

Sowing Goodness



Responding Joyfully
to the Gospel Call

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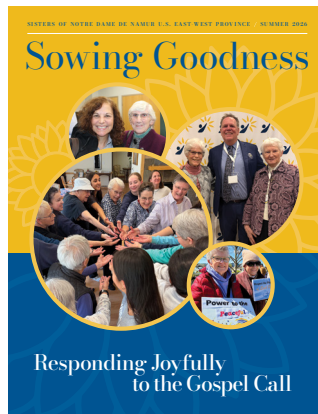
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Managing Editor*



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Learn more about the mission and ministry:
snddeneastwest.org/our-work

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Sowing Goodness
Volume 5, Number 1

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) make known God's goodness through educating for life and taking a stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children.

Sowing Goodness is published twice a year for friends of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Province by the Communications office.

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

We share our Summer 2026 issue with hearts full of gratitude and joy. Our theme for the year focuses on **Responding Joyfully to the Gospel Call**. Inspired by St. Julie Billiart's enduring mission "to make known the goodness of God," we celebrate the many ways this call is alive across the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Province and throughout our global community.

This year holds special significance as we mark the **175th anniversary of the Sisters' presence in California**, a milestone woven from a tapestry of courageous women. Across generations and geographies, we recognize how deeply interconnected we are—bound by faith, mission and a shared commitment to embody God's goodness in our world.

With joy, we celebrate the call of our Sisters across the Province, who continue to respond to the Gospel through courageous advocacy for social justice, care for creation, and solidarity with those made poor. Their witness invites us all to live with deeper purpose and compassion.

We also rejoice in the response of our students across the country, who bring the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame Learning Community to life each day. Through their commitment to justice, peace and the dignity of every person, they carry forward St. Julie's vision with energy and hope.

We remain mindful of our responsibility to sustain and strengthen our community of Sisters. Their lives of service are a profound gift, and their legacy calls us to continued generosity and care. We are grateful for your continued support!

Grounded always in the goodness of God, we move forward together joyfully, grateful for our shared mission, inspired by our history and hopeful for what lies ahead.

With gratitude and joy,
The U.S. East-West Leadership Team



Sister Ginny

SISTER VIRGINIA SCALLY

Sister Maria

SISTER MARIA DELANEY

Sister Pat

SISTER PAT O'BRIEN

Sister Kathryn

SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN

Sister Roberta

SISTER ROBERTA RZEZNIK

Our Community

A Calling to Joy, Prayer and Action

BY SISTER ROSEMARY RUDO NYAZENGA, SNDdeN

I BELIEVE MY CALLING to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is God's invitation—just as Scripture said, "I have called you by name, you are mine."

My first interaction with the Congregation happened through a friend who knew the Sisters in Zimbabwe and shared my contact information with them. They reached out and invited me to a "Come and See" experience. During that visit, I had the chance to meet Sister Anne Doyle and tour the Sisters' communities.

What moved me deeply was learning about our foundress, St. Julie Billiart. She dedicated her life to God's mission and helping those in greatest need. Her story touched me deeply and affirmed in my heart that the SNDdeN is where I am meant to be rooted. Sister Anne left a spiritual impression on me. She has been a Sister for over 50 years and continues to serve with joy, energy and unwavering dedication to helping others. Her example motivates me to stay committed to my own journey.

The various stages of formation nourished my calling and provided me with the space to grow in many ways. In the novitiate, I was encouraged to express my gifts and passions, especially my love for farming. After my profession, this gift found a place in my ministry at the Notre Dame Farm in Illula, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Working on the farm is my passion and brings me great joy. I raise poultry and grow various crops, including beans, groundnuts, yams, Irish potatoes and other vegetables. Customers visit the farm to buy fresh produce. We supply hotels with our harvest. We also keep dairy cows for milk. All the farm activities and products help support the community. For me, farming is not just work but prayer in action. Through the rhythm of planting, cultivating and harvesting, I experience God's presence and providence. In this ministry, I see how God has shaped my vocation: to make known His goodness through the fruits of the earth, the dignity of labor and the joy of serving His people. *

This article was originally published in the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur International magazine, Good Works, Volume 2, No. 2, November 2025.



Sister Rosemary Rudo Nyazenga,
SNDdeN in Kenya



Scan the QR code to learn more about Vocations at the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur or email: vocations@ewsndden.org



LEFT AND BELOW: Sisters and Vocation and Formation ministers from across the Congregation gather in Rome. Participants join working groups, utilizing translation tools.

Building Our Future Together in Hope

BY SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN, SNDdeN

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur look like? It looks like women gathered from five continents, praying together, speaking different languages and sharing a common charism and mission.

In late March 2026, the Congregational Leadership Team, through the work of the Congregational Formation Team, convened an International Formators Meeting in Rome, a historic gathering of Vocation and Formation Ministers from across the entire Congregation. Associate Sabrina Harper, Vocation Promoter, and Sister Kathryn Keenan, SNDdeN, Leadership Team member, represented the U.S. East-West Province at this significant convening.

The theme—*Building Our Future Together in Hope*—was not merely a title. It was a declaration. Vocations are the lifeblood of our mission, and formation is how we nurture, shape and sustain the women called to carry St. Julie Billiart’s charism into the world. This meeting placed that sacred work at the very center of the Congregation’s attention.

Grounded in prayer and rooted in



the spirit of our foundresses, St. Julie and Françoise Blin de Bourdon, participants reflected deeply on the realities Sisters face across the globe, including the diverse cultural contexts, unique challenges and the shared call that unites them all. Together, they examined the essential elements of formation programs: candidate preparation, assessment requirements, the stages of formation, and the ongoing education and support of formation ministers themselves. A spirit of hope pervaded every conversation, especially as participants explored new possibilities for greater international collaboration.

Each day began with a prayer service prepared by participants and closed with Eucharistic liturgy,

a cadence that kept the gathering anchored in what matters most. Woven throughout was a profound commitment to building a culture of care: for new members, for formation ministers, and for the communities that welcome and shape them.

The meeting also offered moments of grace beyond the conference room. A pilgrimage to the holy city of Assisi renewed spirits and deepened resolve. On Palm Sunday, participants joined thousands of the faithful in St. Peter’s Square for liturgy with Pope Leo XIV. Another powerful reminder that this work of formation is part of something far larger than any one province or program. The future of Notre Dame is being built prayerfully, collaboratively and with great hope. ✱



ABOVE: Responding to the great need for teachers, NDMV places volunteers in schools and adult learning programs to tutor, mentor and support learners of all ages.

Notre Dame Mission Volunteers: Responding to the Call to Transform Lives

BY CORA DAVIS, NDMV DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

RESPONDING JOYFULLY to the Gospel call often begins with a simple “yes”—a willingness to serve, to trust and to step into the unknown. At Notre Dame Mission Volunteers (NDMV), that joyful response transforms lives.

When Brittany Sachs joined NDMV in 2010, she had a degree in education but no classroom experience. What she discovered was more than a first job—it was a calling. “When you’re going into a service opportunity, it opens your mind to serve the greater good...to stepping up to do whatever is needed,” shared Sachs. Today, she serves as principal of the very school where she once volunteered—her “yes” continuing to shape students’ lives.

Her story reflects a larger mission. For 35 years, NDMV has invited volunteers to live out the simple truth that “It is better to give than receive,” through service. NDMV believes one year dedicated to others can inspire a lifetime of purpose, forming educators who lead with compassion, resilience and joy.

Jess Kanoff, now NDMV’s director of operations, first served nearly a decade ago. Immersed in community, she learned that teaching is not just theory but presence. “I learned the most about teaching by being in the community and being absorbed by it,” said Kanoff. Today, she continues to respond to the call to service by mentoring others on their own journeys of service.

In response to the need for teachers, NDMV places volunteers in schools and adult learning programs to tutor, mentor and support learners of all ages. This work builds skills, confidence and hope—especially when challenges arise. Volunteers like Peter Lynch carry the belief that “Every single student is a child of God,” a truth that he holds even on his hardest days in the classroom.

