

16 co-workers share \$95.45 million

Joseph Young/CNS

ROSEVILLE, Minn. — Their collars may be blue, but they sure weren't.

The winning Powerball ticket held by 16 women from Holdingford in central Minnesota could put them into Porsches rather than Fords.

But many seemed to be counting their good blessing as a vehicle for doing good unto others first, then themselves.

The women are 15 kitchen workers and one custodian, employed by the Holdingford School District, who dub themselves the "Happy Huskers" after the school's nickname, the Huskers.

All happily hopped a chartered bus Oct. 27 to the Minnesota state lottery headquarters in Roseville to claim \$95.45 million, a half-share of the Oct. 25 jackpot. A second winning ticket — sold in Indiana to Regina Mandabach, 29, a single mother of two — also matched the winning numbers 6, 17, 45, 48 and the Powerball of 4.

After taxes, each Minnesota woman will receive either about \$2.1 million in a single payment or more than \$4 million over 30 years, depending on which payment option she chooses.

Each woman had 60 days to decide whether to take her one-sixteenth share of the winnings in 30 annual payments, or in a one-time lump-sum cash option. Those who opt for the lump sum payment would each receive, after taxes, a check for \$2,107,244.85.

Those who choose the annuity would each receive, after taxes, 30 annual payments of \$134,723.70, for a total of \$4,041,711. If a woman would die within those 30 years, the remainder of the annuity would go to her estate.

The Minnesota winners are all married women who live within short commuting distance of Hold-



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Sixteen women workers of Minnesota's Holdingford School District celebrate their multimillion-dollar lottery win at the state lottery headquarters in Roseville Oct. 27. All but one of the women are Catholic. One said she is "praying to do the right thing" with her portion of the winnings.

ingford. The women range in age from 35 to "old enough to retire," according to one news report.

They are: Donna Lange, Judith Feia, Roseanne Feia, Karen Overman, Nancy Vouk, Kathleen Wohletz, Cathy Schulz, Alice Kobylinski, Barbara Nelson, Betty Hayes, Kathleen Welle, Elaine Schumer, Doreen Platz, Susan Breth, Mary Heitzman and Phylis Breth.

Fifteen of the 16 are Catholic; one of them has no parish affiliation. Six belong to St. Hedwig Parish in Holdingford, three to St. Mary's in Holdingford, and one each to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Opole, Immaculate Conception in St. Anna, St. Stephen's in St. Stephen, St. John the Baptist in Collegeville and St. Mary's in Upsala. One of the women is Lutheran and is a member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Cold Spring.

Since 1990, the women had been putting a quarter from each paycheck toward four Powerball tickets.

"I didn't win my parish's turkey

bingo last night," said Schumer of St. Mary's in Upsala about an Oct. 26 fund-raiser. But early that morning she had received a call from fellow winner Karen Overman that each Happy Husker apparently was going to be a couple of million bucks richer.

Before Sunday morning Mass Oct. 26, Schumer's husband, Joseph, spread the good news to Father Donald Wagner, St. Mary's pastor, who kept it under his hat.

"I told Elaine, 'I rejoice with you and the other winners,'" Father Wagner told the *St. Cloud Visitor*, newspaper of the St. Cloud Diocese. "There's lots of excitement now, but I encourage you to take it to the Lord in prayer later and ask for blessings

of the Spirit to guide you in all the decisions you will be making."

Schumer said she is "praying to do the right thing," and plans to contribute some of her winnings to make this holiday season happier for families without food and children without toys, for example. If St. Mary's builds a new church, she said she also plans to contribute to that.

Schumer has not missed any work since learning of the windfall.

"Kids were asking us, 'How come you're working?'" Roseanne Feia said, after news of the women's win made its way through the community grapevine. Schumer kidded with the students, saying, "You guys are very lucky to be served lunch by millionaire cooks."

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