



Support Our Aging Religious, Inc.

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SOAR! Awards Nearly \$1 Million in Grants

Washington, DC – March 8, 2012 – At the February meeting of the SOAR! board of directors, members approved grants for a total of almost \$1 million to 62 religious congregations of women and men in 17 states. These grants will benefit over 3,500 women and men religious at a median age of 77. The SOAR! board of directors and the grant recipients are deeply grateful to all SOAR! contributors for making the grants possible. Members of SOAR!’s board of directors delivered grant checks to many congregations around the country.

The SOAR! grants will assist religious congregations in need of very basic help—the purchase of therapeutic equipment, the renovation of space for handicapped accessibility and structural safety, and the installation of fire alarm and wander guard systems. Through this fundamental assistance many more women and men religious live out the last years of their lives in dignity, safety, and with modest care.

The severity of need among religious congregations cannot be overstated. More than 60% of all religious women and men are over the age of 70 and 32% are older than 80. According to recent studies, the total under-funded retirement liability for religious congregations is more than \$11.6 billion. In addition to this shortfall, many religious congregations have limited capacity to build up resources to care for their elderly and infirm members. The current average annual Social security benefit for religious is \$4,670 compared to almost \$14,000 for lay recipients.

“As religious women and men age in place, their ministries may change. They never, however, retire from their commitment to mission,” stated Michael Rodgers, chairperson of the SOAR! board. “Even the eldest and most frail members continue to serve others through their prayers. They long to continue their ministry and to live out the last days of their lives with dignity and in peace.”

SOAR! was formed in 1986 by a group of concerned lay people to help ensure financial stability of Catholic religious congregations in the care of their elderly and infirm members. Since its beginnings over 25 years ago, SOAR! has awarded over 1000 grants, totaling more than \$12 million, to congregations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

The organization is separate from the annual retirement collection coordinated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

For more information, please contact Deborah Hudson Vornbrock at 202.529.7627 or dvornbrock@soar-usa.org. SOAR!’s website is www.soar-usa.org.

SOAR! is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to assuring financially stable and personally secure futures for elderly and frail members of Catholic religious congregations in the United States, augmenting the efforts of the institutional Church.