In 1948, Dr. Claire Louise Caudill and her nurse, Susie Halbleib, worked to change the medical situation in the foothills of Appalachia. They delivered over 8,000 babies in Morehead, KY, and the surrounding counties, which required the pair to journey by truck, horseback, or sled to homes nestled in the “hollers.” Dr. Louise and Susie, as they were known, promoted prenatal care to the women of the counties. Although mothers and babies always remained a primary focus of their practice, they were also known for treating common illnesses, broken bones, gunshot wounds, and life threatening diseases.

Despite long days, treacherous travel conditions, and a disregard for their own personal safety the pair traveled through the foothills providing care for all in need and “fostering the fullness of life for people who were poor, sick, and aged.” These daring women lived this quoted phrase long before it became part of the Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington, Kentucky mission statement.

Office records showed that many of Dr. Louise's patients could only pay a nominal amount and some were unable to pay at all. Despite this inability to pay, Dr. Louise never denied access to medical care.

Eventually when the need became too great, Dr. Louise and Susie sought the Sisters of Notre Dame to help build a 42-bed hospital. The Sisters' mission, “to proclaim God’s goodness and provident care,” matched Dr. Louise and Susie’s own commitment of care and goodness. The hospital opened on July 1, 1963, and was named St. Claire Medical Center in honor of Dr. Claire Louise Caudill.

Today the greatly expanded St. Claire Regional Medical Center sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame carries on the mission to proclaim God’s goodness through a healing ministry to the people of Eastern Kentucky. The hospital serves a population of over 160,000 in the counties of Bath, Carter, Elliott, Fleming, Lewis, Magoffin, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Rowan and Wolfe.

St. Claire Regional preserves a special emphasis on women's and children's services and a commitment to people who are poor and vulnerable. It thrives in the spirit of the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame and continues the tradition started by Dr. Claire Louise Caudill and Susie Halbleib.
A Message from the Provincial

We celebrate the season of Advent with longing for the coming of Jesus and hope that we recognize the many ways he has already come into our lives. We pray in the words of St. Teresa of Avila to realize that we are the hands and feet and heart of Christ in the world today. May this Christmas season find us more aware of how much God loves the world.

We continue to implement our 2010 General Chapter with an emphasis on our six critical issues: Prophetic Witness; Formation for Mission; Missions Ad Gentes; Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation; Sustainability of Resources; and Governance Structures. One means of implementation we have used is the process of “learning communities,” which has been very life-giving for us.

We have recently welcomed home some of our Sisters who minister in Uganda, East Africa. Our province has been very blessed and our lives have been enriched by our relationship with the people of Uganda. We look forward to the day when our Ugandan Sisters of Notre Dame will be able to come to our Provincial House in Covington.

We pray for God’s abundant blessings on you and those you love. We are grateful for our partnership with you in the mission of Jesus.

Sister Marla Monahan, SND

Province Calendar

January
13-16 U.S. SND Women in Formation and Formation Directors in Chardon, OH
21 Province Day
29 Start of Catholic Schools Week

February
1-5 Catholic Schools Week
3-5 Forty Hours Devotion at Provincial House
17-20 U.S. SND Leadership in CA

March
2-4 Women’s Retreat
9-10 Province Day
25 Congregational Patronal Feast of the Annunciation
30 Women’s Retreat

April
27-5/11 Congregational Health Care Conference in Covington

May
13 Feast of St. Julie Billiart

June
2 Province Day-Celebration of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
24 Public Jubilee Celebration - 2:00 p.m. at St. Agnes

July
4 90th Annual 4th of July Festival
25-30 European Pilgrims’ visit at the Provincial House
On Thursday, October 6, 2011, a group of Thomas More College faculty members, alumni, and friends gathered at the Thomas More College Biology Field Station for the dedication of the Sister Mary Laurence Budde, SND, Outdoor Classroom and Nature Trail. Sister Mary Laurence was honored for her years of work and her vision in helping to bring to fruition the Field Station, a one-of-a-kind center for applied biological research.

In her opening remarks, Sister Margaret Stallmeyer, CDP, President of Thomas More College referred to Sister Mary Laurence as one of the Founders of the River Station. “We are so delighted to honor you today,” said Sister Margaret. “This facility is used by hundreds of students every year of all ages. They come here for field trips and some for a week of camp. So your contribution to our development of this field station is touching hundreds of people throughout the whole region. I can’t thank you enough for being a part of that.”

Dr. Christopher Lorentz, Director of the Center for Ohio Research & Education at the Field Station, presented Sister Mary Laurence with a book of mementos including beautiful pictures of the Biology Field Station and names of supporters who contributed to the outdoor classroom and nature trail. Sister Mary Laurence told the audience, “I am just so overwhelmed. So many good people are here, some I have known for many years. I am very grateful for all the support they have given me and all the faculty and students in the biology and chemistry departments for what we have been able to achieve; not only in the ordinary line of education, but also in the environmental education field for hands-on research.”