One year of service becomes something more: a lifelong commitment to showing up, investing in others and joyfully living the Gospel—one student, one classroom, one community at a time. *

NDMV Celebrates 35 Years of Love in Action

LOVE IN ACTION is the perfect theme to celebrate a special anniversary! For 35 years, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers (NDMV) has carried forward a mission rooted in faith, service and the transformative power of love. Established in 1992 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, NDMV continues a legacy first begun by St. Julie Billiart in 1804: to reveal the goodness of God through action, especially among those most in need.

This anniversary marks more than a milestone—it celebrates a living tradition of service that continues to shape communities across the nation. Each year, hundreds of NDMV members dedicate themselves to meaningful work in schools and community programs, supporting literacy, mentoring youth, assisting with job readiness and other vital initiatives. Through their commitment, individuals are empowered, voices are uplifted and communities are strengthened.

This spirit of encounter is at the heart of their special 35th anniversary gatherings across the United States, offering an opportunity to reflect, reconnect and look ahead with renewed purpose. “Love in Action” will be celebrated nationwide, from spring to fall, in communities where a vibrant tradition of service continues to impact people.

At the opening event in Baltimore, Executive Director Ted Miles spoke to friends, volunteers and supporters about how the “mission has always belonged to the community.”

He shared that each year, hundreds of NDMV members serve in schools and community programs, support literacy, mentor youth and assist with job readiness.

“The call to serve and the call to justice are very much a part of who we are,” he said.

The event also honored Sister Katherine “Sissy” Corr, SNDdeN, who has worked alongside NDMV staff and volunteers from the early days and engaged with many of them as they assisted with the St. Julie Haiti Project’s community-led bakery. (Read more about this project in our story “Rising Together” on page 10.)

At its core, NDMV envisions a society where everyone can flourish, where access to education is not a privilege but a right, and where each person is encouraged to grow into his or her full potential. The organization promotes a spirit of inclusion and respect, working toward a world where diversity is embraced, and all people can participate fully in the common good. Relationships remain central to this mission. By meeting people where they are and walking alongside them, NDMV fosters connection, dignity and hope.

Congratulations to NDMV as they mark 35 years of service and continue to build a future grounded in compassion, justice and “Love in Action.” ✨

To learn more about NDMV and the upcoming celebrations, visit www.ndmv.org.



SNDdeN Development Director Liz Hughes, Sisters Sissy Corr and Marie Prefontaine, SNDdeN and Ted Miles



Ted Miles presents an award to Sister Sissy Corr, SNDdeN.

Woven Together in God's Goodness: 175 Years in California

THE STORY OF THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR in California unfolds like a tapestry—each thread a story of courage, faith and unwavering trust in God's goodness.

The weaving began in revolution-torn France, where Julie Billiard and Françoise Blin de Bourdon imagined something radical: that the education of girls could transform the world. In 1804, amid uncertainty and hardship, they founded the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, trusting that God's goodness would carry their mission farther than they could see.

Julie's vision was both simple and bold: "God let me know that we will carry the light of the gospels to all nations. We are not to be limited to one diocese or country." She told her Sisters, "Have a heart as wide as the world." Though she never traveled to California, the threads she established would stretch across oceans and generations.



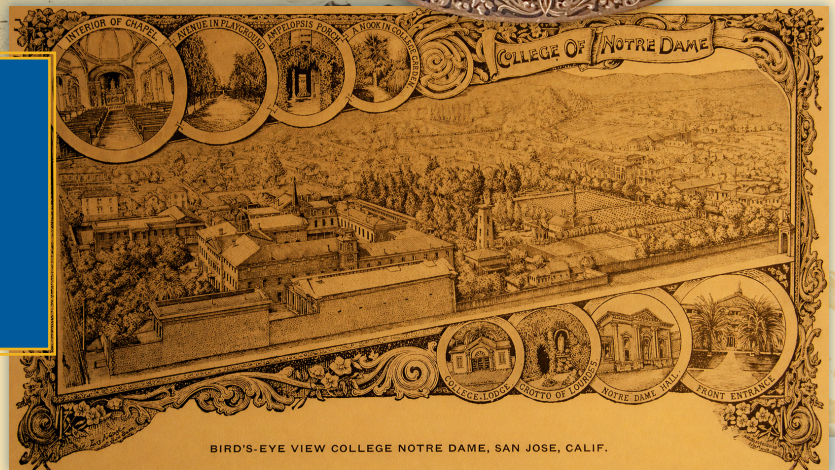
"Have a heart as wide as the world."

St. Julie Billiard



Early Mission & California Beginnings

1843-1860



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW COLLEGE NOTRE DAME, SAN JOSE, CALIF.

New Threads on the Frontier

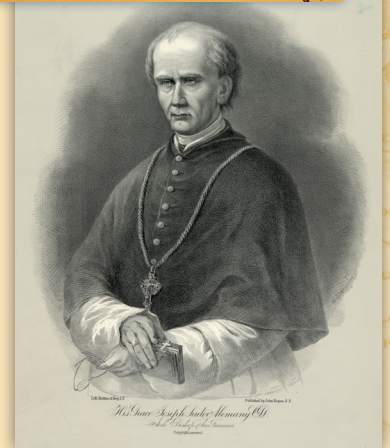
In 1843, six Sisters left Belgium aboard the *Indefatigable*, beginning a long and difficult journey to Astoria, Oregon. There, they opened schools and orphanages, weaving the first threads of the mission into the Pacific frontier.

Historic events soon pulled those threads South. The Oregon mission needs decreased after the 1848 discovery of gold in California uprooted families and then typhoid further devastated the region. In 1851, Sisters arrived in San José at the invitation of Archbishop Joseph Alemany, agreeing to begin again in unfamiliar territory.

With little more than faith and determination, they gathered support and built a school from salvaged materials—a home, a classroom and a kitchen fashioned from what was available. On Aug. 4, 1851, Notre Dame College opened its doors.

From the beginning, the Sisters wove inclusion into their mission. Girls of many backgrounds—Mexican, Irish, French Canadian and Native American—were welcomed at a time when such openness was rare. The Sisters lived simply, learning new languages, adapting to new cultures and expanding opportunities for young women.

Each student became a vital thread in a growing fabric of education and belonging. No one was turned away.



TOP LEFT: From the beginning, students of many backgrounds were welcomed into the Notre Dame community.

TOP RIGHT: An image of the *Indefatigable*

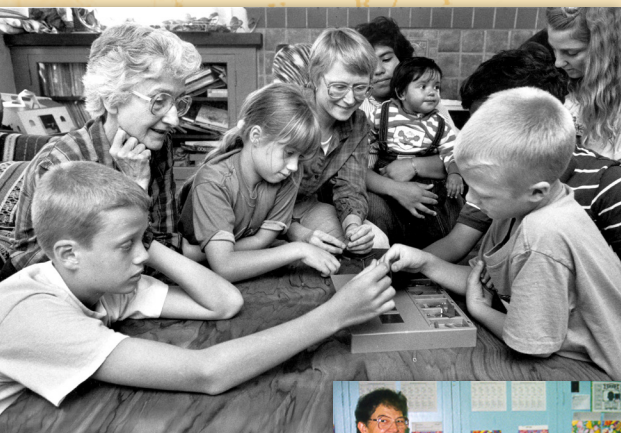
CENTER: Notre Dame College, San José, founded in 1851, became a cornerstone for women's education in California.

BOTTOM: Archbishop Joseph Alemany



Late 19th–20th Century

Growth, Resilience & Transformation



Strengthened Through Challenge and Change

As the work expanded, the tapestry grew stronger. In 1868, the school became the College of Notre Dame, the first college for women in California. Additional threads were added as Sisters from Guatemala joined the mission, bringing cultural and linguistic gifts that enriched the community.

