

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

*Serving the elderly poor in  
San Francisco since 1901.*

Winter, 2013

**ST. ANNE'S HOME**  
300 Lake Street  
San Francisco, CA



**ST. ANNE'S HOME**

## Feelin' Groovy

### The art of feeling great is thriving at St. Anne's

**BY: MARIA CUNNINGHAM**

Community living calls for different adjustments for different people. For some it can be as straightforward as adjusting to the change in personal routine and for others as complex as coping with losing the ability to support themselves. There are a variety of programs at St. Anne's that address these issues and more. But, one of our newest and most popular programs is just about feeling good about life.

The Feelin' Groovy group spearheaded by our Social Worker, Beth Powers, and our Creative Arts Director, Tim Lobacz, meets once a week, and because the group has generated such interest among our Residents, two groups have been formed. I was lucky enough to be able to attend one of the Feelin' Groovy sessions as an independent observer, and what a treat it was for me! There were smiles and laughter everywhere.

The format was very informal and inviting. Simple group questions like, "how many have seen snow," "how many have siblings," or "how many languages do you speak," encouraged a flurry of discussions. The

questions served as ice breakers, but often took the participants back to happy times that prompted the sharing of special memories. The focal point of the exercise was to focus on all the things that make one happy. Concentrating on all the good things, large and small, embracing the positive things in life, and building up from that. It was a wonderful exercise with a one-size fits all message. One Resident summed it up nicely, "It's good to laugh, and even better to share good laughs."

The overall goal of the program is to stimulate triggers that allow participants to find their own "happy space" and to help them develop positive coping skills. Each week participants will engage in guided meditations that nurture the soul intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. This will include everything from art projects to acting games to time with our chaplain, as well as one-on-one hand and shoulder massage. The group welcomes their new afternoon indulgence with anticipation as they look forward to learning more about themselves, as well, as each other. As an added bonus, it has also provided them with another opportunity to make new friends.



*Residents along with leaders after completing an art project that took them back to their early years. Back row – left to right: Claire Casabonne, Mary Mullen, Margaret Webber, Beth Powers, Tim Lobacz; Front row – left to right: Annabelle Carberry, Sama I. Sandy, and Lorraine Higgins.*



*Edith Hartnett engaged in her Feelin' Groovy art project.*

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

## My Summer at St. Anne's

BY: AUDREY URLACHER

This past summer I was a hospitality intern at St. Anne's Home as part of a summer program hosted by the Little Sisters of the Poor for college aged Catholic women. The program includes living at a Little Sisters of the Poor home and helping where needed.

I was a little apprehensive about the whole experience because I did not know what I would be doing and because I would be sharing space with an intern that I did not know. My fears were quickly put to rest. My fellow intern, Mariah, and I became adventure buddies on the weekends and helped each other learn the ropes at St. Anne's during the week.



Summer Intern Audrey Urlacher.

As a nursing student, I was given the opportunity to accompany Residents to medical appointments, and attend care plan conferences to learn about how the staff manages care for the Residents. I assisted Residents who needed help getting to their restorative exercises, helped with activities, organized craft projects, and even helped with laundry.

St. Anne's is a wonderful place. They offer the Residents a rich spectrum of activities ranging from daily Mass and praying of the rosary to riding in antique cars through the Presidio, along with a variety of interactive activities, like Summer Olympic Games. In addition, the staff at St. Anne's is the friendliest I have ever encountered, which I think can be attributed to the Sisters keeping the spirit of St. Jeanne Jugan thriving in their home.

Interning at St. Anne's Home was a true blessing for me; both because of the many amazing and eye opening experiences not only at St. Anne's, but also in the city of San Francisco. San Francisco opened my eyes to the effects that poverty and mental illness can have and it made me wonder, "What can I do for these people?" I realized I can do nothing for them except to be an instrument in God's hand, and to love them where they are.

I thank the Little Sisters of the Poor, the staff at St. Anne's, and most importantly the Residents for opening their home to me and accepting me into their beloved family. I greatly miss St. Anne's and pray that God has it in his plans for me to come back and visit soon.

### JOIN OUR E-COMMUNITY

In an effort to reduce mailing costs, we would like to increase our electronic communications with our community. Please share your email address with us by going to our website at [www.littlesistersofthepoors.org](http://www.littlesistersofthepoors.org) and click on "Register Here". Please be assured that we never share your information with anyone.

