

The ADVOCATE

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Editor's Note: *"Christian families are missionary families. . . . They are missionary in everyday life, in their doing everyday things, as they bring to everything the salt and the leaven of faith!" —Pope Francis, October 27, 2013. Our Lady, Queen of Peace (OLQP) is known for its diversity and message of social justice. The winter issue of The Advocate focuses on several families and an active member of the church who welcomes others to join the OLQP community. Together they make a beautiful multi-cultural tapestry.*
—Paula Cruickshank,
Editor, The Advocate

The Johnsons

A Family Assembled

By Jack Sullivan

"No, you are both too old," an adoption agency aide curtly told Ralph Johnson, then 54, when he inquired whether he and his wife Debra, 46, could adopt a child from the Washington area. That turndown in 2000 did not discourage the Johnsons. Instead, they pursued other avenues outside the United States and now cherish two high school sophomores and one seventh grader as their own.

In 2001, Debra and Ralph, both active at OLQP, were allowed to adopt Maria, eight months old, and Tony, five months old in Guatemala. They brought those babies back to Northern Virginia where, as Debra put it, "It was almost like having twins." Undeterred by the challenges, the couple four years later returned to Guatemala and adopted 18-month-old José.



The Johnson Family
Photo by Lifetouch

They took toddlers Maria and Tony with them for the occasion as a way of introducing them gradually to their new baby brother. "We were happy with their response," Debra recounted. "They took to José right away." Twelve years ago the Johnsons moved from Arlington to the Lincolnia Park area of Fairfax County because of the ethnic diversity there. "We wanted to make sure that our children would see people who look like they do," said Debra. The story of the Johnsons' adoptions was featured in USA Today in November 2014.

The ethnic diversity and the many families who have adopted or fostered children at OLQP is also a benefit, according to the couple. Two years ago they helped to start the "Building Forever Families Ministry" that assists couples like themselves adopt or foster children. Recently their family adopted/rescued two very friendly dogs.

Ralph, a retired official of the National Transportation Safety Board, joined the parish as a bachelor in 1971, was quickly recruited by then pastor Fr. David Ray, and for the past forty years has been the parish budget director and a lector. Debra who has been a member of OLQP

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for 20 years continues serve as a Eucharistic Minister and sings in the Folk/Contemporary choir at the 11:15 AM Mass.

The Johnsons have tried to keep their children in touch with their Hispanic heritage. Four years ago in a program called "Guatemala Ties," they joined five other families with children adopted from Guatemala on a tour of the country, visiting major attractions, such as Antigua, Lake Atitlan and Tikal. The children also were able to visit with their former foster families again.

Although Ralph and Debra do not speak Spanish and the children grew up speaking only English, the parents are hopeful that they will learn the language in school. Maria currently is in her third year of Spanish at Annandale High and José just started to study Spanish. Maria shows talent at playing the oboe and José recently has taken up the saxophone. Tony is fixated on basketball, attested by the hoop in the Johnson's driveway.

As the children grow up, there are new challenges, Debra admitted. She finds that school counselors too often are untrained in dealing with problems of adopted, mixed ethnic families. Another issue, the couple noted, is dealing with the prejudice that their children sometimes encounter. Ralph recounted a visit that Maria made to the school office waiting on her own and was not welcomed until he walked in and the attendance person then recognized Maria as Ralph's child. Debra emphasized that unless one experiences personally the racism in society, it can go unnoticed. ♦

Loving Grandparents Raising Their Grandson

Shellye and Ronald Hutchinson

By Kathy Desmond

They met in front of the historic Engine 16 firehouse in downtown Washington, DC. Shellye was looking for a metro stop and Ronald, meeting friends at the firehouse for lunch on his day off, showed her the way. She said "No" when Ronald asked her for her phone number, so he gave her his number.

Ronald worked in fire communications for the DC Fire Department; Shellye worked as a medical technician at the Washington Hospital Center. Within six months they were engaged. They married in June 1993 when they were 41.



The Hutchinson Family

Ronald and Shellye wanted a family, but were unable to have a child, so they decided to adopt. They networked with other families and found an adoption agency, Trumbull County Social Services, in Warren, Ohio, where they adopted a child. Brittany was two years and 4 months old when her parents brought her home in 1995. Soon after she was baptized in St. Columba Catholic Church in Oxon Hill, Maryland.

