



# MISSIONARY SISTERS

*of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus*

www.mscreading.org

# CONNECTIONS

Fall 2016 Newsletter

## Welcome to El Factor!

*Before the zika virus stalled Sr. Lisa Valentini's mission trips to the Dominican Republic, she took a group of senior adult missionaries to the town of El Factor in October of 2015. Following are the memories of Megan, one of these missionaries from the parish of St. Columbkille, Boyertown, PA*

My first mission experience began early in the morning on October 19. My team and I—a group of 8 adults—met at the parking lot of St. Columbkille's at 3:30 a.m. to begin what would be a life-altering trip. There were signs at every turn that something special was taking place. Even though our Pastor Father Marty was not able to travel with us, he got up early and greeted us with Dunkin' Donuts and coffee. We then met our van driver, Vinnie, who just so happens to have family in the Dominican! We then travelled to Newark Airport and checked in with our 16 fifty-pound duffle bags full of donations without a hitch. Only two of our carry-ons were searched in security: mine, because of the 2,500 jingle bells and Ken's because of the pizza crust requested by our mission immersion coordinator, Sr. Lisa Valentini, MSC. Neither search was problematic, so we soon boarded the plane for Santiago.

Upon arriving, some of our duffle bags were searched for expired medicines that missionaries often try to bring into the country. Successfully through security again, we waited for Sr. Lisa to pick us up. How happy we were that she arrived with a van and some help to get



*Some of the missionaries from St. Columbkille's Parish, Boyertown, PA.*

all of our baggage loaded. We met Luis Manuel and Nanau and Sr. Lisa passed around some food and water for all of us and proceeded to tell us that the entire country was in a very severe drought and that water was very hard to come by. For Americans, this means that we stop watering our lawns and washing our cars. **For the Dominicans, it means if they cannot afford it, they have no water.** It also means that foods that are usually staples become very expensive, making it even more difficult to feed a family. Sr. Lisa was able to get water for us but we had to be VERY careful in our usage.

Although the accommodations were very simple, the church recently had bought the property that was formerly a hotel, so we each had our own room and a bathroom. The rooms may not have been what we are used to, but they were all that we needed and each had a large industrial size fan that made sleeping very comfortable.

### A Simple Life Filled with Prayer

Our days were filled with prayer and prayerful work. We attended Mass daily. We had both a morning and an evening prayer; *continued on page 2*

## Chatting About Women Helping Women



As a part of their *Sharing the Heart, Fireside Chat Series*, the MSC Sisters invited a few of Berks County's female leaders to discuss their roles helping women through the nonprofit sector. Joining MSC U.S. Provincial Superior Sr. Mary Anne Bigos (second from right), these women included: Kimberly Rivera, former Executive Director of *Girls on the Run of Berks County*; Regina Rinehimer, Co-Founder of *Women 2 Women*; and Mary Kay Bernosky, Esq., Executive Director of *Berks Women in Crisis* (left to right).

Together with an audience of forty-five on September 28, the women broached topics of both professional and personal interest. Each spoke to her particular nonprofit organization's unique response to circumstances and challenges facing women. **Common among each organization at the mission level was their focus on efforts to lift up women, regardless of circumstance, by creating opportunities for growth and tools to enable self-confidence and self-reliance.** *continued on page 6*

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we prayed before and after meals and every time we travelled. We ate all of our meals together and our down-time was spent preparing for the children or people we would meet the next day. During the course of the week, we travelled to three different schools and basically “took over” either their morning or afternoon sessions. Sr. Lisa would greet them, introduce us and share bible stories laced with singing and dancing. Then it was our turn as missionaries!

We guided them through two activities speaking only English and using gestures. We helped all of the children make tambourines and lions.

A lot of the kids had little experience with cutting so they required some help. How it all happened is still a mystery. Just when we thought it was all lost and there was no way we were going to finish, we heard the jingle bells go to work on the tambourines. Despite the language barrier we were able to convey our pleasure in their work sometimes with just a smile and a “thumbs up.”

