

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

*Serving the elderly poor
in Philadelphia since 1869*

Fall, 2021
HOLY FAMILY HOME
5300 Chester Avenue
Philadelphia, PA
19143
littlesistersofthepoorphiladelphia.org



HOLY FAMILY HOME

World Day of Grandparents & Elderly

"I am with you always."



OUR NEEDS

**Nestle Boost Breeze
8 oz nutritional
drinks**

**Hand sanitizer with
pump (not flip lid)**

**XL disposable vinyl
gloves (latex free
and powder free) for
kitchen use**

Pope Francis established the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, which was first celebrated on July 25, 2021, the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, grandparents of Jesus. This World Day is of particular significance to us at Holy Family Home, as we care for the elderly, many of whom were influenced by their own grandparents and who now play a role in the lives of their grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

In his letter, Pope Francis echoed Jesus' comforting words, "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20), to assure the elderly that "the whole Church is close to you – to us – and cares about you, loves you and does not want to leave you alone!"

Pope Francis chose those words particularly because of the isolation and loneliness the elderly

**During the
pandemic,
the Lord
is close to
those who
felt isolated
and alone.**

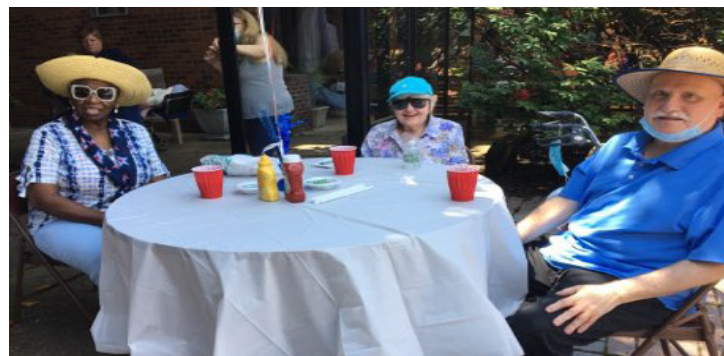
felt during the pandemic – he assures them that even during that time of trial the Lord "is close to those who felt isolated and alone."

At Holy Family Home, the Sisters and staff did their utmost to keep the Residents engaged and connected with their families during the pandemic.

As soon as it was safe to do so, and in accordance with CDC guidelines, we lifted restrictions and family visits were resumed. We encourage grandchildren and young relatives to come and keep alive the connection among generations, to bond with and bring joy to their loved ones.



This summer we were happy to welcome Mother Celine (right), Mother Superior of Holy Family Home, and Sister Maria Catherine (left), supervisor of the skilled nursing unit, with Mother Provincial Alice Marie's blessings.



Residents were so happy to have an outdoor picnic for the Fourth of July, the first outside activity in over 15 months. The barbecue smelled and tasted delicious, the weather was gorgeous, and everyone was reluctant to go back inside!

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR



Resident Jane P. (second from left) treasures this photo with her maternal grandparents (left and right), her great-grandmother (center), her brother (third from left), and her cousin Sister Elizabeth Teresa and her brother.

The Influence of Grandparents Love and Guidance

The first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly gave our Residents an opportunity to remember their grandparents, as well as to reflect on their relationship now with their own grandchildren and young relatives.

Mary Lou's grandparents had passed away before she was born. But she would like to think that she would be as close to them as she is to her grandchildren. She and her granddaughters would go to church together on Sundays and then go back to her house for a day of fun and dinner. They would toast marshmallows, bake Christmas cookies, or go to Pennypack Park, where they would walk on the rocks: "We didn't have to spend a lot of money to have a good time." She hopes that her granddaughters would learn from her to stay close to the family, love and respect one another, and have faith in God.

Jane P.'s grandmother would go to daily Mass and then stop in to have breakfast with the grandchildren. From her visits and her example, Jane learned how to be a good grandmom. She also learns from the children – whenever her great-grandchild was corrected by her mother, she would say, "Mom-Mom

Jane told me it's OK." Jane says, "I learned to zip-up my lips so she'd obey her Mom."

