



# OSF Profile

NOVEMBER 2022

*Dear Friend,*

As we move closer to celebrating Thanksgiving with family and friends, we take time to recall all the many blessings we have been given in our lives. We celebrate Thanksgiving with grateful hearts.

As Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, we have truly been blessed by the generosity of our donors. Because of your goodness to us, our retired Sisters enjoy a safe, healthy, and enriching environment to live in their retirement.

I usually write about one of our Sisters, but today I want to share with you the blessings our Sisters experience each day at St. Francis Convent because of you.



Sister Lourdetta writing a note to enclose in the bag lunch for a person who is homeless.



“Her smile would light up the room. She was kind and full of encouragement. Back in the day at Assumption High School in Wisconsin Rapids, Sister Lourdetta made a difference. With

her quiet but firm demeanor, she expected us to grow, live up to our potential, and become the very best versions of ourselves. Her influence helped build a generation of teenagers into capable, productive adults.”

*Gale Klappa  
Chair, WEC Energy Group  
Assumption High School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
Class of 1968*

■ In visiting with **Sister Lourdetta Van Driel**, a resident at Elizabeth Hall (assisted living apartments), I learned about the blessing she enjoys as she sits by the window in her easy chair and looks out at Lake Michigan. “One of my favorite activities is watching the sailboats on Lake Michigan. Often, I imagine they are going to Chicago to shop or to visit one of the museums,” she said

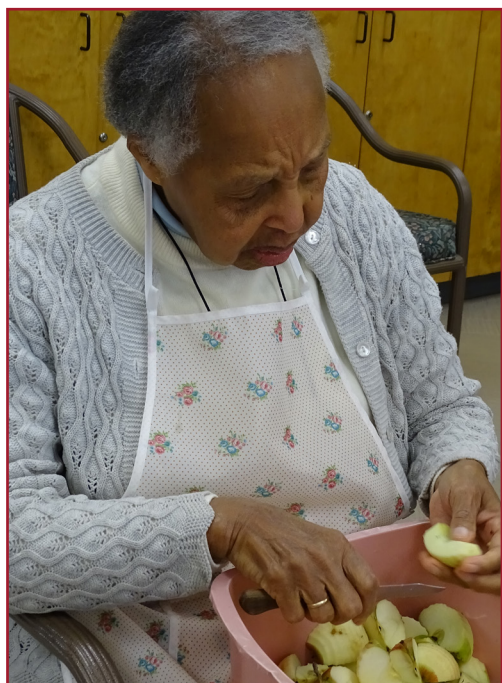
She likes how the window is low enough so that she can observe the activity in the park across the street. It’s a way for her to stay connected with the people in the neighborhood, watching families having picnics and playing games together. She is amazed at how many people walk their dogs in the park.

It is also from this window that she can observe the changing of the seasons and reflect on the beauty of God’s creation.



She is grateful for the Sisters who share community with her. One of the highlights of her day is getting together with the Sisters for meals in the Elizabeth Hall dining room. She enjoys their conversations about world, local, and congregational news, as well as stories of their ministries, places they have visited, or childhood memories. What a wonderful way to share life together!

■ **Sister Mary Jerome** also lives in Elizabeth Hall. She feels so blessed by all of the enrichment activities that are provided for the Sisters, and participates in as many activities as she can and enjoys the great variety offered. Not only does she get her physical exercise by attending the morning stretch but her mind gets a workout by participating in brain aerobics.



Sister Mary Jerome helping to peel apples at an Apple Party.

On Tuesday afternoons, Kim Brewer, the activity director, meets with a group of Sisters who have learned to knit using a loom. Sister Mary Jerome's face lit up when she shared that the scarves and hats they are knitting will provide warmth for a child or adult this winter at one of Milwaukee's homeless shelters.

She finds the presentations on social issues offered by Justice and Peace Animators Jill and Steven Haberman to be very informative. They help her stay attuned to world events. These sessions often have follow-up activities that provide outreach opportunities for the Sisters to help those in need. One of the projects Sister Jerome participated in was making stuffed animals for

the Afghan children who were housed with their parents at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin. "Being a part of making a child from a war-torn country feel welcomed and happy was very rewarding," she said.

Living at St. Francis Convent also provides volunteer opportunities. For Sister Mary Jerome this has meant learning to operate a computerized cash register so she can work in the convent gift shop. When the cash register and Sister Jerome "aren't in agreement," she knows she can count on Liz Kolvenbach of IT Services to help her out. She delights in being of service to the Sisters and the people of the community who come to shop.

Living on the convent grounds provides opportunities to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. You can often find Sister Mary Jerome praying the Stations of the Cross in the Convent Park or praying for the needs of the congregation and the world in the Sacred Grove of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

■ **Sister Clara Styger** feels the Sisters are so blessed to have such a caring, dedicated staff to assist them each day. She is edified by their commitment to ensuring that the Sisters are well cared for and are living in a healthy environment.