During the week we also had two opportunities to throw a party for the local seniors and those with special needs. These two events were my



*The special needs students are a favorite of every mission group Sr. Lisa takes to the Dominican Republic.*

favorite of all the activities we hosted. Maybe it was the party atmosphere, maybe it was the music and the dancing, maybe it was the opportunity to really spend time with and bond with some of the people. Whatever the



*Bag packing is an exhausting part of mission preparation. Thanks to this group of young prior missionaries, the job was conquered quickly.*

were so very appreciative of the simple pleasures we offered: balloons, crayons, ribbons, and jingle bells. I feel so very lucky that I was able to be a part of their lives, even if it was for a short time.

After this experience, I will never be able to vacation in the Dominican again—at least not in the usual spots. How could I travel to the Dominican Republic without visiting the people I now have come to love!

I am truly grateful to all who made this trip possible for me. Thank you to my incredible husband who allowed me to go and took on the family schedule all by himself. Thank you to everyone for their prayers and well wishes; they were much needed and appreciated. Thanks also to all who contributed monetary gifts to defray the costs of the supplies we needed for our activities. And a very special thank you to my good friend Mary Beth Moyer, who upon hearing that we had a jingle bell crisis, went out and bought all she could find!

### Things I learned on this trip:

I want to go back.

I need to learn Spanish.

The simple life is the life to be envied, not the life filled with material distractions.

Everyone comes with a story, and everyone has something to offer.

Jingle bells show up on airport x-rays.

Pizza crusts also show up on airport x-rays.

Garlic powder turns into ROCK in a humid environment.

Flushing the toilet and washing your hands is a privilege.

Preparation for 50 kids means stringing 300 bells!

You don't have to understand the language in order to appreciate and participate in Mass.

There is true power and comfort in prayer.

Bug spray is also a good potpourri. ☽



*Sr. Lisa prays with a young man during the missionaries' special needs school visit.*

## How can YOU play a vital role in the MSC mission?

- Pray for the MSC Sisters and all whom we serve.
- Become a Lay MSC Associate.
- Join our monthly giving club.
- Remember our Sisters in your estate planning.
- Honor a loved one on our Tree of Life.

Attend and/or volunteer at our events, on our committees or on our Development Advisory Board.

For all information, visit [www.mscreading.org](http://www.mscreading.org) or email [cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org](mailto:cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org)

## Sacred Heart Tree of Life



Memorialize and Honor Loved Ones outside the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus by inscribing a tribute in return for your donation. Visit [www.mscreading.org](http://www.mscreading.org) to view options and to order or call (610) 929-2802.

# International News

## MSC GENERALATE INTERNATIONAL VISITS



The multicultural community of Manila

Sr. Barbara Winkler, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Sr. Bonaventura Kim, General Assistant visit their MSC Sisters throughout the world in an effort to better understand, encourage and support their international communities and to dialogue about the present and future of each community through individual and community meetings. The pictures below represent some of these visits. †



Our U.S. Province Sisters in Mexico



The communities of Guatemala and El Salvador



The communities of Madrid and Romania

## INDIAN DISTRICT: NEW MISSION IN ODISHA, NORTH INDIA

On May 20, 2016 our MSC Sisters in the Indian district extended their mission to Northern India to a small village called Kotpad. It takes two days of travel from Bangalore to reach Kotpad located in the Koraput district in the Indian state of Odisha. At present the sisters are collaborating with the CMI Fathers (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) in the field of education. Three of our Sisters, Leela, Bindu and Arokia Mary have willingly accepted to take up this new venture. On the 20th of May an inaugural Eucharist was celebrated and the sisters

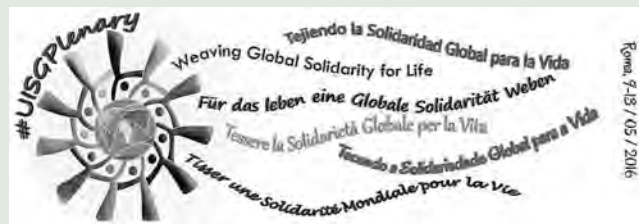
were officially welcomed by the CMI community of Nirmal province. **It is our hope and prayer that this new mission in North India will be successful and will help us to continue to grow and flourish in India as Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart.** We join the Sisters of the Indian District in praying for blessings and guidance upon our Sisters who have taken up this new venture of bringing the message of God's love to North India. †

