



SOAR! NEWS

SUPPORT OUR AGING RELIGIOUS, INC.

20TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2006

20 Years Making a Difference

Dear Friends of SOAR!,

This anniversary time, we pause to reflect on what has transpired over 5, 10, 15, and now 20 years. Your prayers and financial support have helped countless religious as they have aged in place. Many want you to know how grateful they are and to assure you of their daily prayers for your special intentions.

Through this Anniversary Issue, we aim to thank everyone whose generous contributions helped to generate significant renovations and provide therapeutic equipment for Catholic religious congregations in need.

SOAR! receives many heart warming letters each day. Just one example of how your gifts have made a difference follows. It echoes the gratitude of many grant recipients.

Dear SOAR Board of Directors and Staff:

The reason for this letter is to sincerely acknowledge the grant from SOAR for \$6,500 to begin our project of installing showers in the bathrooms of our facility. I am a recipient of one of these shower units and being an elderly sister I find it so easy and convenient to shower.

Thank you and be assured of a special remembrance in my prayers for you and for all the wonderful help SOAR gives to others.

Gratefully yours,

*Sr. Maria Battaglia"
Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Hamden, CT*



Sister Leonard Giacalone former kindergarten teacher and choreographer turned model to promote showers designed for the elderly.

Many religious congregations remain in financial need. Some are dependent on their social security checks which average about \$4,125 annually or just \$12.00 a day.

During this anniversary year, we invite you to continue to share your commitment to the religious who taught you, employed you, cared for you during a hospitalization, or provided other services by making a gift to SOAR! Your gift will help to purchase more medical equipment, retrofit living spaces to make them handicapped accessible and compliant with ADA code requirements, and install elevators and sprinkler and security systems.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was born, Elizabeth Ann Bayley in 1774 in New York City. She developed into a New York socialite, a devoted wife, and mother of 5 children. Following the death of her husband, she converted



to Catholicism and founded in 1809 the first new community for religious women in the US and the following year the first free Catholic school for girls staffed by sisters. Her legacy now includes 6 religious communities with more than 5,000 members, hundreds of schools, social service centers and hospitals throughout the world. Her tireless efforts in social ministry, charity, and education led to her canonization in 1975.

SOAR! Awards: Testimonies of Appreciation

SOAR!'s Awards are strong testimonies of appreciation for the genuine generosity and goodness of individuals who have made a difference in the lives of others.

Once again the SOAR! Board of Directors and staff and the grant recipients express our gratitude to all the individuals and couples who served as honorees to guarantee the success of the gala dinners held in Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, La Jolla, Garden Grove, Orange County, and San Francisco, California; New York, New York; and Washington, DC.

The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton award is given to individuals and couples who have distinguished themselves through the sharing of their leadership and generosity in the spirit of the Saint Elizabeth Seton. In Orange County, CA prior to the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Awards, the following individuals were honored for their roles as Catholic leaders:

- 1992 Sr. Marie Therese Solomon, ODN and Daniel J. Harney
- 1993 Sr. Jane Frances Power, CSJ and Stanley Pawlowski
- 1994 Patrick Vincent Loughnane and Eugene J. Deiss

Of special note is that in 1993 Denise Hattler established the Father Victor Yanitelli, S.J. Award given at the New York dinners to religious for outstanding work in their ministries.

Each person that we have honored over the past 20 years is recognized for a persona that inspires and empowers others. All have outstanding gifts of grace as searchers of truths in writings; compassionate caregivers; or advocates in the pursuit of quality education, the appreciation of the arts, or social causes.

