming against the mainstream, how to channel rage into action and how to heal our broken world. For all, this is a lifelong journey. And for many, it starts with Loretto."

As throughout its long vital history, Loretto continues to encourage and advance journeys of service. In 2023, the Loretto Volunteer program underwent a transformation, emerging as the Loretto Justice Fellowship. The ripples roll on and on.



The 2011-2012 Loretto Volunteers visit Loretto Motherhouse. Cathy Mueller SL is at upper right. Photo: Peg Jacobs CoL

There's just something special about Loretto that you can't find anywhere else. And something this special deserves to be celebrated, cherished and shared.

Emily Cohen, 2010-2011 Loretto Volunteer



Sayana Scott, Marian alumna, class of 2022, shares the impact of a Marian education at the 2026 Marian Magic Gala at Washington University in St. Louis in April. *Photo: Gara Lacy*

Marian Middle School shapes women for life

Marian Middle School was founded with a bold mission: to provide girls with limited financial means but extraordinary potential an education that breaks cycles of poverty and opens doors to opportunity.

Mary Elizabeth Grimes, president,
Marian Middle School

What about the girls?

In 1998, Nancy Wittwer SL read a news article about a soon-to-open Catholic boys' school in St. Louis. She was prompted to ask, "What about the girls?" As Barbara Roche SL has shared, "Under the initial leadership of Nancy and Ursuline Sister Madonna O'Hara, seven congregations of women religious came together and committed to opening a middle school for girls in St. Louis."

What began as one Sister of Loretto's dream has become a steady and flourishing reality impacting nearly 400 students and their families over 26 years. On the next pages, you'll read about the strong influence Marian has had on three students' lives.

[Watch a brief video](#) of Nancy talking about her dream and [read Barbara's article](#) about Marian in the fall 2023 issue of *Loretto Magazine*.

Nancy Wittwer SL's dream of a school for girls came to fruition in 2000 and has flourished since.
Photo: Jean M. Schildz



Rooted at Marian

... Rising at Nerinx

By Bridjes O'Neil, Marian Middle School

Marian Middle School was built on the belief that opportunity takes root early — especially for girls with immense promise and limited financial means. At Marian, that belief becomes a foundation. For Marian girls, education is a stepping stone to colleges, careers and lives of impact.

The Sisters of Loretto's educational legacy flows from Marian Middle School to Nerinx Hall High School as, year after year, the majority of Marian alumnae choose to go on to Nerinx, a Loretto-founded school. Since 2006, 24 Marian grads have attended Nerinx, continuing a thriving tradition of leadership, scholarship and purpose. This fall, eight Marian students will return, and Nerinx will welcome three new Marian freshmen.

Sayana Scott

Sayana Scott, photo page 16, Marian alumna class of 2022, embodies the power of the Marian-to-Nerinx pathway.

Growing up in Ferguson, Mo., during a period of profound community grief and unrest, Sayana witnessed resilience, solidarity and the strength of a collective voice. When she arrived at Marian, she was quiet and unsure whether leadership was meant for her.

Marian saw differently. Teachers recognized Sayana's potential and encouraged her curiosity. Participation on a middle school robotics team sparked her interest in precision and analytical thinking — skills that later shaped her goal of pursuing a career in dental health.

As she prepared for high school, Marian's Graduate Support team walked closely with her through the application and financial planning process, ensuring that uncertainty never became a barrier.

At Nerinx, she flourished. Sayana became a visible campus leader. She learned not only how to lead, but how to create spaces where others felt seen and heard.

"I was once that girl in the corner, terrified to speak," Sayana says. "But now? I'm a woman building bridges across global cultures — from mission trips with Loretto to studying in Spain. At the Mexican border, among profound strife, I still saw hope, humanity and acts of kindness."

Sayana will continue her academic journey at the University of Louisville, Ky., building on her Marian foundation and Nerinx experience.

Lonjay Hemphill

Lonjay Hemphill, Marian alumna, class of 2017, says Marian gave her more than just a top-tier education; it gave her exposure to perspectives and experiences that she wouldn't have had otherwise. She learned to see the world beyond the immediate environment.

"Marian saw my determination and helped me turn that into a strong sense of independence, cultivating the



Lonjay Hemphill, Marian alumna of the class of 2017, is proud to be a Marian Girl and Nerinx grad. Photo: Chris Ryan, Once Films

time management and critical thinking that could help me change my trajectory," Lonjay shares.

As she transitioned to high school at Nerinx, she continued to thrive, but her journey was far from smooth. Her senior year, she struggled with financial aid applications as a first-generation college student. She had no idea what she was doing, and she kept getting denied because she was missing her parents' tax information. That's when she turned to the Graduate Support Program at Marian, receiving guidance on the correct next steps and help filing for independence so she could receive scholarships. Throughout college, Lonjay worked tirelessly to support herself, but she

never lost sight of her ultimate goal to help vulnerable communities, especially children. Her passion grew from life experiences. Now she's a Maryville University graduate with degrees in psychology and sociology pursuing an advanced degree in social work at Washington University in St. Louis, focusing on children, youth and family.

"None of this would have been possible without the early foundation that Marian provided me," Lonjay says.

Katie Rodas-Santizo

Katie Rodas-Santizo, Marian alumna of the class of 2023, demonstrates how Marian and Nerinx cultivate creative excellence and intellectual courage.

Katie recently won a poetry competition through St. Louis University's Inspired By Arts Showcase, a regional competition open to high school and college students. The contest invites young artists to draw upon themes from the university's annual book selection and is co-sponsored by St. Louis County Libraries.