Nestled along the banks of the Ohio River, the Field Station offers students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to enhance their knowledge of the natural world through field courses, research projects, and outreach programs that focus on the ecology of the Ohio River.

The Annual Memorial Mass for the Deceased Sisters of Notre Dame took place at St Joseph Heights on November 6, 2011. This year's theme was “When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.” Approximately 200 relatives and friends of the deceased Sisters joined the community for Mass in the Provincial House Chapel.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Sister Marla Monahan, SND, and Sister Mary Dennise Wagenlander, SND, read the litany of names of the deceased sisters as family members came forward to receive a treasure box containing a blessed rosary from Rome as a token of remembrance.

A brunch was served in the large meeting room. Family and friends also had the opportunity to visit the graves of their loved ones. The celebration was a blessed occasion; uniting us all with our deceased sisters.

Over one hundred sisters and Associates of the Sisters of Notre Dame gathered at the Provincial House for the Second Annual Sisters’ and Associates' Picnic on October 21, 2011. The evening began with a delicious supper in the large meeting room, followed by a sing-a-long, trivia, corn hole games, and later an old-fashioned bonfire. For this memorable evening of fun, entertainment, and fellowship, a big “thank you” goes to this year’s picnic committee: Beth Raum, Carole Simon, Donna Kramer, Marcia Klaene, Kathy Kramer, and Mary Gray.
Saving A Life

(This was an eye witness account given by Sister Mary Delrita Glaser, SND, fourteen years ago.)

"When I first saw Christopher, he was already convulsing. The infant and his mother had not bonded, and she was unable to nurse him. He was severely undernourished. My diagnosis was insufficient blood sugar. He was near death. When the mother sent for the priest to baptize the baby, Father requested my help. I wanted to send Christopher to the hospital, two hours away, but the mother preferred to ask her husband when he returned. I knew we didn’t have that much time. I went home, got some sugar, water, and a dropper, and started dropping sugar water into Christopher’s mouth. As he got sugar into his system, he settled down. We were on the right track. Next I went back home and concocted a kind of formula, then worked with Tereza, the mother, to give it to him. Once the baby gained some strength, she could try to get him to nurse before her milk dried up. She had nursed her other children, so it wasn’t that she didn’t know how. There was just some kind of disconnect, and the Lord put us there to help. It worked!"

Today Christopher is a healthy child, who loves music. In church, even as a little tyke, he would stand next to the choir director and “direct” the choir. He has also become an excellent drummer and dancer.

When Christopher was an infant, St. Julie School was not yet built. This year he’ll be in P7 (primary grade 7) His siblings also go to St. Julie and his mother works on the SND farm. The Sisters in Buseesa have truly made life-changing differences for Christopher and his family.

East Africa Conference

The Fourth SND East African Conference was held in Uganda the week of August 20, 2011. The conference attendees included: the general government from Rome, missionaries from several SND provinces, and representatives of the twenty-five national Sisters from Uganda, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania. All were energized as each unit discussed what was happening in their mission area and in formation, as well as, in their planning for the future. Prayer times and gatherings for singing and dancing reflected the cultures of the participants.

The conference group took an overnight trip to Buseesa to visit St. Julie Primary School and Notre Dame Academy Secondary School which are the first SND foundations in Uganda.

God has blessed us abundantly. All the missions have candidates, postulants, and novices in formation. The SND future looks very bright in East Africa.
Living Out Our Mission in Uganda, East Africa

Notre Dame Grad Opens Minds Through Creative Writing Classes

For years I dreamed of serving in a developing country. As a Notre Dame Academy alum, I have fond memories of fund raising for our sister school in Buseesa, Uganda. I hoped that one day I would have the chance to visit the people of Buseesa. I finally achieved that goal when I arrived in Buseesa in September.

After landing in Uganda and winding through rough, red dirt roads, we finally arrived in mountainous Buseesa. Along the way we passed young children barefoot, walking home from school as smoke rose from their mud huts. The school community welcomed me while performing traditional dance and song routines. I was overwhelmed by the warm welcome I received, but my heart still ached for family and friends I left at home. I was excited to start this new chapter in my life, but fearful of what lay ahead.

My fears soon faded as I began learning the difficult names and precious faces of each child. These children obviously longed for the attention of an adult and the love of a friend. If I initiated a game of soccer, or began reading a book, a group of children would surround me with smiling faces and inquisitive minds.

The precious laughter of children captivated me, but I really found my heart to be with the young women in the secondary school. I found the women in the secondary school to be dedicated to their studies and helpful to one another.