## UISG PLENARY ASSEMBLY: MAY 9 - 13, 2016 ROME

Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC Superior General participated in the **XX Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General held in Rome** from May 9-13, 2016 where 854 women religious, who are all leaders of female congregations of apostolic life, met to reflect on the theme "Weaving Global Solidarity for Life", "that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

The leaders came from **80 different countries**: some from countries which are well known areas of conflict and war where people endure suffering and deprivation on a daily basis; others from countries where to be Catholic is seen by some as a threat and a reason for their persecution. **Participation in the assembly helps foster international and global collaboration among the religious so that they can continue to be a voice and prophetic witness in the Church and world.**

**Sr. Carmen Sammut, msola, UISG President** emphasized the importance of this gathering every three years as it enables the leaders



to get to know one another and also the contexts and situations we are living in all the corners of the world.

Drawing on the theme of '**Weaving Global Solidarity for Life**', the three main speakers challenged the leaders to reflect on what we live and especially to see how **together**

we can be more effective in our actions. What does it mean to be a religious living today, living and acting in the manner of Jesus? Through listening and dialogue the participants searched for some orientations and actions to be taken **TOGETHER** in favor of the life of our planet, of marginalized people, and for a more concerted and inter-congregational commitment as religious.

During the assembly there was a special audience with Pope Francis and a celebration of the **50 years of UISG, remembering with gratitude all those who have brought it to its mature existence today.** The leaders left the assembly full of hope and enthusiasm for our vocation because, "We are never alone for wherever we are we form part of one big family with the same objective; that of weaving better lives for all." †

# NUN RUN 5K

MSC Sisters  
www.MSCreading.org

## Fun Walk 2016

**Thank you for participating in our  
7th Annual NUN RUN 5k and Fun Walk!**

Hundreds of runners and walkers participated in the seventh annual NUN RUN at Sacred Heart Villa in Reading on Saturday, September 17. One of two annual fundraisers for the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC), the NUN RUN has taken its place as the "most challenging" and "best organized" 5K event in Berks County, according to its many repeat participants. MSC Sisters' Mission Advancement Director Carrie Whitmoyer who organizes the yearly event credits her faithful NUN RUN Committee, her race day volunteers and the Sisters' long-standing mission to be the Heart of Christ for others for the 5K's success. The event, held the third Saturday of each September, is uplifting and truly impactful for the Sisters' missions and lives and for all who participate. To get a glimpse of the day's festivities, visit [www.mscreading.org](http://www.mscreading.org).



Sr. Mary Anne Bigos's opening prayer and the National Anthem, sung by David Decembrino, are a Nun Run crowd favorite.



Team Hildebrand represented as one of six teams who took part in the Nun Run 5K and 1M Walk. Other teams included Team Swann, St. Mary's Kutztown, Team Jordan, LJ's Fitness & Running Club and Charlie Sarti's Third Element.



The Girard Family proves that the Nun Run truly is a family and pedal-friendly event.

# NUN RUN 5K

MSC Sisters  
www.MSCreading.org

## Fun Walk 2017

**SAVE THE DATE: September 16, 2017**

Because of your generosity, we have cleared more than \$17,000 which will be used to supplement our Sisters' mission and retirement costs. Whether as a participant or a volunteer, YOU have made a difference for not only our Sisters, but also for the people to whom they minister. YOU are impactful! To view event pictures, visit <http://mscreading.org/>.