Ronald came from a long line of Catholics. His grandparents established a Catholic school for poor children in St. Mary's County in southern Maryland. He spent a summer at the Franciscan seminary in upstate New York. Shellye was a Baptist, born again. But she wanted to worship with Ronald. So, she went through RCIA at St. Columba and became a Roman Catholic.

One of Shellye's co-workers was a member of OLQP. When he passed away of lung cancer in 2002, Shellye came to the funeral service. She took public transportation and arrived early. She sat quietly by herself. She looked at the picture of the black Madonna and Child. A dog came and sat next to her, followed by a kindly gentleman. The beautiful funeral service led by Fr. Tuozzolo convinced her to return with Ronald.

After a year of visiting, she and Ronald decided to join the OLQP community. They still live in Fort Washington, but they commute to the 9:30 AM Mass on Sunday. They've become friends with the people who sit around them at Mass and feel part of the church family.

Their daughter, Brittany, reached out to them when she learned she

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was having a baby. Ronald and Shellye accompanied her through prenatal care and delivery and brought Brittany and her son, Bryan, home after he was born. Because of Brittany's personal challenges, Bryan was soon placed in the care of DC Family Services. Within two months, Bryan was placed in foster care of his grandparents, Ronald and Shellye who are in the process of adopting him.

Bryan will be two years old in May. He is a healthy, thriving baby with delayed oral motor skills,

and participates in therapy at Children's Hospital once a week. He enjoys his time at the local child development center each day. Shellye says, "Raising Bryan is a full time job, 24/7." Ronald retired January 31, 2017. Shellye retired in 2014 due to low vision. Both are the eldest of large families who were responsible for the care of younger siblings. And both are committed to raising Bryan together.

So, the question 'what role does your faith play in your lives' was easy to answer. Shellye said her parents taught her to pray, "Lord

help me be good today" and "Let Go, let God." She quotes scripture, "Pray without ceasing." She asks God "to keep us healthy so we can raise Bryan to be an adult. We are 65 now." Their faith shows. "I know that God will take care of me." Their faith in God and prayer is the center of their family life.

Shellye would like to be active in the Food Pantry ministry, once Bryan is settled in school, and Ronald retired. But right now participating in the Sunday liturgy and being part of the Queen of Peace community gives them strength. ♦

Celebration of Family is Key at 1 PM Spanish Mass

By Sally Harrs

Father Joseph Nangle, OSF, a member of the Franciscan order, has served the Spanish community at OLQP for twenty-six years, and he describes it as being a unique and lovely experience. St. Francis recognized himself and all creation as belonging in God's family. Through Fr. Joe, in OLQP's Spanish community, everyone is welcome—young and old, rich and poor, believer and non-believer—as brothers and sisters and members of Christ's family.

The 1 PM Spanish language Mass at OLQP is a celebration of family. Participants at Mass greet each other with an "embraso," a traditional gesture that signifies respect and acceptance and the joy of joining one another at Mass.

At 1 PM the Sunday Spanish Mass, a tradition with exceptions, is about to start. The folk group is tuning up. Fr. Joe has vested and is at the back of the church waiting to enter. And then a woman grasps Father's hand and whispers a request to go to confession before Mass, a request Father never would deny. Minutes later, Father has returned to the vestibule of the Church and a parishioner comes up and whispers a request for prayers during the Mass for her son who had been killed in Mexico. Another parishioner brings Father a statue to be blessed. And then Father begins to process up the aisle to be stopped once again, this time by two brothers in their twenties from Bolivia who are armed with a video camera and a request to film the entire Mass in memory of their father who had just died. In and around 1:15 PM, the 1 PM Mass is about to start.

The Spanish families that gather each Sunday at OLQP are frequently members of extended families. Everyone is considered a "primo hermano (a)," whether a first cousin, an in-law, or godparents. These ties are lifetime bonds, and the relationships are ongoing and often have obligations, as in the case of godparents. Disagreements occur as in most families, but it is not uncommon for Spanish families to strive to smooth things over. Family ties are lasting. A new baby with a young mother is welcomed and nurtured

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by everyone in the family. “Our children” is a tradition within Spanish families.

