



SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Department: City Manager

Prepared by: Lindsay Lara, City Clerk

City Manager Approval: _____

TOPIC: CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2020

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO RECIPIENT OF THE RICHARD P. O'BRIEN AND MARY FERRARIO O'BRIEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2020

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution of Appreciation

BACKGROUND: In March 2001, J. Michael Mahoney established an endowment in honor of former Planning Commissioner Richard O'Brien and his wife, Mary Ferrario O'Brien. The endowment funds an annual "Citizen of the Year" award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an individual in the San Rafael community who has made exceptional contributions to the City, making it a better place to live or work. In addition to public recognition, the endowment provides a cash award to the recipient.

In September 2001, the City Council adopted procedures for the "Citizen of the Year" award program and process. The procedures include the appointment of a Section Committee to review nominations from the public and recommend an award recipient to the City Council. The Selection Committee includes two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, a member of the O'Brien family, a representative from the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, and neighborhood community representatives (e.g., Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods).

The call for nominations was initiated in November 2019. Once the current year nominations have been submitted, they are reviewed along with the nominations submitted over the past three years (in this case 2017, 2018 and 2019). Last year's Citizen of the Year recipient (Jeff Craemer – 2019) was eliminated from the pool of eligible candidates.

This year, a total of 19 candidates were considered. Of this total, 16 nominations were submitted for five nominees this year and 14 were carried over from the past three years. On January 30, 2020, the Selection Committee met to review and consider the nominations. The Committee selected the Dominican Sisters as the twentieth recipient of the award.

FOR CITY CLERK ONLY

Council Meeting: _____

Disposition: _____

As summarized in the attached Resolution and nomination materials, The Dominican Sisters were selected as Citizen of the Year due to their impact on the community in the areas of education, social justice and health care. For many years in San Rafael they, and the college that they started and fostered, have been an unparalleled asset for our growing City. They have provided a beautiful campus atmosphere centered in a residential area, attracting students from around the world. They have shared their campus and resources with the public at large. Their involvement in social justice issues from immigration to affordable housing to advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community has been a beacon of inspiration and hope for all. The Sisters spent nearly two years pursuing the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent project, attending all City meetings and meeting with neighbors, spending their own funds to remodel and bring the Convent wing into compliance with Code requirements, in order to welcome two previously homeless families under their Dominican roof. The Sisters' collective accomplishments and their quiet determination has bettered not only our community but also everyone they have touched, which has earned them the receipt of the City of San Rafael's Citizen of the Year Award for 2020.

If approved by the City Council, the Dominican Sisters will be recognized at this year's State of the City Dinner, which is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2020.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: The call for nominations for Citizen of the Year was advertised in Snapshot (the City Manager's e-newsletter), the City website, NextDoor social media, and with neighborhood associations.

FISCAL IMPACT: As the Citizen of the Year Award program is privately funded, there is no financial impact to the City of San Rafael. However, the recipient of this award receives a check in the amount of \$2,500 from the Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Fund, which is administered by the Marin Community Foundation.

OPTIONS:

1. Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation conferring the Citizen of the Year Award to the Dominican Sisters
2. Return the recommendation to the Selection Committee for reconsideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution of Appreciation
2. Nomination materials for the Dominican Sisters



City of San Rafael
Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien
Citizen of the Year Award
Presented to
The Dominican Sisters

WHEREAS, The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have had an unparalleled impact on the community in the areas of education, social justice and health care. For more than 100 years, the Sisters have provided uncompromising leadership in the community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University, The Garden School, San Domenico School, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for individuals over 50 years of age, providing an educational world with a variety of courses to meet the inquiring minds of many of our community members; and

WHEREAS, The Sisters' dedication to the local community and the world at large is unsurpassed. For many years in San Rafael they, and the college that they started and fostered, have been an unparalleled asset for our growing City. They have provided a beautiful campus atmosphere centered in a residential area, attracting students from around the world. They have shared their campus and resources with the public at large. Angelica Hall provides a wonderful venue for guest speakers and authors to talk to hundreds of local residents. The Santa Sabina Center is a unique sanctuary in Marin where people of all beliefs and cultural backgrounds can find sacred space and contemplative quiet. The Sisters share this space with others for retreats, musical programs, conferences, private study and reflection, etc.; and

WHEREAS, their involvement in social justice issues from immigration to affordable housing to advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community has been a beacon of inspiration and hope for all; and

WHEREAS, in an age where incivility permeates all levels of our society, the Sisters have shown us what it means to be thoughtful, patient and understanding. This was the case when the Sisters pursued the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent project, opening their home to house two single mothers and their small children. The Sisters spent nearly two years in the process, attending all City meetings and meeting with neighbors, spending their own funds to remodel and bring the Convent wing into compliance with Code requirements, in order to welcome two previously homeless families under their Dominican roof. These women and their children are experiencing living in a safe, loving home environment, benefitting from the support and companionship of the Dominican Sisters. There aren't many who would voluntarily open their home to house the homeless. The Sisters did it voluntarily and not without spending countless hours, dollars and even their own elbow grease (the Sisters painted the wing themselves) to see their dream of sharing their home with the less fortunate become a reality; and

WHEREAS, The Sisters collective accomplishments of their quiet determination has bettered not only our community but also everyone they have touched. They are silent warriors who continue to persevere, selflessly pursuing their vision statement: "We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person. We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems that deprive any person of dignity." All this for others and without any expectation of acknowledgement. Remarkable, unsung, influential and visionary leaders, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael. The Sisters walk the walk and talk the talk, working tirelessly to advance positive change in our San Rafael community and the world.

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the San Rafael City Council expresses its appreciation to The Dominican Sisters efforts on behalf of their community and hereby awards them the Richard O'Brien and the Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Award.

Mayor

From: [Forms Admin](#)
To: [Lindsay Lara](#)
Subject: New submission from Citizen of the Year
Date: Friday, January 04, 2019 2:52:57 PM

Date

01/01/2019

Nominee for Citizen of the Year

Dominican Sisters of San Rafael San Rafael

Nominee's Home Address

1520 Grand Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
United States
[Map It](#)

Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?

- Yes

Nominee's Phone

(415) 453-8303

Nominee's Email

[REDACTED]

Your Name

Diane Henderson

Your Address

[REDACTED]
United States
[Map It](#)

Your Phone

[REDACTED]

Your Email

[REDACTED]

What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have had an unparalleled impact on the community in the areas of education, social justice and health care. For more than 100 years, the Sisters have provided uncompromising leadership in the community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University, The Garden School, San Domenico School (started in San Rafael and relocated to San Anselmo), and the Osher Living Learning Institute for individuals over 50 years of age, providing an educational world with a variety of courses to meet the inquiring minds of many of our citizens. Their involvement in social justice issues from immigration to affordable housing to advocating on behalf of the

most vulnerable in our community has been a beacon of inspiration and hope for all. The Sisters have joined other congregations in operating Dignity Health, a not-for-profit public corporation, operating hospitals and ancillary care facilities in three states.