The Esteemed Honorees District of Columbia

- 1987 Theobold During
- 1988 Mr. John O'Neil
- 1989 Mr. Thomas Lake
- 1990 The Catholic Daughters of the Americas
- 1991 Sister M. Majella Berg, RSHM
- 1992 Reverend Monsignor Michael di Teccia Farina
- 1993 Corinne (Lindy) Claiborne Boggs
- 1994 The Loyola Foundation
- 1995 Mr. Mark Russell
- 1996 Mr. Mark Shields
- 1997 Sandra Andrea McMurtrie
- 1998 Timothy and Monica May
- 1999 Reverend Monsignor John J. Enzler
- 2000 Kevin and Jane Belford
- 2001 Otto and Jane Ruesch
- 2002 His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
- 2003 Reverend William J. Byron, S.J
- 2004 Sister Carol Keehan, D.C., R.N., M.S.
- 2005 The Late Eugene I Kane
Reverend Monsignor Thomas A. Kane
- 2006 Dr. and Mrs. John J. DeGioia

New York

- 1997 William G. Parrett
- 1998 Dr. Francis J. Macchiarola
- 2001 Drs. John and Yvonne Driscoll
- 2002 Detective Denis P. Mulcahy
- 2003 John J. Fialka
Catholic Daughters of the Americas
- 2004 Monsignor Peter G. Finn
- 2005 Denis Hughes
- 2006 Joseph P. Delaney

Chicago

- 2000 Shirley Madigan
- 2002 Edward M. Burke

Los Angeles

- 1996 The Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters
- 1997 Tom Lasorda
- 1998 The Thomas & Dorothy Leavey Foundations
& the Late Dorothy Leavey
- 1999 Bob & Lois Erburu
- 2001 Richard and Maude Ferry
- 2002 George and Gretchen Gibbs
- 2003 Most Reverend Joseph M. Sartoris
- 2004 Allen and Kathleen Lund

Orange County

- 2006 H.E. Sir Patrick D. Powers, KCGHS, KM

San Francisco

- 2001 Joanne Murphy
- 2002 Dr. Eileen Aicardi
- 2003 Diane Buchanan Wilsey & Lenore Heffernan

Grant Recipients: Time and Again Grateful

The grant recipients consistently express their gratitude for the grant awards through thank you notes or phone calls. They always want to make sure that the donors, boards of directors, and staff are aware of their gratitude and prayers for them.



SOAR! Grants... Your Generosity Made Visible

ALABAMA

Benedictine Sisters, *Cullman*
Visitation Sisters, *Mobile*

ARKANSAS

Benedictine Monks of Subiaco Abbey,
Subiaco
St. Scholastica Monastery, *Ft. Smith*

CALIFORNIA

Daughters of Charity, *Los Altos Hill*,
Sisters of IHM, *Los Angeles*
Sisters of the Holy Names, *Los Gatos*
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet,
Los Angeles
Collaborative Project, *Los Angeles*
Dominican Sisters, *Mission San Jose*
Sisters of the Holy Family,
Mission San Jose
Daughters of Mary and Joseph,
Ranchos Palos Verde
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose,
Freemont
Salesian Society of Fathers & Brothers,
San Francisco
Servants of Mary, Ministers to the Sick,
Oxnard
Sisters of the Holy Family, *Freemont*
Sisters of the Presentation, *San Francisco*
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Saratoga
Little Sisters of the Poor, *San Francisco*
Little Sisters of the Poor, *San Pedro*
Lovers of the Holy Cross Sisters of Los
Angeles, *Gardena*
Carmelite Sisters of St. Joseph, *Solvang*
Nuns of the Order of Preachers,
Los Angeles
Sisters of Notre Dame, *Thousand Oaks*
Sisters of Company of Mary, *Tustin*
Sister of Mercy, *Burlingame*
Sisters of Saint Louis, *Woodland Hills*

COLORADO

Abbey of St. Walburga, *Virginia Dale*
Sisters of St. Benedict - Benet Hill
Monastery, *Colorado Springs*
Sisters of St. Francis, *Denver*
Sisters of St. Benedict, *Littleton*

COLORADO (continued)