After a few weeks teaching math and biology, I yearned for more interaction with the secondary students. Because of my personal love of writing and knowing the difficulty of writing well in a second language, I suggested to Sister Mary Rita Geoppinger, the head teacher, that a creative writing group might be a helpful and enjoyable opportunity for the girls. By the end of the first week, over seventy young women signed up to meet on Sunday afternoon for a creative writing class.

The girls’ longed to improve their writing skills and quickly learned to critique one another with the goal of becoming a better writer. One method I used with the girls was a technique in which we gathered in a circle to create a story. One girl would start a story then each girl in the circle would add a sentence. Through this exercise the girls learned to use in their writings descriptive settings, interesting characters, plot development, and concise conclusions. In the near future, I hope to compile a portfolio of the girls’ best writing samples in order to showcase their writing skills.

As various activities allow me to weave myself into the community and culture of the people, I hope to open my heart to the fruits of my experiences. My overwhelming gratitude to the people of Buseesa and my inexhaustible joy of life in the present moment, gives me an undiscriminating love for all people.

Greatest Gift to Give: Education

Please consider the Uganda Sponsorship Program and give the gift of education. A donation of $600 will help defray a portion of the cost to educate one student for the year. General donations to the scholarship fund can be made monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually. With your sponsorship you will receive a student picture and correspondence from your sponsored student. For more information please contact Sister Mary Margaret Droege at 859-392-8109 or email her at mmdroege@sndky.org

Maria Chai (R) poses with Sister Mary Janet Stamm before she travels to Uganda
“Give thanks to the Living God, Glory, Alleluia.” This is the song in my heart as I thank the Lord for his goodness to me, my family, my friends and my Sisters as I celebrate my sixty years in religious life. This goodness of God has been constant in each stage of my life, beginning with loving parents and siblings.

God called me in love to religious life and, although I might not have rushed to respond to the call, it became clearer to me that my Beloved was calling and I could not be happy in anything less than responding to God’s call. Shortly thereafter I was able to go to Rome in the apostolate of prayer. How wonderful it was being able to pray for the needs of the Church, the congregation, the province, my family, and the whole world. Not only was my life affected by living in the pulse of the Church, but I also experienced the diversity of our congregation as I met Sisters from Indonesia, Brazil, Germany, New Guinea and from each of our areas of ministry. How I enjoyed trying to say something in their languages. I also worked with Vietnamese refugees, not knowing that God was preparing me for the work ahead.

After thirty-five years in Rome, I returned to our province, being able to help in various inner-city schools and be near my Mom who was gracefully aging.

In 2004 I met Hispanic immigrants who had come to our Provincial House from Dayton to share their culture. Immediately I felt the Lord’s call to work with people whose lives offered so many challenges. I am able to teach English and prepare adults for the citizenship test. I have taught first communion classes and helped prepare individual children who experience difficulties to ready them to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. I have been blessed to be a welcoming presence for those who sometimes find a cold reception in our country. And at each stage of my life, I find it is not just others that I am serving, but that the Living God manifests himself in such a way that my heart cannot but continue to ring with his praise.

Alice Betigheimer was born at the home of her parents in Bellevue, Kentucky, on July 6, 1922. A brother and a sister died in infancy before Alice was born and another brother, Joseph, preceded her in death. Her father, Louis, was a truck driver and factory worker and her mother, Mary, was a homemaker.

Alice grew up during the depression and her family learned to live frugally. She attended Sacred Heart School in Bellevue, Kentucky where she first came to know the Sisters of Notre Dame. Her secondary education was first at the Academy of Notre Dame of Providence in Newport, Kentucky, with the Divine Providence Sisters and then at St. Anthony Commercial School with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. Even though she knew many congregations of religious women, she expressed love for her teachers at Sacred Heart and a desire to become a Sister of Notre Dame herself.

After graduation, Alice worked for several years as a secretary and as an assistant for a U.S. Representative in Washington, D.C., but soon she realized that God was calling her to religious life. After much prayer and reflection, she entered the community to become a Sister of Notre Dame.

Sister Mary Alice served in the ministry of education and administration in Kentucky, Ohio, and Alabama. She loved working with children and her happiest years were spent at St. Joseph Orphanage and the Diocesan Catholic Children’s Home. In addition to her professional ministries, Sister Mary Alice was an accomplished musician.

Sister Mary Alice was committed to Jesus Christ through her religious vocation. In her own words, what was most meaningful to her was “the total dedication to Christ, through Mary, and the opportunity to work with poor children, especially orphans.” She treasured her life in community as a Sister of Notre Dame.