The Sisters' dedication to the local community and the world at large is unsurpassed. For many years in San Rafael they, and the college that they started and fostered, have been an unparalleled asset for our growing City. They have provided a beautiful campus atmosphere centered in a residential area, attracting students from around the world. They have shared their campus and resources with the public at large. Angelica Hall provides a wonderful venue for guest speakers and authors to talk to hundreds of local residents. The Santa Sabina Center is a unique sanctuary in Marin where people of all beliefs and cultural backgrounds can find sacred space and contemplative quiet. The Sisters share this space with others for retreats, musical programs, conferences, private study and reflection, etc.

Additionally, they also provide financial support in the form of Vision Grants for both local and international causes, to support critically valuable ministries in areas where they don't have Sisters living or in ways that they are not qualified to provide. Most recently, the Sisters were Vision Partners with a therapeutic equestrian program at St. Vincent's School for Boys and a hygiene, health and literacy program for YienDak women in southern Laos. And it doesn't stop there. A classic example of an innovative way that the Sisters support one of many causes, is their support of the Alzheimer's Association. The Sisters have long supported the Alzheimer's Association, and since many of their own Sisters are unable to travel to a city where one of the fundraising Walks to End Alzheimer's takes place, for many years they have instead sponsored their own walk on the Path of Hope at Lourdes Convent and subsequently sent a generous donation to the Alzheimer's Association.

The Sisters' contributions to education, social justice and ministry to the community are well known and priceless; far exceeding the scope of normal civic responsibility.

What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?

The activities of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have impacted countless lives in our local community and around the world. Perhaps the most obvious impact of the Dominican Sisters' presence in San Rafael is their creation of the beautiful campus of Dominican University of California and the lovely Santa Sabina Center.

The Sisters' efforts have supported an educational facility which has trained many of the teachers in our City and County for over 94 years. Under the leadership of Sister Samuel Conlan, a model Development Center for children with special needs was created on the Dominican Campus, followed by development of a Special Education Teacher Training Program that has earned statewide recognition for excellence. The Dominican Sisters also founded Dominican College's nursing program which received accreditation from the National League for Nursing in 1990.

Thousands have been educated by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael at all levels from pre-school through graduate school. In addition, 120 Dominican Sisters have ministered at St. Raphael's Parish and School since 1890. Homeless have been housed. Hungry have been fed. Funds have been raised and donated to local causes.

The Sisters' contributions to education, social justice and ministry to the community are well known and priceless. Particularly true in today's important areas of immigration, affordable housing and advocacy for those who are in most need of social services and who are least able to take care of themselves. The Sister walk the walk and talk the talk, working tirelessly to advance positive change in our San Rafael community and the world.

The Sisters have made a tremendous difference in the lives of two young mothers and their small children, taking them into their home. The Sisters spent months at City hearings and ultimately gained approval to remodel (at their own expense) the Yellow Hallway of Lourdes Convent in 2017 to welcome these formerly homeless families under their roof to live with them in a safe, loving home environment. These women and children can attest to the huge difference the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have made in their lives.

Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.

The collective time and energy that the Sisters have provided to our San Rafael community over the past 125+ years is immeasurable. Since 1890 the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have been a hidden jewel to the City of San Rafael and its history. They have provided uncompromising leadership in the

community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University, Osher Living Learning Institute, San Domenico School (now located in San Anselmo), and the Garden School, educating thousands of students from preschool through graduate school. Their combined efforts have supported an educational facility which has trained many of the teachers in our City and County for more than 94 years. Their superb nursing program, graduating students in varying medical disciplines, provides nurses to our hospitals and medical facilities.

There is no limit to the time and energy that the Dominican Sisters have dedicated to our community and other efforts. Over 120 Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have ministered at St. Raphael's Parish and School since 1890. In 2017, Sister Joan Hanna retired after 60 years as a Dominican Sister, the last 13 as Director of St. Raphael's Pre School. Sister Adele Rowland, an artist who studied under Ansel Adams and pioneered color photo montage images long before the advent of Photoshop, used Marin images in her works which are treasured around the world. Sister Carla Kovack has for several years taken local Dominican students to Uganda, delivering water filtration systems, mosquito bedding nets, school supplies, play equipment for the children and funds to help complete a maternity wing at the local health center. Sister Adele Gerlach at age 80+ was leading groups including San Rafael residents on 100-mile walking pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago, in Spain. Sister Marion Irvine is approaching her 90th year, but continues to be committed to serving others by raising social consciousness, primarily through teaching, administration and example. She holds the title "Promoter of Peace, Justice and the Care of Creation" and works tirelessly with others to address issues relating to human trafficking and has worked to create safe houses, protect the environment, provide affordable housing, improve education and to further other social justice issues. Sister Marion began running at forty-eight years old, ran competitively for fifteen years and was the oldest woman ever to qualify for the Olympic trials in long-distance running in 1983. Clearly there is no limit to the time and energy that the Dominican Sisters dedicate to our community and to the future of our community.

In 1946 Sister Patricia Lyons founded and became Principal of The Garden School, a preschool and kindergarten located on the Dominican Campus, educating generations of San Rafael children. On the 50th anniversary of The Garden School in 1996, then Governor of California, Pete Wilson, sent a congratulatory letter to Sister Patricia, saying in part: 'You have touched the lives of three generations of Californians, providing each with a strong foundation with which they can meet the challenges of the future. You have inspired love and loyalty from your friends, colleagues and numerous students, and you have bequeathed to Marin County, and all California Schools, a legacy of academic excellence.' Since the 1890s, the influence of the Dominican Sisters has been widely experienced primarily in the areas of education and social justice, though health care is another strong dimension in the Sisters' mission as they have joined other congregations in operating Dignity Health. The Sisters collective accomplishments of being good, contributing and active citizens in their San Rafael community and the world while maintaining the educational and social commitment they made some 128 years ago continues to this day.

Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.

Founded by the Dominican Sisters in 1890, Dominican College was long associated with women's education. It was the first Catholic college in California to grant a bachelor's degree to women. It was a daring move in the 1970s, when, under the leadership of the Dominican Sisters, the College was transformed from an all-women's college into a coeducational institution. Seeing the need for the College to be an integral part of the local community, the Sisters expanded the Board of Trustees to include laypersons, non-Catholics and men, to reflect the members of the business and professional community. In 2000, Dominican College of San Rafael became Dominican University of California. The new name recognizes Dominican's status as a university with graduate degree programs, a diverse student body and a global perspective, a significant transformation over more than 100 years from the all-women's college started by the Dominican Sisters.

In an age where incivility permeates all levels of our society, the Sisters have shown us what it means to be thoughtful, patient and understanding. This was the case when the Sisters pursued the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent project, opening their home to house two single mothers and their small children. The Sisters spent nearly two years in the process, attending all City meetings and meeting with neighbors, spending their own funds to remodel and bring the Convent wing into compliance with Code requirements, in order to welcome two previously homeless families under their Dominican roof. These women and their children are experiencing living in a safe, loving home environment, benefitting from the

support and companionship of the Dominican Sisters. There aren't many who would voluntarily open their home to house the homeless. The Sisters did it voluntarily and not without spending countless hours, dollars and even their own elbow grease (the Sisters painted the wing themselves) to see their dream of sharing their home with the less fortunate become a reality.

