



# Heart

Winter 2006

A Journal of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province

# ...to Heart

*Our service of education and instruction is directed chiefly towards the young and those who bear within them the future of the world.*

— *Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart, par. 7*

## Dear Friends,

The sentence from our *Constitutions* cited above has taken on new meaning for me. In November I attended our international Assembly of Provincials in Uganda, where representatives of the Society's forty-four countries met to talk about issues related to the Society's future. The first days were devoted to experiencing something of the context within which our sisters there live and minister. At Meeting Point International, a holistic program in a very poor neighborhood of Kampala, we met women, men and children who have AIDS or are HIV-positive and who had been displaced by the war in the north with the Lord's Resistance Army. Meeting Point International offers health care, schooling for children, education for adults and preparation for working in small cottage industries. We experienced the fruits of this education as children and adolescents, alive with enthusiasm and energy, danced their cultural dances, dramatized a poem in English and sang for us in several of the languages of the visiting provincials from around the world.

Another day's experience brought us to the new Sacred Heart Primary School in Kyamusansala, which our Network schools, alumnae/i and friends have helped to build and support. The girls' motivation and pride in learning were in evidence everywhere – in the six-year-old spontaneously writing words on the blackboard while she waited for the adults to finish their conversation; in the poise and sense of self so visible in the student who read at Mass; in the support the students give one another as they prepare for state exams. Our hearts resonated with the passion of our sisters in Uganda/Kenya concerning the importance of education for these children who will help build the future of Africa.

A third vignette: In Haiti last June, Judy Vollbrecht, RSCJ, introduced me to several school principals in the town where our sisters live. They spoke of the weak preparation of their teachers and of their hope that the monthly Saturday workshops, which the RSCJ community had organized, would develop into a normal training school. The commitment and conviction of these principals touched me, as did their sense of urgency. Whether or not we can develop a full teacher-training program there, in a developing part of our hemisphere, we are being asked to draw on our own gifts and preparation for the sake of the next generation.

For most of us in the United States these experiences are not part of our everyday lives. Yet they may help us understand the urgency of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of providing universal primary education by 2015. Perhaps for you, as they did for me, they may offer fresh perspective on the importance of quality, value-based, holistic education in shaping the next generation of our world.

As we celebrate the coming of the Christ Child this year, let us hold in our hearts the world's children and ask how we might ensure that they who bear within them the future of the world may have the resources they will need to help build a future of justice, peace and love.



In the Heart of Christ,

*Kathleen Conan, RSCJ*

Kathleen Conan, RSCJ  
Provincial

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*Feature articles and photos are by Pamela Schaeffer, editor of Heart, except where otherwise noted.*

# Heart

*Heart* is published three times a year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, for a broad circle of friends. The covers, photographs of hearts in nature, symbolic of Christ's presence at the heart of the universe, bear witness to the contemplative dimension of the Society's "wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic" mission: to discover and reveal God's love through the service of education.



Photo: Massimiliano Pieraccini, BigStockPhoto.com

The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in post-revolutionary France and brought to the United States by Saint Philippine Duchesne in 1818. For more information about the mission and ministries of the U.S. Province, please visit [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org).

### **U.S. Provincial Team:**

Kathleen Conan, RSCJ, Provincial  
Anne Byrne, RSCJ  
Marina Hernandez, RSCJ  
Paula Toner, RSCJ

**Editor:** Pamela Schaeffer

**Designer:** Peggy Nehmen

**Copy Editor:** Frances Gimber, RSCJ

Please send address changes for *Heart* to [editor@rscj.org](mailto:editor@rscj.org) or to Heart editor at the address below. Article proposals, manuscripts and letters for publication are welcome.

Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province  
4389 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63108-2205  
314-652-1500  
Fax: 314-534-6800

## U.S. PROVINCE AT 25

The U.S. Province, Society of the Sacred Heart, will be twenty-five years old in September of 2007 – an anniversary that is being marked by a Year of Prayer, a visit from the General Council, a series of teleconferences, focused attention on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and a provincial assembly at Loyola University in Chicago in July.

The province was formed in 1982 in a merger of five provinces as a way of uniting members and enhancing collaboration for ministry. Anne O'Neil, RSCJ, was named the first U.S. provincial by Helen McLaughlin, RSCJ, superior general of the international Society at the time, and the Provincial House was established in centrally-located St. Louis.

Of historic note, Religious of the Sacred Heart were early among congregations in the United States to combine several regions of the country into one. Many congregations have since followed suit, and some have mergers under way. Leaders of several of these congregations have sought advice on their mergers from RSCJ.

Here are some significant events of the past twenty-five years:

- Soon after the U.S. Province was formed, new sponsored ministries were established. Among the first were Sprout Creek Farm, an educational center now situated in Poughkeepsie, New York (a great place to buy artisan cheeses for the holidays – [www.sproutcreekfarm.org](http://www.sproutcreekfarm.org)) and the Center for Educational Design and Communication ([www.cedc.org](http://www.cedc.org)) in Washington D.C.
- Philippine Duchesne was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1988.
- The Society established an international foundation in Indonesia. (Sisters Anne O'Neil and Sara Ann Rude of the U.S. are working in that ministry.)
- A website, [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org), was established by the CEDC in 1994.

- A Sacred Heart Associates program began in 1995.
- The Society celebrated the bicentennial of its founding by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in 2000, and Clare Pratt, RSCJ, was elected superior general at the General Chapter in Amiens, France. She became the first American to serve in that post.
- To mark the bicentennial, an international foundation was established in Haiti by four provinces, including the United States.
- The province appointed a director of communications in 2002 and a mission advancement director in 2004.
- The U.S. Province Archives moved in 2003 from Villa Duchesne to its present home near the Provincial House.
- The Society established an office at the United Nations in 2003, in concert with the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and appointed Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, of the U.S. Province as the Society's representative.
- The Network of Sacred Heart Schools moved its office from Newton, Massachusetts, to St. Louis in 2004.

These events and many others are noted in a booklet titled "Woven Together in Love," which RSCJ are using as focus for prayer throughout the year.

RSCJ have been invited to bring to the upcoming provincial assembly proposals for collective action related to one of the Millennium Development Goals.

(See [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals))

Two members of the General Council, Sisters Clare Pratt and Jane Maltby, will visit the province during February and March. (The visit, one of the General Council's regular visits to the province, coincidentally falls during the anniversary year.)

The symbol for the Year of Prayer – and the source of the prayer booklet's title – is a hand-woven ceremonial shawl that has been used since 1988 in installation ceremonies for new provincial teams. ✦



## PHILIPPINE GOES TO STATE CAPITOL

A bronze bust of Saint Philippine Duchesne has found a home at the Missouri State Capitol, thanks to U.S. Attorney Catherine Hanaway, who commissioned artist Sabra Tull Meyer to make the sculpture.

Hanaway was the first woman to hold the position of speaker in the Missouri House of Representatives, and it fell to her in that role to choose the person whose image would join twenty-four others in the Hall of Famous Missourians, which is housed on the third floor of the capitol rotunda.

Hanaway said she chose Philippine because she, too, was a woman and a pioneer.



“I wanted someone who was a first,” she said. She added that Philippine, who came to Missouri from France as a missionary at the age of 49, is an inspiration for people who are “getting older and still want to accomplish something.”

Further, she said, “Philippine gave us a very important model for what to do when times are difficult. She often felt alone and isolated [as a foreigner in this country] and what did she do? She turned to prayer. It is a great example for all of us in the hardest moments.”

The sculpture of Philippine was unveiled November 17 at Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles – home of the Shrine of Saint Philippine Duchesne – and blessed by Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis. Burke blessed the sculpture following a Mass and later that day it was crated for its two-hour journey to Jefferson City, Missouri’s capital.

