

# Ministry Report

News/Views  
From the Franciscan Sisters  
of Christian Charity  
Sponsored Ministries, Inc.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries is to carry out the commitment of the Sponsor to the healing and educational mission of the Catholic Church through the provision of quality health care and educational services.

In a spirit of partnership with dedicated religious and lay leaders, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries will strengthen the Sponsor's commitment by leading change, ensuring stewardship of resources and integrating mission and values.

## Transforming Hurt Into Hope

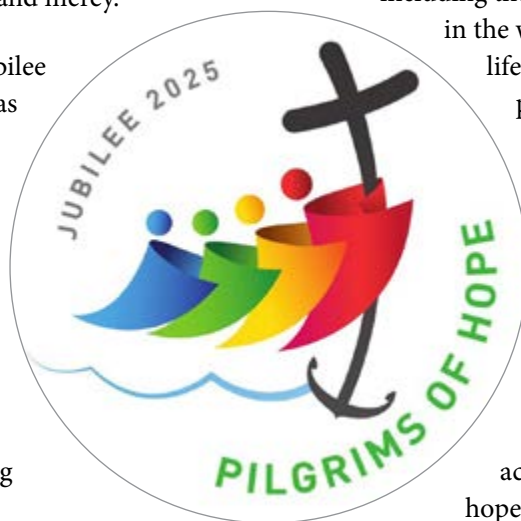
By Sister Kay Klackner, OSF, Vice President of Mission

**T**he encouraging words of St. Paul, "Hope does not disappoint," inspired Pope Francis to declare hope as the focus of Jubilee 2025. The Jubilee Year officially began with the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve 2024. Every 25 years the Church declares a jubilee year inviting all people to return to God and receive grace and mercy.

Since 1300, the jubilee year is celebrated as a holy year that calls the faithful back to right relationship with God, each other, and creation as was practiced in the Jewish roots of celebrating a jubilee every 50 years to re-establish these proper relationships. Pope Francis stated in the papal bull, the official announcement of a Jubilee Year, "For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' ... of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as 'our hope.'" The Jubilee Year concludes with the closing of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica Jan. 6, 2026, on the feast of the Epiphany. The Holy Door is then bricked over by masons.

In choosing the theme, Pilgrims of Hope, the pope believed that everyone in the depths of their being knows what it is to hope—the desire of good things to come despite not knowing the future. It is God's word that helps us find reasons for that hope.

As pilgrims of hope, we are called to be "signs of hope" in the Jubilee Year, including the desire for peace in the world, openness to life and responsible parenthood, and closeness to prisoners, the poor, the sick, the young, the elderly, migrants and people in difficult situations. Every act of kindness is hope gleaming.



As healthcare organizations, we have a special opportunity to transform hurt into hope. The works of mercy practiced in our hospitals and eldercare associations are works of hope. Our Shared Statement of Identity for the Catholic Ministry (Catholic Health Association) states "By our service, we strive to transform hurt into hope." Doesn't that sound like the call to be pilgrims of hope in this Jubilee Year?



## Message from the President

### Friends,

A crucial aspect of leadership, often overlooked, is a leader's ability to create a sense of connection and inspire hope. If you have ever worked for a leader with this skill, you may have accomplished tasks beyond your expectations. Furthermore, when an entire organization's culture is connected to hope, then special moments are daily. As I have completed my first meeting with each FSCCM organization, I was able to hear and see firsthand special moments between employees and those we serve.



Ryan Neville

At Clement Manor I attended a resident council that was full of both laughter and tears. In Nebraska, the Franciscan Healthcare and St. Joseph's Elder Services board of directors carry and strengthen our mission in their circles with extreme pride. Residents at St. Paul Elder Services have confidence and security in their journey alongside SPES regardless of the challenge. I was motivated by the optimism by the Genesis HealthCare executive team to expand into underserved areas and at Holy Family Memorial the employee's resilience to connect to new patients in new markets only broadens our mission.

These examples are the byproduct of leaders with a warm heart fueled by a mission. I want to acknowledge our leaders for their positive impact on the communities we serve through the FSCCM mission.



### 2025 Trustee Forum

On October 23, seventy participants joined the 2025 Trustee Forum on Zoom. The theme was Laying a Foundation for Effective Decision-Making. Keynote speaker, Dr. Dennis Gonzales, Catholic Health Association, provided a solid background to the Catholic ministry of board service, the who and how in leading for hope, and description of values-based decision-making.