By the early 20th century, Notre Dame schools stretched across California. Growth brought challenges. In 1906, the San Francisco earthquake tore through the region, threatening to unravel years of work. In a difficult but necessary decision, the Sisters destroyed part of their own buildings to stop the spread of fire. In the aftermath, Sister Mary Bernardine sent a message that would echo through the years: “The Sisters, the children, all safe. God is good. Buildings can be rebuilt.” True to her word, classes resumed in makeshift spaces, and within two years, the schools rose again—the tapestry not broken, but rewoven, stronger than before.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Newly built Notre Dame school on Dolores Street in San Francisco was dynamited during the 1906 earthquake to stop the spreading fires; Sisters Susan Olson and Marie Veronica Wagner, SNDdeN at the Pajaro Valley Shelter; Sister Caroline Sanchez, SNDdeN helps women learn computer skills; Sister Judy Flahavan, SNDdeN with students while principal at Nativity School in San José.

Early 20th Century and Vatican II

New patterns continued to emerge. In 1923, the College moved to Belmont, later becoming Notre Dame de Namur University. Ministries expanded across California, including schools, retreat centers and outreach programs that met the needs of a changing world.

In the decades following World War II, the tapestry widened further. But the 1960s brought a deeper transformation. The Second Vatican Council called religious communities to respond anew to the needs of the time.

For the Sisters, this meant weaving their mission into new places, especially among those experiencing poverty and marginalization. The tapestry grew in San Francisco’s Hunter’s Point, where the Sisters lived and worked alongside community members and expanded educational opportunities for children. During the 1980s, they helped establish Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, offering safety and support to women and children, work that continues today.



SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
Washington City (1840)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sister Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN teaches students at Notre Dame High School in San José; Sister Jeanette Braun, SNDdeN serves at Table of Plenty in Half Moon Bay; Sister Yvonne Bondi, SNDdeN enjoys recess with Notre Dame Elementary Belmont students; Notre Dame High School Belmont students and Sisters gather during the Adopt-a-Sister program.

Living Mission & Impact

Late 20th Century–Today

A Living Tapestry

The mission extended beyond California as well, reaching across the United States and around the world—from Alaska and Hawaii to Africa and Latin America—each new ministry another thread in a global tapestry of care and justice.

Over time, new hands joined the weaving. Lay colleagues, educators, Associates and partners became essential to the mission, carrying forward the spirit of Notre Dame in schools and ministries. The Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community continue to guide this shared work, giving voice to a story still unfolding.

Today, the tapestry is vast and vibrant. The Sisters sponsor and serve in ministries across the United States and in 15 countries over five continents. Their mission lives not only in Sisters, but in students, educators and communities shaped by their vision.

One hundred seventy-five years after those first threads were laid in San José, the tapestry continues to strengthen and grow.

Each generation adds its own beautiful color and diverse texture through acts of courage, compassion and faith—all woven together in God’s goodness. *



Learn more about our 175th Anniversary in California: Woven Together in God’s Goodness: bit.ly/CA175SNDdeN

Shared Vision



Rising Together: Hope, Bread and Resilience in Haiti

IN THE CITY OF LES CAYES, HAITI, amid earthquakes, civil unrest and the daily weight of uncertainty, something remarkable continues to rise, quite literally.

The St. Julie Haiti Project (SJHP) has grown from a humble starter of hope into a fully independent, incorporated nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status—well-proofed by resilience and nourished by community in one of the world’s most challenging places. Encouraged by Notre Dame Mission Volunteers to grow into its full potential, SJHP now lifts others as it flourishes.

At the heart of the project is its beloved bakery, where 20 workers and 50 bread sellers bring fresh loaves to five towns, nourishing nearly 792,000 people each year. This is more than bread. It is dignity kneaded by hand. It is livelihoods sustained. It is community, baked fresh daily.

“I can provide for my family as a direct result of working for the bakery,” says bakery worker Facile Laisaire. “I can provide food and school fees from the scholarship. I have two daughters. I do my best for them. Work means freedom to me.”

The bakery is just one chapter of a much larger story. SJHP’s solar-powered water project delivers approximately

15,000 gallons of clean drinking water annually—truly a life-changing gift in a region where access is never guaranteed. A thriving garden project is strengthening food security from the ground up, while weekly computer lessons led by Pedro Bellabe are opening digital doors for workers eager to build new skills. Music lessons, inspired by M-Lisada, an Ugandan-based NGO, are nurturing the souls and talents of scholarship students, reminding them that joy and beauty are as essential as opportunity.

Scholarship support for the children of workers and bread sellers ensures that the investment in today’s families becomes the transformation of tomorrow’s generation.

Through every challenge the Haitian people have endured, the faith and determination of the community have never wavered. Neither has the St. Julie Haiti Project.

Named for a saint who believed fiercely in the goodness of God and the dignity of every person, SJHP carries that joyful spirit forward every single day, one loaf, one drop of clean water, one child’s dream at a time. ✨

ABOVE: The St. Julie Haiti Project provides clean water, nourishment and educational opportunities that open hearts and futures.

Building New Connections Across the Miles

BY SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN, SNDdeN

IN JANUARY OF 2025, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Leadership Team (EWLT) attended a meeting of Congregational leaders in Nairobi, Kenya. We gathered from all over the world, where we live and are in ministry, to grow as a community of leaders and to foster relationships across languages and borders. During that meeting, we were encouraged to identify several provinces with whom we might have ongoing conversations.

The EWLT is committed to engaging in dialogue with our Sisters in Perú. For a year, we have met via Zoom, for

prayer and reflection, so that we might know each other better. Additionally, we have begun conversations about how we can support one another in new ways across the miles, in our efforts to live and make known our mission: that God is Good!

In January of 2026, our Sister Juana Jaqueline Castillo-Salvador, SNDdeN traveled from Perú for a month-long visit to the U.S. East-West Province. Sister Juana Jaqueline lived in community with our Sisters as she visited the various regions of our Province: the Northeast (Massachusetts

and Connecticut), California and the Mid-Atlantic. At each location, Sister Juana Jaqueline shared in community life with our Sisters, visited their various ministries and gained further insight into the lives of our Sisters in the U.S. East-West Province. We are so glad that this visit was possible, and we look forward to ongoing connections with our Sisters in Perú! ✨

BELOW: Sister Juana Jaqueline, SNDdeN (front row, right) joins Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at the Feast Day celebration at Emmanuel College, Boston.



Education

Where Girls Build, Create and Lead

AT NOTRE DAME ACADEMY in Hingham, Massachusetts, an exciting opportunity is unfolding!

The newly opened Teixeira Family Innovation Center is transforming the way students in grades 6–12 learn, create and imagine their futures. Spanning three dynamic, interconnected spaces—a computer lab, engineering lab and recording studio—the Center is a launchpad for the next generation of problem-solvers, designers and innovators.

Here, students don't just absorb knowledge. They build robots. They simulate business startups. They craft interactive e-books and produce podcasts. They broadcast live coverage of school events, finding their voices and their confidence in real time.

NDA President Annemarie Lynch Kenneally '80, P'13, '15, captures the spirit of the space beautifully: "The Teixeira Family Innovation Center reflects our commitment to empowering girls as creators and problem-solvers."

That commitment is now four walls and a vision made real—a place where curiosity is welcomed, creativity is celebrated, and every student is encouraged to dream boldly and build fearlessly.

The future, it turns out, is being built right now, and the girls of Notre Dame Academy are leading the way. ✨



TOP: The computer lab's large-screen workstations and advanced software tools enable simulations, 3D modeling, data visualization and virtual tours of museums, historical sites, national parks, operating rooms and outer space.

CENTER: At the grand opening festivities (left to right): President Annemarie Lynch Kenneally '80, P'13, '15, NDA Hingham Board Chair Kelly Manning Collins '95, P'26, '26 and Father John Currie.

BOTTOM: Students use the recording studio as a production space and learning lab, opening opportunities beyond traditional classroom work.

From Sacred Soil to Shared Table

WHAT IF A FARM COULD FEED a community while healing the Earth at the same time? At Cuvilly Arts & Earth Center in Ipswich, Massachusetts, that vision is already taking root.