Many of the Spanish families in the parish are first generation immigrants making a transition between cultures. Baptisms are joyous occasions, and the quinceañera celebration for 15 year old girls is a Latin American celebration that is treasured. The children and next generation grandchildren in these families speak English but they participate in the Mass in Spanish.

Many Spanish parishioners have experienced first-hand bigotry, hatred and meanness of spirit. Skin color has been an issue for many Spanish young people, and during these uncertain times, the potential of brushes with the law prompts many to drive back roads of our community and stay at home.

Fr. Joe praises the many single mothers in the OLQP Spanish community who are strong and dedicated to the loving care of their children. They are often the sole support of the family and are called upon to face heartbreaking immigration problems. Father Joe described a family that had been thriving. The father was a truck driver with a green card supporting his family with two children. There was a terrible accident involving a cyclist who passed on the right-hand side of the driver’s truck and was killed. The father was jailed, but the court determined that he was not guilty of a violation; however, a drug arrest many years earlier was recalled and he was deported to Mexico ten years ago leaving his wife and two daughters alone.

The Spanish community at OLQP in Arlington is a safe place for many residents and their families where their traditions and family bonds are treasured. They don’t need to be afraid. OLQP is home.

“Family is not an important thing. It’s everything.”

Busy Parents Raising Two Young Children

Leah and Patricio Tanyag

By Kathy Desmond

Leah and Patricio met at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, where each sought an education in a technical field. Each had a relative or good friend studying there. Both were very involved in the Filipino American Student Association. Patricio said the organization “[felt] like family, our home away from home” at the large state university. One day Leah’s friend introduced her to his cousin, Patricio. Leah and Patricio got to know each other while leading the 100-member student association and its activities.

Both grew up in conservative Catholic communities. Patricio went to traditional Catholic schools in Virginia Beach and was an altar boy. Leah attended Pre-K and kindergarten in a Catholic school in New Orleans. When the family moved to New Jersey, she attended CCD classes, confirmation class, and after-school

programs, while going to public school. But she felt little connection to these groups.

After graduation, job opportunities led them to Arlington. They found OLQP on Google; it was the Catholic Church nearest to their home. They came to Mass one Sunday to check it out, thinking that they would visit several churches, but decided they were happy at OLQP. Leah and Patricio liked Fr. Tuz and his “don’t worry about it” attitude and his dog, Toby. They attended the 8 AM Mass on Sunday and loved the music and Harriet, the music director at the time. In particular, Patricio said he liked OLQP because it was a progressive church with a social justice orientation, very different from what he grew up with. They appreciated its African-American history. The parish was interested in the things he was interested in. And it was small, and it, too, felt like home, “something that resonated with us,” Patricio noted.

Leah and Patricio married at OLQP in 2010, with Fr. Tim Hickey leading the ceremony. They jumped into

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parish life, joining the Haiti Committee, working in the Food Pantry, the Eucharistic ministry, and reading scripture at the 8 AM Mass. They wanted to learn more about their Catholic faith and how it relates to current social issues so they participated in two social justice ministry programs before starting a family. The Good News People and Just Faith were year-long programs, with weekly sessions. They learned about current social justice issues and their faith by reading books and listening to speakers and discussing them. They learned more about their Catholic faith in these programs than at the Catholic schools they had attended.



The Tanyag Family

When they were ready to start a family in a bigger home, they sought houses close enough to go to OLQP. “Queen of Peace church is a big factor in our lives,” Patricio said.

Patricio Gonzalo, “Gonzo,” was born in June 2014 and Nola Felisa in May 2016. Leah and Patricio honored their grandparents giving the children their middle names. Fr. Tom baptized Gonzo and Fr. Tim baptized Nola.

The family says prayers together every night. Throughout the day, Patricio and Leah teach their kids to treat others according to Matthew 25, “Do unto others. . . .” They want their children to understand people, to be compassionate, to accept and help others. Their perspective is to be a servant. Teach them that what their parents think is important and they learn these things along the way. As a

result, Gonzo always wants to help others, whether emptying the car or doing tasks at home.