Sister Natalie Binversie announced Trevor Frank as the recipient of the 2025 Sister Ritarose Stahl Award for his leadership and outstanding service at St. Paul Elder Services in Kaukauna, Wisconsin. Well-known for his volunteerism in the local community, Trevor is an avid advocate and supporter of St. Paul Elder Services. Congratulations, Trevor!



Trevor Frank, board chair of St. Paul Elder Services, is recognized with the Sister Ritarose Stahl Award.

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**Editor:** Karen Stenzel



## Hurt into Hope

Hope can look different in many situations, whether there is a short-term outlook for a complex problem to turn around or a long-term need where hope may be the only answer. Life often presents us with profound challenges where hurt can seem overwhelming. However, compassion and community support can transform these painful experiences into sources of hope. Two touching examples illustrate this powerful journey from despair to optimism.

At Clement Manor, the “Moments to Embrace” respite care program exemplifies how support can help caregivers find hope amid their struggles. Funded by a generous grant from Bader Philanthropies, this initiative provides caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease two hours of respite every Friday for 12 weeks, starting in April. Caregiving can be an emotionally and physically draining experience, often leading to burnout and feelings of isolation. The Moments to Embrace Respite Care Program offers these caregivers a break with expert-led sessions that equip them with essential tools and resources. During this time, they can connect with others facing similar challenges, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding. As caregivers step away from their demanding roles, they are reminded that they are not alone. This respite enables them to return to their loved ones refreshed and with renewed hope, transforming the weight of



*The Clement Manor Moments to Embrace Respite Care Program offers caregivers renewed hope.*

their responsibilities into a more manageable burden.

In another instance of resilience and community spirit, a staff member at Clement Manor faced an unimaginable crisis when her family lost everything in a house fire. The emotional turmoil of losing one’s home and belongings can be devastating, leading to feelings of hopelessness. Yet, the response from her colleagues exemplified the power of unity. They rallied together, gathering gift cards, clothing for her children, blankets, and other necessities, filling five carloads of donations. This outpouring of support met her immediate needs and was a lifeline during a very difficult time. The staff member, who initially felt crushed by the weight

of her loss, began to see glimmers of hope through the kindness of those around her. The Clement Manor community helped her family regain basic needs and instilled a sense of belonging and support, allowing her to envision a brighter future – with much more hope!

Both examples from Clement Manor illustrate the profound impact of compassion in times of distress. Through structured programs like Moments to Embrace or the spontaneous support shown during a personal tragedy, hope can emerge from hurt. These stories remind us that while life can bring profound challenges, the response of a caring community can turn despair into hope, helping individuals cope or thrive as they rebuild their lives.





## Nurturing Hope in the Face of Life's Challenges

**F**ranciscan Healthcare stands as a beacon of compassion, treating every patient with the dignity and respect they deserve. In our mission to meet patients exactly where they are in their journeys, we cultivate a sense of hope. By empowering them to make choices while ensuring their safety, we open a pathway to healing. Hope is a powerful feeling—an expectation that something good is possible. Whether through thoughtful discharge planning or heartfelt conversations with patients and their families, we strive to guide them toward decisions that nurture safety, security, and well-being in their daily lives.

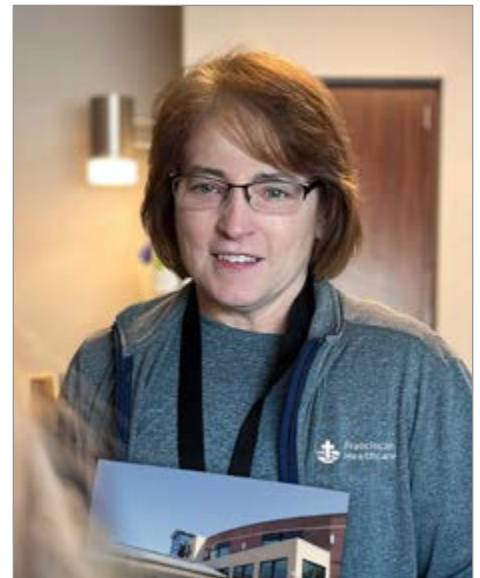
Hope manifests differently for each individual, from the small victories of simply getting out of bed in the morning to achieving goals of strength and recovery. We recognize that acceptance of one's health journey unfolds at each person's unique pace. It's vital to acknowledge that patients may encounter setbacks, yet we stand as dedicated professionals to support and inspire them toward brighter tomorrows.