To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael are unsung heroes, quietly working to fulfill their commitment to raise social consciousness primarily through teaching, administration and example. The Sisters present a steady, balanced and peaceful presence at community meetings, creating an atmosphere of respect and trust. This was most evident at the recent hearings to allow the Sisters to convert the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent to housing for two women and their young children, previously without permanent housing. This program allowed the Sisters to open their home to two formerly homeless families, allowing them to live with the Sisters for two years, as the women transition to fully independent living. In their words, the Sisters were "thrilled" to open their home to others, allowing the Sisters to fulfill a dream that began in 2015, with nothing in it for them but the joy of helping others, opening their hearts and home to the less fortunate.

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael are an unparalleled source of "good" for our entire community. Every project they have undertaken has fostered a greater sense of justice, fairness and humbleness for all involved. The Sisters, and the school they started and fostered have been a unique and unsurpassed asset for our growing City. While administration has been transferred to lay people in recent years, the guiding principles the Sisters established at the time of the founding of Dominican College remain intact and the Sisters remain very involved with its operation, among other things as instructors and as members of the governing Board of Dominican University of California.

The Sisters collective accomplishments of their quiet determination has bettered not only our community but also everyone they have touched. They are silent warriors who continue to persevere, selflessly pursuing their vision statement: "We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person. We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems that deprive any person of dignity." All this for others and without any expectation of acknowledgement. Remarkable, unsung, influential and visionary leaders, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael.



Ragghianti|Freitas LLP

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GARY T. RAGGHIANI
[REDACTED]

January 3, 2019

City of San Rafael
Citizen of the Year Selection Committee

Dear "Citizen of the Year" Selection Committee:

I write to nominate the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael to be named City of San Rafael Citizen of the year.

I have been a resident of Marin County for 70 years and of San Rafael for nearly 40.

Since the 1850's the Sisters of Dominican have been an important presence in the City. At Dominican College which they founded and now as members of the governing Board of Dominican University of California.

Their contributions to education, social justice and ministry to the community are well known and priceless. Particularly is this true in today's important areas of immigration, affordable housing and advocacy for those who are in most need of social services and who are least able to take care of themselves.

It was my distinct privilege to represent the Sisters in their successful application to the City to house two mothers and their children in an unused hallway of the Lourdes convent on Locust Avenue. Those families are there now and have been since the issuance of a permit from the City in 2017. It was heartening to see the outpouring of support from the community and from so many organizations for the proposal made by the Sisters. I consider my representation of the Sisters in this endeavor to be one of the most satisfying of my professional career.

Representing the Sisters provided me with a unique insight into their congregation. I was able to work with and watch these incredible women honor their religious mission and strive to help those in need. The women I worked with are intelligent, articulate, more than well educated, caring, and selfless ambassadors of all that is good in the human spirit.



Ragghianti|Freitas LLP

PAGE 2 OF 2

We all benefit from having them in our midst. I urge that they be recognized and honored with this award. They richly deserve it.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary T. Ragghianti'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'G'.

Gary T. Ragghianti

GTR/jlp

Patricia Garbarino



January 3, 2019

San Rafael Citizen of the Year Selection Committee
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear San Rafael Citizen of the Year Selection Committee:

It is with utmost admiration that I write this letter highlighting the following achievements of this wonderful group of women.

This community has been graced and blessed by their presence for decades.

- With their perseverance, they continued to work with the San Rafael Planning Commission, despite the appeals by 2 neighbors to get the "Lourdes" house approved to help 2 women and their children get a new start by providing transitional housing. This will help the women get established and find permanent housing.

This is part of the Sister's Mission, which has long included Social Justice.

- They are very attuned to the changes in society and culture and have responded diligently with expanding commitments to caring for the environment and preaching care for the planet.
- The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have expressed their solidarity with the migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, who are fleeing violence and extreme poverty. They seek protection, opportunity for right livelihood and peace in which to live and raise their families.
- The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael had arrived to establish schools and hospitals. Today they can also be found in parishes, social service agencies, day programs for those without homes and prisons.

Vision Statement

- "We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person. We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems that deprive any person of dignity."

With those achievements listed, I could not more highly recommend the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael be awarded the honor of San Rafael Citizen(s) of the year.

Sincerely Yours,

Patty Garbarino
Patty Garbarino

Homeward & Bound

OF MARIN

December 21, 2018

Dear "Citizen of the Year" Selection Committee:

It is with wholehearted enthusiasm that I join others in nominating the remarkable, unsung, influential and visionary leaders, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael!

Since the mid to late 1850's the influence of the Dominican Sisters has been widely experienced primarily in the areas of education and social justice (though health care is another strong dimension in the Sisters' mission as they have joined other congregations in operating Dignity Health).

The Sisters have provided uncompromising leadership in the community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University and San Domenico School, now located in San Anselmo. Their involvement in social justice issues from immigration to affordable housing to advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community has been a beacon of inspiration and hope for all.

Their steady, balanced, and peaceful presence at community meetings creates an atmosphere of respect and trust.

In addition, the Sisters commit resources and funds to worthy projects such as the Yellow Hallway Project—converting part of their convent to be used for 2 homeless families with children. The Sisters paid for all required renovations and welcomed the families into their home.

The Sisters are mentors to us all in subtle yet powerful ways as they live their mission in the Mission City, San Rafael! They are simply awesome!

Sincerely,



Mary Kay Sweeney, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Jack G. Nixon

Selection Committee for SR Citizen of the Year
San Rafael City Hall
1400 Fifth Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Members of the Committee:

I wish to support the nomination of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael as a group for the Citizen(s) of the Year Award.

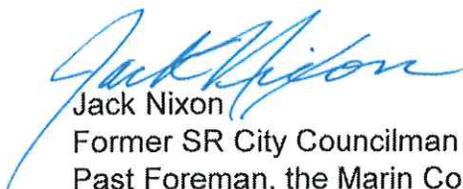
In the fifty-five years I have called San Rafael home, I have found that the Sisters have been an unparalleled source of "good" for our entire community. Every project they have undertaken has fostered a greater sense of justice, fairness and, yes, humbleness for all involved.

In an age where incivility permeates all levels of our society, the Sisters have shown us what it means to be thoughtful, patient and understanding even when their projects have been assailed by intemperance and shortsightedness.

For all their many years in San Rafael, they, and the school they started and fostered, have been a unique and unsurpassed asset for our growing city. Their quiet determination has bettered not only our community but also everyone they have touched.

Surely there is no better time or place to honor these unsung women than now by naming them the Citizens of the Year for San Rafael.

Thank you for considering my request.


Jack Nixon

Former SR City Councilman
Past Foreman, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury

To: Selection Committee
San Rafael Citizen of the Year Award 2019

I am writing in support of the nomination of the Dominican Sisters as Citizen(s) of the Year.

Reading the criteria listed below, it is my opinion that they meet every one of them:

- Housing two single mothers with children certainly qualifies as significant. These women and their children experienced living in a safe, loving home environment plus benefited from the companionship and support of the Dominican Sisters.
- The benefits to the community are not only immediate, but will continue as the mothers move on after receiving this extraordinary assistance, plus their children will always remember this time and will always know the importance of supporting and helping others.
- The Sisters spent months dealing with the permit process, including attending all city meetings as well as significant time with the physical changes needed to house the families.
- The challenge, although from just a few people, turned what should have been a simple permit process into a months-long undertaking that the Sisters deftly handled.
- They surely qualify as unsung heroes.