The family looks forward to going to the 8 AM Mass on Sunday. It is a way to set aside the noise, as Fr. Tim says, and helps them focus on what is important. “It gets us through all the big issues God puts in front of us,” Patricio says. Gonzo likes to go to Mass, listen to the music, and enjoys sharing peace with our OLQP extended family. ♦

Stratman Family Drawn to OLQP Message of Community and Social Justice

By Bobby McMahon

For the Stratman family—Kelly, Steve, and their two girls—being a part of the OLQP community is very much a family affair. Kelly was one of the core group of volunteers who put in the long hours to make the 70th Anniversary Celebration the amazing experience it was, and the girls are right now preparing for Confirmation. They volunteer as a family for the Bookshelf Ministry and are known for stepping up when something needs to be done.

The family also finds special ways to live out OLQP’s mission in serving others and bringing aid to those in need. A few years ago, the girls decided that they would no longer get gifts from friends for their birthdays, but instead would choose to help those in need.

“That was actually something we decided as a family,” Kelly said after Mass not too long ago. She noted that the girls do receive gifts from family, and they all feel that it’s more than enough. “We feel very fortunate,” she said.

When birthday time rolls around, the girls have organized donations for the food pantry and collected books for the Arlington Free Clinic. Near the holidays, Kelly said, the Free Clinic likes to get new books to wrap and give to the children who are there with their parents. So one of Kelly’s girls asked all friends to bring new books, and then they wrapped them and brought them to the Clinic.

“They have a lot of little kids over there, and board

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books that are in good condition are hard to come by,” she said, offering the knowing smile of a parent who knows how little children can treat books.

The family is also active in Family Circle 18, which Kelly says is great in part because the family now lives in Vienna. “We don’t run into people from the parish at school, so it’s good to have those touchpoints,” she said.

Kelly said that the sense of community, the positive nature of the parishioners and the commitment to social justice is why the family makes the drive in to OLQP.

“It feels like the real purpose of what church is supposed to be,” she said. That sentiment was shared with her time and time again while planning the 70th Anniversary Celebration, she said, adding that people who had moved away have felt that sense of connection to OLQP.

Said Kelly, “It’s a really special place here.” ♦



The Stratman Family

they came to OLQP.

Over the years, the family has been involved in several OLQP ministries. They were part of the Religious Education Family Circles (Circle 17) and their daughter, Sophia, was also an altar server. Natasha said, “Participating in the Family Circles was a great experience—meeting and connecting with other families in the church.”

Natasha was also an active member of UJAMAA for a few years. During that time, she arranged for youth-centered bus trips to such historically significant sites as: The African American Civil War Museum and Memorial; the Anacostia Museum; the National Shrine; and the Martin Luther King Memorial.

But, as Sophia, now 13, grew older and became heavily involved in extracurricular activities, Natasha’s involvement in UJAMAA lessened. However, she still writes an article every year during Black History Month for the church bulletin cover and has been a valuable source of historical information for the Committee.

Sophia’s schedule of extracurricular activities includes a variety of activities. She joined the St. Bernadette

math club this year, and she now plays the piano. She is still on the travel soccer team and travel AAU basketball team and she also plays basketball for St. Bernadette.

Natasha is on the Board at St. Bernadette school as the Volunteer Coordinator. Both she and Sophia are very involved with school programs and activities, such

as dances, the fall festival and the Secret Santa workshop. As a family they love to go to movies and to relax. Natasha added that with all they do for the school and, “even though we could get a tuition discount if we attended the church where my daughter goes to school (St. Bernadette), we would not leave OLQP.”

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The Ofosu Family

Balancing Career, Church and Family Life

By Veronica Dabney

Natasha and Jasper Ofosu met in Delaware when they both were attending a high school summer program called Forum to Advance Minorities in Engineering (FAME). At that time Jasper was dating someone else. They reconnected seven years later when they ended up working for the same company, First USA Bank. They began dating and were married on June 3, 2000, at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Ofosus found OLQP when the family moved from Delaware to Virginia in 2007 and set out to find a church that was diverse. (They felt Northern Virginia was lacking in diversity.) They found their place when



The Ofosu Family

“My life used to be focused on my career, but after becoming a mother, things changed. I now dedicate my time to being a mother. Raising a strong, smart, confident daughter is my priority. My outlook calendar is full of all of Sophia’s activities. Our schedule revolves around her schedule. Being a good parent is not easy. There are so many things you sacrifice for your children, and they won’t appreciate it until they have children of their own.” ♦

Tim Murphy

A Member of the OLQP Family Who Welcomes Young Adults Home

By Bobby McMahon

In 2010, Tim Murphy was looking for a new community of faith. A graduate of James Madison University, Tim had been active in Catholic Campus Ministry during his time at school and was searching for a faith community as meaningful and vibrant as his college experience had been.