Katie Rodas-Santizo, Marian alumna, class of 2023, attends St. Louis University's "An Evening with Jhumpa Lahiri" on April 8. Photo courtesy of Irma Santizo

Participants explored challenging topics such as cultural displacement, isolation, family and generational tension, betrayal and the fragility of ordinary life. Katie's work stood out for its depth, insight and emotional clarity.

This recognition reflects the confidence that Nerinx Hall students develop in sharing their voices beyond the classroom, including on university platforms and in public spaces. That confidence, educators note, is rooted in years of being encouraged to think critically, write boldly and trust their perspective.



An extended investment

The message remains consistent: Marian's investment does not expire. Through high school, college and early adulthood, Marian continues to provide guidance, advocacy and encouragement. The results speak for themselves — over the past five years, 100% of Marian alumnae have completed high school, with many continuing on to higher education and professional careers.

Tamara Harris, director of college and career success, emphasizes that Marian's support is designed to last. "Everyone's path is different. Some have more challenges than others," she says. "Regardless, we mean it when we say we are 'Educating Girls for Life.'"

Bridjes O'Neil serves as development and communications manager at Marian Middle School in St. Louis.



Tamara Harris, director of college and career success at Marian Middle School, stands beside Nerinx Hall High School student Tamia Daniel, Marian alumna, class of 2025. Photo Gara Lacy

With all that our girls face in life, we know there is a light within them powerful enough to overcome any obstacle. From the moment a child becomes a Marian Girl, she is surrounded by love and a safety net of support.

Mary Elizabeth Grimes, president,
Marian Middle School

Loretto educates for the times

Loretto has a heart for education. The first Sisters of Loretto taught children on the frontier in Kentucky starting in 1812. As the order moved across the country over the next century and a half, and then into South America and China, opening and running schools and teaching in many others, thousands of children and families benefited from the Sisters' commitment to compassion, academic excellence and faith. Today, this might mean teaching in a classroom, or it might be reflected in other ways to touch and teach others. Here, and in upcoming issues, we'll share stories of Loretto members who continue to educate. Some are in the heyday of their careers, while others, perhaps officially retired, remain lifelong teachers, in or out of the classroom. Watch for profiles in upcoming issues.

Sharon Kassing SL: The gift of learning

Opening myself to being taught, especially by 10-year-olds, is and has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. The exchange is an equation at equilibrium, flowing evenly!

Sharon Kassing SL

By Christina Manweller

"From the time I was first a student of the Sisters of Loretto at Nerinx Hall, I was witness to stellar teaching; education was exciting and fun. I never had a mediocre teacher. I have to admit though, being a teacher was never in my personal plans. I wanted to be an illustrator for Walt Disney, a veterinarian or own a hardware store."

God's plans for our lives don't necessarily line up with our youthful aspirations! Sharon, who ended up teaching for nearly three decades in an elementary school — primarily science and art — says being a teacher turned out to be "a very special gift" in her life.

After 29 years in the classroom, she went on to serve at the St. Louis Zoo for 13 years, saying that it was "a fitting capstone to my years of teaching. In partnership with Washington University and the National Science Foundation we worked with the Saint Louis Public School teachers and students to develop a fondness and concern for animals and their habitats and the role that we all have in ensuring their long-term existence.

"My job as an educator has always been to take away barriers to learning, no matter what the age group. Kids, especially, could probably teach themselves quite well if there were fewer things in their way. It's also important to help kids find and be proud of what they are good at, what their gifts are. And to help them let it shine! That means I need to teach every student, not just the ones who 'get it.' And finally, my job is always to be fair and to show them



Sharon Kassing SL helps Ayan Huran, a neighbor, with her schoolwork. Ayan studies cyber security at a community college in St. Louis. Photo: Nimo Abdi

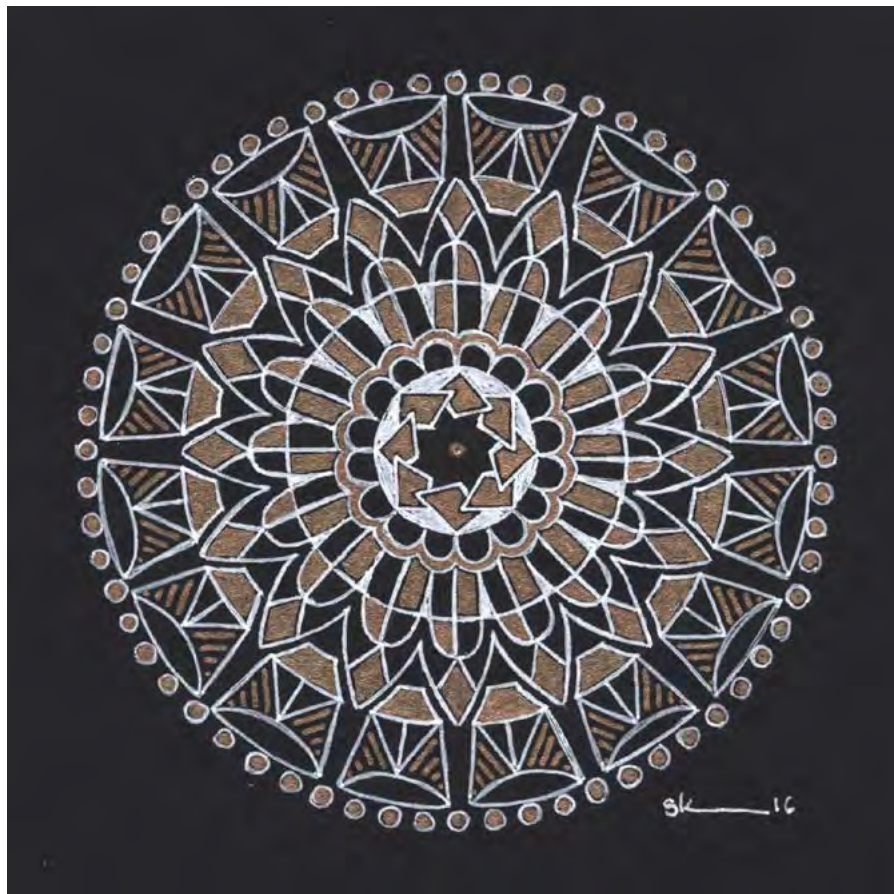
how to do it too. When I received work from my students, I respected it and returned it in a way that reflected I had paid close attention to what they submitted."