Please consider the Dominican Sisters for this award. They truly deserve recognition.

Thank you,
Mary Lou Ragghianti

1. Selection of the award winner shall be based on the following criteria:
 - The significance of the individual's accomplishments, whether past or present;
 - The quality, scale and duration of the benefits to the community resulting from the individual's accomplishments;
 - The amount of time and energy devoted to the community beyond the scope of normal citizen responsibilities;
 - The nature of the challenges faced and overcome by the individual; and
 - The extent of previous recognition received by the individual (e.g., the extent to which the nominee is an "unsung hero").

December 31, 2018

Mayor Gary Phillips

Citizen of the Year Committee

1400 Fifth Avenue Room 203

San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Citizens Committee,

We would enthusiastically support the nomination of the Sisters of Dominican University of California to become San Rafael's Citizen of the Year. Since 1890 they have been a hidden jewel to the City of San Rafael and its history. Their combined efforts have supported an educational facility which has trained many of the teachers in our County for over 94 years. They provide a superb nursing program, graduating student in varying medical disciplines. The Osher Living Learning Institute for individuals over 50 years of age, providing an educational world with a variety of courses to meet the inquiring minds of many of our citizens. Angelica Hall provides a wonderful venue for guest speakers and authors to talk to hundreds of local residents. The Sister have maintained a beautiful campus atmosphere centered in a residential area, attracting student from many corners of the world to witness and participate in a different environment.

While administration has been transferred to lay people in recent years the guiding principles the Sisters established at the time of the University founding remain intact. The Sisters collective accomplishments of being good, contributing and active citizens in their Marin community and the world while maintaining the educational commitment they made some 128 years ago continue to this day.

They are most deserving of the recognition by the City of San Rafael. They have been fabulous Citizens in our community.

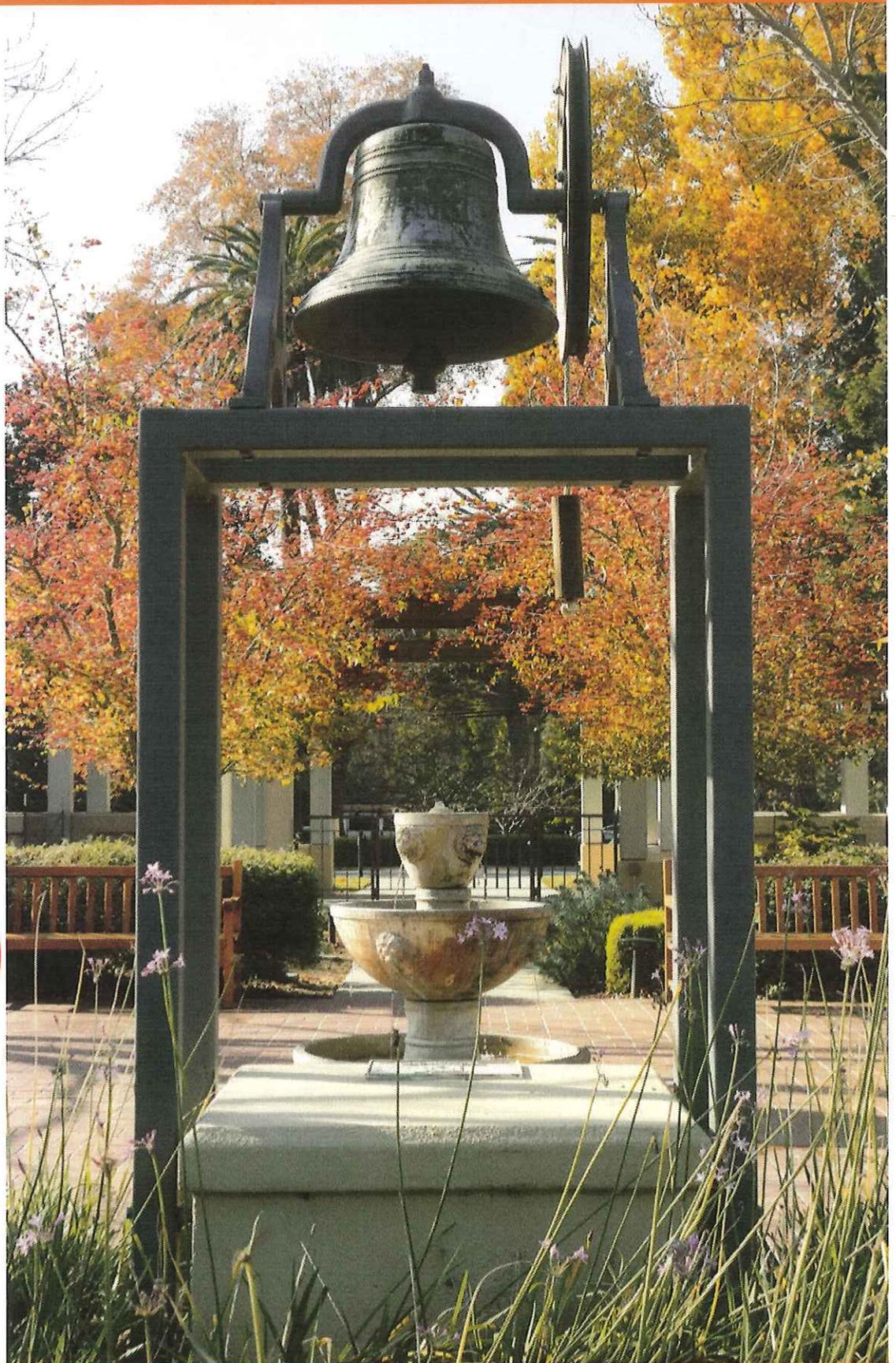
Sincerely,

Lou and Marge Bartolini

DOMINICAN
SISTERS
San Rafael



OP *ignite*



FALL 2017

Dear Friends,

Fall 2017

Praise be to God, the all-merciful one, whose consolation never fails us! God consoles us in all our troubles, so that we in turn may be able to console others in any trouble of theirs and to share with them the consolation we ourselves receive from God. As Christ's suffering exceeds all measure and extends to us, so too it is through Christ that our consolation has no limit. 2 Corinthians 1: 3-5

As I write this, I am praying for all those who are facing difficult times, that they may experience the consolation of our God. I know from talking to people and watching the news, that many are being consoled and lifted up by their neighbors. We have seen this with the hurricanes in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico, in the aftermath of the shooting tragedy in Las Vegas, and most recently with the wildfires in the counties of Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino and Lake, just north of us. I know that not all troubles are related to natural disasters; people that you and I know and care about are facing challenges to their health, their financial security, or their ability to remain in our country. People we do not know, but who are our brothers and sisters, face many other challenges, just as dire. In the midst of it all, I remember two things: God is with us, and God has given us one another.