One day, two friends invited him to come to OLQP.

“I remember the first time I was here; I sat next to an older lady. After Mass, she said ‘is this your first time coming here?’ I said yes,” Tim said. “And she said, ‘I really hope you come back.’ That was my first insight into what OLQP is all about.”

Since then, Tim has played an active role in helping to continue OLQP’s mission of offering a welcoming community centered on social justice and inclusivity. He has served the RCIA ministry in several ways, travelled to Haiti to

work with our brothers and sisters in Medor, and he was appointed by his peers as the youngest chairman of the Parish Advisory Board in the group’s history.

Tim was even auctioned off for a date at the 70th Anniversary celebration of the church. He went for \$500, which, according to many, was a steal.



Tim Murphy
Photo by Lifetouch

Tim has also been one of the stalwarts of OLQP’s young adult community and worked to create what has been its cornerstone—the 6 PM Mass. What began with a few people working with Fr. Tim has grown in five years to become a packed Mass most every weekend.

Just a few months after coming to OLQP, Tim recalls a one-on-one meeting with Fr. Tim on how he could get involved with the parish. He recommended RCIA, but also asked Tim what he was passionate

about. The question prompted Tim to talk about his experience at JMU, and how he wanted to provide the same powerful experience to young adults at OLQP as he had found at school.

“I wanted to provide an avenue for young adults to gather and have a mass where they were in charge of different liturgical ministries,” Tim said.

Early on at 6 PM Mass, Tim remembers how he would sometimes have to serve as an usher, lector and Eucharistic Minister in the same Mass. He says it is great to see how much it is grown, and particularly enjoys seeing young adults participate in the liturgy. Today, you can usually find Tim at the back of the church at 6 PM, getting things set up and recruiting parishioners to bring up the gifts or pass a basket.

For Tim, OLQP is a welcoming church with impactful homilies and opportunities to help others through social justice. It’s a community where people can try new things. And if you need evidence of that, you can always stop by OLQP around 6 PM on Sundays. ♦

Our Lady Queen of Peace Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 16, 2017



Fr. Tim
Photo by Phyllis Johnson

By Veronica Dabney

The theme for OLQP's 2017 Martin Luther King program was "Peace, Tolerance and Unity for a New Generation." That theme was chosen as a call to envision what Dr. King would have dreamed for young people in this time and to recall the challenges they faced in his time. It was also to remind the congregation in a stark way of how the past informs the future.

Again this year Monique O'Grady, as emcee, offered welcoming remarks and guided the

congregation through the program. The 9:30 AM Gospel Choir, led by new director, Kristofer Pandohie, sang spirited versions of some OLQP favorites. A cross section of the OLQP community, representing the diversity of the membership, offered words from the Bible (read by Chuck Moran and Adriana Rodrigues), and quotations from Dr. King's letters, speeches and books.



MLK Day Program Participants
Photo by Phyllis Johnson



MLK Day Choir
Photo by Phyllis Johnson

The young people read thematic quotations that spoke to Dr. King's vision for children: "Peace" read by Claire Cullather; "Tolerance" read by Sam Stewart; and "Unity" read by Daniel Skoloda. Adults read quotations that recalled how Dr. King spoke to Peace, Tolerance and Unity in his day. The quotations were read by Wilfred Braveboy, Cynthia Brown, Keren Charles, Koube Ngaaje; Maria Munoz, and Dr. Sheila Harmon-Martin.

To end the program, Fr. Tim delivered a homily that was a moving and sometimes very personal tribute to the life and words of Dr. King. He called on the congregation to work toward perfecting the themes of the program in their own lives. With regard to tolerance, he even suggested moving beyond it, because tolerance implies "putting up with" people who don't look or think the way we do. He urged that we work instead for acceptance and empathy toward other people. He then asked us to "Lift Ev'ry Voice" and pass on, especially to our children, the program's message of "Peace, Tolerance (acceptance) and Unity."

A reception followed the program in the Founders Room.

