As one of our core values, the word collaboration often threads our conversations. Webster defines it, “working with another person or group to achieve something.” I’d tweak Webster just a bit: sharing our gifts with one another to fulfill our mission.

The 2019 theme for our Salvatorian Family Years on Fire celebration is “Passion for Collaboration.” True to our founding vision, we seek ways to collaborate. One example is supporting professional education for our sisters in Africa. It began in 2009 with our commitment to lead an English Language Immersion Program in Tanzania. In the spirit of collaboration, Lay Salvatorian Sue Haertel will return for her sixth time in June to lead ESL classes for our sisters from Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo. She’ll also mentor two local sisters to lead the program in the future.

Close to home, we collaborate through our religious sponsorship of Divine Savior Holy Angels High School, Hadley Terrace Senior Apartments, St. Anne’s Salvatorian Campus in Milwaukee; and Divine Savior Healthcare in Portage, Wis. We share our gifts to instill a culture of compassion among their lay governing boards, administrators and staff. They share their gifts to strive for organizational excellence.

You collaborate with us too, when we invite you to walk with us in mission. Faithfully, you open your hearts to our invitation through your prayers and gifts.

Gratefully,

Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS
Provincial Leader

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In Memoriam

Sister Bernadette Kline, SDS professed 75 years, died September 23, 2018. Barely a year after opening our St. Joseph Mission School in Huntsville, Ala. in 1956, Sr. Bernadette accepted international mission assignments in Africa, England, Israel and Rome. She embraced each and every call to serve with an open heart.

Sister Carol Marie Haag, SDS (formerly Sr. Carla), died October 21, 2018. Teaching and administrative work filled many of Sr. Carol's 53 years professed as a Salvatorian Sister. She never imagined herself working with troubled teens, but she felt the Holy Spirit brought her to the youth detention center where she spent her final years in ministry.

Sister Rachel Wallace, SDS professed 59 years, died January 17, 2019. Sr. Rachel loved “ordinary” nursing, but her lifetime dedicated to the healing profession also included teaching nursing students, and parish nursing in her final years of active ministry.

Read about Sisters Bernadette, Carol Marie and Rachel here: http://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/memoriam/
January 2019 marked 45 years since National Catholic Schools Week was officially declared a cause for celebration. Long before that declaration, Sister Mary Jo Stoffel, SDS has been celebrating on her own.

In 32 years of education ministry, Sr. Mary Jo has taught 1,037 first- and second-graders. She's sure of it, because she still has a list of her former students from each and every year. She's been praying for them too.

In her early years of teaching Sr. Mary Jo was known as Sister Boniface. She served in Catholic elementary schools from 1958 until 1990. Her assignments included Landover Hills, Md; Sauk Rapids, Minn.; a number of rural Wisconsin communities, as well as Mother of Good Counsel (MGC) and St. Pius X in Milwaukee.

Sr. Mary Jo began her teaching ministry in a second-grade classroom at St. Mary’s School in Maryland. A classroom veteran, the late Sister Kristin Stoppleworth, SDS took the fledgling teacher under her wing and shared some advice that Sr. Mary Jo took to heart. “She suggested that I keep a list of all my students from year to year and continue to pray for them. I think it’s the most wonderful thing I’ve ever done,” Sr. Mary Jo says today. “I've been so grateful to Sr. Kristin because it’s rewarding and keeps me connected to my teaching years.”

Each night, Sr. Mary Jo says a collective prayer for all her former students. Then every Monday, she mentions each name listed on one of 31 loose-leaf pages secured in a small, black leatherette three-ring binder. The hyphenated school year and parochial school name appears at the top of each page. The name of each child is neatly written in ink, in alphabetical order with last name first, just as it would have been on Sr. Mary Jo’s class roster. With each name numbered, it’s easy to see that her largest homeroom had 55 students – two years in a row – and her smallest had just 13 students in 1979-80.

Sr. Mary Jo talks about “double-session” classes in her first two years of teaching. In the 1958-59 school year, she taught 48 second-graders in the morning session. Then she and another sister split an afternoon class of 45 second-grade students for two hours each. The next year she had 55 students in her morning session and 43 in her afternoon split session. It wasn’t until 10 years into her teaching ministry that Sr. Mary Jo’s class roster dipped below 30 students.