In his homily, Archbishop Burke paid tribute to the saint’s accomplishments. “We are called to imitate her in following Christ in our lives,” he told the congregation, which included students, faculty and staff of the academy, members of Associated Alumnae/i of the Sacred Heart, who were attending a regional meeting in St. Charles, and several Religious of the Sacred Heart.

Philippine Duchesne founded the first free school west of the Mississippi, and established the Society of the Sacred Heart on American soil when she arrived in St. Charles in 1818. Late in life, she ministered to the Potawatomi Indians in Kansas, fulfilling a lifelong dream.

Maureen Glavin, RSCJ, head of school in St. Charles, told students after the Mass that we are able to follow Jesus only when we understand how much God loves us. “What I think Philippine would like to say to you is that you are perfect. You are beautiful. You are special,” Sister Glavin said. “Each of you has a special role to play in life, but you can do it only if you truly believe you are loved.”

Hanaway and the artist who created the sculpture were both present for the Mass and blessing. See [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org) (News of the Province) for photos of the event.

Other famous Missourians whose images are in the hall include Sacajewea, Samuel Clemens, George Washington Carver, Thomas Hart Benton, Harry Truman, Walt Disney, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Stan Musial and J.C. Penney. ❖

# Heart GETS THUMBS-UP IN SURVEY

So far, about 130 readers of *Heart* have returned the survey enclosed with the Summer 2006 issue.\* Respondents include RSCJ, former RSCJ, alumnae and alumni, Sacred Heart Associates, co-workers, family members and friends.

Here is a summary of the responses received so far:

- All but two respondents agreed that the magazine is achieving its goal of creating greater awareness of the mission and ministries of the U.S. Province.
- All but five respondents offered positive feedback on the heart-in-nature covers, and many wrote in comments. “The cover is always inspiring and sets the tone for a prayerful moment of reflection,” one respondent wrote. Several said

they now keep a lookout for hearts where they appear in nature.

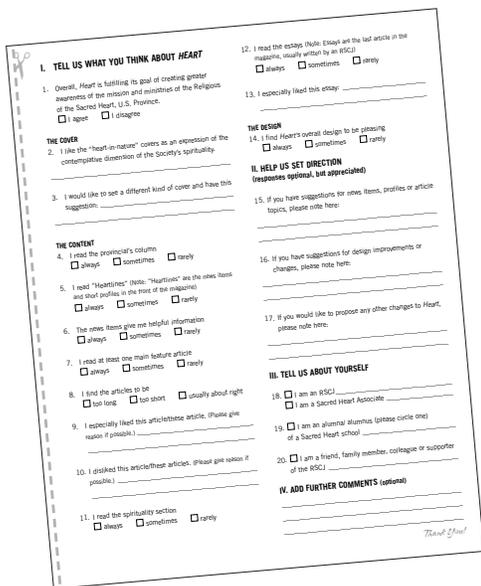
- A large majority of respondents – 79 – said they read virtually all of the magazine’s content. Another 36 said that, while they “always” read some sections, they “sometimes” read others. The most often skipped section is Heartlines, with 21 respondents saying the news items are only “sometimes” useful. No respondent said he or she “rarely” reads any section.
- All but two respondents like the magazine’s overall design.
- Respondents reached all the way back to 2003 to name their favorite articles, but the all-out winners were two in the Summer 2006 issue – “Heroism and Survival,” an essay by Elizabeth Walsh, RSCJ, and Kathleen Hopper’s “Hand in Hand,” her story of recovery from cancer that appeared in the spirituality section. A report on the U.S. Province’s corporate stance against the war in Iraq in the same issue elicited divergent views. Five respondents said they appreciated the province’s stance; six considered it misguided.
- All but three respondents described the article length as “usually about right”; two would prefer them shorter, one would like them to be longer.
- Many respondents proposed future articles on specific topics, such as individual Network schools, profiles

of Sacred Heart Associates and alumnae/i, work of the Society in other countries, RSCJ who work in adult education, elderly RSCJ, Society history and spirituality of the founders.

In planning future issues, we will try to incorporate as many of our readers’ suggestions as we can. ✦

— Pam Schaeffer, Editor

*\*Please note: If you have not returned the survey, it is not too late. Although we gave a deadline of November 1, we would like to hear from as many readers as possible, so please send those surveys in.*



## In Memoriam

Please see [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org) for biographical information on RSCJ who have died.

May they live in the fullness of God's love.

*Jane Dubrouillet*  
August 23, 2006

*Kathryn Sullivan*  
September 22, 2006

*Alice Husson*  
September 27, 2006

*Mary Lou Warner*  
November 17, 2006

## GLOBAL FOCUS FOR YOUNG PROFESSED

*Y*oung professed Religious of the Sacred Heart – those in temporary vows – came together for prayer, conversation and recreation in October, a semi-annual meeting that focused on the Society’s international dimensions.

The meeting was held at Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri.

Participants talked about their individual international experiences, which include a visit in August to Poitiers, France, by two of the group, Lisa Buscher and Regina Shin, for a gathering of young professed Religious of the Sacred Heart from around the world.

That event, they said, had strengthened their desire for deeper cross-cultural communication in the Society and underscored the need for more language study.

Three guests from other provinces joined part of the meeting in St. Charles: Sister Isabelle Lagneau of France, Sister Kim Young Sun of Korea, and Sister Hilda Bamwine former provincial of the Uganda-Kenya province. The three are spending some time in the United States.

Each gave an overview of her province and talked about recent developments and challenges.

The Society’s membership extends over forty-four countries on six continents. The newly professed RSCJ, as part of their “emerging vision” for the Society, have identified the need to be open to the world, while rooted in one’s local culture, as a particular challenge of the Twenty-First Century.

A report by Jane O’Shaughnessy, RSCJ, on the discussions in St. Charles is available at <http://vocation.rscj.org/>. ❖



Young professed Religious of the Sacred Heart who took part in the October meeting are (back row) Kathleen McGrath, Elisabeth Brinkmann, Mary Frohlich, and Lisa Buscher; (middle row) Regina Shin, Kim King, and Jane O’Shaughnessy; (seated) Diana Wall and Janine Siegel.

# SPEECH OF ANGELS

*Music is well said to be the speech of angels.*

— Thomas Carlyle



Sister Padberg works hard during sessions to engage residents in music-making.

From St. Charles, Missouri, the U.S. Province touchstone since Saint Philippine Duchesne established a school – and with it the Society – on American soil in 1818, the Missouri River runs west and south, skirting the valley town of Marthasville. Situated in a bucolic landscape reminiscent of the Rhineland, the town and its surrounding area attracted German immigrants in the early 1800s – farmers, shopkeepers and vintners, along with pastors to serve a burgeoning Evangelical flock.

It was here that Eden Theological Seminary got its start in 1850 in a building of limestone quarried on site. And it is here that Harriet Ann Padberg, RSCJ, a spiritual descendant of

Philippine, a retired professor and a music therapist, has found a home for her gifts.

She and the former seminary site have much in common, if such an analogy can be made: Each has found new purpose and new life in a new era.

Symbolically at least, they are a match.

After Eden Seminary moved nearer St. Louis in 1883, the facility in Marthasville was put to use as a residential care center for developmentally disabled adults. Now one of two campuses of Emmaus Homes, it is affiliated with the United Church of Christ. For the past fourteen years, since her retirement from Maryville University, where she served as professor of mathematics and music for thirty-five years, Sister Padberg has dedicated two days a week to her second profession, music therapy, at Emmaus Homes.