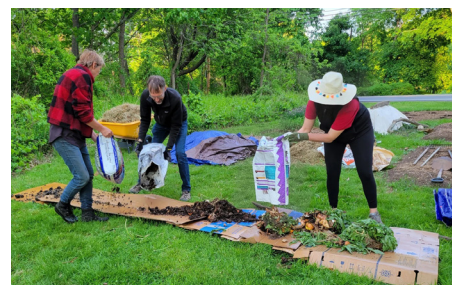
Launched earlier this year, “Harvest for Good” is a bold initiative weaving ecological stewardship with local food security. Guided by the belief that all life is sacred and biodiversity is essential to planetary well-being, Cuvilly has transformed part of its campus into a living, giving ecosystem.

Using permaculture principles and organic practices, the program works toward a zero-waste, closed-loop system. Premium produce goes directly to those in need, while imperfect

vegetables nourish resident pigs or enrich compost beds—feeding next season’s harvest. In partnership with Kinship Farm’s “Grow Food for Good” program, surplus duck and chicken eggs are donated to local food pantries, bringing fresh nutrition to neighboring families.

Inspired by regional leaders like Gardens for Good and Wright-Locke Farm, Cuvilly has built community into the program’s very foundation. Volunteers of all ages—from preschool fledgling farmers to adult gardeners—dig in side by side.

Together, they’re growing something far greater than food: a more resilient, compassionate and sustainable world. ✨



ABOVE: Community Harvest for Good volunteers at the Cuvilly Arts & Earth Center learn permaculture principles and organic practices to feed those in need.

A World of Experience, One Joyful Mission

WHEN TALITA BORGES walked onto the campus of Trinity Washington University, something clicked. “What stood out most,” she recalled, “was how deeply mission-driven the community is, especially in its care for students.” For someone who has spent a decade bringing people together across cultures, faiths and continents, Trinity felt like home.

Borges officially joined Trinity in January as the new director of Campus Ministry, stepping into a role most recently held by the beloved Sister Ann Howard, SNDdeN, who retired after eight transformative years as campus minister.



Director of Campus Ministry Talita Borges

Born in Brazil and raised in a vibrant Catholic household, Borges brings a richly international spirit to her new role. Her ministry has taken her from Brazil to Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, where she collaborated with Christians across denominations and immersed herself in interfaith initiatives that shaped her deeply.

“These experiences showed me firsthand that it is not only possible, but deeply enriching, to bring together people of different cultures and religious traditions,” she said. “Diversity is not something to overcome, but a gift to be recognized, honored and celebrated.”

A lay consecrated woman affiliated with the Focolare Movement, Borges sees her calling at Trinity as a joyful continuation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur’s legacy. “Carrying forward that legacy means helping to cultivate a community where faith, learning and justice are deeply interconnected,” she explained—accompanying students not only in their academic and spiritual growth, but in becoming architects of a more just and compassionate world.

She is especially eager to expand ecumenical and interfaith programming, creating inclusive spaces where every student feels seen, welcomed and spiritually nourished.

Sister Ellen Reilly, SNDdeN offered a warm blessing upon her arrival, sharing, “I like your inclusivity, openness to all students and staff, your goal to build community and to be service oriented. Blessings on your ministry!”

With joy, conviction and a world of experience behind her, Talita Borges is ready to write her own chapter in Trinity’s living mission. ✨

A Promise Delivered

SOME APPOINTMENTS tell you everything about a school's mission. This is one of them.

Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School (NDCR) in Methuen, Massachusetts, has named Mabel M. Dominguez as principal. A proud NDCR alumna, Dominguez was shaped by this community, returned to serve it and now steps forward to lead it.

As NDCR President Sister MaryAlyce Gilfeather, SNDdeN said: "As an alumna who has been formed within this community, Mabel embodies the mission we seek to live each day."

Through years of service as teacher, dean of students and vice principal, Dominguez has led with care, clarity and an unwavering belief in every student's dignity and potential. She still teaches in the classroom, modeling the commitment to lifelong learning she hopes to inspire in others.

She holds degrees in psychology, mental health counseling and educational leadership, the latter earned through the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education.

In Mabel Dominguez, Notre Dame Cristo Rey has found more than a principal. She is a living expression of what this mission produces—and what it promises every student. *

BELOW: Salutatorian Natalie Rodriguez '25 with newly named NDCR Principal Mabel Dominguez '09



ABOVE: NDNU continues to lease the campus space while exploring new campus locations and expanding its digital and hybrid learning environment.

A New Chapter for Notre Dame de Namur University

BY KURT ALLEN, VICE PRESIDENT, ENROLLMENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, NDNU

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, the Belmont campus of Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) has stood as a place of quiet transformation, where ivy-covered paths, the historic Ralston Mansion and the rolling hills above Water Dog Lake have shaped generations of students. Now, that storied setting is entering a new chapter.

With the sale of its 96.5-acre campus to University of California Investments, NDNU is not simply closing a chapter; it is redefining its future. What may appear to be a straightforward real estate transaction is, in fact, a thoughtful evolution of a 175-year-old mission in a rapidly shifting higher education landscape.

Founded in 1851 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and relocated to Belmont in 1923, the university has long embraced change as part of its identity. This moment is no different. "Selling our campus does not mean abandoning our mission," said President Beth Martin, Ph.D. "It ensures continuity for our students and honors a legacy rooted in social justice, service and education."

That legacy will remain visible. UC Investments has committed to preserving the campus's most iconic landmarks, including Ralston Mansion and the Carriage House, ensuring that the history etched into the landscape endures.

For now, daily life continues uninterrupted. Students will still walk the same paths, attend classes and gather in familiar spaces as NDNU leases the campus for up to five years. Behind the scenes, however, the university is starting to reimagine what comes next, which will include exploring new campus locations in San Mateo County while it continues to expand its digital and hybrid learning environment.

For a university with nearly two centuries of history, change is nothing new. The Belmont campus may no longer define NDNU's identity in the future, but the spirit that gave rise to it, the commitment to education, service and community, remains as strong as ever as NDNU charts its path toward the next century. *

75 Years of Courage, Knowledge and Faith

JOYFUL CELEBRATION, deep gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose. That was the spirit at Notre Dame Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts, throughout the 2025-26 academic year, as the entire school community came together to mark 75 years of transforming the lives of young women through Catholic, all-girls' education.

The milestone was honored with an anniversary Mass in the school's Cuvilly Auditorium—a gathering rich with meaning, as alumnae, former faculty, current students and families lifted their voices together in thanksgiving. A speaker series deepened the celebration, exploring themes of legacy and vocation, including the stirring reflection “Rooted in Love. Called to Serve: Honoring the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and 75 Years of NDA.”

Now-retired Head of School Marilyn Tencza offered words that touched the heart of it all:



“We remember with deep gratitude the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who brought St. Julie Billiard’s luminous vision to life...a world where young women could grow in knowledge, courage and faith.”

From its founding under Sister Marion Cecilia, SNDdeN, to its newest chapter under new Head of School Linda D. Anderson, NDA Worcester has never stopped honoring that founding call, and its next 75 years look just as bright. *

ABOVE: NDA alumna Andrea Salvidio Brewster '85 (left) and her former principal, Sister Ann Morrison, SNDdeN

A Homecoming Worth Celebrating

ON MAY 9, 2026, Emmanuel College welcomed back one of its own in the most meaningful way possible. Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, alumna, professor and visionary Congregational leader, delivered the commencement address and received



an honorary degree before a crowd of graduating students on the cusp of their own remarkable journeys.

Sister Mary’s connection to Emmanuel runs deep. A proud member of the Class of 1979, she later returned to campus as a professor of sociology, dedicating many years to shaping young minds. Alongside her colleagues, she conducted groundbreaking academic research while inspiring hundreds of students to pursue intellectual excellence and embrace lives rooted in shared values.

In her remarks to graduates, Sister Mary said, “I invite you to discern how and where you will build bridges and how you will be a bridge, to those around the corner and to those halfway around the world. Let respect

for the dignity of the human person, care for creation, solidarity and the common good be key principles to guide you through life’s decisions.”