Sharon's impact, as with all inspiring teachers, has been long-term. "I proudly take credit," she says, "for a significant number of people who have gone into science, art or music careers. Really makes me proud. But it also makes me proud to see them having lovely families with kids of their own."

Sharon Kassing SL's gift of art

The patterns kept coming, so I just kept drawing them. I think I've drawn in the neighborhood of about 400 since I started in 2015.

Sharon Kassing SL

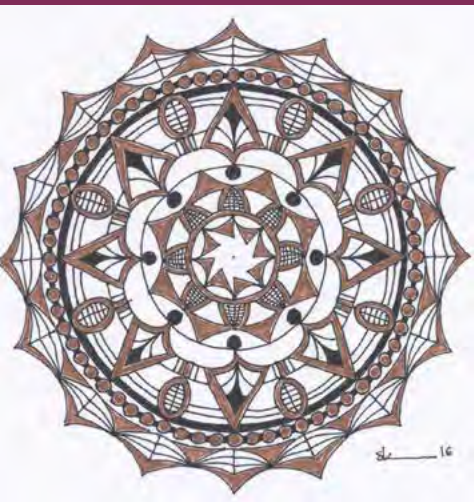


On her art:

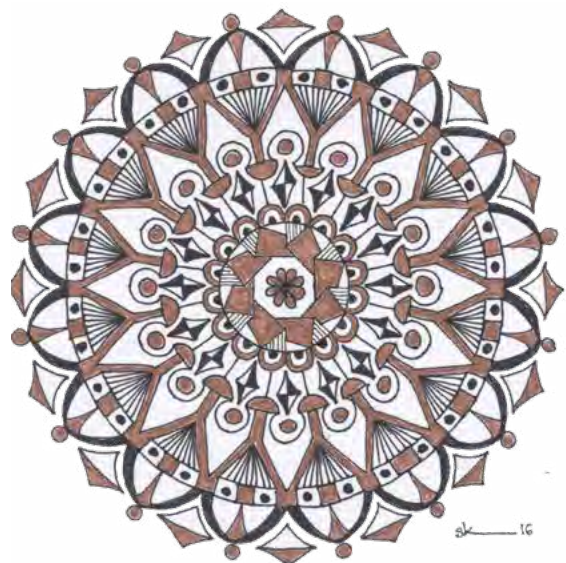
Sharon's mother encouraged her to create from a young age. She shares, "I got my first set of real watercolor paints and brushes when I was 10 years old. I took classes at the St. Louis Art Museum. Gabriel Mary Hoare SL taught me at Nerinx Hall and mentored me as I taught art to my classes.

"I incorporated art projects into all my science and social studies classes too. I taught animal-related art projects with teachers when I worked at the St. Louis Zoo. That was great fun."

Sharon says of the mandalas, "The patterns kept coming, so I just kept drawing them. I think I've drawn in the neighborhood of about 400 since I started in 2015. Most recently I've started drawing in white and gold on black paper. Very satisfying."



Sharon Kassing SL has found that creating mandalas is a satisfying blend of science and art. *Photo: Jean M. Schildz*



Congratulations 50-

Kathy Santopietro Weddel CoL

Kathy shares that in October 1976, when she signed her contract and became a Loretto co-member, she felt as if she was being asked to "live the words of Isaiah.

"Isaiah proclaims that if we do away with the yoke and the clenched fist, and if we give bread to the hungry and relief to the oppressed, Yahweh will give strength to our bones and we shall be like a watered garden, sustained by a spring whose waters do not fail."

Helen Sanders SL, Loretto president at the time, "planted plain brown seeds in the dark, fresh, rich earth of my pocket. And Loretto said, let them be. I ventured to new beginnings, uncharted territory and worlds of new learning.

"And when I needed a hint along the 50-year journey, I put my hand in my deep pocket and felt around. And behold a garden!:

"A bouquet to gift;
Food to nourish;
Earth to cherish;
Peace to teach;
and
Love to harvest."

Kathy concludes, "I remain grateful for those seeds that continue to sprout and grow, always nourished by precious friendships, shared wisdom and practiced faith — the Loretto Community whose waters do not fail."



I remain grateful for those seeds that continue to sprout and grow, always nourished by precious friendships, shared wisdom and practiced faith — the Loretto Community whose waters do not fail.