It isn't entirely accurate, of course, to say that Sister Padberg is dedicated to the profession, though she is a registered music therapist and, with Ruth Sheehan, RSCJ, established a music therapy program at Maryville in the 1970s. (It remains the only such program in the St. Louis area.)

Rather, she is dedicated to the people the profession can serve. At Emmaus Homes, those include Francie, Colleen, Cindy, Tammy, Susan, Herbert, David, Billy, Andrea (their last names are omitted for privacy), and many others, each with special needs, and often with multiple disabilities, including autism, bipolar disorder or severe retardation.

On Tuesdays and Fridays, they eagerly wait their turn to sing with Sister Padberg, play simple instruments, chat, or just be soothed and loved.

On one of those two days, Sister Padberg is often assisted by two volunteers, Carna Manthey, a board-certified music therapist who completed the Maryville program, and her husband Ty Manthey who plays harmonica.

On a recent Tuesday, one of the first to arrive for her session was Francie, who likes to sing from *Wee Bible Songs*. In addition to limited mental capacity, Francie is blind and requires a wheelchair. She is also a bit of a tease.

With Sister Padberg accompanying on an electronic organ, she sang several verses of "Oh Be Careful": "Oh be careful little eyes what you see ... oh be careful little ears what you hear," illustrating the words with appropriate gestures.

Next she sang a song about Jonah, stopping to ask Sister Padberg, "Why did God put Jonah in the belly of the whale?"

"To save him, so he wouldn't drown," Sister Padberg replied.

"So he wouldn't go down to the bottom of the ocean."

"That's right."

"Well he was supposed to be thinking about God, not about the whale," countered Francie, with a grin.

### Common elements

Francie's session was laced with laughter, though she was anxious about an upcoming medical procedure. She jostled with Ty Manthey as he shuffled through his seven harmonicas, each in a different key, hurrying to keep pace with Francie's extensive repertoire. "You took long enough!" she admonished.

Francie's final song was "Kumbaya," and as it ended, Sister Padberg leaned toward her and said softly, "Jesus is very near you, Francie."

"He goes with me," Francie replied.

"And he'll go with you to the doctor today."

Francie, reassured, left, giving way to Tammy and Cindy. Carna Manthey played the organ while Sister Padberg held Cindy's hand and, looking at Tammy, sang one of her favorite songs: "Tammy."

Tammy smiled broadly, moving her lips with the words. Cindy's attention wandered, and Sister Padberg moved her hand to the rhythm of songs that followed: "Home on the Range,"

"My Favorite Things," and "Edelweiss."

Susan, who enjoys choosing and changing instruments, was next. She kept time with small cymbals to a rendition of "Caissons," but continued the clanging after the music stopped.

"That's all, Susan," Manthey said, with a nod of finality. "One of the objects is to get them to stop at the right time," she explained.

During the sessions, common elements emerged. Each person was greeted with Sister Padberg's signature "hello song": "Music, music ... music in the morning ...," and dismissed with a parting tune: "Goodbye Susan, goodbye Susan. Goodbye Susan, we hate to see you go."

Songs were varied to individual tastes and needs, and several participants chose simple percussion instruments to play. Sister Padberg and the Mantheys worked hard to engage each person, encouraging them to talk and sing.

### Therapy's goals

At 84, Sister Padberg is happy to be a part of Emmaus Homes, one of the best facilities of its kind, though struggling in the face of recent budget cuts and staff shortages to meet its goal – helping its residents to live to their fullest capacity.

The music therapists strive for positive behavior changes, including improved socialization, ability to follow directions, self-control, heightened self-esteem.

"Some of these people could easily go into themselves and become totally isolated," Sister Padberg said. "Some are so seriously ill that they would never engage if we didn't draw them out."

By listening to them, by inviting them to choose instruments, and by acknowledging their musical preferences, "we are validating them as persons," she said.

Some residents arrive lethargic and moody and engage gradually, reluctantly; others come on strong from the start.

*continued*



Carna Manthey accompanies on the organ as Andrea sings "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Below: Billy keeps time with rhythm blocks.



*"Some are so seriously ill that they would never engage if we didn't draw them out."*

*“When you come here several times, and see the interactions, it’s amazing.”*

Colleen, who loves to entertain by rhyming, is one of the latter. “Ty, you can fly. Go up to the sky. And make a pie,” she jostled.

“Sister Harriet, you’re a parrot. Why don’t you carry it,” she continued, rolling her wheelchair into place. She laughed along with her listeners, then threw back her head and began singing ballads, challenging Sister Padberg to keep up on the organ.

Eddie Lou was next, tense and emitting low groans. The therapists shifted gears. The Mantheys played soothing music – “Jesus Loves Me,” “How Great Thou Art,” “Let Me Call You Sweetheart,” as Sister Padberg stood beside Eddie Lou, crooning softly, one hand on her back, the other gently stroking her arm.

“The object of the music is to keep her calm and keep her here,” Carna Manthey said.

With others, though, the object was to keep them moving. Sister Padberg danced to “Müss Ich Denn” with David, who most enjoys

German tunes.

Sister Padberg noted that, for many of the residents, music triggers associations and brings back memories that can have a soothing effect or get people talking.

That was obvious when Herbert, 69, came in and took his place at the organ, as the therapists moved to other chairs. Herbert, who plays by ear, ran through his repertoire, introducing selections – mostly old cowboy songs – with conversation about his youth. He talked about his mother who had played the piano and his dad who kept a collection of Gene Autry records, which he played on a windup Victrola.

At one point, Herbert interrupted his reverie to note emphatically, “This isn’t my home. I was *put* here.” A brief discussion of the meaning of home ensued.

“Home is where you are loved, Herbert,” Sister Padberg said. “Home is where you are *today*.”



Sister Padberg helps Susan attach small cymbals to her fingers.



Volunteer Ty Manthey brings a bag of harmonicas in different keys.

### Year of awards

This has been a big year for Sister Padberg. She received two special awards: Epsilon Sigma Alpha’s statewide DIANA Award (Distinguished International Academy of Noble Achievement) and Maryville’s Dean’s Award in the School of Health Professions.

A parent of a resident at Emmaus Homes, crediting Sister Padberg for dramatic improvements in her daughter, nominated her for the DIANA Award, given to individuals “who have unselfishly given of themselves in an area of service that benefits others” and who “exemplify in daily life the ... qualities of love, faith and courage.”

People speak often of such qualities in Sister Padberg.

Becky Ruedin, associate director residential services at Emmaus Homes, said, “Sister Harriet has a sixth sense about working with our people. She can get them to react and communicate in a way that we on the staff cannot. When she is singing and playing music, people who only say a word now and then will be able to sing full sentences.

“We love her here. She has such high expectations for our residents, and such respect for our residents, and that respect is mutual.

“She is so tired at the end of the day, but she keeps coming and plugging away with us.”

Ty Manthey echoed the praise. “When you come here several times, and see the interactions, it’s amazing. To me, watching her is like watching miracles happen in slow motion.” ❖

Photograph courtesy of CPP



Photograph courtesy of CPP



# mayan eye



Photograph courtesy of CPP



Photograph courtesy of CPP



● **f it was heritage that drew Carlota Duarte, RSCJ, to southern Mexico, it was the prospect of empowering people through art that convinced her to stay.** For the last fourteen years, Sister Duarte has overseen the Chiapas Photography Project, which has trained more than two hundred indigenous photographers – Mayan Indians – in creative skills that are enabling them to tell their own story, building dignity and cultural pride in Mexico’s poorest state.