Trappist Community (St. Benedict),
Snowmass

CONNECTICUT

Apostles of the Sacred Heart, *Hamden*
Our Lady of Grace Monastery-
Dominican Nuns, *N. Guilford*
Daughters of the Holy Spirit, *Putnam*
School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Wilton*
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Windsor

DELAWARE

Sisters of Notre Dame, *Wilmington*
Capuchin Poor Clares, *Wilmington*

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Dominican Fathers & Brothers
Missionaries of Charity
Dominican Nuns, St. Dominic's
Monastery
Marist Society
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Visitation Nuns

FLORIDA

Sisters of St. Joseph, *St. Augustine*
Benedictine Monks of Florida-Saint Leo
Abbey, *Saint Leo*

GEORGIA

Abbey of Our Lady Holy Spirit
(Benedictine Monks), *Conyers*
Carmelite Sisters, *Savannah*

IDAHO

Benedictine Sisters of St. Gertrude
Monastery, *Cottonwood*

ILLINOIS

Augustinian Order Province of Our
Mother of Good Counsel,
Olympia Fields
School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the
King, *Lemont*
School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Berwyn*
Benedictine Sisters, *Chicago*
Christian Brothers, *Chicago*

ILLINOIS (continued)

Marist Brothers, *Chicago*
Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary,
Kankakee
Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange
La Grange Park
Sisters of the Living Word,
Arlington Heights
Sisters of the Resurrection, *Chicago*
Sisters Holy Family of Nazareth
Des Plaines
Third Order St. Francis, *Joliet*
Benedictine Sisters of SH, *Lisle*
Missionary Sisters-St. Charles
Melrose Park
Little Brothers/Good Shepherd,
Momence
Inst. of Blessed Virgin Mary, *Wheaton*
Sisters of Christian Charity, *Wilmette*
Resurrection Health Care, *Chicago*
Little Sisters of the Poor, *Chicago*

INDIANA

Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ,
Donaldson
Sisters of St. Benedict, *Ferdinand*
Mount St. Francis Friary,
Mount St. Francis
Sisters of St. Francis, *Oldenburg*
Sisters of St. Joseph, *South Bend*
Sisters of Providence
St. Mary of the Woods

IOWA

Sisters of Mercy, *Cedar Rapids*
Cistercian Nuns (Trappist Nuns)
Dubuque
Congregation/Humility of Mary,
Davenport
Sisters of St. Francis, *Clinton*
Sisters of the Visitation *Dubuque*
Sisters of Charity/BVM, *Iowa*
Sisters of St. Francis, *Iowa*

KANSAS

Benedictine Sisters, *Atchison*
Dominican Sisters, *Great Bend*
Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia
Concordia

KENTUCKY

Dominican Sisters, *Louisville*
 Cong. of Divine Providence
Melbourne
 Glenmary Home Mission Sisters
Owensboro
 Literary Society of St. Catherine of
Sienna, St. Catherine
 Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Nazareth
 Passionist Nuns, *Whitesville*
 Ursuline Sisters, *Louisville*

LOUISIANA

Dominican Sisters, *New Orleans*
 Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic,
New Orleans
 Marianites of the Holy Cross
New Orleans
 Province of the Society of Jesus
Grand Coteau
 Saint Joseph Abbey, *Saint Benedict*
 Sisters of the Holy Family, *New Orleans*
 Sisters/Immaculate Conception,
Metairie
 Society of St. Teresa of Jesus
Covington

MAINE

Sisters of Mercy, *Portland*
 Servants of the Immaculate Heart of
 Mary, *Biddeford*

MARYLAND

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
 Baltimore Cooperative Project
 Carmelite Sisters of Baltimore
 Discalced Carmelites of MD, *La Plata*
 Benedictine Sisters, *Ridgely*
 Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales,
Childs
 Religious of Jesus and Mary, *Hyattsville*
 Religious of Jesus and Mary, *Mt. Rainier*
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Baltimore*
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Ellicott City
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Stevenson
 Villa, Joint Retirement Convent
Baltimore