Emmanuel College captured the spirit of the moment perfectly, describing Sister Mary as “a beloved alumna and former faculty member whose life exemplifies the transformative power of an Emmanuel education and the enduring mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.”

For the Class of 2026, her presence was more than an honor—it was a joyful, living example of responding to the Gospel call. *

LEFT: Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN (left) and Dr. Beth Ross, president of Emmanuel College

The Empowerment of an All-Girls' Education

BY RILEY McGLYNN, CLASS OF 2028 AT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL, BELMONT

DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, it is so important to recognize the impact that an all-girls' environment has on women.

"Support each other, and you have that support system behind you that girls will help girls rise up into higher positions in workplaces, sports, college, anything in the leadership area," said senior Autumn Deetz-Rodriguez. "So it's just good to have a big family."

Whether a person attends an all-girls' school or works in an all-girls' environment, it can lead to significant personal growth. Such a supportive space can lead to the empowerment of young women, inspiring them to work hard and reach high goals.

"It's just given me more sense of...leadership that I can use going into college," said Deetz-Rodriguez.

"I hope that an all-girls' experience helps you understand how not to be embarrassed, to not be shy, to raise your hand," said Admissions Associate Carri Alegri '96.

All-girls' environments can often lead to advantages that many may not have experienced in another setting. When you place yourself in this environment, it is easy to see the opportunities they open for young women.

"People are really starting to understand the advantages, and maybe it's not for everybody, but they are really starting to see that there are so many possibilities," said Alegri.

A community focused on creating all-girls' atmospheres can give women a place to grow and encourage them to rise higher. These communities deserve recognition for the leaders and role models they create. *



This story, previously published in The Catalyst, is reprinted with permission and has been edited for Sowing Goodness.

LEFT: Notre Dame High School student, Riley McGlynn



A workshop at NDNU by Crystal Catalan of The Buckley School explored topics core to Hallmark 5: embracing the gift of diversity.

Carrying the Mission Forward—Together

THERE IS SOMETHING UNMISTAKABLY ALIVE about a room full of Notre Dame educators focused on mission.

Twice a year, teachers, administrators and mission leaders from across the SNDdeN U.S. East-West Province gather—once on each coast—for the Notre Dame Educators Symposia. Now in their third year, these gatherings are more than professional development. They are joyful celebrations of a shared calling.

In January, the West Coast symposium at Notre Dame de Namur University featured a dynamic workshop by Crystal Catalan of The Buckley School, exploring civil discourse, human dignity and inclusion—core to Hallmark 5: embracing the gift of diversity.

March brought the East Coast gathering to Notre Dame Academy in Hingham, Massachusetts, where Sister Bárbara Gutiérrez, SNDdeN set hearts alight with stories from the Congregation's earliest days, calling every educator to see themselves as "living chapters in the history of SNDdeN education." Interactive workshops and spirited roundtables followed, sparking ideas that will ripple far beyond any single school.

These symposia make one thing gloriously clear: Notre Dame education is a living, breathing mission—carried forward with joy, purpose and love. *

"The work of the past did not end. It belongs to you now."

Sister Bárbara Gutiérrez, SNDdeN

Spirituality

Joyful Accompaniment—A Reflection

BY SISTER ANN MARIE COOK, SNDdeN

“HOW DID YOU SPEND YOUR DAY?” may not be intended as a trick question, but the answer can get complicated. Sometimes the day may include agreeing with a perplexed, elderly Sister that the new sweater her mother just gave her is a beautiful color. Or the conversation may include the Red Sox’s hard-to-fill first-base position. Or why graphic novels deserve to be a separate literary genre.

All these conversations take place at Notre Dame Health Center (NDHC) in Worcester, Massachusetts. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur make up about a quarter of the facility’s 110 residents. Some Sisters are there for rehab only; others are there permanently. As I move from one wing to another, I have the opportunity and privilege to spend time with many Sisters.

Little from my past ministries prepared me for this experience. In the first half of my Notre Dame “missions,” I was a high school English teacher and administrator. Then, with a monumental leap, I became an adult basic education teacher in the state prison system for a little more than two decades.

My quilting patterns and fabric finally got the attention they deserved when I retired in 2011. That focus lasted for several months, until I was asked to replace a Sister Advocate at NDHC on short-term medical leave. The Advocates offer a constant, loving presence to each Sister. An Advocate might accompany her to emergency room visits, select a graduation present with her for a relative’s big day and ensure her iPad is ready for a Zoom meeting.

While the Advocates have official work, they’re willing to include my light-hearted approach to visiting. So, a couple of days a week, I have lunch with the Advocates, then start my wanderings. Down one side of a corridor, up the other.

As a SNDdeN, I’m uniquely able to tell a Sister how political changes have affected her friend working at the border. Maybe the Sister resident wants information about another Sister’s sudden ER trip from our Ohio facility. Or the Sister may want to share the joy and pictures from a family visit. However the day turns out, I count myself fortunate to be joyfully sharing it with other Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. ✱



Left to right: Sisters Margaret Middleton, Anne Marie Cook and Jane McAndrews, SNDdeN

Sisters in Ministry



Advocacy in Action

Responding to St. Julie's Call

ST. JULIE BILLIART DEVOTED HER LIFE to those on the margins. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur continue that work today. In a world where human dignity is under constant threat, the Sisters of the U.S. East-West Province remain committed to justice and peace. Through prayer, direct action, legislative visits, advocacy campaigns, statements and public witness, they live their mission in concrete, tangible ways.



Standing Against Human Trafficking

On National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, January 11, 2026, over a dozen Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur joined the Anti-Trafficking Coalition of Boston's annual vigil at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston.

Guest speaker Edith Ayuso of the Attorney General's Office, Division of Victim Assistance, reminded participants that human trafficking—the buying and selling of men, women and children—remains an urgent reality in our cities and communities today. Representatives from the FBI, connected to the Coalition through Bakhita House, were also in attendance.

The Sisters came prepared to contribute. The Ipswich, Massachusetts, community donated handmade hats and cards of encouragement, crafted by Sister Trish O'Rourke, SNDdeN, for the Coalition's "Bags of Love" project. These bags, filled with toiletries, gift cards and other essentials, are given directly to women upon rescue to help meet their immediate needs. Ayuso expressed sincere appreciation for the Sisters' ongoing support of trafficking survivors in the Boston area.



A Public Witness for Peace

Sisters across the country gather regularly to give public witness to their Gospel values. At the end of March, Sisters, Associates, staff and co-workers gathered to advocate, adding their voices to those of Pope Leo XIV and people around the world calling for peace and justice. Sisters stood on the streets with signs of support for immigrants and prayers for peace. Not deterred by physical limitations, Sisters in cars covered with messages of advocacy looped the rally routes, ensuring everyone's participation.

Justice and peace advocacy is the ongoing work of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The Sisters remain present, active and committed to the belief that every human life matters and every act of justice counts. ✨

THIS SPREAD: Our Sisters participated in rallies holding placards and looped the routes in cars covered with messages of advocacy for justice and peace.



ABOVE: Eco-Artisans at the Cuvilly Arts & Earth Center cleverly repurposed pillows into dresses, old sweaters into winter accessories, and animal feed bags into tote bags, for donations to groups in need.

Eco-Artisans Explore Creativity and Connection

BY SISTER PAT TOCE, SNDdeN

THE CUVILLY ARTS & EARTH CENTER (Cuvilly) is a ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Through educational programs and community-building, Cuvilly inspires people of all ages to explore their creativity and connection to the Earth. Its mission embraces ecological justice and models sustainability, grounded in the belief that all life is sacred and that the diversity of life is essential to the planet's well-being.

The Eco-Artisans group formed in the fall of 2024 as part of a lifelong learning initiative rooted in the Sisters' commitment to *Laudato Si'* and Cuvilly's mission to care for the Earth. Its focus is practical: tackling textile waste and fiber pollution by repurposing fabrics and other materials before they reach the landfill.

The scale of this problem is staggering. According to Earth.org, approximately 11 million tons of textiles end up in U.S. landfills every year, much of it driven by "fast fashion." Synthetic fibers like polyester can take more than 200 years to decompose, leaching toxic chemicals into soil and water and releasing greenhouse gases along the way, according to EPA data.