**We recognize the following for their Gold Sponsorship:**

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**We recognize the following for their Silver Sponsorship:**

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**SR. LISA**  
**ROCKS!**  
Courtesy of Doug White

# Thank You, “Bingo Ladies”!



Each and every spring since our Sisters can remember an energetic group of ladies board a bus much like fans who travel to cheer on their favorite sports team. Armed with prizes and tasty treats, they travel to Sacred Heart Villa to cheer on their favorite MSC Sisters. These ladies, organized by Magdalen Garrison, include members of St. Peter's Church, Coplay and members of St. Peter's Altar and Rosary Society. Through fellowship and countless games of Bingo, the ladies renew relationships with the Sisters. Although many of the Sisters who taught them have passed, the ladies of Coplay enjoy the company of the Sisters. Magdalen recounts that **“MSC Sisters taught us for so many years at St. Peter's. We visit because it was a special time in our lives and we are thankful for them.”** These faithful women of St. Peter's remember and cherish the love and dedication of MSC Sisters who educated them and taught them the values

of faith, hope and love. Our Sisters know their yearly bingo visitors as generous and fun people who make them feel valued, loved and remembered. Thank you, ladies of St. Peter's Coplay, for your continued care and enthusiasm! You are loved by the MSC Sisters. †



## In Search of Vocations

by Sr. Marie Raymond Gazo, MSC

How do I know my vocation in life? Where can I learn and consider a vocation as a religious Sister? These are just a few of the questions posed by young women during FIAT DAYS 2016.

During the month of July, the MSC Sisters were invited to join Sisters from various communities to help enquiring women discover more about their vocation in life. Sisters Mary Seibert and Marie Raymond Gazo attended the FIAT DAYS sponsored by the Harrisburg Diocese and Sisters Mary Saponara and Marie Raymond Gazo joined the staff for the FIAT DAYS in the Allentown Diocese.

For four or five days, high school and college-aged women entered a retreat period of prayer, which included Mass, Eucharistic adoration, Liturgy of the Hours (the Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church), Rosary and Stations of the Cross. The women also accepted instruction on such things as listening to God in prayer, and they learned themes central to religious life: the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, community life, and the special charisms/gifts

each religious community offers to the Church. These thoughtful days also included fun activities such as sports, crafts, and even a talent show. There also was ample time to just “hang out” with the Sisters for informal chats or serious discussions about life choices and mature decisions.

“FIAT” or “May it be done to me as God wills” was Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation, and so we Sisters ask all Catholics to join us in our search for vocations; to pray that as Mary replied, these young women who are searching to answer God's call in life, will be open and generous in their responses. †



As a young Sister, Marie Raymond Gazo taught children in various Catholic elementary schools.



Today, Sr. Raymond's vocation has taken her to Allentown, PA, where she ministers to the elderly and to shut-ins in addition to her work with the people of St. John the Baptist Parish and the many duties she fulfills on behalf of her MSC community.

# Donor Tributes



Sr. Barbara Daniels began her ministry as Sacramental Coordinator at the UGA Catholic Center in 2012. She followed two previous MSC Sisters in this role, Sisters Barbara Winkler and Marie Clark. In total, MSC Sisters have been in mission among the people of Georgia in various ministries since 1938.

"We wish to bring to your attention the superb ministry of Sister Barbara Daniels, Sacramental Coordinator at the University of Georgia Catholic Center. [When my Dad died] we were referred to Sister Barbara, who helps families plan funeral masses. The family dynamics among my Dad, brother and me were less than functional and planning this Mass was difficult. Sister Barbara did not know Dad, [my brother] Michael or me, but she took us in shepherding us through this difficult time with compassion, understanding, and love while not judging us. She made all the difference for us during this very difficult time, making the planning process from start to finish very healing.

On behalf of our family my brother is sending a check in appreciation and gratitude for Sister Barbara and her ministry at the UGA Catholic Center. We are deeply grateful to her and to all of the missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart, who have such a long and distinguished history in the Athens' community. Your congregation's presence in the Athens' community and in all of the lives it has touched has been and continues to be a gift beyond measure." — Marcia

*"...a gift beyond measure."*

**Donors like YOU made Sr. Barb's ministry to Marcia's family possible.  
All our Sisters appreciate your support as they continue to guide more families  
and individuals through challenging times.**

"I am returning the \$100 that I won in your sweepstakes. First thing I've ever won in my 87+ years. I was, as well as my three children, educated by the MSC Sisters at Holy Guardian Angels. They taught us respect and gave us a great educational foundation for our success in life, for which I am so very grateful!" — Catherine

**Each of YOU who responds to our spring and fall  
sweepstakes calendar provides care for our  
retired Sisters who have lived lives of service  
and mission on behalf of the love of the  
Sacred Heart of Jesus.**

*Thank You!*



Sr. Nanette who taught at H.G.A. pulls a winning ticket!