The project, which today employs a full time staff of four Mayan photographers, has accumulated an archive of more than 75,000 images. They are the work of some two hundred and fifty photographers representing at least ten indigenous ethnic groups, mostly from Chiapas, but also from Yucatan and the neighboring state of Oaxaca. The project is renowned in Mexico and abroad and has caught the eye of the Ford Foundation, which has provided much of the funding over the past ten years. Some photographers have seen their work published in beautiful books and displayed in galleries in the United States, including New York City, and throughout Mexico, as well as in Iceland, Holland, Germany and Spain.

Ironically, most of the men and women who have become skilled at visually recording the rhythms of daily life, the beauty of the land and the people, are unaccustomed to speaking for themselves – are politically invisible, or were, until the short-lived but successful uprising that brought Chiapas into international prominence in the early 1990s. They are, however, economically vital.

“The economy is based on their cheap labor,” Sister Duarte said, in an interview during her recent visit to St. Louis to attend a college reunion. They are largely rural farmers, coffee growers and peasants who lack the most basic amenities of modern life. Yet through photography, the indigenous peoples’ appreciation of their own changing culture has been translated into a national cultural treasure that will endure long after many of the things that money can buy.

*continued*



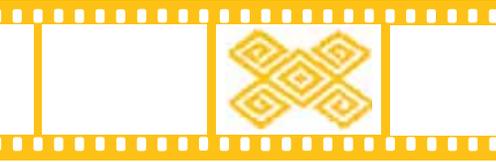
Top left: *My sister is going to visit my grandmother.* Pascuala Sántiz López, 1996. Tzotzil ethnic group.

Top right: *The pot of tamales is ready to put on the fire.* Emiliano Guzmán Meza, 2000. Tzeltal ethnic group.

Above right: *Untitled.* Carlota Duarte, 2001. Xunka’ López Díaz (seated) and Juana López López taking photos.

Above left: *Untitled.* Juana López López, 1998-2000. Tzotzil ethnic group. From the series *Kichtik / Nuestro Chile / Our Chile.*





Photograph courtesy of CPP



Photograph courtesy of CPP



Far left: *My first cousin Antonia is picking mulberries in the field.* Lucia Sántiz Girón, 1995. Tzeltal ethnic group.

Left: *The corn is hanging on the wall.* Juana López López, 1997. Tzotzil ethnic group.



Carlota Duarte, RSCJ, is founder of the Chiapas Photography Project.

## Exploring ethnicity

The daughter of a Mexican father and an American mother who attended a Sacred Heart school, Sister Duarte attended Kenwood Academy of the Sacred Heart in Albany, New York, on a scholarship and then Maryville College in St. Louis. Two years out of college, she joined the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1968. Following in the footsteps of Cora McLaughlin, RSCJ, her aunt, who taught art history for nearly two decades at Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, Connecticut, Sister Duarte pursued an interest in art and earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts at Manhattanville College. (Sister McLaughlin, now retired, lives at Teresian House in Albany.)

Sister Duarte was attracted to the Society by the deep spiritual practice of its members, its strong intellectual tradition, and its reputation for affording women freedom to grow as individuals in the context of a shared mission.

Her first assignment as a Religious of the Sacred Heart was teaching English, photography and pottery-making at Doane Stuart School, a Network school in Albany. After six years, she moved to Boston to help establish an art and craft cooperative, Casa del Sol, where immigrant women, mostly from Puerto Rico, learned to produce marketable goods and sell their work. During this period, she began to work as a professional artist, and in 1977, she was accepted at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she earned a master's degree in fine arts.

The 1980s and early 1990s were taken up with teaching at the University of Massachusetts, in the working class city of Lowell, where Sister Duarte learned from a colleague a principle that guides her to this day: "We don't have everything we'd like [in the way of equipment], but our students are eager to learn, and we owe it to them – and to ourselves – to give them the best that we can." In 1990, her photographic essay *Odella: A Hidden Survivor* was published and exhibited throughout New England and elsewhere.

It was in this period, too, that Sister Duarte gained a deeper appreciation of ethnicity and became interested in exploring her own. She was familiar with parts of Mexico from her grammar school days, when her family lived in southern California and made regular trips across the border. "My mother had a strong social conscience," she said. "We often went to Mexico to take things to an orphanage in Tijuana."

## City a magnet

As an adult, Sister Duarte traveled all over Mexico, visiting Yucatan, her father's family's home, and Chiapas, with its more mountainous terrain and cooler climate. Her ties with Mexico were strengthened in the mid-1980s, when she was offered what she describes as an exceptional opportunity: to collaborate in compiling a reference book on Mexican pictorial collections, including photographs, paintings and graphics.

What struck her as she traveled around, getting to know the country through its visual history, was that indigenous origins were "central to Mexican identity," yet virtually all representations of Indians were the work of outsiders. "It felt very unfair to me," she said.

Wouldn't it be a matter of simple justice, she wondered, if indigenous people could be empowered to speak for themselves by creating their own images.

Duarte began the Chiapas Photography Project in 1992, working first as a visiting artist at House of the Writer in San Cristóbal de las Casas, where indigenous Mayans had begun preserving their culture through writing and related activities. As Chiapas's second largest city, with a population of about

150,000, San Cristóbal serves as a magnet for commerce and outsiders, including tourists, who enjoy the contrasts of the centuries-old colonial architecture and the pre-conquest Mayan ruins a few hours away.

“It is a very special, beautiful place – to me one of the most interesting places on the planet – cosmopolitan, yet provincial – with its mix of ancient cultures, indigenous people, and colonial remnants,” Sister Duarte said.

Paradoxes abound. “I can be in my apartment watching a movie, look out the window and see someone walking by with no shoes, carrying an enormous bundle,” she said. “My heart is still very much affected by the suffering of the place.”

In addition to tourists, the city attracts many short-term researchers, human rights workers, journalists, church workers and political observers from several countries. But at last count, she said, she is one of only about thirty or so Americans who live full time in San Cristóbal. Europeans, especially Italian, French and German, are more numerous.

## Education fundamental

In the early years, the photography project used 35-millimeter manual cameras donated by friends and colleagues in the United States. Sister Duarte tutored natives in their use, but strictly avoided imposing artistic standards on their efforts. Once a core group was trained, they trained others, so that now all basic training is provided by Mayan photographers, carried out in Spanish and native languages and incorporating methods suitable to the culture. In the early years, as the project grew, donated disposable cameras were added to the equipment bank. Participants learned to reuse them by replacing used film with new. Over the years, better cameras, mostly contributed, have become available.

“We are now getting donations of good-quality film-based analog cameras as people switch to digital,” she said. “And recently, we have begun receiving digital cameras as well, so



Far right: *The town of Tenejapa*. Emiliano Guzmán Meza, 1998. Tzeltal ethnic group.

Bottom right: *Shadow*. Juana López López, 2002. Tzotzil ethnic group.

Right: Staff at the *Archivo Fotográfico Indígena*.



we are able to move into this new technology. Volunteers have come too, from several countries – more than fifty-five so far, including two Sacred Heart alumnae.

In 1995, three years after the Chiapas project began, the Ford Foundation gave Sister Duarte an individual award, making it possible for her to settle permanently in Chiapas and further develop the project. A project grant from the Ford Foundation the next year funded the beginning of the *Archivo Fotográfico Indígena* – Indigenous Photography Archive – located at the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology, where Sister Duarte had been invited as a visiting researcher. Photographs from the archive are available on request to the indigenous participants, academics and the press, and images have appeared in a variety of publications.

The project has created thirteen traveling exhibitions and seven books, always multilingual, in the photographers’ native language, in Spanish, the national language of Mexico, and in English. Publications include a book of photographs of many forms of the ubiquitous chili pepper by Juana López López, a project staff member since 1999.

Since finishing the book, López has moved on to other artistic experiments, including “multiple photos” – several images joined to make a single work (see *Shadow* below).