"Retrouvaille" Helps to Heal Struggling Marriages

By Amy and Jay Vennett

For couples struggling in their marriage, it's easy to believe that no one can possibly understand the pain and despair they're experiencing. So, too, is the common belief that there is no way to heal the gulf between them, and the only way out is divorce. We thought that, too, when we were experiencing our period of misery in 2008.

But we were wrong. Throughout the United States, Canada, and 25 other

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Retrouvaille, continued from page 8

countries, there are tens of thousands of couples who have been to the brink of divorce, but found a better way and have stronger, richer marriages as a result. Because so many of these couples felt such gratitude to God for helping them, they have formed communities to help other couples still struggling in their marriages.

The name of this ministry is “Retrouvaille”; a French word that is pronounced REH-tro-vie. It began in Quebec. There is no precise English translation for “Retrouvaille,” but the word that comes closest to its meaning is “Rediscovery.”

And that is what Retrouvaille does. The ministry helps husbands and wives rediscover each other and why they fell in love. Retrouvaille involves a weekend program at a local hotel, followed by six weeks of follow-up sessions on Saturday evenings and afternoons. In addition, there is monthly support and enrichment meeting for couples who have participated in the weekend and follow-up sessions.

We are one of the couples who rediscovered each other through the Retrouvaille program in the fall of 2008. It has meant so much to us that we actively give our time in support of this program by registering couples who desire to start the program and by presenting and sharing our story on weekends and during follow-up sessions. We are happy to share more with anyone who would like to contact us at 703-920-1832 or

vennett3@verizon.net.

If you're hurting in your marriage, go to <http://retrouvaille.org> online, or call 703-351-7211 for information about the local program (you may remain anonymous). Programs in Northern Virginia for 2017 take place starting February 24, July 7 and October 20. There are also 2017 programs starting in Maryland on January 27 and September 15. ♦

Stephen Ministers Helps Those Facing Life-Changing Challenges

By Joan Brown

Stephen Ministry is a compassionate Christian ministry that was founded in 1975 by Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk, a pastor and clinical psychologist. While Dr. Haugk was the pastor of a St. Louis congregation, he saw the need for care that exceeded what he alone as pastor could provide. He then trained nine members of his congregation to work with him in providing a caring ministry. At the encouragement of his new ministers, he founded Stephen Ministries St. Louis to equip other congregations to train laity for ministry.

Last August, three of our parishioners spent a week in Pittsburgh at a leadership training course to bring the Stephen Ministry to OLQP. Those leaders are Donna Davis, Bill Casey, and Joan Brown. Beginning in January, they taught 15 members of our parish to become Stephen

Ministers, which consisted of 50 hours of training. In June, the new ministers were commissioned for service.

The Stephen ministry will provide care to those who are hurting through serious illness, death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a job, loneliness, and other life-changing challenges. Fr. Tim worked with Stephen Ministry at a former parish where he was assigned and was the initiator of encouraging this ministry here. As the Stephen Ministers are assigned to a parishioner, each will meet with the person (referred to as a care receiver) once a week for an hour. Confidentiality is maintained at all times.

There are over 11,000 congregations enrolled in the Stephen Series, many of which are now Catholic parishes. More than one-and-a-half million people have received the care of Stephen Ministers.

If you have a need for a Stephen Minister, please call Joan Brown (703-971-2975) or the rectory (703-979-5580) and someone will be in touch. If you know of someone who will benefit from Stephen Ministry, discuss it with that person and ask them to be in contact with us.

The mission of Stephen Ministries is summed up in Ephesians 4:11-23—“To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” ♦

Sponsoring Students at the University of Fondwa

By Sue Carlson, M.D., Kathy Desmond and Susan Savage

Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP), Arlington, Virginia, entered into a partnership with St. Joseph parish of Medor through the Parish Twinning Program in 1997. The parish is in a remote area of the Caho Mountains in the Artibonite Department.

Over the years, the partners have increased the number and scope of their activities with the main purpose of supporting sustainable development so that the Medor community can improve its own standard of living.

We first learned about the University of Fondwa (UNIF) through the Spiritan link between OLQP, which has Spiritan priests, and Father Joseph Philippe, CSSp., Founder of UNIF, also a Spiritan priest. We were impressed with the idea of a university in rural Haiti whose goal is to empower students from rural areas to create wealth in their home communities through obtaining degrees in agronomy, veterinary science and business management with this sustainable development focus.