Kathy Santopietro Weddel CoL

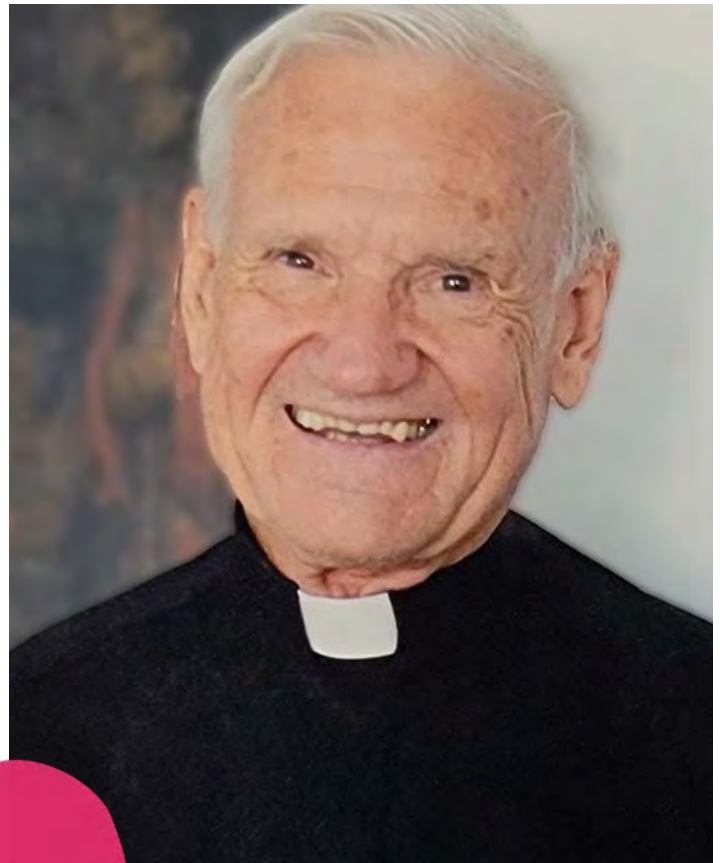
-year jubilarians!



Peter Urban CoL

The Rev. Peter Urban became a Loretto co-member along with his brother, Larry. They were influenced by Elizabeth Dyer SL, who generously shared her love for Loretto with all whom she met. Peter says the fact that "we are so interested in helping the poor" has meant the most to him as a member of the Loretto Community.

In the [spring 2022 issue of *Loretto Magazine*](#), Father Peter shared the story of his service with Miguel Pro Mission, an organization he founded in 1999 to bring dignity, safe housing and education to the people of Juarez, Mexico. This work is close to his heart and continues. You can watch a short video of Father Peter talking about the work in Juarez at bit.ly/PeterUrbanVideo.



We also extend hearty congratulations to Susan Schilling CoL!



Loretto at the UN

Students encounter the global stage

Loretto at the UN, established in 1991 and now in partnership with the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, offers unique opportunities for students and recent college grads to experience the workings of the UN. Along the way, these young adults gain invaluable experience and explore potential careers. They interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and learn all about advocacy in action. Here we focus on college-age volunteers and interns. In our next issue, we'll share high school students' experiences. Happy 35th birthday, Loretto at the UN!



Pausing for a photo op at the offices of Tzu Chi, a humanitarian NGO at the UN, are Livy Klonowski, Kate Klonowski, Hannah Reyes, Fatima Argerout, Loretto at the UN intern Grace Broome and Beth Blissman CoL. *Photo courtesy of Beth Blissman CoL*

Setting the stage for future change

By Beth Blissman CoL

Since I began representing Loretto at the United Nations in December 2016, we've hosted more than two dozen interns/volunteers in our office at the Church Center of the UN. It's an exciting experience to enter the UN and witness, support and participate in dialogues and discussions with diplomats and occasionally heads of state. Even though our office is very small, it is an excellent opportunity to dig into the work. Our ability to host delegations, programs and events is determined each year by how much people-power we can manifest. Volunteers and interns have helped expand our efforts over the years.

One of my greatest joys as Loretto's UN representative is connecting with future generations by welcoming a few dozen students from Loretto-founded schools to the annual meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women each spring. (You'll meet a few of the students in the next issue.)

Over the years, we've drawn interns from rural and urban areas seeking to enhance their academic foundations through real-world experiences. Our interns hone many skills and engage with a wide range of topics, from ending gender-based violence to the power of youth-led climate activism. They connect with other advocates of all ages,

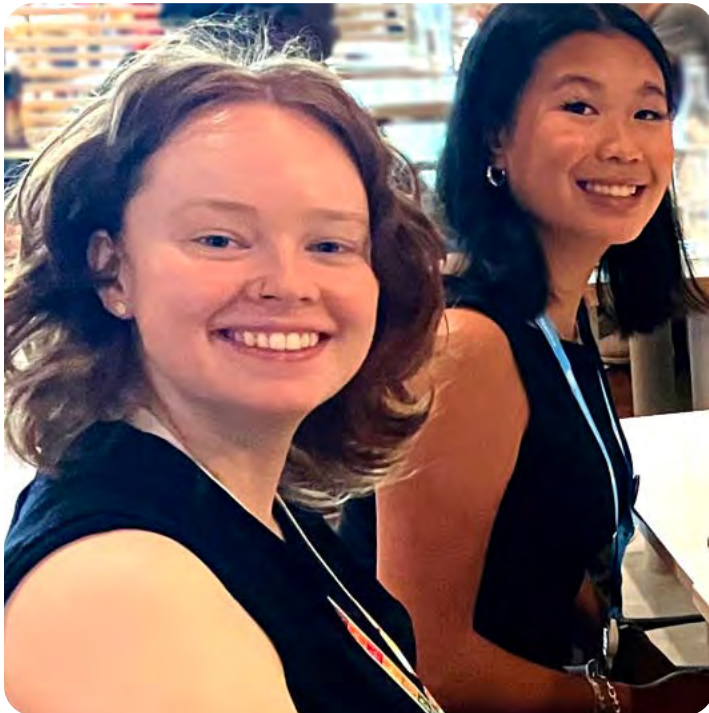
genders and cultures and engage in critical conversations, challenging norms and discovering their purpose. They leave not just as interns, but as experienced changemakers — ready to build the world they want to see.