The sheer numbers and the extent of people's suffering can be overwhelming, unless we rely on God's strength to guide us. Each of us is able to do what is ours to do. Some are called to respond on a large scale; some of us support their efforts with our time or our treasure. Some of us prayerfully continue with our daily lives and stay alert to opportunities to extend loving hands and hearts.

As 2017 draws to a close, we pray for the grace to truly believe that "All things work together for good for those who love God." Romans 8:28. We hope you will enjoy this debut issue of *OPignite*, our re-named newsletter that reminds us of our passion as preachers of truth, love and justice. We have included news and photos of what we are doing, locally and globally, that express our mission to proclaim God's Word in our world.

While I always say how much it means to us to have you as part of our Dominican family, and to hear from you, please know that in these times, I feel it even more deeply. Please stay in touch, and be assured of our thoughts and prayers.

Gratefully,

Sister Maureen McInerney, O.P.
Sister Maureen McInerney, O.P.
Prioress General



PREACHERS OF TRUTH · LOVE · JUSTICE



Photo courtesy of Maura Thurman, Homevard Bound of Marin.

The Yellow Hallway Adventure

Having received all of the necessary approvals, the renovation of a hall of rooms at Our Lady of Lourdes Convent, currently unoccupied by any sisters, began in earnest in June.

In August ten of our sisters came by for a one day painting party! Seen above, from left, Sisters Sue Allbritton, Margaret Diener, Raya Hanlon, Joan Hanna, Anne Dolan, Brigid Noonan, Rodolfo Cubillo who is the convent's maintenance tech, Lorraine Anodee, Abby Newton, Kit Hamilton, Patricia Dougherty, joined Lourdes Convent moderator, Sister Patricia Simpson. Six bedrooms, one for each mother and one for each child, were carefully cleaned and freshly painted. What has taken

a little more time has been converting a window on the front porch into a separate entrance, turning two rooms into a small kitchen and dining area, creating a small living room and a play/study room for the children, and creating a door to lead out to a small deck and fenced lawn area. We have also taken great care to be sure that we meet all of the ADA building requirements as well as fire safety codes.

Two women, formerly without permanent housing, and their children under eight years old, will live with us for two years, with support services from not-for-profit Homeward Bound, to transition to fully independent living. We are thrilled. As our faithful readers know, this dream began in 2015, the Year of Mercy.



Mission Statement
We, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, commit ourselves to the mission of Dominic: to proclaim God's Word in our world.

Called to discipleship through our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, we follow Jesus according to the Dominican apostolic life; we pray, study, celebrate and live out God's Word in community.

With our lives thus centered in the Lord, we seek to extend His mission of truth and love in our ministry, bringing the Gospel to bear with depth and compassion on the critical issues of our times.



We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person. We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems that deprive any person of dignity.

Vision Statement



Blessed Be the Longing

In August we gathered to welcome our latest candidate, **Theresa Cusimano**, into the Dominican family and our congregation. She was born in Buffalo, New York and raised in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Theresa studied business as an undergraduate, obtained a master's in higher education and a law degree. She pursued a career in higher education and has "a passion for justice," as seen in her human rights advocacy.

Theresa began to explore her calling to religious life with the Sisters of St. Joseph in Philadelphia who taught her from first grade through high school. At a Come & See event, she was encouraged to take the online vocation match survey on vocationnetwork.org, a website provided by the National Religious Vocation Conference. That led her to us. After conversations with our Vocation Director, Sister Carla Kovack, Theresa applied to continue her vocation journey with us.

In September, Theresa flew to Florida for a pre-arranged speaking engagement, so was coincidentally on hand to help her parents, Martha and James, prepare for Hurricane Irma. Thankfully, their neighborhood was relatively untouched. Currently she serves as Executive Assistant to the leadership team, and attends classes at the Graduate School of Theology in Berkeley. Please join your prayers with ours of gratitude and support.



A Walk for Hope

by Sister Patricia Simpson

HOPE! What a wonderful gift: the ability to hope. We are hoping for so much in our world today that it is difficult to name everything.

Here at Our Lady of Lourdes Convent, one of our hopes is for an end to Alzheimer's. As we watch some of our Sisters, our family members and friends endure this devastating disease, we wonder what we can do to help. Each year the Alzheimer's Association's campaign, **Walk to End Alzheimer's**, has the goal to "raise awareness and funds for the care, research and support" of those affected by the disease. Since we at Lourdes Convent aren't able to travel to one of the walks in the various cities where they take place, what better way than to have our very own walk around our outdoor pathway. We call it the **Path of Hope**. For five years now we have sponsored a walk right here at Lourdes Convent, and each year we have been able to send a generous donation to the Alzheimer's Association to further their research and contribute to care. This year we showed up on Saturday, October 7.

The Sisters living at Lourdes Convent walk by themselves if they are able or they use their walkers. Our caregivers help those in their wheelchairs navigate the path too; our Sisters from the neighboring convents join in as do friends from around the Dominican neighborhood. The wonderful students from Dominican University of California come and help organize, walk to support all those who come to further the cause of Alzheimer's research. Who knows! Maybe one day all of our efforts will bring what we hope and pray for: an end to Alzheimer's.



All ages, all abilities joined in October on the Path of Hope around Our Lady of Lourdes Convent to make a difference in the effort to end Alzheimer's dementia that now affects 5.5 million Americans.

In May the wonderful people of St. Raphael Parish hosted a special tribute to the Dominican Sisters with a beautiful Mass and celebratory supper. They acknowledged 120 Sisters who had ministered in the parish and its school since 1889. **Sister Joan Hanna's** retirement as Director of the Preschool for thirteen years coincided with the event; as she says, she is "the caboose" in the long line of Sisters to serve at St. Raphael's. The histories of the parish and the congregation have been woven together for 128 years; our deep relationships live on.



Our Vision Partners

We are pleased to share with our readers about two of the **Vision Grants** that we awarded this year. The Vision Fund gives us the ability to support critically valuable ministries in places where we do not have Sisters living, or in ways that we are not qualified to provide.



Sister Susannah Malarkey sponsored the application from **Catholic Charities** in the San Francisco Archdiocese to support a therapeutic equestrian program at **St. Vincent's School for Boys** in San Rafael. For more than 160 years, this school has provided help and hope

for severely abused, neglected and abandoned boys. A trained equestrian clinical practitioner, working full time, helps the boys overcome anti-social and aggressive behavior, and promotes their self-esteem. More than 60 boys are able to participate in this program, and the eighteen horses are receiving another opportunity to be of service.



Sister Maria Foraboschi sponsored the application of a pastoral program in the Diocese of Pakse in southern Laos. The hygiene, health and literacy program for the **YienDak** women is improving the health of a thousand households in a rural village. Water is piped from an open stream about seven miles from the village. The basics of hygiene were unknown to the villagers; research shows that when the women learn, everyone benefits. In addition, literacy in the Lao language among women has been very low, as in ten per thousand. A one-on-one mentoring program has been set up. This has proven to be an effective model in other developing countries.

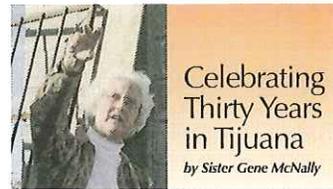
Works of Love in Africa

For nine years our readers have been following the story of **Sister Carla Kovack's** ministry in **Uganda**, the result of her deep listening to a long-time yearning to serve God's people in Africa. In 2008 Sister Carla traveled to the small rural village of Kiganda, lived with the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart, and volunteered in the primary school.