We realized that the University of Fondwa could help achieve the goal of sustainable development by developing leaders and that it could provide significant benefits for the Medor community and for the individual students who attended. We wanted students from Medor to have the opportunity to attend UNIF, but in keeping with the OLQP

goal of helping the entire Medor community, not individual people, we did not think that student scholarship was part of the OLQP Haiti Committee's mission. Instead, three of us on OLQP's Haiti Committee decided to sponsor three Medor secondary school graduates ourselves, outside of the Haiti Committee.



Sue Carlson with four Medor Secondary School Graduates attending the University of Fondwa

We met with Father Joseph to educate ourselves about the university, its programs and requirements, including the funding requirements. The annual fee of \$4,500 is a turnkey cost including room, board and work-study, an excellent value especially considering the small size of the school and attention afforded the students.

Secondly, we needed to be persuaded of the value of sending three students, boys and girls, through the program at the same time, which added to the cost for us. But Father Joseph gave a convincing rationale for this: all three disciplines: agronomy, veterinary medicine and business are needed in each rural

community and the students will support each other during their education and subsequent work back at home.

When we spoke with Father Joseph we were also impressed with his description of a Development Committee in the students' home community, whose responsibility is to identify the students who will apply to the University of Fondwa and then to meet regularly with them during their school years to help support their wealth-creating efforts. Having a Development Committee mentor the students—choosing them, following their progress,

Giving encouragement, suggesting potential projects and helping them achieve their personal goals and those of the community—is something that sets UNIF apart from other universities and is vital for the success of its students and the future development in their home community. The Development Committee will also foster sustainability by encouraging community “buy in” to the students' efforts, and its leadership will be critical in bringing greater wealth to the community.

We believe that the UNIF's program has enormous potential for raising up Medor and other communities throughout Haiti. There is now a way that parishes and individuals can contribute to a UNIF scholarship initiative, providing funds that can be earmarked for students in their twin parishes. To learn more about the Rural Scholarship Development Initiative go to <http://raisinghaiti.org/advocates.html> ♦

Marching for Farmworker Justice

By Laura Bandini*

The exploitation of our sisters and brothers in the fields must break God's heart. According to the Department of Labor, farmworkers are among the poorest working groups in our country, with double the poverty rate of all other employees.

Compounding their economic oppression, a Human Rights Watch report described that most farmworkers had personally experienced or know other farmworkers who have experienced "rape, stalking, unwanted touching, exhibitionism, or vulgar and obscene language by supervisors, employers, and others in positions of power." However, in part because of the severe power imbalance between these victims and their employers, most said they never reported these and other workplace abuses.

Yet farmworkers have been demanding respect and workplace protections by organizing into labor unions such as the United Farm Workers and Farm Labor Organizing Committee. And in 2011, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a group of farmworkers in Florida, organized a new form of self-protection called the Fair Food Program which is designed, monitored, and enforced by the farmworkers themselves.

Under that program, retailers pay an additional penny per pound for tomatoes. The farmworkers use that money to enforce a code of conduct for their workplaces. The retailers agree to cease doing business with any company growers who fail to comply with the code of conduct. A farmworker-led Fair Food Council enforces that code by operating a 24-hour hotline for farmworker complaints, conducting investigations and workplace audits, and enforcing a zero tolerance policy for forced labor, child labor, and violence including sexual assault. There are also penalties for other infractions including sexual harassment and discrimination.

From 2011 through 2015, the Fair Food Council used the \$20 million raised by the program to investigate 1,100 complaints, and educate 3,500 workers in meetings and 150,000 workers through printed materials and videos.

The Washington Post called the Fair Food Program "one of the great human rights success stories of our day." It has won accolades from the United Nations and the Obama White House.

Because of CIW efforts, fast food franchises such as McDonald's, Taco Bell, and Burger King signed onto the Fair Food Program. It is therefore surprising that Wendy's has refused to join its competitors, opting instead to shift its tomato purchasing to Mexico and adopt a weaker code of conduct that lacks the Fair Food Program's enforcement mechanisms and farmworker empowerment.

Following in the footsteps of the United Farm Workers, the CIW recently called for a consumer boycott of Wendy's to encourage the fast food chain to act justly and join the Fair Food Program. The Labor Team advertised the boycott at the parish and urged our fellow parishioners to join in for an October 30 two-mile mile march from the White House to a local Wendy's to call attention to the boycott.