Our 2025 intern Hannah Reyes, St. Mary's Academy (Denver) alumna, shares, "One of the most meaningful parts of this experience was the chance to interact with ambassadors, delegates, NGOs and UN officials, seeing firsthand how governments, civil society and the private sector come together to tackle pressing issues."

Emma Sandu, intern with Loretto at the UN in 2022, says she is grateful that she got to be part of Loretto through her internship, which she calls "an amazing experience." She shares, "I was privileged to have a front row seat to the inner workings of civil society at the UN headquarters. It was incredibly empowering ... to be in the UN and hear about the good things that are happening that you don't usually hear about."

Watch a short video about Loretto at the UN put together by interns: <https://bit.ly/InternsUN>

Beth Blissman CoL serves as the Loretto Community's representative to the United Nations.



Grace Broome and Hannah Reyes dine in New York City.
Photo courtesy of Beth Blissman CoL

Grace Broome, Loretto at the UN intern 2024-2026, says that the Loretto internship "definitely challenged me to step into unfamiliar spaces and navigate complex global conversations and grow both as a communicator and an advocate." Grace heads to grad school at the University of Notre Dame this fall.



Beth Blissman CoL, Loretto at the UN representative, poses with Hannah Reyes at UN headquarters in New York City.
Photo: Teresa Blumenstein

Hannah Reyes, 2024 St. Mary's Academy alumna and Loretto at the UN intern in 2025, says she was educated by Loretto for 13 years, beginning in kindergarten, and credits the Loretto Community with giving her the confidence, global perspective and leadership skills to navigate spaces from student government to the United Nations. As a St. Mary's sophomore, she had been invited to sit on an international panel during the UN's 62nd Commission on the Status of Women; the panel featured young women from around the world sharing personal connections to climate justice initiatives. Later, as an intern with Loretto at the UN, she worked toward expanding Loretto's impact. She writes that her internship was "an incredible opportunity that deepened my commitment to global change. I've not only deepened my understanding of global advocacy but also had the chance to apply problem-solving, collaboration and creativity to advance meaningful change. ... I learned so much about what advocacy looks like on the global stage." Hannah affirms, "I'll always carry with me the spirit of advocacy, collaboration and hope that defines Loretto at the UN."

Impact Report 2025



**With your help
we've directly impacted
thousands of lives ...
and countless lives
into the future**



Mary Ellen McElroy SL with her St. Mary's Academy "buddy." Loretto-founded schools pass on values of faith, community, justice and respect.
Photo: Regina Drey SL



Students visit with Kathleen Tighe SL at Loretto Motherhouse. *Photo: Rachel Brahm*