A book, by Emiliano Guzmán Meza features another staple of the Mexican diet: corn. A book by Maruch Santíz Gomez, pairs photographs of objects from everyday life with native sayings and beliefs – a slice of cultural history that she wanted to preserve.

For example, the words “It is unlucky to sweep the house in the afternoon. You could become so unlucky that you could

*continued*

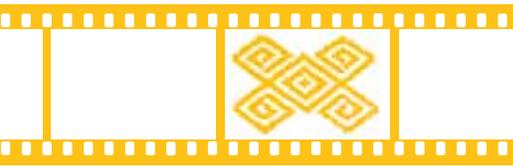


Photograph courtesy of CPP



Photograph courtesy of CPP

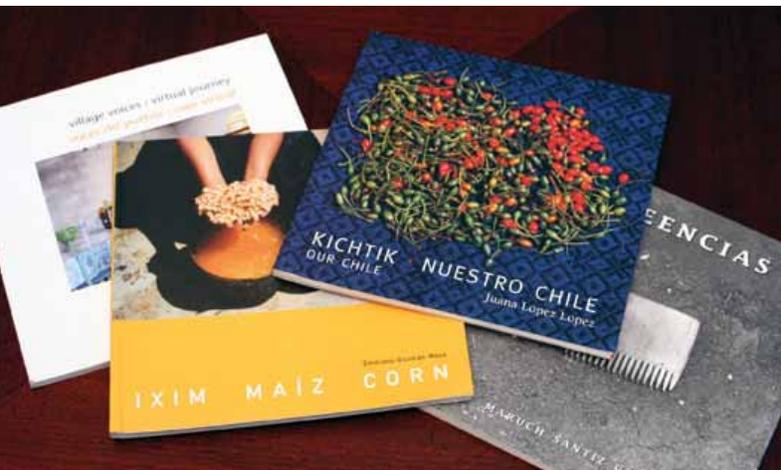




Photograph courtesy of CPP



Far left: *The clown who is a man dressed as a woman is embraced by the "white" clown.* Petul Hernández Guzmán, 2001. Tzeltal ethnic group.



Books published by the photography project provide a record of Chiapas daily life and culture.



Photograph courtesy of CPP

Left: *My little sister Cristina is looking at the camera in her traditional clothing.* Xunka' López Díaz, 2000. Tzotzil ethnic group.



lose all your money" appears alongside a photograph of a branch used for sweeping.

Sister Duarte said the project is fundamentally an educational one that goes well beyond developing photographic skills. Staff members at the archive begin the day with two hours of study. This is school work for some, including two who are attending the university. Photographers work on Spanish too, an acquired language for most indigenous people in Mexico.

Financially, the project's development is due to donations by many individuals as well as to the substantial Ford Foundation support over the years. Lamentably, the Ford funding is ending this year, so Sister Duarte has begun to establish a modest endowment and hopes to see it grow.

## Justice through art

Two major political events have occurred since Sister Duarte began her work in Chiapas. First, on New Year's Eve, 1993, while she was visiting Boston, a group of armed, masked peasant insurgents seized San Cristóbal and several surrounding towns, calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army and declaring war on the Mexican government. The uprising had been prompted in part by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which held little promise for the long impoverished and oppressed Indian population throughout the country.

The Mexican army soon brought a restive peace to Chiapas, after more than a hundred people were killed, and Sister Duarte was able to return, though to a militarized city. Since that time, she said, the situation in Chiapas is one of "low intensity warfare" and the life of indigenous communities has become more difficult.

In 1998, she became eligible for dual citizenship, a result of her direct Mexican heritage (her father was from Yucatan) and NAFTA – "one of the few positive components of that agreement," she noted. Previously, like many foreigners, she had lived in fear of deportation – an ironic twist on Mexicans now living illegally in the United States.

Since the project began, a range of academic phrases has been used in international coverage, both press and academic, to describe what Sister Duarte has done: "photography as creative social discourse" and "the camera as a tool of social awareness," to name just two. But Sister Duarte prefers to describe the project in the simpler language of art and justice, and as an extension of the educational mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She notes that the project not only provides quality education to the educationally underserved, but also, through outreach activities, educates the public about indigenous talent and culture.

She stressed that the purpose of the project goes much deeper than the externals that draw a lot of notice, such as the glossy books and exhibitions in New York. What still matters, she said, is what mattered when the project was conceived: "Giving people the opportunity to represent themselves with their own artistic talent and to regard themselves and their cultural heritage with dignity and pride." ❖

*For more information about Sister Duarte's project and its publications, please see [www.chiapasphoto.org](http://www.chiapasphoto.org).*

**O**n an early November morning in Omaha, some 290 students at Duchesne Academy spread across the grass to form the numerals 1-2-5. Joining them were faculty, administrators and staff, who formed a heart above the numbers, and sixty-five preschoolers, who lined up across the bottom, as if to underscore.

A photographer hired to capture this 125th anniversary moment, hovered overhead in a cherry picker. Pictures done, a huge banner proclaiming “It’s Congé!” unfurled from on high, as students rewarded adult planners with screams of joy.

Space constrictions would have prohibited such a “photo op” at the other Sacred Heart school commemorating its 125th this year: Convent of the Sacred Heart (91st Street) in New York City, where buildings occupy virtually every square foot of land.

No matter. Space-deprived 91st Street is marking the occasion with urban élan. Events include Christmas caroling along 91st Street, from Fifth Avenue eastward, serenading residents of the nation’s most populous city.

And *that* could not happen in Omaha.

If celebration styles at these two schools are a Sacred Heart version of Aesop’s “City Mouse-Country Mouse,” it goes without saying that, differences in contexts aside, the two

schools hold key values and traditions in common.

What *is* surprising is to find that they are linked in history, too.

As it happened, the nuns who founded Duchesne in 1881 were dispatched not from St. Joseph, Missouri, a mere 120 miles to the south, but from New York City, 1200 miles away.

The person inviting them was also an easterner: The Rev. James O’Connor, vicar apostolic of the Territory of Nebraska, hailed from Pennsylvania, where he had served as chaplain for the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

His first petition to the Society in France for a Sacred Heart School in Omaha was denied, but two years later, in 1880, he won over Mother General Adele Lehon, assuring her that Omaha had a great future and adding charitably, “Its climate is the best I’ve known.”

The first two RSCJ, Margaret Dunne and Bridget Mangin, arrived in 1881 and opened a school with three students in a rented house. Omaha was becoming a civilized place to live by then, if still smarting from its *continued*



Banners from the Web sites of the two schools.

Heart version of Aesop’s “City Mouse-Country Mouse,” it goes without saying that, differences in contexts aside, the two



[www.duchesneacademy.org](http://www.duchesneacademy.org)



[www.cshnyc.org](http://www.cshnyc.org)

# Tale of Two Schools

*Duchesne Academy and  
Convent of the Sacred Heart at 125*

reputation as a rowdy railroad town. The eastern religious had many adjustments to make. They noted in their house journal for the first year that Native Americans had come begging for alms and that their students, though gifted with high spirits and refreshing simplicity, fell short intellectually and spiritually relative to their urban peers.



The Otto Kahn Mansion, 1 East 91st Street, New York City

Chloe Pashman, teacher at 91st Street, reads to Phoebe Martin, a pre-kindergarten student.

