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

from the Constitution of Sisters of St. Dominic of St. Catherine of Siena – Article 8
A Note from the Editor
S. Chris Broslavick

We celebrate so many changes. The Sponsorship Office has a new face … or two! Ss. Carmen Agbuis and Jane Weiss join me to become a sponsorship team. While we divide the labor, we together work to strengthen the efforts of our Boards of Directors and integrate our Dominican mission. Governance is important, but infusing Dominican thought and values into our ministries holds greater promise for Dominican ministry into the future. It is a lofty goal, but we can do it.

As a child in Catholic grade school, I learned the magic of the words, “Sister says…” And nearly everything thereafter came to be! Like magic.

In this issue of Dominican Roots we feature the voices of our sisters who work in some capacity for each of our sponsored ministries. I hope that you are touched by the magic of their words.

If you observe the constellation of our ministries, you will find shining stars. With the close of this school year, St. Catherine’s concluded its 150th anniversary celebrations. Siena Retreat Center will peak in brightness beginning in January 2016 when it will have served the spiritual needs of retreatants for 50 years. In November of this year, Catherine Marian Housing (Bethany) will have sheltered the abused for 25 years. And, the Eco-Justice Center recently celebrated its tenth birthday.

In this issue we highlight Catherine Marian Housing and the Eco-Justice Center.

Our hope is that you recognize changes – an ever-forward movement – in our ministries. For those of us who see this as a day-to-day occurrence, we talk about changes as evolution. Yes, we are evolving! And we want to take you along for the ride!

Please, read on, and on…

S. Chris is Sponsorship Coordinator for the Racine Dominicans, as well as editor of Dominican Roots

A Note from the President
S. Maryann McMahon

This year at our annual gathering each sister and associate was commissioned to courageously collaborate for the sake of the mission. What does it mean to collaborate? For me it means working together to achieve a common goal or provide a needed service. Because I cannot be all things to all people, I need to partner/collaborate with others to best respond to upholding truth and doing justice.

When I collaborate with others in seeking a more just world, I put my vision and hopes for a more just society alongside the hopes and visions of others before deciding on a course of action. It is no longer my agenda, my outcome, my success. When we collaborate, the action for justice is ours. We put our best gifts forward to attain an agreed upon goal.

It is easier to “go it alone” at times, but in the long run, courageous collaboration leads to more viable and sustainable solutions to unmet needs.

For example, because K-12 Catholic school education is valued, the Racine Dominicans have been a part of a long-term planning process with the Catholic parishes in the area. With the help of the Archdiocese, the Racine Catholic School Collaboration is closer to becoming a reality than ever before. Catholic parishes, with or without their own schools, are invited to work together to create a K-12 Catholic education system in Racine that is supported by all the Catholic parishes so that access to Catholic education remains an option here in Racine well into the future.

How and where do we courageously collaborate? How does collaboration help us claim our interdependence with one another and Earth? Can we move from the “I” to the “WE” for the sake of greater truth which does justice?

S. Maryann is President of the Racine Dominicans

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It’s Catherine Marian Housing’s silver anniversary! Over 25 years ago the Racine Dominicans, in collaboration with the Wheaton Franciscans, saw a great need in Racine to help victims of domestic abuse. Together they created Catherine Marian Housing, Inc. (CMH). Bethany Apartments, a program of CMH, received its first resident on November 14, 1990.

Throughout the past 25 years, Bethany has served 87 single women, 175 moms and 379 children. One former resident observes, “While healing at Bethany I learned to look beyond my abuse and focus on the next step of my recovery, which is to always move forward and remember to look back and take someone else by the hand.”

Each resident comes with her own obstacles, desires for growth, and hopes for the future. Residents have up to two years to realize their hopes and desires. Bethany provides each woman tools – weekly group meetings, case management, education opportunities, employment coaching, and techniques of empowerment as well as parenting guidance.

A current resident said, “Bethany is a safe haven… I fled my abuser very scared, had nothing and no place to go. I prayed and God led me to Bethany who opened their doors to me and my three children. The staff is very compassionate and supportive. They help me focus on goals and getting a job and my education, so I can be independent.”