The Partnership

\$2,245,690
Received in donations

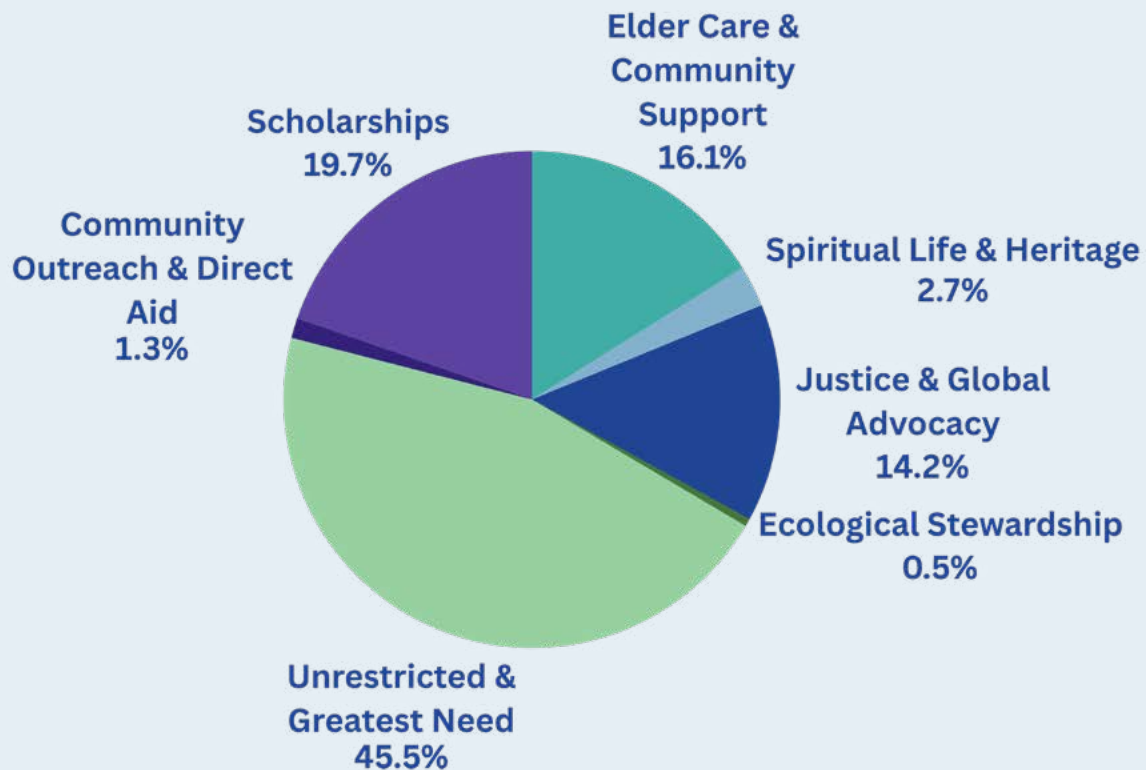
1,223
Donors

50
Percentage of gifts
under \$100





2025 Donations



-  Elder Care & Community Support: Loretto Living Center; Care of Sisters; Retirement Fund; Motherhouse Upkeep and Educational Programs
-  Spiritual Life & Loretto Heritage: Cedars of Peace Retreat Center; Knobs Haven Retreat Center; Loretto Archives and Heritage Center; Loretto Heights Cemetery, Denver
-  Justice & Global Advocacy: Peace Committees; Loretto at the UN; Loretto Justice Fellowship; Immigration support/advocacy; Ann Manganaro SL Fund; FST School/Sisters - Ghana; Pakistan Mission; Barbara Wander CoL Haiti Fund; Jeannine Gramick SL Ministry; Mary Ann Gleason SL Ministry
-  Ecological Stewardship: Carbon Reduction Fund; Native Tree and Plant Fund; Motherhouse Farm; Loretto Woods Cemetery
-  Unrestricted & Greatest Need: Where Funds are Most Needed; Loretto Special Needs Fund
-  Community Outreach & Direct Aid: Loretto Hunger Fund; Latin America/Caribbean Committee; Individual Ministries; Mission and Ministry
-  Scholarships: Students Receiving Scholarships to Loretto-Connected Schools



The parish boys' school in Lahore, Pakistan, serves free lunch to the children. *Photo: Nasreen Daniel SL*

6

Countries with Loretto presence

Ghana, Guatemala, Uganda,
Pakistan, United Kingdom, USA

28

U.S. states with Loretto presence





In April, Mary Nelle Gage SL escorted a group of Vietnamese adoptees to their birth country. Here she greets a woman with whom she worked in Saigon during the Vietnam War. *Photo courtesy of Tobi Peters*



In El Paso Kathleen Corbett SL, Mary Margaret Murphy SL and Irma Avila SL continue serving the local community. *Photo: Buffy Boesen SL*



Mary Catherine Widger SL, right, has served those with intellectual disabilities in Denver for more than 50 years. Here she pauses in Bridge Community's kitchen with Veronica Saykally, house manager. *Photo: Christina Manweller*

The Outreach

14

**Free Motherhouse events:
9 concerts, 2 farmer field days,
Ag Bash, a quilt show and
a Christmas open house**



A child enjoys the Christmas Open House.
Photo: Will Myers



A 2025 Ag Bash participant and Future Farmer of America member holds a quail. *Photo: Will Myers*



Donna Mattingly SL helps out a young Ag Bash attendee in August. *Photo: Will Myers*



Badin Pond, one of three fishing sites, also offers visitors a peaceful walking path at Loretto Motherhouse.
Photo: Angela Rakes

5

Miles of nature trails open
to the public



We're off! Runners participate in the 5K Nature Run fundraiser in June, a healthy family activity.
Photo: Will Myers

The Ministry

28

Interns/Fellows mentored



Hannah Reyes, 2025 Loretto at the UN intern, poses with Beth Blissman CoL, Loretto's representative to the UN.
Photo courtesy of Beth Blissman CoL



Loretto Justice Fellows gather to steep in community and support one another in their social justice work.
Photo: Annie Rosenkranz



untold

Hours of prayer,
for the needs
of the neighbor,
the world



The chapel at the Cedars of Peace retreat center invites slowing down. *Photo courtesy of Susan Classen CoL*

1,327
Retreatants welcomed
at Loretto Motherhouse

82
Residents cared for
by Loretto Living Center
at Loretto Motherhouse:
39 Sisters of Loretto and 43
lay residents mainly from
the local community



Residents and visitors spend time in the courtyard at Loretto Living Center.
Photo: Rachel Brahm

The Stewardship



654.4

Acres of land
under conservation



A Loretto Motherhouse field is alive with coreopsis.
Photo: Cody Rakes

100+

Trees planted

25

Acres of native grasses
planted



In the photos above, kids enjoy a summer day camp at Loretto Motherhouse. Loretto partnered with New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future to offer the nature-immersive adventure camp. *Photos: Will Myers*



Students from Loretto Academy (EL Paso), Nerinx Hall High School (St. Louis) and St. Mary's Academy (Denver) learn about nature during an educational and service visit to Loretto Motherhouse. *Photo: Rachel Brahm*

Loretto thanks you.



We couldn't do it without you.

Clockwise from top left: Eleanor Craig SL; Cathy Smith SL; Mary Swain SL with Cathy Mueller SL; and Buffy Boesen SL Photos: Will Myers

Memorials and Tributes of Honor

January 2026 — April 2026

**In Honor of:
Requested by:**

An asterisk (*) following a name identifies a Loretto co-member.

Eleanor Craig SL

Rebecca Sallee Hanson

Eileen Custy SL

Rose Mary and Michael Bickett

Arri Daian

Emily Volk

Antoinette Doyle SL

Cynthia L. Giguere-Unrein

Benedicta Feeney SL

Joan Herman

Jeannine Gramick SL

John M. Le Bedda II

Jennifer S. Morgan

Mary Jo Highland

Mary A. Highland

Loretto

Loretto Heights College class of 1960

Jackie Costanza Koroshetz

Sisters who taught at "Broadway," Louisville, Ky.

Mary Joe Zeillmann

Sisters who taught me & siblings at Our Lady of Sorrows School, Bernalillo, N.M.

Dolores Tafoya

Sisters who taught in Sterling, Ill.