At Franciscan Healthcare, our vision is unwavering: to provide exceptional care infused with hope. Each department reflects this spirit, fostering collaboration that nurtures positivity and growth among our team members. Our highest priority in engaging with patients and their families is to listen deeply, creating space for them to

voice their needs and concerns. We empathize wholeheartedly with their current circumstances, guiding them to focus on the present moment. With ongoing training, educational opportunities, and strong leadership, we are committed to elevating our service to the community.

Franciscan Healthcare embodies hope by honoring the unique stories that bring each patient to our doors. We aim to be a source of light during challenging times, serving as a sign of hope for the next step in their journey.

Discussing hope can be especially poignant during the profound moments at life's end. In addressing the concept of "how hurt transforms into hope," we find strength in our personal relationship with Jesus. Grief is profoundly personal, impacting each patient in distinct ways. Allowing individuals the time to process their emotions at their own pace fosters a garden of hope amidst hurt. As we continue to listen, support, and encourage our patients through every stage, we play an instrumental role in their and their families' decision-making journeys. Our commitment to patience and persistence in building relationships helps us meet patients and families where they are, nurturing hope in the face of life's challenges.



*Team members, Caleb Peterson and Diane Persson, from Franciscan Healthcare*



## Transforming Hurt Into Hope at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital

Patients often experience fear and uncertainty after heart surgery or an unexpected diagnosis of heart disease. We aim to transform that hurt into hope here at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital, where we recently initiated a new cardiac rehab program – the Pritikin Intensive Cardiac Rehab program (ICR). This intensive cardiac rehab program was already being used at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. ICR differs in many ways from the standard cardiac rehab program we had been offering. Patients receive 72 sessions in ICR versus 32 sessions in standard cardiac rehab. The three key pillars of the Pritikin model are exercise, heart healthy nutrition, and healthy mindset. Education around these three pillars is based on scientific, published research. Cooking classes, videos, and workshops on exercise, nutrition, and healthy mindset are part of the education component. Workshops are led by certified staff who have been trained in the Pritikin ICR model. This program has the wonderful addition of education on a healthy mindset, treating the whole person. Our board-certified chaplains lead the Healthy Mindset workshops, along with one of our nurses. These Healthy Mindset workshops focus on mindfulness, the power of a healthy outlook, recognizing and reducing stress, goal setting, and healthy sleep.

Documented results of patients in an ICR program have shown reductions in blood pressure, cholesterol levels, inflammation markers, and weight. At two to three weeks after starting a Pritikin program, blood pressure is reduced by 9%, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides decreased 23% and 33%, markers of inflammation (C-reactive protein) fell by approximately 40%, and weight decreased an average of 7-11 pounds.

Staff provides guidance with exercise and allows patients to start slowly if needed. Through workshops and cooking schools, patients learn important concepts and are able to try new foods and recipes. As they gain confidence, they may see improvement in exercise, make different choices at the grocery store, reframe some of their thoughts, or find a new recipe. The exercise and education aspects are group

activities, so the patients are not going through this process alone. Change that occurs over the 12 weeks provides new hope for our patients.

Our staff are very hopeful about the impact of this program. We are able to have more time with patients as they now receive a regular schedule of education workshops in addition to exercise. When patients see improvement, make progress with diet changes, and create connections with other patients and staff, it brings hope to all of us. Also, seeing our program grow and develop elicits hope that other health care systems will refer their patients to our ICR program.





## Turning Hurt into Hope

**T**he Genesis HealthCare System Spiritual Care Department offers spiritual and emotional support for patients and their families. The team is available around the clock, regardless of a person's faith or religious affiliation.

Spiritual Care chaplains reflected on how they transformed patients' hurt into hope in 2024.

"In providing spiritual care to families when a loved one has passed, I can see the impact of our kind words or deeds on the families. These are reminders that there is still love and love brings hope," said Rev. Rob Morris.

### Reflecting on the impact of hope at Genesis

#### 1. In what ways is Genesis a sign of hope?

"I believe our organization is a beacon of hope by being a place

where individuals can come and find compassionate care for their bodies and spirits during their time of need," said Rev. Randy Gearhart, Genesis Spiritual Care Director.

"We are a sanctuary for our community members. We offer an atmosphere of healing and community," said Rev. L. Lynne Hottle.

#### 2. What do you hope for at Genesis?

"My hope for our organization is that we will always abide by our commitment to live our mission, vision and values individually and collectively," said Gearhart.

"My hope for our organization is that we continue to build upon our reputation of compassionate, quality care and be a place of care that people come to first," said Rev. Bill Blair.

#### 3. What gives you hope at Genesis?

"What gives me hope in our organization is when I see the caring, compassionate care that our team gives our patients, their family members and each other," said Gearhart.