MASSACHUSETTS

Carmelite Monastery, *Boston*
 Congregation of the Sacred Hearts
Fairhaven
 Contemplative Sisters/Good Shepherd,
Springfield
 Dominican Sisters Congregation of St.
 Catherine of Siena, *Fall River*
 Dominican Sisters of the Presentation,
Brighton
 Holy Union Sisters, *Fall River*
 Little Sisters of the Poor, *Somerville*
 Marist Missionary Sisters, *Waltham*
 Medical Missionaries of Mary *Somerville*

MASSACHUSETTS (continued)

Immaculate Conception, *Newton*
 Missionary Sisters of St. Columban
Brighton
 Missionary Sisters of the Society of
 Mary, *Waltham*
 Monastery of St. Clare, *Jamaica Plain*,
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Boston*
 Sisters of the Assumption, *Petersham*
 Sisters of the Assumption, *Worcester*
 Sisters of St. Anne, Marie Esther Health
 Center, *Marlborough*
 Sisters of Charity, *Wellesley Hills*
 Sisters of Charity of Ottawa-St. Joseph
 Province, *Lowell*
 Sisters of Jesus Crucified, *Brockton*,
 Sisters of St. Chretienne, *Wrentham*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Brighton*
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Worcester
 Ursuline Sisters, *Dedham*

MICHIGAN

Sisters of St. Joseph, *Nazareth*
 Adrian Dominicans, *Adrian*
 Sisters of St. Dominic, Congregation of
 Most Holy Redeemer, *Adrian*
 Servants of Jesus, *Berkley*
 Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart
 of Mary, *Monroe*

MINNESOTA

Mount St. Benedict Monastery,
Crookston
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Mankato*
 Sisters of St. Benedict, *St. Joseph*
 Benedictine Sisters, *St. Paul*
 Crosier Fathers and Brothers,
St. Paul
 Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls,
Little Falls
 Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict,
St. Joseph

MISSOURI

Assumption Abbey, *Ava*
 Conception Abbey, *Conception*
 Redemptoristine Nuns, *Liguori*
 The Sarah Community, *Bridgeton*
 Sisters of St. Francis/Holy Eucharist
Independence
 Sisters of the Most Precious Blood,
O'Fallon
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *St. Louis*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *St. Louis*
 Sisters of Divine Providence, *St. Louis*
 Society of the Sacred Heart, *St. Louis*
 Ursuline Sisters, Roman Union Central
 Province, *Crystal City*

NEBRASKA

Sisters of St. Francis, *Alliance*
 Notre Dame Sisters, *Omaha*
 Sisters of Mercy/Collaborative Project,
Omaha
 Servants of Mary, *Omaha*

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Discalced Carmelite Nuns, *Concord*
 Sisters of Holy Cross, *Pittsfield*
 Sisters/Presentation of Mary, *Manchester*
 Sisters of Mercy, *Windham*

NEW JERSEY

Brothers of Christian Schools, *Lincroft*
 Capuchin Franciscan Friars, *Union City*
 Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual
 Rosary, *Union City*
 Franciscan Sisters, *Ringwood*
 Franciscan Servants of HIJ,
North Plainfield
 Missionary Society or Salesian Sisters of
 St. John, *North Haledon*
 Religious Teachers Filippini, *Morristown*
 Sisters of Christian Charity, *Mendham*
 Sisters of St. Dominic, *Caldwell*
 Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth,
Convent Station
 Sisters of Charity Mount Saint Andrew
 Villa, *Paramus*
 Sisters of Immaculate Conception,
Paterson
 Sisters of Mercy, *Plainfield*
 Little Sisters of the Poor, *Totowa*
 Sisters of Mercy, *Watchung*