Since then, she has returned several times, each time with fresh ideas and support for improving the quality of life for the people such as water filtration systems, mosquito bedding nets, school supplies, and play equipment for the children.

In June, for the third time, **Sisters Carla** and **Professor LeeAnn Bartolini** escorted a group of **Dominican University of California** students to the village to experience life in a developing country first hand. "Each day we met with our small group of primary school students. At first, the youngsters were shy and uncertain about these American women. By the third day, the children were fully engaged in their conversation lessons using the wonderful books provided by recent Dominican graduate, **Jennifer Doering**. By the end of our stay, students were showering **Stephanie Hernandez** (pictured below) with food: avocados, maize and sugar cane, tokens of their gratitude. "The language of thanks is the same all over the world," Sister Carla shared.

Other exciting news this year is the completion of a maternity wing at the **St Matia Mulumba Parish Health Center**. Thanks to grants from **Dignity Health** and a Vision Grant from the congregation, a new furnished and equipped space, dedicated to pregnant women and newborns, will provide services from pre-natal classes and monitoring through delivery with the caring supervision and assistance of the Center's midwife.



Celebrating Thirty Years in Tijuana

by **Sister Gene McNally**

I ministered in education for twenty-seven years, teaching in Catholic high schools that our congregation had founded and/or staffed. During that time, I took students on service trips to Tijuana and did some volunteering myself. In September 1986 I began working in Tijuana full time, with the support of the congregation and friends. The vast majority of the people living in this arid canyon area lacked the funds to meet their families' basic needs.

Colonia Esperanza is a labor of love, not only from those who have supported it, but also from the people who live here. We have built **Our Lady of Hope Chapel** where we gather as a community to pray. We have established the **Clinic San Rafael**, open three days a week, where a doctor sees patients for just 35 pesos per visit, and is able to provide some medicine for free. We have the **Domingo Guzman Youth Center** with classes in English, a computer lab with a teacher, a playground and a basketball court.

But that's not all. All of the homes and businesses we have helped build by paying local workers, as jobs are scarce. We have also been able to provide most of the funding for twelve university graduates, as well as elementary school and high school students.

I couldn't have done it without my "lovely ladies," a group of lay women living in the area who assist me with running the programs, activities and services here. They refuse to accept salaries, saying they are "doing it for God," so I do what I can to express my appreciation.

I couldn't have done it without faith in God, the generosity of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, and the kindness of so many others. It is a great comfort to me on those difficult days... Thank you all so much.

Donations to support Sister Gene's ministry can be sent to the Development Office with a note that they be directed to Colonia Esperanza.



Back to School The new school year began in August at Dominican University of California! The faculty, staff and students are our neighbors, and we look for every way to mutually support and interact with one another.

Each year we look forward to welcoming the new students and introducing ourselves! The first event is **The Amazing Race**, a creative scavenger hunt for information that helps the students find their way around campus.

The second event is **Smoothies with the Sisters**, an invitation to pause in the midst of a busy day to sip a refreshing treat and get to know one another.

Treasured Memories in Our Archives

Our congregational archivist, **Sister Patricia Corr**, often comes across fascinating examples of times when our history intersected with that of our state or region. Recently she shared with us the story of Frances, Georgia, and Eliza, daughters of George and Tamsen Donner. The three children survived the Donner Party Expedition and were rescued in 1843 when they were just 6, 4, and 3 years old. In 1857, when Frances was 17, Georgia 15, and Eliza 14, they were enrolled in **St. Catherine's Academy in Benicia**. It was the decision of the husband of their half-sister, Elitha, Benjamin Wilder, was taking advantage of the Sisters' offer "that when more than two of a family become pupils the same term, the third one shall be received free of charge (except incidentals)."

Eliza published her book in 1911. In chapter 34, we read her charming memory of arriving at St. Catherine's, a month after her sisters, and meeting **Mother Mary Goenaere**.

Mother Mary, with open watch in hand, stood before me, saying, "Your sister Georgia cried twice as long as expected when she came; still, I will allow you the regular five minutes."
"I don't wish to cry," was my timid response.

"But," she insisted, "you must shed a few entrance tears to—" Before she finished her sentence, and without thinking it would be overreaching a stranger's privilege, I impulsively threw my arms around her neck, laid my cheek against hers, and whispered, "Please don't make me cry."

She drew me closer to her, and her lips touched my forehead, and she said, "No, child, you need not." Then she bade me go with my sisters and become acquainted with my new surroundings.



2017 Fanjeaux Seminar group.

A Dominican Experience of Studying Abroad

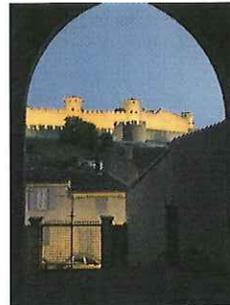
by Sister Patricia Dougherty, Professor Emerita at Dominican University of California

For twenty-one years I have happily been involved with the **Fanjeaux Seminar**. It was the inspiration of Sister Vivian Jennings, a Caldwell Dominican. The goal is to ensure that a true understanding and appreciation of St. Dominic, and the charisma of the order he founded, continue among the laity in Dominican institutions of higher education. The seventeen-day seminar uniquely introduces American students, faculty members and staff to medieval times and the heritage of St. Dominic.

Sister Samuel Conlan first told me about the concept, and I immediately volunteered to help in any way since I would be in France on sabbatical that spring. My contribution was accepted, and I have worked with the program ever since. At this stage, I help coordinate and get everyone to where they should be. I also trouble-shoot and fill in with a variety of activities. It has been life-giving to me because it grounds me. I have met so many wonderful people who work at different Dominican colleges and universities. We share our own schools' successes and challenges and learn from each other.

In 2017, we hosted thirty-six participants from eleven institutions. In the mornings, the students learn about the history, philosophy, art and literature of the period. Faculty and staff explore the Dominican vision of higher education emerging from the intellectual traditions of the **Order of Preachers**, particularly as they relate to theology, social justice and the arts. In the afternoons, we all go on excursions to visit heritage sites, including the cities of Toulouse and Albi, the monastery of Lagrasse, and the mountain of Monsegur and, of course, the village of Fanjeaux and the monastery of the nuns at Prouille where the order began.

For many years the group stayed at the Belvedere, the guest house of the Dominican Sisters of the Verbe Incarné. This year, we stayed at Notre Dame de l'Abbaye in Carcassonne. I missed walking the medieval streets and the sunrises at Seignadou and sunsets in the Belvedere garden, but Carcassonne was a great site at the foot of the ramparts of the fortified city. A welcome surprise was learning that Dominic celebrated Mass at the abbey in the lovely, twelfth century chapel. The seminar always ends with four nights in Paris.



We're going again at the end of May 2018. If you or anyone you know is interested in learning more, go to <http://www.dom.edu/academics/studyabroad/fanjeaux-france>.