The march was a powerful blessing. It enabled us to stand publicly with our exploited farmworker sisters and brothers in their struggle for justice. Fifty of us marched. Most were students, some were retirees who had been marching and protesting for farmworker rights since the 60s, and some were members of the clergy and other faith leaders. We began the march with a prayer and chanted in Spanish and English, holding bilingual signs as we walked.

The best part of the long march was the reaction from the public. There were honks and cheers of support, but also questions from people who hadn't heard of the Wendy's boycott and perhaps hadn't been thinking about the working conditions of people who were harvesting their tomatoes. The marchers always peeled off from the group to stop and explain the boycott and the Fair Food Program despite having to run to rejoin the group.

When we arrived at Wendy's, we formed a peaceful picket line on the sidewalk in front of reporters, and the leaders of the march went inside the restaurant to speak to the manager. I was moved by their report afterwards that the manager listened, and the leaders had explained that our interests were aligned with his. All we wanted was for Wendy's to treat with dignity and respect the workers who make its enormous corporate profits. That included both the manager and the workers in the fields.

I left with a greater sense of solidarity with the farmworkers, the marchers, and our community, and a deeper sense of purpose. Social media echo-chamber posts can be cathartic. It is actions and respectful engagements like this that really help impact our world.

If you would like to support the CIW and Fair Food Program, please visit <http://www.allianceforfairfood.org> to sign up for updates, including actions you can take to support the Wendy's boycott. Please email me at htlaura1@gmail.com to join the Labor & Income Inequality Team.

* The opinions expressed in my Advocate columns are mine alone and do not represent those of my employer.

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Team (JPIC) Puts Discipleship into Action

By Michelle Knight, Social Justice and Outreach Minister

The OLQP parish continues to put its discipleship into action in old ways and new. Apologies are extended to any ministries that are overlooked! As always, you can learn more about many of these actions (and others!) on our website (<http://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/>) and in the bulletin (<http://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/bulletins.html>), which is archived on the website. Here are some of the some of the Fall activities by the JPIC Team:

SHOEBOX/SCARF MINISTRY: The parish, once again, responded generously to our items for those who are homeless for the shoebox gifts and handmade scarves. Over 450 scarves were knitted or crocheted and 435 shoeboxes were packed! They were distributed to ASPAN, SEEC, and our food pantry and to a women's shelter in Anacostia. Thanks to all who contributed!

HAITI COMMITTEE: In October, Haiti was hit by a devastating hurricane. Funds from the parish were used to provide disaster relief in Medor. A medical mission flew to Haiti in December. The committee also held its annual Christmas card fundraiser.

VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement): OLQP had a very strong presence at the October All VOICE action held at Oakton High School in Vienna, VA. VOICE members spoke to Northern Virginia state and local elected officials and asked them to support measures that provide justice in our education systems, safety from gun violence, and affordable housing.

FOOD PANTRY: Currently, the pantry serves an average of 170 families each week. Several weeks the pantry has served nearly 200 families. Bad weather tends to bring down the numbers, as many participants walk, use public transportation and/or have babies with them.

GABRIEL PROJECT: Last Christmas, a parishioner held a Christmas party and asked guests to bring diapers for the Gabriel project. Those diapers have been given out all year long and were just exhausted in December! All are encouraged to consider this for your next event! One mentor has been matched with a new Mom.

LABOR AND INCOME INEQUALITY: The group held a one-day fundraiser for Shirlington Employment and Education Center to buy snow shovels. The workers will be able to borrow them to find work shoveling snow. The Labor Team is planning a May Day celebration at the parish on Monday May 1 from 7-9pm in the Founders Room and a special Second Annual Labor Day Mass on Monday 9/4 at 11am. All are welcome!

MATT 25: The store continues to be very busy, serving close to 500 individuals per week and distributing nearly 1,000 items weekly. There are many volunteers, but always a need for more. There is still a need for an overall coordinator.

NEWS OF NEW AND RE-ENERGIZED TEAMS

1. We now have a Gun Violence Prevention Team chaired by Gerry LaPorte. Watch the bulletin for information on meetings and events.
2. Our Immigration team has a new chair with a name familiar to many of you: Greg Staff. Watch the bulletin for news of their activities.

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