"I have hope in our organization because of the quality of team members that I interact with daily," said Blair.

#### 4. What examples do you have of transforming hurt into hope?

"I believe that advocating for patients to improve the patient experience is a way Genesis transforms hurt into hope," said Rev. Dr. Dido Ntontolo.

"Each time we have a code blue, it is a time of crisis, anxiety, fear and sometimes death, grief and loss. Whenever possible, at a code blue, a chaplain is present, along with the code team. The chaplain, as well as other team members, bring comfort, emotional and spiritual support and turn hurt into hope by representing God's loving presence during life's most painful and difficult times," said Gearhart.

"We transform hurt into hope through our Honor Walks for organ donors. We see a family, and our employees respond to each other with love and compassion during these walks. Another example is in our Behavioral Health unit. People struggle with grief, addiction and other problems, and our employees do a wonderful job of restoring hope," said Blair.



*Members of the Genesis HealthCare System Spiritual Care Department.*





## Life is Filled with Hope

At baptism we are gifted with the theological virtue of hope, a virtue that points to God, to eternal life, to the future kingdom. It is also a virtue for the now, to be lived in our every day lives, today and every day. It gives us confidence and a deep joy in the midst of the struggles and challenges of life as well as during the obvious highpoints of daily living,

The need for hope has come to the surface in today's world. Pope Francis has declared this jubilee year as one of hope. The Catholic Health Association speaks of turning hurt into hope. As a religious congregation, we prepare for our general chapter this summer as pilgrims of hope. We are surrounded by the need and reality of hope.

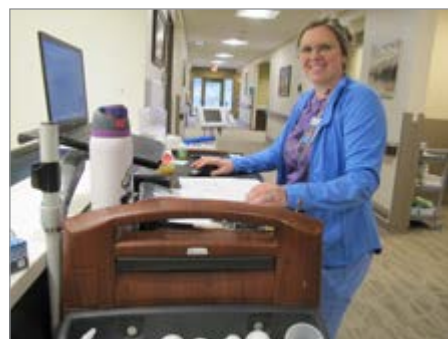
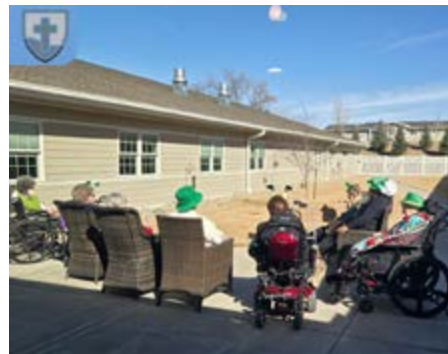
So, how is hope a part of life at St. Joseph's Elder Services' Retirement Community (assisted living) and Villa (nursing home). There are many perspectives that could be examined, but only three will be considered here.

The first is simply health—physical, mental, and psychological health. The aging process brings with it a slow-down in physical abilities. Walkers, gait belts and wheelchairs, the need for help with what were once simple tasks, the need for direction to the common places of daily life are all just part of everyday life. At St. Joseph's Elder Services, these are just part of an enhanced need and life of hope. The

fulfillment of these new needs is met with compassion and friendliness. Encouragement to aim for new heights, and skills keep hope in focus. Staff members, while helping residents, make it obvious that their own lives are enriched by the lived hope and sharing of the residents.

The second element of hope is that of the social side of life. Of course, most people would choose life in their own homes with all the things they had accumulated in life over moving to assisted living or a nursing home with limited space. After a time of adjustment and settling in, new opportunities emerge and hope is revived. For many the friendships of earlier life are renewed and deepened. New friends are made. New talents are discovered. There is an opportunity for a variety of activities and choices to be made. Visits with family and friends take on new meaning. Life is filled with hope.

The spiritual aspect of life at St. Joseph's Elder Services is the glue that keeps hope in the forefront of life at St. Joseph's Elder Services. Religious services are held: Mass four times a week is celebrated at both facilities, a Lutheran service is held weekly, and there are visits from various pastors. Bible study takes place weekly; there is meal prayer at noon; and so many other ways and times that God's presence among us is evident. Words aren't adequate to describe the spiritual integration of life at St. Joseph's Elder Services. There's a happy atmosphere of hope.



*Hope abounds throughout St. Joseph's from social activities, Mass, and compassionate care.*



## Meaningful Connections Bring A Beacon of Hope

Social isolation among seniors is a pressing concern, with nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older considered to be socially isolated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, and chronic illnesses contribute to this isolation, leading to adverse health outcomes. Addressing this issue, the ElderMatch program, a collaboration between St. Paul Elder Services and the Outagamie County Aging Unit, offers a beacon of hope by fostering meaningful connections between volunteers and seniors.