The Eco-Artisans have already taken on a range of repurposing projects: dresses made from pillowcases, tote bags from animal feed bags, mittens and gloves from old wool sweaters, and toddler pajama bottoms from fleece and cotton. Many of these items are donated to groups in need. For Halloween, the group designed costumes for Cuvilly teachers using only recycled materials.

The possibilities are endless—limited only by your imagination. Countless tutorials are available online, and many organizations are eager to receive handmade donations. Your effort can make a real difference.

You can also act right now by disposing of textile waste responsibly. In Massachusetts, it is illegal to throw textiles—clothing, linens, curtains or fabric scraps—in the trash. If clean, dry and odorless, all textiles must be recycled or donated, even if torn or stained. Check www.Mass.gov or your local government website for the options available to you.

Every textile you divert from the landfill is a small but meaningful act for the Earth. *

Making God's Love Visible

BY SISTER JANET DEAETT, SNDdeN

EACH WEEK, I VOLUNTEER at a soup kitchen in Enfield, Connecticut. I assist with meal prep alongside other volunteers and am always aware that people who are hungry will have nourishing food because of our ministry. St. Julie said, "Do everything for the love of God who has done everything for love of you." This love is visible in what we do and how we serve.

Continuing to make known God's goodness at the food bank requires careful food preparation. Local stores mostly donate the groceries, and the items need to be examined and washed before use. We make a large green salad and fruit salad to go with

the evening supper. Sometimes we place single-portion dessert slices on small plates, make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or bag cookies for takeout. Not only is this a joyful task because it feeds those experiencing poverty, but it's also joyful to work with others who freely give with a loving spirit. We put God's goodness into every bite!

The call to religious life is a grace and blessing. To be irresistibly drawn into the heart of our good God as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur is an experience like no other. When there are challenges, God is there. When there are joys, God is there. When there is sadness, God is there, and God is always Good!

I am glad I took the quiet time to listen to God's movement in my heart and to ponder what God was asking of me. I will never regret saying "Yes!" *



Sister Janet Deaett, SNDdeN



Sister Dianne Shaw, SNDdeN

Opening My Mind, Stretching My Heart

BY SISTER DIANNE SHAW, SNDdeN

I HAVE VOLUNTEERED at Notre Dame Education Center (NDEC) in Lawrence for about 10 years. I began as a mentor in English language practice, as immigrant students find it next to impossible to find someone with whom to practice English. It was then that I learned firsthand about the joys, sorrows, challenges and successes of being an immigrant in the United States.

When COVID struck, the students continued meeting online. We forged relationships as we celebrated the goodness of God in each of our lives and how God is leading each one to discover new gifts within, develop them and grow as a result. This journey certainly aligned with St. Julie's vision: to provide each person with what they need to live a full life. At NDEC, this empowerment is happening every day.

Presently, I volunteer as an initial interviewer for candidates, some young, some older, men and women, mostly immigrants, who desire to become certified nursing assistants. This program equips them with the skills to become healthcare professionals, which can lead to meaningful jobs in a variety of settings.

My 66 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur have opened my mind and stretched my heart. From elementary school teacher to religious education director to school counselor in inner city schools, and a Navajo Mission School in New Mexico, to presently being "retired" in Ipswich, Massachusetts, my mind and heart have been expanded to include the world and all its people.

How blessed I am to have been called to be a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. *

Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy and Impact at the United Nations

BY SISTER ISABELLE IZIKA, SNDdeN,
CONGREGATIONAL UN NGO REPRESENTATIVE

NEARLY 25 YEARS AGO, Sister Ellen Gielty, SNDdeN, then General Superior of the SNDdeN, met with leaders of several congregations recognized as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the United Nations. Being designated an NGO offered them a way to extend their advocacy for justice and peace to a larger audience. Sister Ellen began to imagine how Notre Dame could similarly amplify its voice to deepen our service of those to whom we minister, especially people living in poverty in the most abandoned places.

Her efforts in 2001 led to the Congregation obtaining NGO accreditation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Public Information (DPI), now known as the UN Department of Global Communication (DGC). The SNDdeN Congregational Leadership Team named Sister Joan Burke, SNDdeN as the first official NGO representative of the Congregation and tasked her with setting up the office in New York. The SNDdeN joined a growing network of women and men religious advocating within the UN's intergovernmental body for human dignity, sustainable development and systemic change.

This year, as we mark the 25th anniversary of our presence at the UN and our access to global advocacy, I am humbled to represent the Sisters as our UN NGO Congregational Office representative. Through this presence, our focus on the most forgotten and vulnerable has led us to take initiatives to address poverty eradication, gender equality, education, human trafficking, migration, climate action and peace building. Our office has also frequently contributed to ongoing, high-level dialogues among UN member states on relevant issues.

Our active commitment as an NGO at the UN aims to give voice to the lived experiences of communities worldwide, promoting a more just social order for all people. Whether advocating for the eradication of poverty, gender equality, girls' access to education in developing regions or fostering ecological justice in response to the climate crisis, our work continues to embody the Notre Dame mission: making known God's goodness in compassionate and courageous action. Our 25th anniversary celebrates our achievements and our collaboration with other religious, civil society, donors, lay partners, coworkers and students who share our mission for a more just and humane world. *

RIGHT: In 2026, the Sisters mark the 25th anniversary of the SNDdeN presence at the UN. Pictured: Sisters Marie Delaney (in black) and Isabelle Izika, SNDdeN



“Let us continue to make known the goodness of God, locally, globally and in every corner of our shared world.”

St. Julie Billiart



Practicing Respect Across Difference

BY KATHRYN YANIK, DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

FOR GENERATIONS, Catholic sisters have been leaders in civil dialogue and communal discernment. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur were founded as an international congregation in 1804 and, since then, have demonstrated their commitment to dialogue across cultural and identity differences. This year, we expanded our synodal work to launch a new initiative on civil dialogue.

Led by the Office of Justice, Peace, Integrity and Care for Creation (JPIC), the SNDdeN U.S. East-West Province implemented a Lenten dialogue series titled “Practicing Respect Across Difference.” As part of this practice, the Province hosted a series of dialogues on Faith and Politics, Feminism, and the Role of Women Religious in

the World Today. These conversations have gathered Sisters, Associates, staff and former members.

The JPIC Office also hosted a training in reflective structured dialogue for 40 individuals from the SNDdeN community and 15 other congregations of women religious across the United States and Europe. The training was well received and raised questions about how we can further integrate models of dialogue and synodal listening that have shaped our cross-congregational ministry for centuries. In the next stage of our civil dialogue ministry, we would like to expand on our work to develop a model of reflective, structured dialogue that integrates the charisma and spirituality of our community. We welcome the



ABOVE: JPIC Director Kathryn Yanik

participation of all our partners in mission! Please contact the JPIC Office at jplic@ewsndden.org if you are interested in learning more. *

Recalling a Life Devoted to the Underserved: Sister Sue Ann Shay, SNDdeN (1936–2009)

SISTER SUE ANN SHAY, SNDdeN devoted her life to social justice, tirelessly fighting for the underserved. Born in 1936 and raised in Greenwich, Connecticut, she later earned degrees from Trinity College (now Trinity Washington University) and Fordham University Law School, where she was one of only two women in her class. A dedicated lawyer and advocate, she became known for her work in anti-poverty efforts, women’s causes and peace initiatives.

In the mid-’70s, Shay moved back to Connecticut, where she worked first for the New Haven Legal Assistance Program and later for the Hartford Neighborhood Legal Services Program. She also became more interested in consecrated religious life. After spending a year discerning her vocation and living with a few Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, she entered the order at 39 and made her first vows in 1975.

Aware of the growing crisis of women with infants and young children living dangerously on the streets of Hartford, she co-founded My Sisters’ Place women’s shelter with Sister Judy Beaumont, SNDdeN. A small blue Victorian house in the community was transformed into a place of safety and possibility for those with nowhere else to turn.

