

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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Sister Finds Hospice Enriching Experience

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — A yearning to work with nursing home patients became a deep interest in hospice work when one graduate of St. Joseph's School of Nursing first heard the concept described.

Sister Mary Hock, a Maryknoll sister, had just returned from 43 years of mission work in Asia in 1976 and she was looking for a ministry in San Diego. She heard a nurse describe the just-starting hospice program there, she said, during an interview recently at St. Joseph's in Elmira, and knew that she wanted to become involved.

Since then she has been a volunteer for San Diego County Hospice, an experience she was eager to describe during her recent visit for the School of Nursing's alumni banquet.

She was celebrating the 50th anniversary of her graduation from the school.

Sister Mary's experience with hospice care was brought to the Courier-Journal's attention by Sister Mary Lou Herlihy, a Rochester native and Maryknoll sister working in South Korea, where Sister Mary had worked from 1950 until 1976.

Hospice care, which is care of the terminally ill, began in

England and has spread to the United States and is being started in several areas of the diocese, including St. Joseph's Hospital.

The program she works in, Sister Mary explained, is based on home care, although the volunteers continue to visit a patient who becomes hospitalized.

Usually referrals are made by the patient's doctor or a nurse, she said, and the patient is evaluated by the hospice staff, which includes an oncology doctor, an oncology nurse, three nurse's aides, and a social worker. They determine how much additional support the patient's family needs, she

said, and which volunteer would be best.

Volunteers participate in a six-week training program before they work with a patient, and are continually supported by the hospice staff. Their time with the patient is spent talking, listening, reading or simply being there, Sister Mary reported, and often takes the form of respite care, allowing family members to leave. The topic of death is never avoided, she said, and often she tries to bring it into the conversation.

The patients often have "unfinished business" they can take care of during this time, she noted, including people they want to see, birthdays they want to be part of, and other family concerns.

And for that reason, the hospice doctor works to both control the person's pain and maintain alertness. Drugs are prescribed to keep pain from recurring, with care to avoid overdosage "so the patient remains alert," she explained.

While working with a particular patient, you "become very close to the family," sister said, noting that the hospice program sponsors a group for family members after the patient has died.

Her first patient, Sister Mary related, was a 29-year-old woman who had been a cancer patient for 10 years. "I grieved for her when she died," she said, "but I wouldn't have it any other way."

The work is a "very enriching experience," she commented, and "I feel each patient gives me more than I give."

The woman's sister, she noted, has continued contact with the program, explained that it's the one place where she has found the support she needs to deal with her sister's death.

For the volunteers, weekly



SISTER MARY HOCK

"care conferences" help them deal with their problems, she reported, and each has a different way of dealing with the death of a patient. For her, sister said, she needs time off. Others want to begin immediately with another patient.

The program's 65 volunteers have worked with as many as 25 terminally ill patients at one time, she noted.

If a patient has to go to the hospital, she said, the volunteers continue visits, and in one major San Diego hospital, the hospice volunteers are exempted from

visiting restrictions.

Sister noted that she could see the value in a facility specifically for terminally ill patients, especially for a person who has no family to provide home care, but she acknowledged the financial problems such a facility would face.

There is a fee attached to the San Diego program, she said, but Sister Mary said that she doesn't know what it is, and doesn't think anyone pays it. The agency is supported through donations, membership dues paid by persons interested in the work, and private grants.



Dr. Robert Siliciano, Sister Margaret Adelaide Owen, Sister Patricia Ann Marks and Sister Martha Gersbach pause following St. Joseph's Hospital's Employees Awards Dinner. Sister Margaret Adelaide and Sister Patricia Ann were among those honored for their service to the hospital.

Hospital Honors Employees

Elmira — Hospital Week 1980 got off to an early start Friday, May 9, as St. Joseph's

Hospital honored 156 employees at the annual service awards dinner.

The theme of this year's observance, "We're America's Health Team," was conveyed in the message delivered by Dr. Robert V. Siliciano, medical staff president.

