“… to sustain the fundamental right of every person to pursue the fullness of life and to share in the common good.”

— Constitution 8
The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Dominic was founded in Racine, Wisconsin, by Mother Benedicta Bauer and Mother Thomasina Ginker in May 1862. The cloistered nuns began their journey in 1858 from the monastery of Heilig Kreuz in Regensburg, Bavaria, intent on establishing a motherhouse and school to teach primarily children of German immigrants. After four years, the Regensburg nuns, now sisters, had gathered ten companions and, with the purchase of property in Racine, they began the foundation of our community. Mother Benedicta recruited immigrant students, especially children of the working class. For more than 150 years the Racine Dominicans in Racine, they began the foundation of our community. Mother Benedicta recruited immigrant students, especially children of the working class. For more than 150 years the Racine Dominicans

**Introducing “Racine Dominican Roots”**

Hello! You are receiving this publication because a Racine Dominican sister or associate wanted to share with you the story of our Dominican congregation (Sisters of Saint Dominic of St. Catherine of Siena). Hence, “Dominican Roots” was born. It primarily features the formal or “sponsored” ministries of the Racine Dominicans. You will also find the 150-year history of the Dominican Sisters and articles on the Racine Dominican Associate Relationship and Siena on the Lake, our newest collaborative project.

St. Catherine High School was opened in 1894 as a girls’ academy. Today, still in its founding neighborhood, the school has evolved into a grades 6-12 program. Principal Tom Noonan has just completed his first year at St. Catherine’s.

Born from a desire of a small group of ecumenical woman seeking a home for their new spiritual life, Siena Retreat Center came into being in 1968. The retreat center will soon relocate to the north end of the Siena campus where the construction of a new retreat center is being completed. Thirty-five years ago the Senior Companion Program began to meet the social needs of homebound seniors. Today its purpose continues, its benefits grow.

In 1990 Catherine Marian Housing was created by the Racine Dominicans and Wheaton Franciscans. Today Bethany Apartments (a program of Catherine Marian Housing) continues to be a sanctuary for women and children affected by domestic abuse.

At the turn of this century in 2005 and 2008 respectively, the Eco-Justice Center and the HOPES Center were created. The Eco-Justice Center addresses the growing consciousness of our role in the care for Earth. The HOPES Center has emerged as the mental health care provider for the homeless and poor of Racine.

“Dominican Roots” will be published biannually. However, you can visit us at any time; all of our ministries and projects have a web presence.

We are always interested in your opinion regarding this publication. Contact us at: sponsorship@racinedominicans.org.

Happy reading!

Chris Brosilavich, OP
Director
Office of Sponsored Ministries

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**Reflection**

“Blessed are they who trust in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord. They are like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream. It fears not the heat when it comes, its leaves stay green. In the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.”

— Jeremiah 17:7-8

Having celebrated our 150th anniversary, the Racine Dominicans now launch into their ministries for the next 150 years resolved to continue the legacy. In these pages you will catch a glimpse of the work in which we are presently engaged, certain these efforts will move us into the future.

We connect with all ages. We reach out to the hungry, the homeless, the marginalized and oppressed. We commit ourselves to answer the call to mission, to bring justice, to bring peace, to deepen relationships and face the challenges of all the tomorrows.

Roots are essential, they ground us. Healthy roots produce good fruit. With hearts firmly established in the soil of God’s wondrous love, we strive to create a world in which all people are recognized as God’s children who, with basic needs satisfied, are able to live in peace.

We believe in the power of God’s Spirit to grasp and enflame us, vowed Dominican women and associates, proclaimers of the Gospel.

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**Racine Dominican Roots**

(Continued on page 10)
Because it is summer and the flowers are in bloom, it only seems natural to compare Bethany Apartments to a garden. Each day we watch the women and children that live here become strong and independent. They are like flowers in a well-tended garden: their roots grow, their beauty multiplies, and they bring joy to all that see them. Staff, volunteers, and donors are happy to supply all the “soil, sun, and water” they need while preparing to put down roots somewhere else in the future.