We are grateful to our friends, families, colleagues, and partners in ministry for their faithful support of our members and their ministries. We hold you in our thoughts and prayers. Listed here are those whose gifts were received between March 1 and August 31, 2017.

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Creatures Great and Small

by Sister Maria Foraboschi, OP

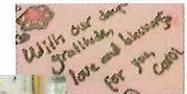
Thanks to local beekeepers, Bonnie and Gary, a new blessing has come to Dominican Convent's natural area: honey bees. These gossamer-winged creatures are endlessly fascinating. Not only do thousands live together in their honeycombed-partitioned hives but also they are all, other than the drones, very busy. The drones are the males whose only purpose is to mate with the queen, after which they die. With the arrival of winter, those still living are unceremoniously shoved out of the hive because they use too many of now scarcer resources.



The queen is the largest bee and indispensable to the hive. She lays approximately 2,000 eggs a day in the comb! All of her needs, food and grooming, are met by worker bees. The worker bees live their short lives in two stages. In the first stage, they work inside the hive, tending to the brood, making and storing honey, and maintaining the proper temperature in the hive by fanning their wings. In the second stage, the workers go outside the hive for the first time and fly all around the hive area, getting their bearings before returning to the hive. The next day they fly off to gather pollen and nectar within a three mile limit. These little bees have their own built-in GPS and are able to communicate the exact location of rich nectar sites in their bee dances back at the hive.

The guard bees take their stance at the hive entrance and will allow only bees with the correct pheromone (scent) to enter. It is their password, and each hive has a unique pheromone which is acquired by the bees from tending the queen.

These beautiful "selfless" marvels of creation function as a community that works for the good of all, with no "in-charge" individual directing their activities. They enrich our lives by pollinating plants which provide not only food but also dessert: honey! When we help bees, we help the environment and, of course, ourselves, a parable for our times.



Farewell, Dear One

Carol Bush served the Sisters and the mission for thirty-two years as Executive Assistant in the administration office. She did her job effectively with great grace and kindness. There was quite the turnout of Sisters, colleagues, and her family at two events to express our gratitude for her service and best wishes for her retirement! Carol is flanked by two special friends, Sister Patricia Bruno (left) and Sister Bernadette Wombacher.

OP *ignite*



Sisters of St. Dominic
Congregation of the Most Holy Name
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OP ignite is the new name of the bi-annual newsletter published by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael since 1985. Its purpose is to share information about our history, news of our current ministries, and our vision of the future in the context of our mission. We welcome the opportunity to communicate with our friends and colleagues as well as with others who wish to learn more about our congregation of women religious and the Order of Preachers. We invite and appreciate your prayers and support.

Prioress General

Sister Maureen McInerney, OP

Council

Sister Carla Kovack, OP
Sister Susan Allbritton, OP
Sister Abby Newton, OP
Sister Mary Kieffer, OP

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Diane Smith, Margaret Diener, and
Gene McNally.*

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Be Refreshed in a Sacred Space

We invite you to treat yourself in 2018 to the many joys of our ministry at **Santa Sabina Center**, a place of study, prayer and community in support of contemplative spiritual exploration. You will find a wonderful selection of offerings: engaging leaders of residential retreats, musical programs, days of prayer, study/reflection evenings, private retreat opportunities, and other special programs.

Visit www.santasabinacenter.org to see
what's upcoming in the new year.

City of San Rafael Citizen of the Year 2019 Nomination

Nominee: Dominican Sisters of San Rafael

Response to Questions

What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have had an unparalleled impact on the community in the areas of education, social justice and health care. For more than 100 years, the Sisters have provided uncompromising leadership in the community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University, The Garden School, San Domenico School (started in San Rafael and relocated to San Anselmo), and the Osher Living Learning Institute for individuals over 50 years of age, providing an educational world with a variety of courses to meet the inquiring minds of many of our citizens. Their involvement in social justice issues from immigration to affordable housing to advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community has been a beacon of inspiration and hope for all. The Sisters have joined other congregations in operating Dignity Health, a not-for-profit public corporation, operating hospitals and ancillary care facilities in three states.

The Sisters' dedication to the local community and the world at large is unsurpassed. For many years in San Rafael they, and the college that they started and fostered, have been an unparalleled asset for our growing City. They have provided a beautiful campus atmosphere centered in a residential area, attracting students from around the world. They have shared their campus and resources with the public at large. Angelica Hall provides a wonderful venue for guest speakers and authors to talk to hundreds of local residents. The Santa Sabina Center is a unique sanctuary in Marin where people of all beliefs and cultural backgrounds can find sacred space and contemplative quiet. The Sisters share this space with others for retreats, musical programs, conferences, private study and reflection, etc.

Additionally, they also provide financial support in the form of Vision Grants for both local and international causes, to support critically valuable ministries in areas where they don't have Sisters living or in ways that they are not qualified to provide. Most recently, the Sisters were Vision Partners with a therapeutic equestrian program at St. Vincent's School for Boys and a hygiene, health and literacy program for YienDak women in southern Laos. And it doesn't stop there. A classic example of an innovative way that the Sisters support one of many causes, is their support of the Alzheimer's Association. The Sisters have long supported the Alzheimer's Association, and since many of their own Sisters are unable to travel to a city where one of the fundraising *Walks to End Alzheimer's* takes place, for many years they have instead sponsored their own walk on the Path of Hope at Lourdes Convent and subsequently sent a generous donation to the Alzheimer's Association.

The Sisters' contributions to education, social justice and ministry to the community are well known and priceless; far exceeding the scope of normal civic responsibility.

What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?

The activities of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have impacted countless lives in our local community and around the world. Perhaps the most obvious impact of the Dominican Sisters' presence in San Rafael is their creation of the beautiful campus of Dominican University of California and the lovely Santa Sabina Center.

The Sisters' efforts have supported an educational facility which has trained many of the teachers in our City and County for over 94 years. Under the leadership of Sister Samuel Conlan, a model Development Center for children with special needs was created on the Dominican Campus, followed by development of a Special Education Teacher Training Program that has earned statewide recognition for excellence. The Dominican Sisters also founded Dominican College's nursing program which received accreditation from the National League for Nursing in 1990.

Thousands have been educated by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael at all levels from pre-school through graduate school. In addition, 120 Dominican Sisters have ministered at St. Raphael's Parish and School since 1890. Homeless have been housed. Hungry have been fed. Funds have been raised and donated to local causes.

The Sisters' contributions to education, social justice and ministry to the community are well known and priceless. Particularly true in today's important areas of immigration, affordable housing and advocacy for those who are in most need of social services and who are least able to take care of themselves. The Sister walk the walk and talk the talk, working tirelessly to advance positive change in our San Rafael community and the world.

The Sisters have made a tremendous difference in the lives of two young mothers and their small children, taking them into their home. The Sisters spent months at City hearings and ultimately gained approval to remodel (at their own expense) the Yellow Hallway of Lourdes Convent in 2017 to welcome these formerly homeless families under their roof to live with them in a safe, loving home environment. These women and children can attest to the huge difference the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have made in their lives.

Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.