## Women Helping Women

continued from page 1

Both panelists and audience members described the evening as "uplifting, wonderful, affirming, amazing, positive and a blessing". And truly it was another Fireside Chat to remember, because each of us needs to know and to share the impactful ways ordinary people respond to extraordinary circumstance in their everyday lives. This knowledge provides us strength, faith in each other and a sense of community. May we continue to live with Heart! ♥



# IN MEMORIAM



**Sister Janet Gallant, MSC**  
(Sister Francette) 1937-2016

Sister Janet was the eldest of four sisters and two brothers. Having discovered our community in a Catholic magazine, she entered our aspirancy, Mount Saint Michael High School, in 1952.

Sister Janet was an excellent elementary teacher. The children knew she cared about them and she was able to motivate them to

work hard and to do their best. For eighteen years she taught in several parish schools in Pennsylvania: St. Henry's, Philadelphia; St. Michael's, Lansford; Assumption BVM, Slatington; St. John's, Allentown; St. Cyril and Methodius, Coaldale; St. John's, Haycock; and Holy Family, Nazareth. Sister Janet generously responded to an emergency request to teach typing and business classes at Little Flower High School, Philadelphia. She was there for seven years. Sister was a member of the provincial council from 1972-1976. She was then asked to study and work in the area of finance and served as our provincial treasurer for four years. After this, as the administrator of our motherhouse, St. Michael Convent, she exhibited a good rapport with the staff and was excellent in organizational management.

In 1994, Sister Janet responded to a request from the National Religious Formation Conference and moved to Silver Spring, Maryland where she was the administrative assistant to the executive director. After she completed her term of service there, Sister was transferred to St. Mary's Hospital in Athens, Georgia, where she worked as the computer specialist assisting in all the offices throughout the hospital.

In 1998 Sister Janet was asked to come to the generalate to assist with various administrative projects. One of her tasks was to reformat the constitutions when we incorporated the scripture passages and selected readings from Frs. Chevalier and Linckens. Sister also prepared the several reflection booklets in preparation for our congregational centennial. On her return from Sutri in 2002 she took up the task of administrative assistant in Sacred Heart Villa.

Sister Janet always said she wanted to be a librarian and in 2007 she finally got her wish to serve as one in Our Lady of Hungary Regional School in Northampton for some years.

Sister Janet was a woman of many talents who served in various ministries. She delighted in all of them and accomplished them exceptionally well. Sister Janet loved her vocation and was a fun person to have in the community. She knew how to enjoy life and how to bring joy to others.

In 2010, Sister Janet retired due to the memory decline she was experiencing. This came as a surprise to all of us, because if anyone kept her mind active throughout her life, it was Sister Janet. When her physical and mental needs required more than the staff of Sacred Heart Villa could provide, she was admitted to Seton Manor Nursing home in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania.

Sister Janet loved her family and her family loved her. In her last days, her sister, Charlene, was her constant companion. ☩

## Congratulations, Sr. Virginia Longcope!

Our very own Sr. Virginia Longcope has been honored by the Northampton County Area Agency on Aging as one of Northampton County's Outstanding Seniors of 2016. This award recognizes "seniors who have contributed their time and talents for the benefit of others in the community." Held on April 28, the ceremony recognized ten seniors and one group. Sr. Virginia was commended for restoring lives by breaking the cycle of addiction through her founding and administration of Stephen's Place in Bethlehem. Operating as a half-way house, Stephen's Place is built on the belief that men coming out of prison should have "a safe, spiritual environment in order to address early recovery from substance abuse as well as develop personal life skills." To this end, Stephen's Place provides hope and help to these non-violent male offenders to rebuild their lives.

We share great joy in Sr. Virginia's ability to change lives through our common MSC mission to be the Heart of Christ for people everywhere. To learn more about Sr. Virginia and Stephen's Place visit [www.stephens-place.org](http://www.stephens-place.org) and [www.mscreading.org](http://www.mscreading.org).