Sr. Mary Jo recalls that as she said goodbye to a class when she was missioned to a new school, her students would ask her to write to them. Each time, she encouraged them to write to her and promised that if they did, she’d write back. She always kept her promise. Typically she’d hear from a few former students, but after a while they’d stop writing – except for a second-grader named Judy from Milwaukee, and a boy named Dan from St. Mark’s in Rothschild, Wis. To this day, both of them still correspond with their former teacher.

Sr. Mary Jo remembers Dan as a student leader even as a second-grader back in 1969. He went on to run his own cheese-making business when he grew up. Judy, whom Sr. Mary Jo taught in 1961-62, eventually became a teacher too. Years later, after Sr. Mary Jo was no longer teaching, she passed along to Judy some of her hand-painted bulletin board lettering to use in her classroom at the very same school where they’d met years earlier – MGC.

Of all her students, Sr. Mary Jo admits she best remembers “the naughty ones and the very bright ones,” but she prays for them all. She knows, too, some of them have passed away, but she still says their names and simply asks God to be with them.
Ellen Bartel fills new role for Province

We welcome Mrs. Ellen Bartel to our Provincial staff in Milwaukee as our Sponsorship Consultant. Ellen retired in May 2018 as president of Divine Savior Holy Angels High School (DSHA) after 20 years. During that time, she has shown us her gift for leadership, strategic thinking and steadfast dedication to our mission. Ellen's breadth of leadership experience began at Lake Forest College in 1976 after earning her bachelor’s degree from Notre Dame. She also earned a master’s degree from Notre Dame. Before joining DSHA as president in 1998, Ellen served in a variety of roles at Milwaukee’s Alverno College for 11 years, including vice-president for Institutional Advancement. As Sponsorship Consultant to our Leadership Team, Ellen will explore the future of our Province’s sponsorship ministry at Milwaukee institutions DSHA, Hadley Terrace Senior Apartments and St. Anne’s Salvatorian Campus; and Divine Savior Healthcare in Portage, Wis. Our religious sponsorship is a model of collaboration that fosters fidelity to our mission among lay women and men who serve as board members, administrators and staff at our institutions. As Ellen settles in, she looks forward to embracing this new challenge.

“I am honored that the Sisters of the Divine Savior have asked me to join them in this important work as we prepare for and shape the future of sponsorship. To collaborate with the sisters in service to their mission is an opportunity that has enriched my life immeasurably,” says Ellen.

2019 Passion for Collaboration

Sister Marion returns to U.S. with new world view

Last September when the Milwaukee Brewers were chasing the National League Baseball Championship, Salvatorian Sister Marion Etzel told us she couldn’t listen to the games in real time in Rome. She tried her best to keep tabs on the home team, saying, “About the time the post-game show airs, we’re waking up to greet the new day. I always listen for good news!”

Now that she has returned to her home province and hometown of Milwaukee, Sr. Marion looks forward to much more than just tuning into Brewers’ games come spring. Catching up with all the sisters is near the top of her list. That goes for relatives too, along with former neighbors, classmates, students and colleagues, and reconnecting with the SDS Community House staff and our sponsored institutions. Sr. Marion is eager to experience how things have changed since she left the U.S. in January 2013. Oh, and watching the evening news in English!

For all the good times to come, Sr. Marion’s departure from Rome is bittersweet. Many things come to mind that she knows she’ll miss from her six years serving on the SDS Generalate as general secretary and councilor.

“Coming to know a world view of our Sisters’ congregation and the Salvatorian Family has been a privilege,” Sr. Marion says, “and living with sisters from very different backgrounds than my own.”

She has also come to appreciate the many cultures that intersect in Rome. “The faces, the languages, the feeling that we are all humans together, and that most people come together to honor the past and to look for spirituality. I realize that I’m in a ‘pilgrimage city’.”

On a lighter note, who can blame her for saying she’ll miss the mild weather – well, for most of the year. She describes the rest of the year in one word: “Hot!” One fond sight she’ll hold in her memory is seeing all the trains and buses. “The public transportation system is wonderful and I love seeing all the tour buses that come into the big garage near the Vatican. Always a treat!”

As much as Sr. Marion has joyfully looked forward to her return to the U.S., she’s going to miss new friends she’s made over the last six years. As she slowly but surely integrates back into the life of her home province, we’ll ask her to share more about her ministry in Rome. For now, we say simply, “Welcome home!”