The collective time and energy that the Sisters have provided to our San Rafael community over the past 125+ years is immeasurable. Since 1890 the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have been a hidden jewel to the City of San Rafael and its history. They have provided uncompromising leadership in the community through their extensive education mission at Dominican University, Osher Living Learning Institute, San Domenico School (now located in San Anselmo), and the Garden School, educating thousands of students from preschool through graduate school. Their combined efforts have supported an educational facility which has trained many of the teachers in our City and County for more than 94 years. Their superb nursing program, graduating students in varying medical disciplines, provides nurses to our hospitals and medical facilities.

There is no limit to the time and energy that the Dominican Sisters have dedicated to our community and other efforts. Over 120 Dominican Sisters of San Rafael have ministered at St. Raphael's Parish and School since 1890. In 2017, Sister Joan Hanna retired after 60 years as a Dominican Sister, the last 13 as Director of St. Raphael's Pre School. Sister Adele Rowland, an artist who studied under Ansel Adams and pioneered color photo montage images long before the advent of Photoshop, used Marin images in her works which are treasured around the world. Sister Carla Kovack has for several years taken local Dominican students to Uganda, delivering water filtration systems, mosquito bedding nets, school supplies, play equipment for the children and funds to help complete a maternity wing at the local health center. Sister Adele Gerlach at age 80+ was leading groups including San Rafael residents on 100-mile walking pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago, in Spain. Sister Marion Irvine is approaching her 90th year, but continues to be committed to serving others by raising social consciousness, primarily through teaching, administration and example. She holds the title "Promoter of Peace, Justice and the Care of Creation" and works tirelessly with others to address issues relating to human trafficking and has worked to create safe houses, protect the environment, provide affordable housing, improve education and to further other social justice issues. Sister Marion began running at forty-eight years old, ran competitively for fifteen years and was the oldest woman ever to qualify for the Olympic trials in long-distance running in 1983. Clearly there is no limit to the time and energy that the Dominican Sisters dedicate to our community and to the future of our community.

In 1946 Sister Patricia Lyons founded and became Principal of The Garden School, a preschool and kindergarten located on the Dominican Campus, educating generations of San Rafael children. On the 50th anniversary of The Garden School in 1996, then Governor of California, Pete Wilson, sent a congratulatory letter to Sister Patricia, saying in part: 'You have touched the lives of three generations of Californians, providing each with a strong foundation with which they can meet the challenges of the future. You have inspired love and loyalty from your friends, colleagues and numerous students, and you have bequeathed to Marin County, and all California Schools, a legacy of academic excellence.'

Since the 1890s, the influence of the Dominican Sisters has been widely experienced primarily in the areas of education and social justice, though health care is another strong dimension in the Sisters' mission as they have joined other congregations in operating Dignity Health. The Sisters collective accomplishments of being good, contributing and active citizens in their San Rafael community and the world while maintaining the educational and social commitment they made some 128 years ago continues to this day.

Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.

Founded by the Dominican Sisters in 1890, Dominican College was long associated with women's education. It was the first Catholic college in California to grant a bachelor's degree to women. It was a daring move in the 1970s, when, under the leadership of the Dominican Sisters, the College was transformed from an all-women's college into a coeducational institution. Seeing the need for the College to be an integral part of the local community, the Sisters expanded the Board of Trustees to include laypersons, non-Catholics and men, to reflect the members of the business and professional community. In 2000, Dominican College of San Rafael became Dominican University of California. The new name recognizes Dominican's status as a university with graduate degree programs, a diverse

student body and a global perspective, a significant transformation over more than 100 years from the all-women's college started by the Dominican Sisters.

In an age where incivility permeates all levels of our society, the Sisters have shown us what it means to be thoughtful, patient and understanding. This was the case when the Sisters pursued the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent project, opening their home to house two single mothers and their small children. The Sisters spent nearly two years in the process, attending all City meetings and meeting with neighbors, spending their own funds to remodel and bring the Convent wing into compliance with Code requirements, in order to welcome two previously homeless families under their Dominican roof. These women and their children are experiencing living in a safe, loving home environment, benefitting from the support and companionship of the Dominican Sisters. There aren't many who would voluntarily open their home to house the homeless. The Sisters did it voluntarily and not without spending countless hours, dollars and even their own elbow grease (the Sisters painted the wing themselves) to see their dream of sharing their home with the less fortunate become a reality.

To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael are unsung heroes, quietly working to fulfill their commitment to raise social consciousness primarily through teaching, administration and example. The Sisters present a steady, balanced and peaceful presence at community meetings, creating an atmosphere of respect and trust. This was most evident at the recent hearings to allow the Sisters to convert the Yellow Hallway at Lourdes Convent to housing for two women and their young children, previously without permanent housing. This program allowed the Sisters to open their home to two formerly homeless families, allowing them to live with the Sisters for two years, with support services from not-for-profit Homeward Bound, as the women transition to fully independent living. In their words, the Sisters were "thrilled" to open their home to others, allowing the Sisters to fulfill a dream that began in 2015, with nothing in it for them but the joy of helping others, opening their hearts and home to the less fortunate.

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael are an unparalleled source of "good" for our entire community. Every project they have undertaken has fostered a greater sense of justice, fairness and humbleness for all involved. The Sisters, and the school they started and fostered have been a unique and unsurpassed asset for our growing City. While administration has been transferred to lay people in recent years, the guiding principles the Sisters established at the time of the founding of Dominican College remain intact and the Sisters remain very involved with its operation, among other things as instructors and as members of the governing Board of Dominican University of California.

The Sisters collective accomplishments of their quiet determination has bettered not only our community but also everyone they have touched. They are silent warriors who continue to persevere, selflessly pursuing their vision statement: "We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person. We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems that deprive any person of dignity." All this for others and without any expectation of acknowledgement. Remarkable, unsung, influential and visionary leaders, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael.



Office of the President

Mary B. Marcy

January 4, 2019

City of San Rafael
Attn: Citizen of the Year Selection Committee
1400 Fifth Avenue, Room 203
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Citizen of the Year Selection Committee:

The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael are the living embodiment of the city's slogan: *a city with a mission*. They were among the first residents of what is now San Rafael, and throughout their century-plus time in this community, they have never wavered from making it a more welcoming, healthy, and just home.

Their work, often unheralded, lives in every corner of this community. When Homeward Bound enlists volunteers or support, they find the Dominican Sister at their door. When the abused or displaced need nurture and a safe space, they find it among the Sisters. When our community first became concerned about climate change, the Sisters quietly built a LEED certified, highly efficient, low impact home. When the community needs a welcome space to gather, the Sisters open their doors. When there is a concern about injustice in our city, in the region, or nationally, the Sisters are present to bring a voice of compassion and integrity to the process of change. They are active in political issues, and equally active in providing personal support and opportunity. Their commitment to education endures every day at our institution, Dominican University of California, which the Sisters founded in 1890.

Their commitment to fairness is evident in their support of every branch of our community. Their dedication to making the world, and our city, stronger is apparent in every aspect of their lives and work. They helped establish San Rafael, and much of what we value in our community is the result of their steadfast leadership, their vision, their compassion, and their integrity, lived every day in ways large and small.

It is my pleasure to support their nomination for San Rafael's Citizen of the Year.

Sincerely,

Mary B. Marcy
President

MBM/jmk

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