In the nearly 45 years since, My Sisters’ Place (MSP) has helped more than 26,000 people with shelter, food and services designed to support lasting independence. The Sue Ann Shay Place apartment building is part of the 34-unit supportive housing program operated by MSP and provides permanent, supportive housing for low-income individuals and families.

Sister Sue Ann Shay returned to God in 2009, leaving a legacy rooted in social justice for all. *

Support Our Ministry



“Georgi has become a special friend. Not only a client, he also gives back by sharing his music with those waiting in line.”

Sister Annette Burkart, SNDdeN

Still Responding Joyfully: Honoring a Lifetime of Love

SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR have poured out decades of faith and God’s goodness in classrooms, hospitals, missions and communities. In 2026, 27 Sisters of the U.S. East-West Province are marking extraordinary jubilees, celebrating 60–80 years of lives consecrated in love, obedience and tireless service to a world that needed them—and they are not finished yet.

For the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, retirement is not an ending. It is a threshold—an invitation to serve differently, more quietly, but no less powerfully. They listen. They respond. They mentor. They pray with and for others. They accompany the lonely, advocate for the marginalized, and continue to sow goodness into the world with the same conviction that has defined their entire lives.

Sister Annette Burkart, SNDdeN embodies that spirit beautifully. “After completing my ‘9 to 5’ ministries,

I wanted to reach out to the poor in our city, Fremont, California,” she shared. Through Tri-City Volunteers, she found exactly that, and more. Tri-City Volunteers Food Bank is the largest client-direct food bank in Alameda County, serving more than 10,000 individuals every month and distributing over 3.6 million pounds of food annually.

For Sister Annette, it’s not just the food service, but the relationships. “Georgi has become a special friend. Not only a client, he also gives back by sharing his music with those waiting in line.” In retirement, Sister Annette discovered that ministry is never a one-way street.

She was instrumental in having the City of Fremont claim the title of “Compassionate City” in 2016. In January, the city celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the signing of the charter. Compassionate Fremont is a grassroots community organization committed to promoting justice, dignity, equity, compassion and respect.

Sister Annette also works to create ongoing spiritual connections between Sisters and women between the ages of 20–45 through her “Pray with Sisters” and “Spirituality: What Is It?” programs. She offers these regularly and is joined by many other Sisters who continue to serve through this outreach ministry. ✨



Your gift is more than support—it is a tangible act of love. You can augment the impact of the Sisters, who respond to God’s call, shape schools, stand for justice and walk with those living in poverty. sddeneastwest.org/support-us

ABOVE: Sister Annette Burkart, SNDdeN with Georgi at the Tri-City Volunteers Food Bank in Fremont, California.

Support Our Community

Faith in Action: A Life of Innovation, Inspired by St. Julie

WHAT HAPPENS when faith becomes the foundation not just of one's personal life, but of one's professional vision, too? For Shyrl McCormick, formerly Sister Miriam, the charism of the Sisters did not just shape her values; it became the bedrock of her choices in ministries of compassion, healing and transformation.

From an early age, surrounded by a family rooted in faith and service, and educated by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur from elementary school through university, McCormick was drawn to a life in which belief and action were inseparable. That calling continues to echo through every endeavor she touches.

In 1961, McCormick joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Over the next 21 years, she dedicated herself to teaching—first in elementary, then in high school settings—while always sensing there was something other to her calling. Her search led her to Seattle University's ministry program. "It was like a dream," she recalls of the experience, which culminated in her being on the team that founded St. Julie's Parish in San José, California. This parish embodies the charism of its namesake and has always spoken to McCormick's heart. There, she served as director of Religious Education for six years.

After years in parish life, McCormick transitioned into peace work at the

San José Peace Center and at the Santa Clara County Council of Churches. Around this time, she left the Congregation and married her husband, Pat. Together they launched Process Design Associates, a venture they ran for 19 years to facilitate team-building and strategic planning in parishes, dioceses, schools, service agencies and small businesses. They believe that the answers any organization needs are within its people.

McCormick's subsequent roles continued to reflect her deep connection to the Sisters, including serving as sponsorship director for the former California Province and as admissions director at Notre Dame

High School, Belmont. "I was so blessed to have felt so connected to the Sisters," she said. Later, her entrepreneurial spirit and desire to foster empathy in organizational cultures drew her back to work like what she and Pat had pioneered. That is when she founded Fearless Conversations—a business rooted in nonviolent communication, psychological type and appreciative inquiry.

"Conversations are how we think together and build relationships," said McCormick. "We need to be able to have conversations free of fears that keep us from speaking our truth."

When McCormick stopped working for the Sisters, she began to really



Pictured left to right: Associates Shyrl McCormick, Sabrina Harper and Marie Felix

Support Our Community

notice the power and vibrancy of the Associate community. “They were so alive, committed, and shared the same values,” she said. This period of her life marked a renewed commitment to the charism. She formalized her relationship with the Sisters once again—this time as an Associate—as both an expression of gratitude and renewed sense of belonging to a community that had always shaped her path.

Shyrl McCormick’s life is a testament to the power of spirituality that transcends time and space, from her earliest encounters with the Sisters to building people-centered organizations to her presence as an Associate today. Her story reminds us that the charism of the SNDdeN calls each of us to seek what is most important.

Here are some guiding questions she suggests:

- What is alive in me? What is alive in you?
- What is really important to me? What is really important to you?

The answers to these questions fuel her ongoing commitment to living authentically and empathetically in today’s chaotic world. Whether facilitating community workshops or engaging in transformative conversations, she continues to joyfully champion the simple yet profound invitation of St. Julie’s vision: to see and be the goodness of God. ✨



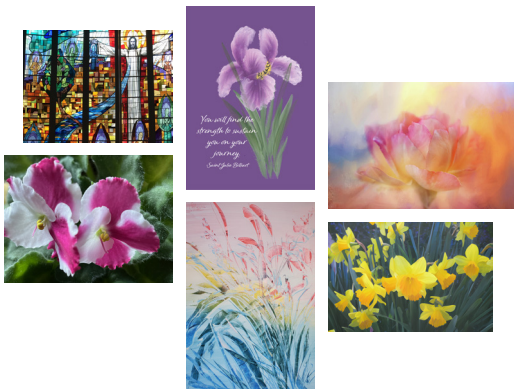
Oh! How Good God Is!

We offer this booklet, “Joyfully Making Known God’s Goodness,” as a reflection resource available via the QR code below. We experience joy in all of God’s creation, in ministry with others, in accompanying those on the margins, and in hope for the future. And we see that joy in you.

We invite you to renew your support of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Your partnership makes the joy of God’s goodness known in real and enduring ways. You may also wish to deepen your impact by joining our monthly donors, providing steady support for ministries that change lives.



Download a PDF of the reflection booklet here.



TRIBUTE CARDS

To celebrate the lives of loved ones, you can purchase Tribute Cards showcasing artwork and photography of our Sisters. We have six cards for different occasions, and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur remember the recipient and the donor in their prayers. All donors are acknowledged. To order, please call our office at **617-387-2500** or visit our website, snddeneastwest.org/request-tribute-cards.

Support Our Future

Walking With Us: Many Paths to Support Our Mission

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR joyfully respond to God's call through teaching, accompanying, advocating and standing with those who are too often overlooked. The ministries are supported by a circle of friends who have chosen to walk alongside us. You are part of that circle. Your prayers, your presence and your support sustain a ministry that

reaches further than any one of us could reach alone.

Many of our friends have shared that they would love to deepen their partnership with the Sisters but assume the only way to do so is through a check. In truth, the ways of supporting the mission are far more varied than most realize. Some paths allow gifts to be made today in ways that honor a

lifetime of careful stewardship. Others quietly carry the mission forward for years to come or even create a legacy that blesses generations long after our own. Each can be shaped to fit your circumstances, your season of life and the values you hold most dear.

Whatever shape or path your partnership takes, it is received with deep gratitude.

If you have ever wondered whether there might be a way of giving that fits you better, we would be honored to talk.