## Our New Chaplain



Fr. Norman serenading Residents Peg Webber and Sama I. Sandy during his daily afternoon concert.

BY: MARIA CUNNINGHAM

Fr. Norman Vitug joined us this Fall from Pampanga, Philippines. Fr. Norman has embraced his new ministry at St. Anne's with enthusiasm and vitality. He admits that his clinical pastoral education has made his adjustment from building churches in the Philippines and serving as pastor for 13 years an easy one. "The most difficult thing for me was to leave my home and family, but now I have a home here. I have been adopted into this new family, and I have found a lot of mothers," he says with a smile.

Fr. Norman finds his new ministry both humbling and rewarding. He visits with Residents daily, especially with the infirm, and greatly enjoys dining with them. "I find that the elderly are not merely old people," he says, "they are really people just beginning again, and I am happy to be a part of their new beginning." He has also started the new tradition of afternoon guitar concerts in the Residence halls. He has always enjoyed playing the guitar and now enjoys it personally, as well as through the eyes of the Residents. "I love seeing the sparkle in their eyes and sometimes even tears of sentimentality. It makes me realize the presence of God, because where there is joy, there is God," he shares. One of the highlights of Fr. Norman's new ministry at St. Anne's is offering daily Mass and giving homilies. "Homilies are the only commodity that people do not pay for, but assures that God fills his people with love, kindness and grace," he explains.

*Welcome to the St. Anne's family, Fr. Norman. We are delighted to have you with us!*



## A Bridge for Life

The sky has cast an omnipotent darkness  
in a strong tenacious wind  
accompanied by a heavy storm  
with the "thundering chariot" of gloomy clouds  
causing the gigantic waives to crash against the shore,  
lambasting each post of the bridge that has been constructed.

Staring cowardly at the bridge  
and the rolling of the angry waves, I wondered.

Why is nature significant?  
What makes the bridge still stand?

In the midst of my soliloquy,  
my heart continues to ask, who am I?  
To discover a new meaning and purpose in life,  
To eagerly crave to have a new life,  
Can I accept the challenge to "rage against the dying light?"

In my darkest needs  
my "faith never wavered,  
and my heart has not surrendered."  
Hungering for your love intensely,  
Your call resounds strongly in my heart and soul.  
I only need your infinite mercy and unconditional love.  
With your unfailing grace, I believe  
to die totally to myself  
I will be with you in that "desert of nothing"  
where Your heart and mine are one.

*Elizabeth S. Herrera*



**Elizabeth Herrera, our Resident Poet.**

Elizabeth has resided at St. Anne's Home since 2008, and did not start writing poetry until coming to St. Anne's. She explains that she was inspired to start writing when she could no longer do her volunteer work, and after the death of a dear friend. "My body slowed down, but I wanted to keep busy and to continue exercising my mind," she says. She is not sure what prompted her to do poetry, but credits everything to the intercession of the Holy Spirit and is certain that the memories of her friend continue to

inspire her work.

Elizabeth's poem, *A Bridge for Life*, has advanced to the semi-final round of the 2013 National Amateur Poetry Competition. As a semi-finalist, Elizabeth's work will be featured in *This Time Around*, a multi-volume collection showcasing the work of new and notable poets from around the world.

***Congratulations Elizabeth and thank you for inspiring all of us to never stop reaching for the stars.***

## A Wine Country Outing

**BY: MARISA MIZONO**

On June 24th, the Little Sisters of the Poor Auxiliary treated 16 Residents to a fun outing and lunch in the wine country destination town of Sonoma. A luxury charter bus transported the Residents, out of the summer fog and into the sunshine of the wine country. They enjoyed a delicious traditional Mexican meal, complete with margaritas at the well-known La Casa Restaurant on the town's square. The Residents were also treated to an exciting raffle, compliments of auxiliary member Linda Grimes and her team of raffle ladies. The outing was capped by a tour of the Sonoma highlights and proved to be a lovely little summer getaway for all.

Our auxiliary takes a great deal of pleasure in being able to arrange for these special periodic outings for the Residents and sharing in quality time with each of them. The next outing will be lunch in late November at the popular Mission Rock Resort, an old time waterfront bar and grill on the southern waterfront of San Francisco Bay. It promises to be a good time out for all!