We often think of those “flowers” that have left us. They are often missed, but when we remember what they accomplished while at Bethany Apartments, and the examples they have set for those who came after them, we are very happy that they were once a part of this garden. We would like to share the experiences of one woman who grew strong and thrived while living at Bethany.

Estelle and her 12-year-old son arrived at Bethany in the summer of 2003. It was a difficult time: she had no family in the United States, didn’t know English very well, and had no car.

Estelle has always been a very determined woman. She got her CNA license after she arrived in the United States and then made plans to become a registered nurse. She continued her education while living at Bethany Apartments and credits the service and support she received in helping her become an RN. Estelle also earned a Master’s degree in health care administration in 2011. She has been an inspiration to her son who is now working as a CNA at the hospital where she began her career and is going to school to receive his RN degree.

We are amazed at their strength and the standards they set for themselves and each other. We watch them bloom, are sorry when they leave, but are glad they have the strong roots needed to live full and healthy lives.

The mission of the Bethany Apartments program is to provide transitional housing to women and children who have been affected by domestic abuse. See more about Bethany at bethanyapartments.org.

A Visit to the Honey House
Janet Weyker, OP
Executive Director
Eco-Justice Center, Inc.

Summer is not only a time of green leaves, blooming flowers, and songbirds, but it is also a time of the voices of excited children at the Eco-Justice Center (EJC). Dedicated to environmental education and care of Earth, the Center hosts hundreds of lively youth coming on school field trips. They come to see and learn about all our animals (alpacas, geese, chickens, ducks, guinea hens, turkeys and rabbits), organic gardening and growing seeds, alpacas’ fiber and fertilizer, and how the Center uses renewable energy to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.

A visit to the honey house is part of every school tour. There the children learn about the life cycle of bees, the parts of a hive, the protective gear worn by beekeepers and other tools of the trade. They see the electric decapping knife used to remove the wax caps from the cells and our six-frame...
Case Managers are Connectors
Maryann McMahon, OP
Executive Director
HOPES Center of Racine, Inc.

Recently HOPES Center had four participants in need of basic household furnishings. They had made their way from homelessness into an apartment of their own. There was a single woman, a new Mom, a Mom with a four-year-old, and a single man. The case managers began looking for what was needed to set up a household.

Before we could turn around, there were beds for everyone, a TV, dining room table and chairs, a glider rocker for the new Mom, dishes, pots and pans, linens, household supplies, toys and clothes for the four-year-old, a love seat, a chair and clothes for three other participants. What support and generosity from our friends and employees!

The next challenges were to collect the donations and then deliver them to their new homes with all the "muscle" to do the work. Again, the case managers made the necessary connections to help get the job done; the pick-ups and deliveries were made within one week.

Greater comfort and happiness abound in the lives of these participants because the case managers in their lives used their skills of connecting people to needed resources.

30 clients regularly to help each one move from homelessness to greater stability and more permanent housing. HOPES Center is blessed to have competent case managers in Elizabeth Jones and Mirijah Sheppard.

Elizabeth has been with HOPES Center since 2009. She brings a wealth of experience from her past positions and advocates for her clients with great compassion and tenacity.

Mirijah joined us in December of 2012. She too has worked in several Racine social service agencies and knows how to help her clients access needed resources. She has a bubbly personality and a laugh that is contagious.

Thanks, Elizabeth and Mirijah, for being great connectors!

The HOPES Center also offers mental health services to the homeless and the poor.

See more about HOPES Center at hopescenter.org.

See more about ECJ at eco-justicecenter.org.

A Space Away
Claire Anderson, PhD
Executive Director – Siena Retreat Center, Inc.

Everyone's heart needs a quiet space sometimes.

Whether meeting with a spiritual companion, taking time for renewal and reflection, or being stirred up by one of our many spiritually enriching programs, everyone finds a warm welcome and opportunity for renewal at Siena Retreat Center.