“Bethany gave us a clean apartment, furniture, food, hygiene products, cleaning supplies and clothes and the best Christmas of our lives.”

“As I was in the process of regaining my power, I suffered a stroke. I did not give up. I finished my first semester of college.”

“My daughter graduated from Park High School and received a full scholarship.”

“Bethany remained faithful the whole time and continues to be there for my family during this process. I am very appreciative and humbled.”

After 25 years of providing vital services, Bethany continues to be the “silver lining” for women and children who are surviving the ravages of domestic abuse.

Beginning as a dream, sparked by an idea kernel that was planted in the spring of 2000 when our Racine Dominican community met for the “Gather the Dreamers” weekend, the Eco-Justice Center has become a living, evolving reality. After four years of study, discussion and discernment, the 15-acre site that is now the Eco-Justice Center (EJC) was purchased by the Racine Dominicans from the Kornwolfs. The development of the center has been an organic venture through the years. First came the green-built house addition with its geothermal heating and cooling system, solar panels for electricity and hot water; then came the building of the education station and the hermitage. Bee keeping, the creation of a honey house, installation of a wind turbine, expanded gardening plots, a labyrinth, a new orchard and a vineyard followed.

Environmental education programs for children and adults have been an integral part of the center since its beginning; however, the scope and number of programs and participants have increased. Each program and event springs from our mission of environmental education and care of Earth in the context of community, creativity, contemplation and cultivation.

The center has been richly blessed with the financial support and help needed to carry forward its mission. In addition to the many sisters and associates who have volunteered time and talent, we had two Dominican Volunteers spend a year working with us. The center hired Kate Kirbie as its first full-time lay employee in 2013; Kate’s energy, talent and initiative are great assets to the center as she manages our social media presence, leads tours and camp groups, writes grants, serves as Co-Chair for the Fall Festival, and lends a hand wherever needed.

S. Betty Ann Heegeman is a Catherine Marian Housing Board Director and Chair of the Board

S. Janet Weyker is Founder and Executive Director of Eco-Justice Center

If you wish to add a friend to our private, nontransferable mailing list or if you wish to be removed from the list, please notify: sponsorship@racinedominicans.org.
A lot has happened at St. Catherine's this year, the school’s 150th anniversary. Many events took place throughout the year to celebrate this historic milestone. Mother Benedicita Bauer’s dream in 1865 of educating immigrant children began requesting space for their own retreats and gatherings at Siena Center.

The need for retreat ministry and meeting space has only grown with each passing year. In 2010 the retreat program became incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Siena Retreat Center, Inc. (SRC). Since the grand opening of its new facility in 2013, SRC continues to welcome people from around the state, country and world who come for respite, healing and spiritual nourishment.

In the fall of 2015, a memorial patio added to the center will be dedicated. The patio is located on the east side of the retreat dining area; a memorial display, honoring and memorializing beloved leaders, family members and friends, will be on the south wall of the dining room. The memorial patio project gives others the opportunity to remember loved ones while participating in the ongoing task of creating an environment of joy, peace, and beauty.

Like all Racine Dominican sponsored ministries, Siena Retreat Center relies on the generosity of others to help support our ministry. We count on the generosity of others to volunteer, pray and financially support our work. If you wish to participate in our memorial patio project, please call 262.878.2587.

The Racine Dominican Retreat Program came to birth in 1966 when Agnes Claire Lanse, OP, and several area women gathered to talk about the fresh ideas initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Soon afterward retreats were offered and groups comprised of Milwaukee.

This past school year a Board-formed Parent Insight Committee open to all parents.

Events included a liturgy with Archbishop Jerome Listecki, throughout the neighborhood and downtown Racine, and meeting space has only grown with each passing year. In 2010 the retreat program became incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Siena Retreat Center, Inc. (SRC). Since the grand opening of its new facility in 2013, SRC continues to welcome people from around the state, country and world who come for respite, healing and spiritual nourishment.

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Congratulations and thanks to all staff, volunteers and supporters for your contributions toward making these ministries so successful!

Bethany Apartments (Catherine Marian Housing, Inc.)

Eco-Justice Center, Inc.