Sr. Virginia Longcope celebrates achievement with one of her Stephen's Place residents.

## BE IMPACTFUL

### Consider Membership in our Monthly Giving Program

- Your tax deductible gift arrives automatically each month and is recorded on your monthly statement
- Your monthly commitment serves as an impactful stream of guaranteed income for our MSC Sisters
- Your gift benefits every MSC Sister and every person served by an MSC Sister
- Your electronic gift is green

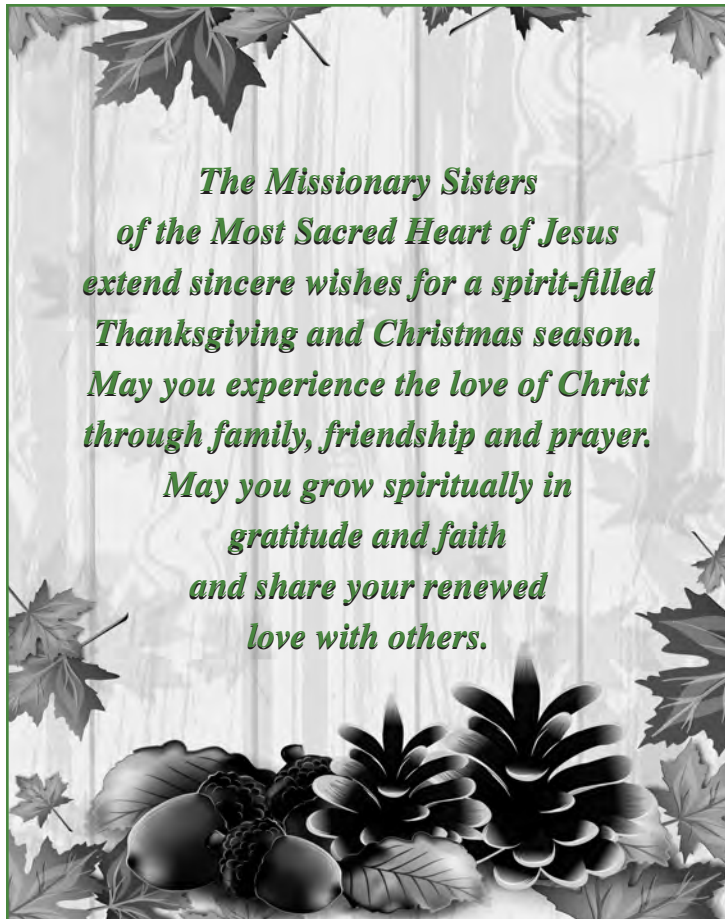
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or contact Mission Advancement at  
[cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org](mailto:cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org) or 610-929-2802.

*Are you or a loved one seeking Independent and Personal Care options? Sacred Heart Villa in Reading, PA, offers compassionate care guided by the spirit and charism of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Call 610-929-5751 and visit the Sacred Heart Villa website, [www.SacredHeartVillaPA.org](http://www.SacredHeartVillaPA.org) to learn more and to schedule a tour today.*



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*The Missionary Sisters  
of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
extend sincere wishes for a spirit-filled  
Thanksgiving and Christmas season.  
May you experience the love of Christ  
through family, friendship and prayer.  
May you grow spiritually in  
gratitude and faith  
and share your renewed  
love with others.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 2016

- Nov. 30**     **Advent Agape** – Begin the season of Advent with a “love feast” marking the beginning of our anticipation of the birth of Christ, the Heart of God on earth. Agape will begin at 6:30 pm and will be followed by fellowship, scones and tea.  
Sacred Heart Villa  
51 Seminary Avenue  
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RSVP [cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org](mailto:cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org)

### 2017

- January**     **Donor Appreciation Event**  
More information to follow.
- April 2**      **Benefit Dinner**  
SAVE THE DATE
- April TBA**     **FiresideChat**   
**Women Helping Communities –**  
**the Berks/Lehigh Connection** featuring  
Sr. Virginia Longcope of Stephen's Place  
and Christine Folk of Mary's Shelter