“Our children are animated with the best spirit,” they wrote. “They are quite fresh souls of great simplicity and extreme ignorance. When told to go to the chapel to pray, they were quite amazed and asked what they ought to say. One little girl of seven, being told by her Mistress that our Lord grants all that we ask of Him, seemed astonished. ‘But Madame,’ she asked. ‘How do you know? Does He come and put it into your hands?’ ”

Soon more nuns arrived, and the Society bought land from the Nebraska vicariate for one dollar. A newly constructed five-story school building, replete with conveniences considered modern at the time, won praise from the

*Whatever the differences, the strengths of the schools are in their similarities: the Sacred Heart tradition and commitment to the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools.*

local press at the dedication in 1882. *The Daily Herald* wrote that the lofty location, overlooking the Jesuits’ Creighton College several blocks away, was “healthful” and the views “far-reaching and picturesque.” A carriage barn and stables were situated to the building’s south.

Mother Dunne stayed in Omaha a decade, leaving behind a school of 150 students and a three-story addition to the original building when she returned to New York – though to Kenwood in Albany rather than to New York City. Once resettled, she no doubt heard many stories about the new school on Manhattan’s East Side, which also dated its founding to 1881.

By the time the school now known as “91st Street” was established, the Society had been in Manhattan for nearly forty years. Various school startups in the city ended up as predecessors to schools farther north, but the East Side school, operating in a brownstone in the city’s prime new residential neighborhood, remained closer over time to its geographic roots. It began with thirty-six students in a brownstone at Fifty-Fourth and Madison. After two years, an adjoining brownstone was purchased to accommodate expanding enrollment.

Surprisingly, though, perhaps because of other Sacred Heart schools in the region, 91st Street grew more slowly than Duchesne. Enrollment did not exceed a hundred until the twenty-fifth year, when a third house was purchased and connected to the other two.

There were other challenges too. From its earliest days, Sacred Heart educators in New York worked to counter the city’s materialistic milieu. The young ladies mostly adhere to the rules, the nuns wrote, but were always conscious of the world outside.

By the school’s fiftieth anniversary, the school had weathered effects of the Great Depression, including a steep enrollment decline, and the nuns sought a larger space. They found it in a seventy-four-room mansion on 91st Street completed just sixteen years earlier by financier Otto Kahn. Its enrollment restored to 136, the school moved to the new location in 1934.



All New York photos were taken by Christy Gowen at 91st Street

Both Duchesne and 91st Street eventually added advanced programs. In Omaha, the nuns opened a four-year college in 1915. A quarter-century later, the religious at 91st Street opened the Duchesne Residence School in the building next door, offering post-secondary school instruction in social and secretarial skills and early childhood education.

Duchesne College in Omaha closed in 1968, and the lower school closed four years later, ending an era of continuous education from early childhood through adulthood. The Duchesne Resident School at 91st Street closed in 1966, and younger students moved into the space.

Today, both Duchesne and 91st Street are moving forward with lay leaders at the helm (as are ten other members of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools). Joanne Fitzpatrick, RSCJ, recently appointed to oversee formation to mission at Duchesne, sees the 125th anniversary as a pivotal time for Sacred Heart education, marking “a new birth of the lay commitment to the vision of Madeleine Sophie.”

Sheila Haggas was appointed head of school at Duchesne in 1995, succeeding Jan Dunn, RSCJ, who now heads Duchesne Academy in Houston. Patricia Hult, longtime teacher and administrator at 91st Street, is currently serving as interim head, replacing Mary Blake. Blake became the first lay head of school in 2000, succeeding the late Nancy Salisbury, RSCJ.

Clearly, the strengths of the schools are in their Sacred Heart legacies and their present commitment to the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools, though it is equally clear that each school has unique characteristics and challenges.

Duchesne enrolls 355, including sixty-five in a preschool program begun in 1998; 91st Street enrolls 671 students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. Tuition at 91st Street, at \$29,000, is nearly four times that at Duchesne, reflecting the significant cost of living difference in the two cities. Twenty-five percent of the student body at 91st Street are members of minority populations – a percentage that would be hard to match in Omaha, given very different demographics, but Meg Jones, director of admissions, said Duchesne prides itself on the socio-economic diversity of its student body.

Keeping the spiritual dimension in the forefront is a challenge for all Sacred Heart schools today, said Barbara Root, director of admissions at 91st Street, “but in New York City, the contrast is more extreme. This is a city run by money, and we have to make a real effort



All Duchesne photos are by Nikki McDonald of Duchesne.

to counter that. I look for families who are attracted to the mission.”

Life in Omaha is more laid-back, reflecting its location at the heart of the Midwest. Further, Omaha has what New Yorkers crave: lots of space, a whole city block of property. An addition to Duchesne was completed in 2003, and a developer recently put an assisted living facility on the site, converting former college classrooms into Via Christie.

In contrast, when 91st Street built a recent addition, the only way to grow was up.

Both schools have strong athletic programs, but students at 91st Street go off campus to practice – by foot to Central Park or by bus to gymnasiums at other schools. Duchesne, its onsite soccer field just a decade old, can boast of five state championships during the 1990s, and 91st street has won several league championships in recent years.

Both schools count distinguished Religious of the Sacred Heart among their alumnae, and Duchesne is legendary for vocations to religious life. At least sixty women who became Religious of the Sacred Heart, and another thirty-four who entered other religious orders,

*continued*

Denise Ervin, mother of Anna and Marie, the girls standing with her, made this anniversary quilt for Duchesne’s 125th.

Front entrance to Duchesne Academy’s oldest building, which dates to 1881.





Lucia Ortiz, an exchange student from Madrid, joins Amanda Ross, Nancy Menagh, Caroline Carberry and Brooke Thomas, campus minister of the upper school, at an all-school service day this fall.

Jessica Strutzel, a junior at Duchesne, helps Marian Salat and Mohamud Hassan, both from Solmalia, with their homework during an afternoon tutoring program.



Left: Patricia Hult, 91st Street



Right: Sheila Haggas, Duschene



were or are alumnae, according to the school's archivist, Lucy Hayes, RSCJ.

Those RSCJ alumnae include three who work at the school today. In addition to Sisters Hayes and Fitzpatrick, JoEllen Sumpter, RSCJ, serves as registrar. Longtime alumnae director, Mary Pat Ryan, RSCJ, recently moved to Atherton, California.

Three RSCJ are in ministry at 91st Street too: Maura Keleher, in charge of formation to mission, Kim King, middle school librarian, and Angela Bayo, former longtime head of the lower school, now assisting with anniversary plans.

Among events marking the anniversaries, Duchesne held a "traditions day" and 91st Street inaugurated a new chapel. And each school held a special anniversary liturgy at a major church nearby – Duchesne's at St. Cecilia's Cathedral; 91st Street's at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola – where leaders spoke of the unbroken thread running through the years: the vision of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, rooted deeply in God's love, and the

legacy of faith, love and learning over many decades that makes the schools much more than institutions – almost living beings in themselves.

Sheila Haggas, in her call to worship, noted that Duchesne had chosen November 21 for its special Mass, the very day that, in 1800, Madeleine Sophie and her companions had committed themselves to a new religious foundation, thus beginning the Society of the Sacred Heart. Shirley Miller, RSCJ, an alumna of Duchesne College who served as head of Duchesne Academy for eleven years, gave a "litany of thanksgiving," expressing gratitude for many things, not least "the legacy of our alumnae and their contributions to our city, our church, our world ... the smell of old wax and the beauty of new buildings ... the highly polished long corridors leading to the statues of the Sacred Heart, Mater, and Our Lady, drawing us closer and more deeply into the mystery and wonder of the charism we have all inherited."

At the 91st Street Mass, Blessed Sacrament Father John Kamas, school chaplain, celebrant and homilist, could have been speaking of every Sacred Heart school as he reflected on the regenerative power of the stories that move the Sacred Heart tradition from past to present and future – stories rooted in personal histories that keep the vision growing and evolving "in our own flesh and blood."