ElderMatch is designed to connect individuals aged 60 and older living in Outagamie County with volunteers who engage with them through visits, phone calls, and letters. This initiative aims to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships that enhance the health and well-being of both participants and volunteers. As Becky Reichelt, executive director at St. Paul Elder Services, noted, the program offers a compassionate twist to assisted living, allowing seniors to engage in activities they cherish but may no longer be able to do alone, such as playing cards or reading their favorite books.

The impact of ElderMatch extends beyond mere companionship; it enriches lives by providing seniors with a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. For instance, Jerry Roberts, a retired high school librarian and current ElderMatch volunteer, is paired with a 102-year-old woman who served in the Women's Army

Corps during World War II. Through their interactions, Roberts not only learns about her remarkable life experiences but also offers her the joy of sharing her stories, thereby alleviating feelings of loneliness.

Volunteers like Roberts often find the experience equally rewarding. Engaging with seniors provides them with a sense of fulfillment and community involvement. Roberts describes his visits as akin to spending time with a grandparent, emphasizing the simplicity and depth of just having a conversation. This reciprocity underscores the program's success in creating meaningful bonds that transcend generational gaps.

The ElderMatch program also serves as a preventive measure against the health risks associated with social isolation. By facilitating regular social interactions, it helps mitigate issues such as high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety, and depression among seniors. The program's structure ensures that volunteers are matched thoughtfully with participants, fostering relationships that are both supportive and enriching.

Community involvement is pivotal to the program's sustainability and growth. St. Paul Elder Services actively seeks volunteers who are willing to dedicate time to brighten the lives of seniors through social visits. A simple conversation or shared activity can significantly impact a senior's life, providing them with companionship and a sense of belonging.



*ElderMatch enriches lives with renewed sense of purpose and belonging.*

For those interested in becoming a volunteer, the process is straightforward. Prospective volunteers can contact Josie at (920) 766-6020 ext.108 or via email at [josiet@stpaulelders.org](mailto:josiet@stpaulelders.org). Seniors wishing to participate in the program can reach out to Keri at (920) 766-6020 ext.189 or [keris@stpaulelders.org](mailto:keris@stpaulelders.org). These points of contact ensure that both volunteers and participants are well-matched, fostering relationships that are beneficial and enduring.

In essence, the ElderMatch program exemplifies how community initiatives can create hope and improve the quality of life for seniors. By bridging the gap between generations through companionship and shared experiences, it not only alleviates loneliness but also enriches the lives of all involved, fostering a community where everyone feels valued and connected.





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## Music Uplifts Spirits

By Sister Carol Ann Gamsky, OSF, Administrator

The Franciscan Center a beacon of hope fosters a deep appreciation for music and the arts by transforming ordinary moments into meaningful experiences through instruction, encouragement, and performance. Teaching music is a powerful symbol of hope because it nurtures creativity, connection, and resilience. Music has the ability to uplift spirits, brings people together, and provides an outlet for emotions that words sometimes cannot express.



During lessons and group classes joy is fostered, confidence, and a sense of belonging help students develop lifelong problem-solving skills. Students listen to one another, work as a team, and appreciate diverse perspectives—all essential qualities. Music also plays a role in healing and

social change. Performances dedicated to communities facing hardship serve as messages of solidarity and encouragement. An example of this is the benefit concert that was presented in May of 2022 which raised money to assist Ukrainian people.

The Franciscan Center is a place that provides vitally important pathways to uplift and heal people who are hurting or feeling misunderstood. Three recent events held at the Franciscan Center are testament to its mission to transform hurt into hope. Laurie Crawford was Wrap Up speaker for the March 2025 Women's Summit held at the Franciscan Center Inc. Laurie shared her belief that when more women come into their power there will be a kinder, gentler, more compassionate and just world. The Sharon Richardson Community Hospice organization

hosted an event at the Franciscan Center for people whom they serve to gather in community to seek comfort and healing as they grieve the recent loss of their loved ones.

Music-based events carry people in pain forward. One such event was the April 2025 the Holocaust Remembrance concert presented to honor 80 years of liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. Music composed by Jewish composers who were killed in concentration camps or who were survivors was performed. Honoring the Holocaust victims was a way to pay respect and served as a powerful reminder of what can occur when prejudice and discrimination remains unchallenged. The event challenged and offered hope that all people can be agents of change, peace and reconciliation.