In 2008, Sister Mary Alice’s health began to decline and she moved into the health care wing of the Provincial House. She retained her sense of humor and offered her prayers and sufferings for the needs of our world. On August 30, Sister Mary Alice died peacefully that evening “with Christ and Mary.”
Hello and Merry Christmas! My name is Julie Althaver and I am the new Director of Mission Advancement for the Sisters of Notre Dame. I began my position in September and I am honored and excited to be a part of the Sisters of Notre Dame community. Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to meet many friends and benefactors who make the SND community so vibrant and strong. From the first moment I entered through the doors of the Provincial House, I could feel the Holy Spirit working within me to fulfill Jesus’ mission of reaching out to others and showing God’s goodness and provident care.

Through this newsletter, the Sisters of Notre Dame are able to communicate the wonderful good works happening throughout the Province, our sponsored institutions, schools, and ministries, none of which could be possible without the love, support, and prayers received from you, our treasured friends.

In this day of economic uncertainty, we realize that we need to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. As printing and postage rates rise, it is increasingly difficult to produce a publication rich in content, but still cost effective. For this reason, beginning with this issue, we are changing to a biannual publication of The Pulse. Other forms of media we will continue using are our website (www.sndky.org) and Facebook. We update these sites daily and can keep you well informed as events happen.

Thank you for partnering with us throughout the year. Together we bring Jesus’ mission to people both home and abroad. Your prayers, support, and concern make a tremendous difference in the lives of all who are helped through the Sisters of Notre Dame.

May the peace and love of Jesus be with you and your family throughout the Advent and Christmas Season.

Proclaiming God’s Goodness and Provident Care to Little Ones

What do Sisters of Notre Dame do when they retire? Possibly a better question to ask is...do Sisters retire? Three Sisters have found a way to continue their apostolic mission through volunteer work at Julie Learning Center, located in St. Joseph Heights.

Sister Mary Patricia Kenney, SND, has been involved with the learning center for many years. She teaches religion two days a week and enhances her lessons through music and by having the children color religious pictures. The children love receiving holy cards and pins she frequently gives them.

Sister Mary Carmella Schneider, SND, spends time at the learning center teaching children Spanish. Recently the children impressed their grandparents, on Grandparents Day, with a Spanish song.

Sister Mary Stefanie Fritz, SND, is our newest retired sister in the group. Sister Mary Stefanie enjoys playing games with the children and helping them with various activities. Her loving ways as she interacts with the children express God’s goodness and compassion for children.

All three sisters convey the Sisters of Notre Dame spirit in the classroom through their unique talents and gifts. Their presence at Julie Learning Center enhances the lives of the children. The boys and girls get to know the Sisters on a more personal level and their presence in the classroom helps to live out the SND mission of proclaiming God’s goodness and provident care.

Please remember the Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington, Kentucky, Inc. in your will or estate plans. Call the Mission Advancement Office at 859-392-8228 for further information.

Oh No We Forgot

In our last edition of The Pulse we failed to recognize St. Mary’s School in Alexandria, KY for their fund raising efforts. Our sincere thanks and gratitude to Mrs. Mary Leuderalbert’s class for their efforts in raising money for the Uganda Mission. We apologize for this oversight.
Donor Recognition

The Sisters of Notre Dame are grateful to our many friends who have made financial donations to the congregation between November 1, 2010-October 31, 2011, including those who wish to remain anonymous. We also wish to thank our friends and family who made in-kind donations.
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1601 Dixie Highway
Covington, KY 41011

Growing Numbers of Dementia Patients

Celebrating 161 years as a Congregation and 50 years of dedicated service to the St. Charles' ministry, the Sister of Notre Dame commemorated Founders’ Day on Saturday, October 1, 2011. The day began with Mass in the St. Charles Care Center Chapel followed by a delicious brunch. Over 60 Sisters of Notre Dame gathered together to celebrate and observe a milestone for the Sisters and their sponsored institution… St. Charles Care Center.

Sr. Mary Luann Bender, SND, Administrator of the Care Center, commented on how beautiful the ceremony was and how grateful St. Charles is to everyone who made this day possible.

In her welcome Sr. Luann addressed the Sisters saying, “Each of our lives has, in some way, been touched by the ministry here at St. Charles. For some in multiple ways, for some as family members being ministered to, for some as ministers embodying Jesus’ mission for the sick and the elderly, for some as board members, and for others as volunteers. But for all of us, as women religious rooted in contemplation, called to be prophetic women, missioned for global transformation, we come together today to celebrate our being called to foster the fullness of life; especially for the people who are poor, sick, and aged.”

Currently the Center is in the midst of a multi-million dollar expansion of its facilities in order to meet the growing needs of the aging population. Completion of the new facilities is expected in the autumn of 2012.

Sister Marla Monahan, SND, enjoys brunch with (L to R) Bob Stevens, Sister Mary Shannon Kriege, and Ed Buechel.

Founding Sisters of St. Charles Care Center.