"In a little while," at the reception, "the din of storytelling will rock the room," he said – a sharing akin to "what is called in biblical studies the *kerygma*, the proclamation of the good news."

"In a very real way, these stories hold the spirit and the energy of Madeleine Sophie's charism, her vision, her world view. If we listen closely to our stories, we should be able to hear how we were and are touched by her vision – and in light of that vision, how we influence and transform the world and our society day by day." ❖

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me to preach  
the Gospel to the poor.  
He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To preach deliverance to the captives and  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
To preach the acceptable time of the Lord.”  
— Luke 4:18-19

# SHOULDER TO SHOULDER, HOPE IN HAITI

By Anita von Wellsheim, RSCJ





Photo: Darcy Kicifel

Onlookers watch as a “TiMachan” (market woman) and a Fonkoze client adds an ingredient to the sauce she is preparing.

**M**y interest in Haiti began in the late 1980s as I followed the news of a young Haitian priest of humble origin named Jean Bertrand Aristide who taught and defended the rights of the poor, courageously opposing powerful forces of injustice, and in 1990 won his country’s presidency, despite U.S. support for his opponent. Reading Aristide’s story, I saw Haiti as a nation crying out for justice and was drawn to look more deeply into its situation.

So when, soon after Aristide’s first removal in a 1991 coup, Pax Christi USA formed a delegation to Haiti, I was quick to join. The purpose of the delegation was to observe and report on human rights abuses in Haiti and to be a support for people in areas of greatest danger. Their faith, courage, strength and resistance in face of unremitting brutal attacks of the military and paramilitary forces of the *de facto* government were a revelation and inspiration to me.

Because our first-hand reports to the United Nations and to the media proved vital for arousing international interest and obtaining help, more delegations were sent. The result was that I became a frequent visitor and eventually a temporary resident and passionate advocate for those who live in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

As nearly everyone knows, Haiti, despite its close proximity to the southeastern border of the United States, is not only the poorest country in its hemisphere; it is one of the poorest countries in the world. Statistics show that, as a result of political chaos, oppressive poverty, and rampant disease, twenty-five percent of Haitians die before reaching 40. Unemployment is officially seventy-five percent – a percentage more than fifteen times the current U.S. unemployment rate and unimaginable in any developed country – and many Haitians live on less than \$100 per year.

If these facts are correct (and few would argue with them), how can Haitian families, caught in the daily struggle for survival, begin to move toward greater economic security? How can they be released from their economic captivity?

If there is one thing Haiti has in abundance, it is obstacles – seemingly endless, insurmountable obstacles.

Urged on by the Gospel, especially by passages such as the one in Luke quoted above, I felt a responsibility and need to respond to this call to serve the needs of the most poor and needy of God’s people.

In time, I learned of a new program that would give me hope. It was Fonkoze, founded by a Catholic priest, which offers microcredit – small loans at reasonable interest rates for people unable get commercial loans – as a way of helping poor people start and operate their own small businesses. Microcredit was declared by the United Nations in 2005 to be the most effective means of reducing poverty throughout the world.

After Aristide returned to Haiti in 1994 to finish out his term as president, I returned to Haiti to minister in whatever way I might be useful. Initially I lived and helped at the Norwich Mission House, studied Haitian Kreyol (Creole), and taught at Lafami Selavi, the orphanage founded in the 1980s by Aristide. I later lived for several months with a Haitian family and then was invited to join the Witness for Peace community being formed in Port-au-Prince.

During most of this time I attended Sunday liturgies at the home of the Spiritan Fathers, and it was here that I became impressed by the fierce concern for the Haitian people demonstrated by Spiritan Father Joseph Philippe, who established Fonkoze in 1994. Two years later, I met Anne Hastings, Fonkoze’s volunteer executive director, who asked me to work with Fonkoze in Port-au-Prince and then to return to the states and help with fundraising. In just over



A Fonkoze borrower arranges shoes at her marketplace.

a decade since its founding, Fonkoze (a Creole acronym for “Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation”) has overcome natural disasters, political instability, and runaway inflation to provide financial services to poor clients all over Haiti. By providing education and basic financial services, such as savings accounts, loans and the ability to transfer money to relatives elsewhere, microcredit empowers families to plan for the future instead of focusing only on day-to-day survival.

Little by little, recipients are able not only to pay off their loans, but also to pay children’s school fees and buy medicines when necessary.

On my return to Washington D.C., I wrote letters and proposals asking for funding and gathered a group of like-minded friends interested in Haiti, a country seemingly beyond redemption. This work flowed from my prayer, from my desire to follow in the steps of Jesus and to carry on the Society’s mission of responding to God’s call in the heart of the world. We did what we could and I believe the people there have remained interested and involved. I gradually realized though, that in metropolitan D.C., Fonkoze is just one of hundreds of causes for justice beating on the doors of government and competing for the contents of people’s wallets.

Albany, New York, proved to be a somewhat different story. After more letters and proposals for funding, it dawned on me that I still had justice-minded friends from my former years of ministry in Albany. So I invited them to a meeting, described Fonkoze and its mission, and *lo* – with a membership of twelve, Fonkoze Albany was born.

Every Fonkoze client has a story to tell. Marie Françoise Neptune was only 18 when her mother died, so she assumed the job of raising five younger siblings and eking out a living for the family. She became a trader, borrowing money at 200 percent interest from a money lender. “I was working for the money lender, not for myself,” she said ruefully.

She would buy and sell “kennedy” (used clothing from the United States), along with rice, beans and other dried foods. She scraped together enough to send her brothers and sisters to school, but could not go herself.

In 1998, a single mother with four children, she joined a Fonkoze solidarity – a group of women who check on one another and covenant to repay one another’s loans if necessary. Marie has taken out seven loans totaling \$2,200. After repaying each one she qualified under the program for a larger loan. With these loans and her savings, she is now able to travel to the Dominican Republic and Panama to buy and then resell various types and larger quantities of merchandise, such as auto and bicycle parts. She even hires other women to sell her goods in the market and shares her profits with them. A happy and successful 52-year-old business woman, she gives credit to the organization that gave credit to her. “I can count on Fonkoze to be there for me today and tomorrow,” she said.

It should be noted that Fonkoze does not give women access to credit and financial services and send them on their way. Rather, it accompanies women out of poverty by providing a package of services critical for success. More than sixty percent of Fonkoze’s members do not know how to read or write when they join Fonkoze. The organization is committed to upgrading their education along with their financial status and thereby helping to build their self-esteem.

Over a two-year period Fonkoze women are taught to read and write as they learn they acquire fundamental banking skills and basic health information and learn to appreciate the importance of upholding human rights and democratic principles.

I believe these educational services are a key reason why Fonkoze’s loan clients maintain a collective default rate of less than two percent.

After just ten years, Fonkoze has grown from a single office in Port-au-Prince with nine employees to thirty branches all over the country, where 400 are employed. The number of depositors has grown from 173 to more than 90,000, and their savings balance has grown from \$78,453 to \$7 million. Loan clients now number 30,000 and outstanding loans total \$6 million.