NEW YORK

Brothers of the Christian Schools, *New York*
 Carmelite Community, *Beacon*
 Congregation of Our Lady of
 the Cenacle, *Lake Ronkonkoma*
 Cong. of Notre Dame, *Bronx*
 Daughters of Wisdom, *Islip*
 Dominican Nuns/Perpetual Rosary,
Buffalo
 Dominican Sisters, *Newburgh*
 Dominican Sisters/Our Lady of the
 Rosary, *Sparkhill*
 Felician Sisters, *Buffalo*
 Franciscan Handmaids of Mary
New York
 Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the
 Sacred Heart, *Peekskill*
 Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the
 Divine Child, *New York & Williamsville*
 Franciscans of Penance/Charity
Stella Niagara
 Franciscan Sisters of the
 Atonement, *Garrison*
 Little Sisters of Assumption, *Walden*
 Little Sisters of the Poor, *Bronx, Queens*
Village, and Latham
 Marianites - Marian Woods
Hartsdale, NY
 Missionary Sisters/Divine Child
Williamsville, New York
 Order of St. Clare Monastery,
New Rochelle
 Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate,
Monroe
 Paulist Fathers, *New York*
 Presentation Sisters, *Staten Island*

NEW YORK *(continued)*

Religious of the SHM, *Tarrytown*
 Religious of the Sacred Heart, *Albany*
 Sisters of Charity /St. Vincent de Paul
 of New York, *Bronx*
 Sisters of St. Francis, *Hastings-on-Hudson*
 Sisters of St. Francis, *Syracuse*
 Sisters of St. Francis, *Williamsville*
 Sisters of St. John the Baptist, *Bronx*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Brentwood, Buffalo,*
Rochester
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Franciscan of
 Atonement, *Garrison*
 Society Sisters of St. Joseph of
 Carondelet, *Latham*
 Sisters of Mercy, *Albany, Brooklyn,*
Buffalo, Dobbs Ferry, Hartsdale, Orchard
Park, Rochester
 Sisters of St. Mary of Namur
Buffalo and Kenmore
 Sisters, Good Shepherd, *Garrison*
 Sisters of the Presentation, *Newburgh*
 Sister Servants of Mary, *Bronx*
 Sisters of St. Dominic, *Newburgh*
 Sisters of St. Dominic, *Blauvelt*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Clarence*
 Sisters of the Presentation of BVM,
New Windsor
 Sisters of the Divine Compassion,
White Plains
 Sisters of the Good Shepherd, *Dix Hills*
 Sisters of the Good Shepherd, *Jamaica*
 Sister Servants of Mary, *Bronx*
 Sisters of Third Franciscan Order,
Syracuse
 Ursuline Nuns Roman Union Eastern
 Province, *New Rochelle*
 Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, *Jamaica*
 Ursuline Provinciate, *New Rochelle*

NEVADA

Carmel of Reno, *Reno*

NORTH DAKOTA

Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation
 Priory, *Bismarck*
 Sisters of the Presentation/BVM, *Fargo*
 Benedictine Sisters, *Richardton*
 Sisters of St. Benedict, *Belcourt*

OHIO

Colettine Poor Clare Nuns, *Cleveland,*
 Discalced Carmelite Nuns, *Cleveland,*
 Poor Clare Nuns of Perpetual
 Adoration, *Canton*
 Sisters of St. Dominic, *Akron*
 Sisters of Charity, *Richfield*
 Sisters of St. Francis, *Sylvania*
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille,
Cincinnati
 Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity, *Euclid*

Sisters of Notre Dame, *Toledo*
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
Cincinnati
 Sisters of the Visitation, *Toledo*
 Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati, *Cincinnati*
 Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, *Pepper Pike*
 Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, *Canfield*
 Ursuline Sisters, *St. Martin*
 Ursuline of Toledo, *Toledo*

OKLAHOMA

Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese of the
 Infant Jesus, *Oklahoma City*
 Sisters of St. Benedict, *Piedmont*
 Congregation of Benedictine Sisters,
Tulsa