**Residents Eileen Spiers and Vera DuRonde sharing their special day in Sonoma with auxiliary member, Loma McNulty.**

## Save the Date

**5th Annual Swing and a Prayer  
Golf Tournament**

*Friday, April 25, 2014*

*Presidio Golf Course  
San Francisco*

# A Simple Note

By: Mother Superior

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Visit us at [www.littlesistersofthepoorsanfrancisco.org](http://www.littlesistersofthepoorsanfrancisco.org)

## Seeking Christmas Angels



**Mother Margaret and Mother Maria Christine at the Golden Jubilee Celebration.**

Dear Friends,

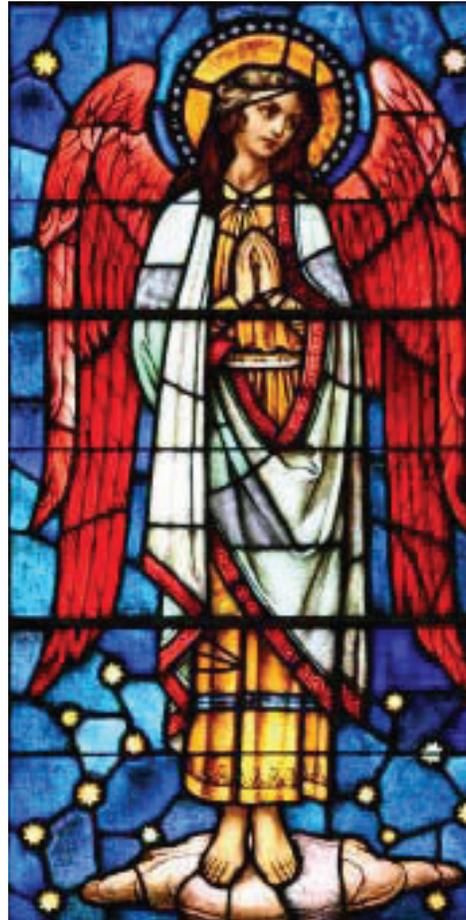
The Year of Faith went by quickly and came to a close on November 24, 2013, the Solemnity of Christ the King. This special year witnessed many distinctive events, the unusual event of a Pope's resignation and a conclave which was able to promptly elect a non-European successor, barely considered to have been among the "papabili." How beautiful to think that the celebration of my Golden Jubilee was also during this "Year of Faith" for it is FAITH that gives true meaning to our consecrated life! The presence of so many Little Sisters, Association Members, Residents, Employees, and Friends of the home made the day an unforgettable experience of love. It was great to see the happy faces of all the guests.

Beyond the gifts that we know will come. God prepares daily gifts for us. The beauty of Autumn has filled the air and Thanksgiving provided us with the opportunity to remember our blessings and thank God for the uniqueness of each day. As we welcome the Season of Advent, we, the Little Sisters and Residents, extend our profound gratitude to you for your help, patience, and good wishes throughout this past year. We thank you most sincerely for your strong FAITH in us and for keeping us afloat with love, prayers, and generosity.

Together let us remember to celebrate the birth of Christ as God's greatest gift of love to the human race. Wishing you a very blessed Christmas Season. The Little Sisters along with the Residents of our home will keep you and your loved ones in our daily prayers.

May God Bless You!

*Sr. Margaret Patricia, lsp*



Last year Christmas Angels helped us raise funds needed to replace our Nurse Call System, which is vital to the care of our Residents. That work is currently in progress thanks in great part to your response to our call for help.

***Our home seems new, but it is now over 30 years old and in need of significant repairs.***

Sadly, there has been serious damage to our building caused by water from various sources, including rain, hillside run-off, and inadequate drainage. We now need to do everything possible to correct this situation and to prevent any further damage. These concerns are currently under review by both civil and geotechnical engineers, and the determination of the total cost for this project is underway. We do not yet have exact numbers, but we know that the cost will be substantial and we need to rely on Christmas Angels now more than ever.

**Your support of this critical project is greatly needed. Donations of any amount will be deeply appreciated and can be made by mail in the enclosed envelope or online by credit card, e-check, or direct deposit through our donations link at [www.littlesistersofthepoorsf.org](http://www.littlesistersofthepoorsf.org)**

***We believe in miracles and trust in our Christmas Angels year after year. We believe that Divine Providence is truly manifested through the goodness and generosity of people who open their hearts to our mission and partner with us in our journey to provide a loving home to the elderly in our community. We thank you for believing in us and appreciating that the value of life does not diminish with age.***



***A view from inside our walls and a glimpse of existing damage to the area between the laundry and loading dock area.***