Ninety-seven percent of the loan clients are women, making Fonkoze a fitting place for me, as an RSCJ, to fulfill the demands of the Gospel to bring good news to the poor and to live out the Society’s commitment to make women

*continued*

and children a priority in our ministries as we carry out our mission of revealing God's love and responding to God present in the heart of the world. (Cf. recent General Chapters of the Society)

Today Fonkoze ([www.fonkoze.org](http://www.fonkoze.org)) is truly the bank the poor of Haiti now call their own. They know that whatever comes – hurricanes, floods, political unrest, a fluctuating economy, deteriorating infrastructure – Fonkoze will be right at their side. In reality, Fonkoze is much more than a program or a project. It is a commitment, a resolve to make real the vision of a lasting institution in Haiti on which the poor can always rely. That is why, to me, Fonkoze is truly God's good news to the people of Haiti. ✚



*After thirty-three years as a teacher and administrator in Sacred Heart schools, Sister Von Wellsheim became involved with Fonkoze in 1996 and founded the Albany group the following year. She is an honorary board member of Fonkoze USA and chair of the Peace and Justice Committee at Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart.*

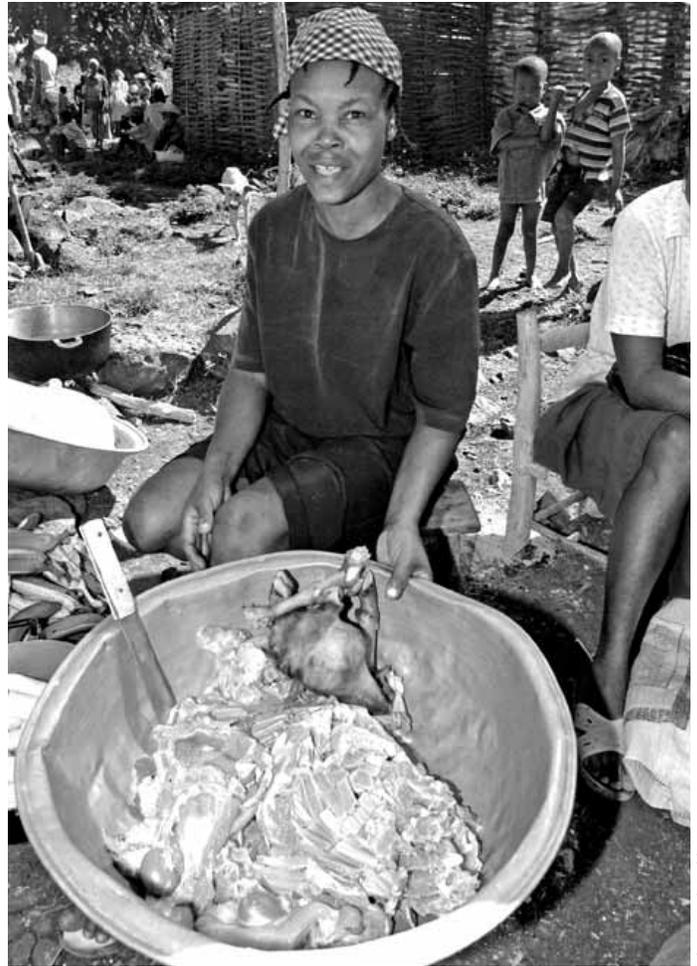


Photo: Karl Grobl

This Fonkoze borrower is a meat vendor.

## SOCIETY IN HAITI:

In addition to Sister Von Wellshiem's work with Fonkoze, the Society established an international foundation in Verrettes, Haiti, in 2000. Judith Vollbrecht and Diane Roche, both of the U.S. Province, are among four RSCJ working in Verrettes. See article in *Heart*, Spring 2004, available online at [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org) (Publications).

## FONKOZE FAST FACTS

**Fonkoze is a bank, with branches throughout Haiti, that specializes in microcredit.**

**What is microcredit?** Microcredit extends loans to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their families.

**Fonkoze's progress:** Established in 1994, Fonkoze currently has more than 90,000 depositors, more than 30,000 active borrowers (97% of whom are women), and 26 branch offices throughout Haiti. As of December 31, 2005, Fonkoze had over \$7 million in savings deposits and almost \$6 million in loans outstanding. Loans overdue more than 30 days were 5%.

**Fonkoze's mission:** to build the economic foundations for democracy in Haiti.

**Other services:** Literacy, business skills and health care.

## READ ABOUT HAITI

Nonfiction:

*Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Tracy Kidder  
*The Uses of Haiti*, by Paul Farmer

Fiction:

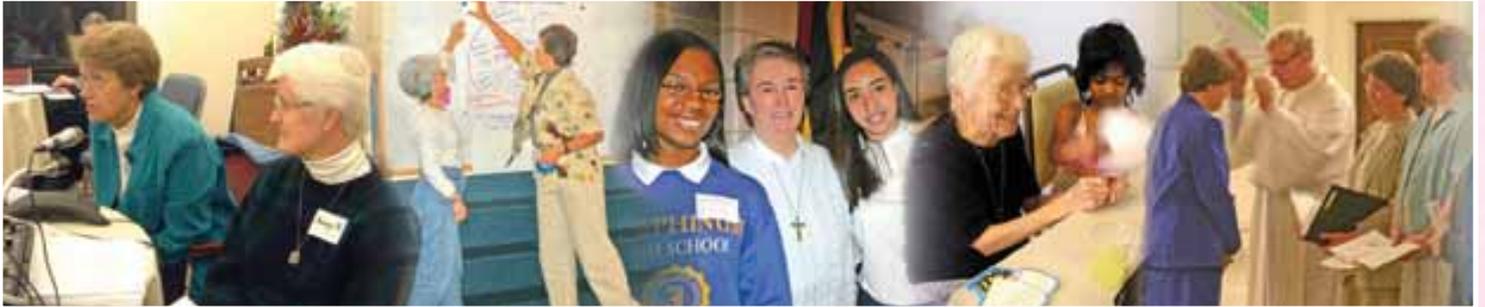
*Masters of the Dew*, Jacques Roumain  
*The Farming of Bones*, Edwidge Danticat

Anthology:

*A Haiti Anthology: Libète*,  
Charles Arthur and Michael Dash

# Join us in mission

Help us make God's love visible in the heart of the world



## How?

### VOCATIONS

If you are interested in membership in the Society, please contact  
Nancy Koke, RSCJ, Director of Vocation Ministry, [vocations@rscj.org](mailto:vocations@rscj.org)

### ASSOCIATES

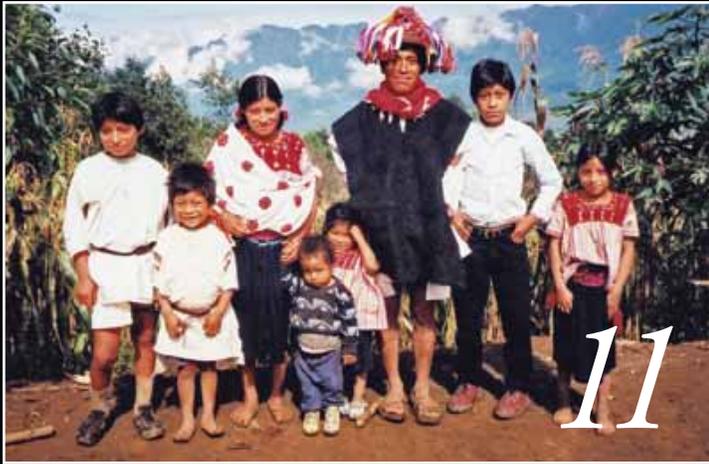
If you would like to learn about the Sacred Heart Associates program for men and women  
who want to share in the mission and charism of the Society, please e-mail

[Anne Byrne, RSCJ, at abyrne@rscj.org](mailto:abyrne@rscj.org)

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Please consider including the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province,  
in your estate plan or your will. For more information, e-mail

[Shirley Miller, RSCJ, at smiller@rscj.org](mailto:smiller@rscj.org)



Carlota Duarte, RSCJ, has taught Mexico's indigenous Indians to see their world with a **Mayan Eye**



Translated, Fonkoze, a microcredit program for Haitian entrepreneurs, means **Shoulder to Shoulder, Hope in Haiti**



Linked in history, both 125, Duchesne and 91st Street make for a fascinating **Tale of Two Schools**

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