OREGON

Sisters of the Holy Names, *Marylhurst*
 Benedictine Sisters, *Mount Angel*
 Sisters of St. Mary, *Beaverton*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Marylhurst*

PENNSYLVANIA

Benedictine Sisters, *St. Mary's*
 Benedictine Sisters of Erie, *Erie*
 Congregation of the Holy Spirit,
Bethel Park
 Discalced Carmelite Sisters of the
 Assumption, *Latrobe*
 Grey Nuns of the SH, *Yardley*
 Medical Mission Sisters, *Philadelphia*
 Missionary Sisters of the Most Blessed
 Trinity, *Philadelphia*
 Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred
 Heart of Jesus, *Reading*
 Missionaries of the Sacred Heart *Center*
Valley
 Passionist Nuns, *Clark's Summit*
 School Sisters of St. Francis, *Pittsburgh*
 Sisters of Blessed Sacrament, *Bensalem*
 Sisters of Charity, *Greensburg*
 Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence
 of God, *Pittsburgh*
 Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale,
Pittsburgh
 Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth
Philadelphia
 Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth
Pittsburgh
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Baden, Baden*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Chestnut Hill*
Philadelphia
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Northwestern PA,*
Erie
 Sisters of Mercy, *Erie*
 Sisters of Mercy of Scranton, *Dallas*
 Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius,
Danville
 Sister Servants of IHM, *Immaculata and*
Scranton
 Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the

Dominican Sisters of Fatima, *Yauco*
 Religious of the Sacred Heart, *San Juan*
 Society of Jesus (Jesuits), *Rio Piedras*
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Caguas*

RHODE ISLAND

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
North Providence
 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, *Pascoag*
 Little Sisters of the Poor, *Pawtucket*
 Sisters of Mercy, *Cumberland*
 Sisters of St. Dorothy, *Bristol*

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sisters of St. Benedict, *Watertown*

TEXAS

Capuchin Poor Clares Blessed
 Sacrament, *Amarillo*
 Congregation of Divine Providence
San Antonio
 Dominican Sisters-Houston, *Houston*
 Daughters of Mary/HC, *San Antonio*
 Hermanas Josefinas (Josephine Sisters)
San Antonio
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Dallas*
 Sisters of St. Mary de Namur, *Fort Worth*
 Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
San Antonio
 Missionary Catechists, *San Antonio*
 Society of St. Teresa of Jesus,
San Antonio

VERMONT

Sisters of Mercy, *Burlington*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Rutland*

VIRGINIA

Holy Cross Abbey, *Berryville*

WASHINGTON

Sisters of the Holy Names, *Spokane*
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, *Bellevue*

WEST VIRGINIA

Sisters of St. Joseph, *Wheeling*
 Sisters of the Visitation, *Wheeling*

WISCONSIN

Benedictine Sisters, *Eau Claire*
 Discalced Carmelite Nuns, *Hudson*
 Regis Convent and St. Bede Priory,
Eau Claire
 Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, *Milwaukee*
 School Sisters of St. Francis, *Milwaukee*
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, *Elm Grove*
 Sinsinawa Dominicans, *Sinsinawa*
 Sisters of St. Joseph, *Stevens Point*
 Society of the Divine Savior, *Milwaukee*
 Valley of Our Lady Monastery-
 Cistercian Nuns, *Prairie du Sac*

A 20th Anniversary History

Bells are ringing at SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary. It is a time to recall our beginnings and growth. It is a time to acknowledge in gratitude the lay leadership and generosity foundational to SOAR! It is a time to look toward the future.

The Beginnings and Growth of SOAR!

On May 19, 1986, John J. Fialka, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), raised the public's consciousness to the "looming poverty of increasing numbers of Catholic nuns" in a WSJ article, "U.S. Nuns Face Crisis as More Grow Older." Thousands of readers became aware of the 115,386 women religious in the United States the year before who were at a median age of 63 and burdened with an underfunded liability of \$2.5 billion.