Sister Martha Gersbach, St. Joseph's administrator, joined Judge Daniel J. Donahoe, board of directors chairman, in presenting service award pins to Sister Margaret Adelaide Owen, board president and former administrator, who has logged 45 years of service, and to Sister Patricia Ann Marks, administrative assistant-dietary inservice coordinator and former dietary head, who has spent 40 years at St. Joseph's.

In addition to honoring employees for 5 to 45 years of longevity, those employees who retired within the year were presented with Certificates of Service.

School Counselors Visit St. James

Hornell — Twenty-one guidance counselors from 16 area high schools attended a meeting May 8 in DeSales Hall to receive an update on the programs of the St. James Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and the School of Radiologic Technology.

University. Mary Jane Sass, student affairs coordinator, discussed admission requirements, student services and activities. Lee Smigiel, librarian and financial aid advisor, discussed expenses and the financial aid available to students through scholarships, grants, loans and hospital and school employment.

The educational program, admission requirements, tuition and academic policy of the School of Radiologic Technology were outlined by Sister Margaret Ann, the school's director.

Loretta Haefele, director of the Nursing School, introduced faculty members and answered questions regarding types of nursing programs, the school's program of study, state requirements, school accreditation and the school's recent affiliation with Alfred

Candy Sale Raises \$9,000

Elmira — The Chemung County General Education Board (CCGEB) heard the results from the candy sale it sponsored in April at its meeting May 8.

proximately \$9,000 to the system. Sister expressed her appreciation for the parents who worked on the drive, the other building principals, teachers and students for their cooperation.

Sister Diane Marie, Our Lady of Lourdes principal, reported that the sale grossed more than \$22,000, and will result in a profit of ap-

And Thomas Klotz thanked Sister Diane Marie for her efforts in coordinating the sale.

Correction

Ithaca — The ladies luncheon being sponsored by PEACE at Immaculate Conception School will be Saturday, May 24, at 11:30 a.m., and not the date given in last week's Courier-Journal. Further information may be obtained by calling the Immaculate Conception Rectory, 273-6121.

Parish Sets 'JJJ' Day

Phelps — St. Francis Parish will hold its second annual Jumbo June Junket Day on June 21 beginning at 10 a.m.

The "JJJ," as it is known by parishioners, will feature a rummage sale, a bake sale, a plants and crafts shop, entertainment for the children, and a 2 p.m. auction.

In addition lunch will be served "deli-style" and will feature barbecued chicken and a variety of home-cooked foods.

June 1 Brunch

Elmira — The St. Patrick's Women's Club will gather for brunch at Pierce's Restaurant on Sunday, June 1, after 9:30 Mass. Father Joseph Egan will be guest speaker.

Monument Dedicated

Elmira — More than 100 people turned out for the dedication of the monument to Mikolaj Kopernik on the grounds of St. Casimir's Parish Sunday, May 4.

The monument, erected by the Polish Arts Club, honors Kopernik, better known by his Latin name, Copernicus, for his contributions to mankind through his promulgation of the heliocentric theory of the solar system.

The bronze, bas-relief plaque, designed by local artist Jan Grybos, notes that he "Stopped the Sun — Moved the Earth" in English and in Kopernik's native tongue, Polish.

In addition to his contributions as an astronomer, Kopernik (1473-1543) also was a physician, economist, military strategist, mathematician and a priest of the diocese of Warmia, Poland.

The monument was unveiled after Stanley Klobuchowski, Kopernik Committee chairman, sprinkled sand from Poland

along its base. The monument was then blessed by Father Henry Adamski, St. Casimir's pastor.

Dr. Leonard T. Grant, Elmira College president, delivered the dedicatory address, noting the importance of Kopernik's discoveries, and the high quality of his work. He also explained the danger he faced in proposing such theories, noting that even long after his death proponents of his theories were persecuted.

Grybos explained his design for the monument. He and Klobuchowski received plaques in appreciation of their efforts on the project.

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