Kristopher Koehler

Tim O Neil

Pat McCormick SL

William F. Watts

Anndavid Naeger SL

Lyndie Duff

Barbara Nicholas SL

Bea and Harold Combs

Carlene L. Laseter

Kathy Nimmer

Gibraltar Design

James Brian Thompson

Lydia Peña SL

Dora Elizabeth Cash

Clare Villa

Julie Popham*

Kathy and Dan Goyette

Elaine Prevallet SL

Clare Villa

Charles Richardson

Kathleen Stewart

Eva Antone Ross

Ruth and Ray Perez

Eva Marie Salas SL

Ximena Ferguson

Anthony Mary Sartorius SL

James A. Starr

Agnes Ann Schum SL

Dugan McGinley

Barbara, Tony & Clara Skees,

Joe Mulrooney

Susan Hermes

Ceciliana Skees SL

Brenna and David Langenau

Marie Lourde Steckler SL

family in Mississippi

Mary Joe Zeillmann

Mary Swain SL

Kathy and Dan Goyette

Elizabeth Mariner

Kathleen Tighe SL

James (Terry) Gates

Kathleen J. O'Renicks

Barb Welcer

Janet Schelb

Mary Wentker

Mari Jo Lynch

Bill Wilcox

Carol Greco



Donate in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one or a cherished Loretto member:
www.lorettocommunity.org/donate

**In Memory of:
Requested by:**

An asterisk (*) following a name
identifies a Loretto co-member.

Martha Belke SL

Kathleen & Michael Dicken

Mary E. Bickel

James (Terry) Gates

Rita Bruegenhagen SL

Teresa Emmett

Mary Denis Bruck SL

Helen Bruck

Philip & Rose Brunelli

Larry Brunelli

Felicia Corrigan SL

Ann M. Corrigan

Mary Ann Cunningham SL

Ruth and Ray Perez

Marilyn Cusick

Dorothy Cusick

Jeanne Dueber SL

Anonymous

Michael and Jeanene Dueber

Phyllis Passafiume

Betty (Wyrsh) Wilson

Mary R. Wilson

Janet M. Frane

Peter Frane

Ann Francis Gleason SL

Carol Harris

Patti and Bernie Michalek

Gondina Greenwell SL

Elizabeth Mariner

Agnes Marie Hagan SL

Marie Underwood

Marie Noel Hebert SL

James C. Hebert

Katherine Ann Heinz SL

Kathleen Kindblade

Joseph Highland

Mary A. Highland

Myron Howlett

Norma Howlett

Pat Hummel SL

Mary Jane Hummel SL

Margaret Ann Hummel SL

Ellen & Dominic Grisanti

Pat Jordan

Victoria and Andrew Sherman

Gwen Lafoon

Margaret Wright

Loretto

**Sisters who taught
in Kankakee, Ill.**

Gary Kress

Sisters who taught at St. Andrews

James. A. Starr

Doris Kenney

Sharon Whatley Dearing

Robin Marlow*

Sally Maresh*

Lisa Reynolds*

Fr. Ben Meyer

Dennis Cyrier

Shirley Mudd

James Mudd

Mary Louise Murphy*

Virginia Callicott

Patricia Gall Caudle

Elizabeth and Lloyd Crockett

Nanci L. Curtis

John Dant

Sylvia Fallaw

Laura and Ben Folk

Steven George

John and Kerri Harwood

Carol and Dan Hewitt

Langdon family

Mary Leyden Johnson

Brenda Lovell

Judith Nebhut

Elisa Parker

Martha Rudman

Percie Snider

Patricia Sutherland

Edith Vasu

Ron Watson and Jeff Corvin

Bud and Alva Nicholas

Bea and Harold Combs

Alicia T. Perez

Ruth and Ray Perez

Jane Marie Richardson SL

Mary Vincent Breeck

Jeanene & Michael Dueber

Phyllis Passafiume

Elizabeth Wilson

Mary R. Wilson

Mr. & Mrs. Paul M. Schmidt

Regina H. Schmidt

Scott L. Smith

Robert Clarkson

Kevin F. Sullivan

Cathryn Ulmer

Martha Thomas

Norma Howlett

Alice Eugene Tighe SL

Elizabeth Mariner

Judy Cassilly Trevino

Patricia Edwards

Kathleen Vonderhaar SL

Rosemary Casey*

George and Marion Curtis

Elizabeth Mariner

Nancy Wittwer SL

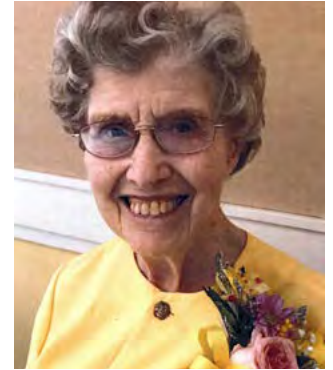
Joan Herman

We are grateful to Loretto friends who honor loved ones through donations. In order to maximize space to share our good news, we've decided to discontinue publishing tributes in Loretto Magazine after this issue. We humbly thank you for all of your gifts and remain committed to responsibly stewarding them.

Katherine Ann Heinz SL

Aug. 4, 1928 – March 14, 2026

Katherine Ann Heinz attended Holy Family School in Denver for grade and high school and entered Loretto after graduation. In her autobiography, she wrote, "One of the joys of my teaching career was teaching first graders to read. I had that privilege for 36 years." She taught in St. Louis and El Paso as well as Denver. Early on, she and Martha Ann Koch SL became good friends, a friendship that lasted throughout their lives. In her late 50s Katherine Ann began working at the Loretto staff office in Denver. She wrote that she kept Community members' records up to date and put everyone's records on the computer the first year she was there. She died at 97, in her 79th year in Loretto.