Between five and six thousand individuals each year are nourished by the many offerings at the Center, which is located on the freshwater shores of Lake Michigan on the Siena Campus. Built by the Racine Dominican Sisters, Siena Retreat Center celebrates the Grand Opening of its contemporary building September 2013 through May 2014. The spacious new building includes private bathrooms, handicapped accessible, new beds and pillows, technology upgrades, additional break-out rooms and sitting rooms, an expanded bookstore, and more.

Grand Opening events include presentations by spiritual leader and author Joyce Rupp, weekend retreats with prominent thinkers, singer-songwriter Peter Mayer in concert, and a celebratory Open House.

Named after Catherine of Siena, the fourteenth-century Dominican mystic of great spiritual depth and influence, Siena Retreat Center has been a place of renewal and enrichment for almost 50 years. Its mission is to nurture healing and wholeness in an environment of peace, joy, and beauty.

Explore what Siena Retreat Center offers you at SienaRetreatCenter.org

Siena Retreat Center

1946
sisters purchase Our Lady of the Oaks, Posen, as infirmary, new cemetery started there

1952
St. Anne’s Home for elderly ladies in Racine moves to Villa St. Aria in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

1954
Conception assumes staffing of St. Joseph Hospital in Oshkosh, Wisconsin

1960
Sisters open a new Dominican College on shores of Lake Michigan, north of Racine

1963
Groundbreaking for new motherhouse on Erie Street, soon after named Siena Center

1964
First sisters leave for mission in La Paz, Bolivia

1966
Siena Retreat Center established

1966
St. Catherine’s Infirmary opened at Siena Center (sponsored ministry)

1967
Dedication of Siena Center Chapel

Dominican Roots
Recognizing and respecting the dignity and value of each human being is the life-blood of the Senior Companion Program. Our volunteers are the listening ears, smiling face and joyful presence for their companion on a regular basis. In addition to socialization, the program provides information and education about key resources so each person is able “to pursue the fullness of life and to share in the common good.”

During our 35th year, the Senior Companion Program hopes and plans to continue to build upon our strong foundation, lived experience and our treasured history. Learn more about the Senior Companion Program at racinedominicans.org/seniorcompanionprogram.cfm

The Doctor is In
Rachel Lantz
English Teacher – St. Catherine’s High School

Rachel Lantz sat down with Thomas Noonan, PhD, to learn a bit more about the school’s new principal.

Clues to Dr. Noonan’s character are abundant throughout his office.

A black and white St. Catherine’s pennant adorns one wall. Framed pictures of James Madison and the United States Constitution hang on another. Next to a circular table used by Dr. Noonan for meetings with students and staff, sits a bookshelf loaded with an impressive collection of historical biographies and texts.

On another wall, Dr. Noonan proudly displays pictures of his daughters along with a collection of the artwork they have given him over the years. I ask about the photographs. He smiles while talking about his girls.

History and family – just as these facets are paramount in the St. Catherine’s community, so too are they important to our principal.

Q. Have you always wanted to be a teacher or an administrator?
A. When I was in high school I had charted a path towards law school. I was destined to be an attorney; then I began volunteer-coaching for a high school debate team. I was immediately captivated by that experience. I realized that if teaching was anything like coaching – and it is – I would find much more fulfillment in being a teacher.

Q. Thinking big picture, what direction would you like to see SCHS go?
A. First, my priorities include focusing people on mission. We need to be true to our Dominican mission, and the tradition that we have, and live that out. We need to teach our students to be in service of others.

Second, I want to focus on academics. We really need to be rigorous in our academic program. We need to challenge students, and that may mean something different to each individual student. We need to embrace the diversity of learning and challenge students appropriately.

Finally, I want to emphasize activities. I really want students to have balance in how they approach school. There is certainly the classroom work that they have to put first, but I want them to couple that aspect with the activities, the socializations, the friendships, and the communities they build through those things.