Above all, please know how deeply grateful we are. The Sisters carry you in prayer. Your companionship is the soil from which the goodness of God continues to grow. ✱



“The Sisters’ commitment to making known God’s goodness deeply inspires me, and I am grateful for the opportunity to build relationships that sustain their transformative mission.”

Liz Hughes, Director of Development

Ways to Support the Sisters

Gifts you can make today:
**Monthly Giving, Stocks, Donor
Advised Funds and Qualified
Charitable Distributions.**



Gifts that leave a legacy for
generations to come: **Bequests.**



Curious which path might fit you?
We would love to talk. Please reach out
to our Development Office at 617-387-2500
or development@ewsnnden.org.

TO LEARN MORE:

Please visit sddeneastwest.org/ways-to-give or call 617-387-2500 ext. 2011.

In Memoriam

We prayerfully remember our Sisters who died between October 1, 2025, and March 15, 2026. The following brief obituaries are a testament to the rich lives Sisters led as they responded joyfully to the Gospel call. Please remember them in your prayers.



Sister Ann Brennan, SNDdeN
(formerly Ann Mildred)

Sister Ann was passionate about teaching English as a Second Language and is also known for her ministry in Japan, where she served for almost 10 years. She once said, “It was a

grace-filled moment for me to teach people from other cultures because they had so much to share from and about their own culture and experiences.” At age 96, Sister Ann went home to her good God on February 21, 2026, after 78 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur.



Sister Janet Cahill, SNDdeN
(formerly James Adele)

For almost 60 years, Sister Janet taught primary-grade students at parish schools in the East and the Mid-Atlantic. Most notably, she served 26 years at St. Jerome School in Hyattsville,

Maryland. Later in her career, she taught small reading groups and worked with preschoolers while continuing to shape children’s faith through First Communion preparation and home visits. Sister Janet returned home to her good God on January 31, 2026, at the age of 93, after 73 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur.



Sister Marie-Rose Charpentier, SNDdeN

Sister Marie-Rose taught at schools from Massachusetts to Kentucky. Memorably, she worked with Appalachian families in West Virginia where she “saw the reflection of God in individuals who were unchurched but so

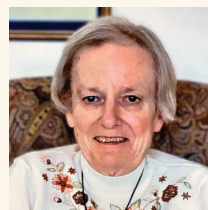
very close to God.” At her 2020 Jubilee, Sister Marie-Rose shared, “I so appreciate the varied ministries I’ve had and the opportunity to meet and work with people of different cultures.” She returned home to her good God on March 15, 2026. She was 86 and had lived 67 years of religious life.



Sister Phyllis Cook, SNDdeN
(formerly Julie Patrice)

Sister Phyllis began her ministry in schools across the West Coast and in Honolulu before relocating

to Kenya. At Egoji Teachers Training College, she adapted her methods, learned Kiswahili and witnessed extreme poverty firsthand. Back in the United States, she launched the successful Writing to Read program at Nativity School in Los Angeles and served as principal of St. Columbkille School for 11 wonderful years. After 66 years of religious life, Sister Phyllis returned home to her good God on February 16, 2026, at age 85.



Sister Mary Elizabeth Duke, SNDdeN

Sister Mary Elizabeth received a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Salem State College

and a master’s in pastoral ministry from Fairfield University. She was a beloved middle-school math teacher in Massachusetts and also served as principal at Notre Dame Elementary School in Tyngsboro. Students respected her, because they knew that Sister Mary respected them. After 58 blessed years of religious life, Sister Mary Elizabeth returned home to her good God on January 15, 2026, at the age of 75.



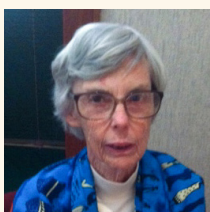
Learn more about our Sisters and their joyful response to the Gospel call: sddeneastwest.org/about-us/our-sisters



Sister Kathleen Haughey, SNDdeN
(formerly *Eleanor Patricia*)

A talented speech pathologist, Sister Kathleen worked in public schools in Baltimore and later served in pastoral ministry, where her compassionate presence touched many lives.

She was especially grateful for her work with Notre Dame Associates and the opportunity to travel the world for missions in Mexico and Nigeria and a meaningful sabbatical in Scotland. At age 93, Sister Kathleen returned home to her good God on February 22, 2026, after completing 75 years of consecrated life.



Sister Catherine Horan, SNDdeN

A gifted educator and administrator, Sister Catherine earned a Bachelor of Science degree in physics from Trinity College, an M.T.S. in mathematics from The Catholic University of America and an MBA from Loyola College.

She had a heart for unhoused women and children with disabilities, serving with care and compassion in Washington, D.C., and Kenya. She also served the Congregation as both a local and an international leader. After 68 years of faithful life, Sister Catherine returned home to her good God on January 3, 2026, at age 86.



Sister Barbara Ann Kavanaugh, SNDdeN

Sister Barbara dedicated over 30 years to teaching across California and Washington. Her passion for the arts infused her classrooms with creativity and ensured an enduring influence on students. She was known as a modern, strong-

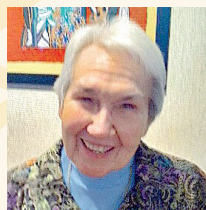
minded woman who cared deeply and inspired confidence in others. Sister Barbara later worked in the Province finance office with the same devotion and care. She returned home to her good God on October 18, 2025, at age 96 after 78 years of religious life.



Sister Immaculata Marie McDonnell, SNDdeN

Sister Immaculata was a dedicated teacher in Massachusetts and Rhode Island who later supervised the transportation of Sisters in Ipswich, Massachusetts. While living with women in formation, she had a particularly

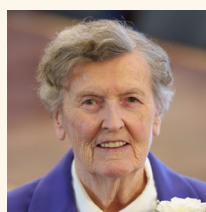
welcoming spirit because she loved being a Sister and wanted them to know that joy. Looking back, she once said, "I have always tried to be what I felt God wanted me to be." Sister Immaculata returned home to her good God on October 28, 2025, at the age of 97 after completing 78 years of consecrated life.



Sister Agnes Rose McNally, SNDdeN

Sister Agnes was a dedicated teacher in Pennsylvania, New York and Washington D.C.,

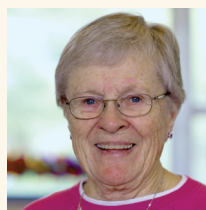
inspiring students from elementary to university. She retired from teaching in 1979 and went on to serve with grace in provincial leadership and at the Diocese of Richmond in Virginia. Sister Agnes believed she "saw God's hands" calling her to inherit a share in Julie's dynamic belief that God is good. After 79 years of religious life, Sister Agnes Rose returned home to her good God on November 6, 2025, at the age of 97.



Sister Elaine McTaggart, SNDdeN
(formerly *Bernard Marie*)

Sister Elaine graduated with a bachelor's degree in English from

Emmanuel College and later earned a master's in mathematics and a certificate in counseling. She was a beloved teacher, principal and tutor for 59 years, including 25 years teaching math at her alma mater, St. Gregory High School in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Sister Elaine went home to her good God on November 27, 2025, at the age of 94 after 77 years of consecrated life.



Sister Julie Marie Thorpe, SNDdeN

A native Californian, Sister Julie Marie loved the Yup'ik people of Alaska, where she served several

summers and full-time for eight years. Her passion in that ministry was teaching catechism, training Eucharistic ministers, assisting at baptisms and funerals, and responding to the community with compassion and strength. She later returned to California and worked with migrant families in Pajaro. Sister Julie Marie went home to her good God on March 6, 2026, after 74 years of religious life. She was 95 years old.



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With gratitude and joy, the
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

invite you to a luncheon on
Sunday, October 4, 2026,
to mark the 175th Anniversary of the
Sisters' arrival in California.

*Join us as we honor the threads woven together
through generations of faith, courage and service.*

A Luncheon Celebration

Crowne Plaza, Foster City, California

Learn more about our 175 years of impactful mission
and ministry in California: bit.ly/CA175SNDdeN