Her gratitude for their loving care is evident when you visit her room at Clare Circle (memory care/assisted living rooms). Hanging on her



Sister Clara giving special TLC to a baby goat.

wall are pictures of her caregivers whom she prays for each day. She tries to express her gratitude to the staff each day for helping her get out of bed, bringing her to meals and activities, cleaning her room, and taking her to community prayer.

Although Sister Clara's Parkinson's limits her in some ways, she spoke of how she is still called to live out the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in her relationships with the Sisters she lives with and with the staff.

She is so grateful for the opportunity to be able to attend the convent Mass through livestreaming and having Eucharist brought to her. She appreciates being able to pray for the needs of the congregation and the world with the Sisters with whom she lives. She feels "called at this time in life to be a prayer for all those who are suffering in the world."

Like the Sisters in Elizabeth Hall, the Sisters in Clare Circle have many enrichment opportunities throughout the week. Sister Clara is looking forward to being able to help make the Christmas decorations that will be placed on the floor where she lives. Another favorite activity is going out on the patio to smell the fresh air and feel the warmth of the sunshine.

With a smile on her face, she spoke of the beauty of creation on the convent grounds, and knows she is living on holy ground. "I have so many blessings to be grateful for."

■ Although **Sister Laverne Sommer** doesn't live at St. Francis Convent, she was blessed to be able to live at Elizabeth Hall for nine months. In September 2021, she misjudged one of the steps in her home, fell, and broke the bones in her right foot.

After spending three days in the hospital after surgery, she was able to come to St. Francis



Sister Laverne Sommer was my first boss while I was a kitchen aid in the St. Ann's kitchen in the early 80s. She gracefully "corralled" the high school girls and we learned to work with respect, kindness, empathy, speed, and punctuality, while always serving a quality product with great attention to detail. Her impact on my career was everlasting and I am so thankful for the foundation that she provided me.



Sister Laverne baking cookies to be sold at the Holiday Boutique.

Convent to recuperate. She said she felt "like a queen" with the staff in nursing, housekeeping, transportation, and physical therapy providing round-the-clock care.

She spoke of how grateful she is for the patience and the loving care she received from the staff. Because of their excellent care, she was able to concentrate on her healing. "Our motto is 'God will provide.' Well, God sure provided for me when I needed a lot of help," she said.

She said the "crown jewel" in her stay at the convent, was the convenience of having her own bathroom, something she had not experienced in the other places she has lived.

Sister Laverne enjoys being with people. During her nine months at the convent, she was blessed in getting to know some of the Sisters she didn't know as well. She appreciated being able to join them for prayer and activities. Bingo and Sunday afternoon movies were a couple of her favorite activities.

Lynn Molitor  
Vice President, Milwaukee Jobs.com (retired)  
St. Mary's Academy, Milwaukee, WI  
Class of 1982

# Sharing Our Blessings \$1 Million Challenge Match

Since 1849, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi have shared their blessings of compassion, faith, and love with thousands of individuals and families in the U.S. and abroad. As our Sisters retire after a lifetime of caring for others, it is now our turn to share with them our blessings of abundance.



► **Today, we are launching** the *Sharing Our Blessings* Campaign so that our elderly Sisters can enjoy a safe, healthy, and spiritually rewarding retirement. We are very happy to announce that the Molitor Foundation and We Energies Foundation have partnered to **match all donations made by May 28, 2023, up to \$1 million.** All gifts (valued up to \$2,500) will be doubled. A \$25 gift will be worth \$50 and \$100 gift worth \$200.

Every gift is a blessing that helps fund high-quality, innovative health care services, programs, and equipment such as:

- Wheelchair and handicap accessible vehicles
- Updated amenities in our Sisters' private rooms and public gathering spaces, such as high-quality lift recliners, new patio furniture, and touch-free automatic door openers
- Cost not covered by Medicare, such as innovative programs like music therapy
- Spiritual and engagement activities that keep our Sisters connected to their faith and their mission of promoting human dignity and caring for creation, like celebrating Mass and Roman Catholic feasts and traditions, growing vegetables for the convent's kitchen, and making gifts for those in need

**These are just a few of the ways your support helps our Sisters.**

**Please consider a generous gift today!**



Another blessing was having the therapist come to her home, to make sure things like grab bars, handrails, and other safety measures, were in place before she returned home.

Today, Sister Laverne is back at her home where she lives with three other Sisters. She is grateful to be able to walk, thanks to the healing environment at St. Francis Convent.

Sisters Lourdetta, Mary Jerome, Clara, and Laverne along with our other Sisters, have given their lives in service to others. Throughout their lives, they have trusted in God's providence and are so grateful for God's faithfulness and abundant blessings to them. St. Francis Convent is more than a building; it is a place of gratitude and blessing made possible by donors like you. Because you have shared your blessings with us, we are able to provide a safe, healthy, enriching, and spiritual environment for our retired Sisters.



Please join us in our "Sharing Our Blessings" campaign to ensure that all of our Sisters will experience a rewarding retirement. Your gift of any size is received with sincere gratitude.

Thank you so much. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

Gratefully,

Sister Mary Kemen, OSF



As Franciscan women with a commitment to caring for all of creation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi use environmentally friendly or post-consumer paper and soy ink whenever possible.