Q. What is your leadership philosophy?
A. My philosophy of leadership is something I learned from my father and my uncle. My dad was in mid-level management for a transportation company, and my uncle was owner of his own tool and die business. It is two parts. First, you find really good people and you empower them to do the work that is satisfying and engaging to them. Second, you support them and provide what they need to help them chart their own path towards a sense of fulfillment.

Thomas Noonan, PhD, became the principal at St. Catherine’s High School in the summer of 2012. See more at SaintCats.org.
Their vision and dream is to design and build a campus that will be home for the Racine Dominicans and some of their ministries, headquarters for both organizations, and a full continuum of housing and care for older adults. The new facility, Siena on the Lake, is being built on the current site of Siena Center, the sisters’ motherhouse on the shores of Lake Michigan just north of Racine, Wisconsin.

The sisters, wishing to preserve their home, identity, and mission on this site and to put their lakeside property to optimal use, not only for their own needs but for the good of the greater Racine community, are partnering with Lincoln Lutheran of Racine to create a new and unique community—a community marked by a vibrant spiritual, intellectual, and physical life and meeting not only the needs of its residents, but reaching out also in service to others. Lincoln Lutheran to design and build a campus that not only for their own needs but for the good of the community marked by a vibrant spiritual, intellectual, and cultural life and meeting not only the needs of its residents, but reaching out also in service to others.

Preservation of natural resources and conservation of the land, walking area, ponds, gardens, and easy access to the beach invite leisure and contemplation. In accord with the partners’ ecological sensitivity, internal climate is geothermally controlled. Life is further enriched by in-house and out-patient therapy services as well as multiple menu and dining options and special events. The sharing of intellectual, cultural, and educational opportunities with the community at large is integral to the spirit of both partner organizations.

Interested? Google Siena on the Lake to learn more about this project.

Siena on the Lake
Susan Noffke, OP
VP Board of Directors and Project Coordinator – Racine Dominicans
Siena on the Lake, Inc.

Racine Dominican Associate Relationship
Have you ever wished for supportive people in your life and a sense of really belonging? Would your life be richer if you were part of a group with whom you could study issues of interest and integrate prayer and reflection into daily activities? Do you seek opportunities to volunteer for the good of others, to become involved in the pursuit of justice for today’s world?

Racine Dominican associates, Christian women and men from a variety of professional, ethnic, economic and educational backgrounds, have asked themselves these questions for over 25 years. They have found many of the answers in the Associate Relationship.

This bond between sisters and associates is one of mutuality and collaboration in the Dominican mission: Committed to Truth, Compelled to Justice. It is supported and strengthened by prayer and reflection, study and friendship as associates gather with sisters for community meetings, celebrations and other opportunities for personal and spiritual enrichment.

“I remain grateful for the inspiration, motivation and supportive presence that my association within the RD community provides.” — SD

Associates make a formal commitment to share in the charism, direction, and ministries of the Racine Dominican Congregation. They have their own lifestyle and occupation and are financially and legally independent of the congregation’s governance structure. An associate is sponsored by an individual sister or sisters, or in some cases, in partnership with an associate who has made a commitment renewal.

“As always, the spirit and charism of the RD community remains the wind at my back, the support beneath my feet and the fire in my heart for peace and justice.” — MS

As members of the Dominican Family, associates share in the tradition of preaching the Gospel and witness with their lives and voices to the public stances of the community regarding issues of justice and peace.

“In the time of mind-boggling social and church upheaval, I find this community, the people, true to the Word of God, questioning and confronting injustice and standing together in love in the midst of immense personal and community passages. I want more of this!” — MW

Learn more about associate relationship at: racinedominicans.org
You are receiving “Dominican Roots” because a Racine Dominican sister or associate wants to share with you ...

- Learn about sponsored ministries
- Learn about Siena on the Lake
- Learn about “association"
- Learn about the new Siena Retreat Center facilities
  and more ...

Learn about GRAND OPENING EVENTS for the new Siena Retreat Center at SienaRetreatCenter.org