The retirement crisis was linked to years of service with little or no compensation, no retirement plans, an aging population in need of healthcare with increasing escalation of cost, and fewer younger members to help in the support of the aging communities. Many people were surprised to learn that the Catholic Church did not support the sisters.

Lay People Incorporate Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!)

The retirement crisis within Catholic religious congregations moved a group of lay people to organize themselves to help confront the challenges embodied in the lives of the women religious in this country. On August 19, 1986, Support Our Aging Religious, Inc (SOAR!) was incorporated by the State of Maryland. Three lay people constituted the initial board of directors. Since the incorporation of SOAR! many lay people followed to help with the provision of goods and services for the financially distressed congregations of men and women, to educate the public regarding the plight of religious, and to participate in development efforts.

Large and Small Contributions Have Made a Difference

Since the founding of SOAR!, many former students, patients, employees of sisters, brothers, and priests have leveraged their support for the women and men religious caught in the web of a retirement crisis by making donations through the direct mail campaigns and supporting the annual gala dinners. Some have given one time; others are multiple givers. The power of the small gift was confirmed in a SOAR! analysis. It showed that 80% of the money collected in a year was contributed by people who gave less than \$50.00 in a year. Other donors have contributed stocks or remembered SOAR! in their wills.

Looking Toward the Future

Catholic religious congregations throughout the country and their sister communities around the world continue to build on their long histories of service. Many aged religious sisters, brothers, and priests remain a vibrant presence in education, and in a wide variety of healthcare and social services. Many live their lives and use their resources to act in solidarity with the economically poor of the world. When men and women religious are no longer able to be in active ministry, but are able to continue in a prayer ministry, they make up a powerhouse of prayer in gratitude for their caregivers, benefactors, and for the needs of the Church and world.

Over its 20 years history, SOAR! has raised more than \$7 million for religious congregations in need and the grant awards have helped to lessen their financial distress. This help has freed religious men and women to be busy about the continuation of their missions and ministries.

SOAR! through the on-going leadership and stewardship of the boards of directors, staff, and donors will continue to respond to the grant requests of the religious congregations.

SOAR! Board of Directors

Past Board Members

Ellen Bennett
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 Frances F. Butler
 Francis J. Butler
 Reverend William J. Byron, S.J.
 Roseanne M. Casey (dec.)
 William Cox
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 Otto Ruesch (dec.)
 K. Peter Schmidt (dec.)
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 Patrick Weschler, *Founding Secretary*

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 Jane Golden Belford, *Vice Chair*
 Michael P. Fitzgerarld, *Treasurer*
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 Henry Ferrero
 John J. Fialka
 William A Geoghegan
 Marilyn Hennessy
 Raymond J. McGrath
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 Milan C. Miskovsky
 John T. O'Rourke
 Ilka S. Rodriguez-Diaz
 H. Terrence Samway
 Beth Veihmeyer

Giving Thanks to the Laity

Donors consistently state that they give out of gratitude for what they have received from religious—everything from education to inspiration. The outreach of thousands of grateful laity has exemplified an overwhelming response to Christ's Beatitudes.

In their time of need, hundreds of religious congregations have benefited from the sacrifices and generosity of the children they have taught, the patients they have cared for, the many they have nourished with the Sacraments, and the distraught that they have comforted and counseled. All contributions have made a difference.

The Catholic religious congregations in 43 states and Puerto Rico that received grants are most grateful for the thousands of people who have contributed to SOAR's direct mail campaigns and gala dinners. The \$7.4 million raised have made more than 500 grant awards possible. Grants range from \$2,000 to \$25,000 and have helped to purchase such items as therapeutic equipment and electric beds; to renovate space to make it handicapped accessible; and to install sprinkler, nurse call, and security systems.

In this 20th Anniversary of SOAR!, it is a matter of great concern to members of religious congregations that all people who have contributed to SOAR! in anyway be aware of their grateful prayers for them.



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