Susanne Terry CoL

July 1, 1937 – March 31, 2026

Susanne Terry, who became a Loretto co-member in 1981, lived and shared an adventurous, creative life full of art, music, teaching, writing, mentorship, learning, laughter and love. Raised in Louisiana, she carried many of her Southern traditions with her to Vermont. She loved her home on High Reach Farm in North Danville, which she had helped build and maintain with her husband, Stephen Parker, for over 50 years. Susanne was a preeminent teacher and practitioner of mediation and conflict resolution. She developed practices for dispute resolution that are used in family court. Susanne taught at Woodbury College where she and colleagues developed one of the first accredited mediation programs in the world. She was a founding member of the Pumpkin Hill Singers, where she and Steve wrote and performed many of their original songs.



Nancy Wittwer SL

Feb. 13, 1934 – May 4, 2026

Nancy Wittwer grew up in St. Stephen Parish in St. Louis and is a Nerinx Hall High School alum. She was received into Loretto in 1951. Nancy fostered several collaborative projects in the St. Louis Archdiocese, including with Marian Middle School in South St. Louis and the Women's Build with Habitat for Humanity. She was a founding member of the Loretto Earth Network and the St. Louis-based Intercommunity Ecological Council of Women Religious. At Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky, she continued her engagement in care of the Earth by providing leadership on Motherhouse committees and carrying out the Loretto Constitutions' emphasis to "extend the boundaries of learning and justice." Nancy's 75th anniversary as a Sister of Loretto would have been Dec. 8. Nancy is featured in a story about Marian Middle School on [page 16](#) of this issue. She also receives mention in an article about Loretto's Earth commitment on [page 8](#).



Unabridged remembrances are found on the Loretto website:
<https://www.lorettocommunity.org/category/obituaries/>

Feeding those who are hungry



The Loretto Hunger Fund provides support to organizations addressing food insecurity. *Photo: Pexels*

Thank you to our friends near and far! In May, we raised \$6,427 to support Loretto's Hunger Fund thanks to the generosity of our extended Loretto community. In May, Loretto Motherhouse held a Derby Day fundraiser netting \$1,562, and in the same month, the Community participated in Kentucky Gives Day, bringing in \$4,865. All this, in addition to Loretto Academy's fantastic work raising \$2,045 in February, highlighted on [page 4](#) of this issue. The entire \$8,472 collected through the three early-2026 fundraisers went directly to the Hunger Fund.

Who hasn't noticed the spiraling cost of food? Loretto's Hunger Fund helps groups provide groceries, stock pantries and serve meals in our local community in central Kentucky and beyond. In Marion County, where Loretto Motherhouse is located, 17% of the population lives beneath the poverty line, compared to 11% nationwide. (It is likely these numbers have grown since last reported in 2024.) Donations to Loretto and the Hunger Fund are, of course, gratefully accepted year-round. [Donate online](#) or mail your check to Sisters of Loretto, 430 Academy Lane, Box 1, Nerinx, KY 40049.

Loretto's Hunger Fund has helped feed the hungry for 52 years. The Stop Hunger Fund, as it was initially called, was established in 1974 in response to worldwide hunger, especially in India, where drought had led to famine and starvation. Loretto Community members were indefatigable in raising money. They babysat, collected aluminum cans, sold paintings and more. Loretto schools collected donations and held bake sales and raffles. The effort does not let up. In recent years, donations have helped feed people in the U.S., Haiti, Mexico, Pakistan and Uganda, among other locations. Students at Loretto Academy in El Paso and St. Mary's Academy in Denver raise money for the Fund. Learn more about the Hunger Fund in the [spring/summer 2024 issue of Loretto Magazine](#).

Postscript

Dear Loretto Friends,

As I write this, our Motherhouse grounds are in full bloom. It is a season that reminds us that while we are called to work for justice and act for peace, we are also called to be stewards of the life around us.

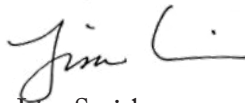
This issue of *Loretto Magazine* is a testament to that call. Within these pages, you will find our annual Impact Report — a visual snapshot of the footprint Loretto continues to leave on the world. From the halls of the United Nations to the classrooms of Chicago, and from our Justice Fellowship program to the daily care of our Sisters at the Living Center, our mission is not merely surviving; it is evolving.

As we see in our features on Loretto at the UN and the Justice Fellowship, the "Loretto impact" is increasingly intergenerational. We are not just carrying on a mission; we are passing a baton. That theme of endurance is why I was so struck by Florence Wolff's 1976 article about Loretto and the country's bicentennial, which we share in an excerpt in this issue. Writing during our country's own 200th anniversary, Florence reminded us that Loretto's legacy is timeless, even as the world around us changes.

In this spirit of stewardship, we also look toward our role in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. While our approach to environmental work has shifted since the early days, the heart remains the same: We are one Community, serving one Earth. Whether through our commitment to regenerative agriculture at the Motherhouse Farm or the quiet sanctuary of Loretto Woods, we continue to find new ways to honor our common home.

Thank you for being part of this legacy. Whether you support us through a gift to the Justice Fellowship, a retreat at Cedars of Peace or by simply reading these stories, you are the reason our work continues. We are honored to walk this path with you.

With deep gratitude,



Lisa Smith

Director of Advancement

LSmith@LorettoCommunity.org

High school students from Loretto-founded schools participate in a Loretto Student Leadership Conference at Nerinx Hall High School in St. Louis in spring 2025. Loretto's life and values continue flowing through the generations.

Photo: Jody Patterson





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Our ongoing stewardship ...



Sing to the Lord all the Earth.

1 Chronicles 16:23