Having a disability brings its own set of life lessons. Maureen S. was born with cerebral palsy. She remembers that her paternal grandfather always held on to her so she wouldn't fall. He encouraged her to "be myself and to do as much as I could for myself." Maureen has no children, but she has two nieces who are always anxious to help her. When she had eye surgery, her great-nephew

asked Santa to bring her a new eye! She tells them that "when you see someone like me in a wheelchair or on crutches, don't stare. Treat them as you would anyone else."

Mac's maternal grandparents lived in South Carolina and were warm and loving. From them she learned to respect all people and not to judge by appearance. She remembers she would crawl onto Granddaddy's lap and watch boxing on TV with him. He took her fishing and she would go to the worm farm and dig up worms, dirtying her new dress one Easter!

Although she had no children, Dorothy G. had several nephews and nieces whom she spent time with. She and her husband would have them stay overnight, take them to the shore on vacation, and be present on their birthdays. She tried to be a good example to them, teaching them to be respectful, loving, and kind to others. "They are very good to me now, always sending me flowers and gifts."

Helen O. learned from her grandfather "how to be kind, how to listen to kids' little stories, and how to be good Catholics." As a grandmother, she says her role is "to be there, spend time and listen, and love them."

Dolores M. summarizes the bond between grandparents/grandchildren: "My grandmom spoiled me; I could do nothing wrong."

Friend of the Elderly Prayer

Lord Jesus, You taught that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for you. Your servant Jeanne Jugan took these words seriously. Moved by the Holy Spirit she opened her heart and her home to the elderly poor. Inspired by her example I, too, want to be a friend to the elderly. Teach me to reverence older persons, to walk at their pace, to listen attentively to their stories, to learn from their wisdom and to generously offer help in time of need. Help us, together, to envision a world full of hope. Through the intercession of St. Jeanne Jugan give me a heart for the elderly, a heart that will love them with your own merciful Heart.

© Little Sisters of the Poor





HOLY FAMILY HOME



Helen O. is looking forward to turning 100 in October. She is always very appreciative for everything the staff does for her.



As she approaches her 100th birthday, Rose A. continues to dazzle us with her fashionable outfits, as she cheerfully greets us every day.

Our Residents Teach Us

Our staff, some who have worked here many years, have been influenced by our elderly Residents. Barb M., here 35 years, says Maureen S.'s determination to stay independent helps her to keep pushing through difficult times. She also enjoys her conversations with Residents: "Christine M. and I talk about how we have so many different religions, but we are all part of God's one Body."

One of our nurses, Nancy S., receives advice from one of the Residents who will be turning 100: "She advises me to love what I do and be happy. Don't stress yourself, eat healthy food, and always pray and ask guidance from above. Then everything will fall into place."

Cathy M., who has worked here for 27 years, has heard many touching stories from the Residents – stories of good times, hard times, heartache, etc. "These are strong men and women who are now dependent on the loving care of strangers they do not know but whom they come to know and rely on every day."

The staff member who has worked here the longest, over

48 years, is Kathy K., our Assistant Director of Nursing. She remembers one Resident who had become unresponsive, and they notified the family, who came in and stayed through the evening. The next day the Resident became more alert. Kathy told her what had happened the previous evening. She asked why the family had been called. Kathy explained that they thought she was going to die and believed her daughters would want to be with her. The Resident said, "I don't think you should call them for that. It would be too hard for them to be here; it would make them sad." Kathy says, "I thought how beautiful it was that even in her nineties her motherly instinct was to still protect her now grown children from

being sad or hurt. It goes to show that no matter how old one's children are or how old a mother is, her first thought is the welfare of her children." She has found that the elderly can be mentors and friends and a great source of knowledge that they would gladly share.

The elderly can be mentors and friends and a great source of knowledge

Spiritual Residents

The Little Sisters of the Poor, even though this is their life's vocation, continue to learn from the Residents. Sr. Maria Catherine once cared for a Resident who was paralyzed: "She taught me how important it is to focus on the person who is in front of you. She confided to me that when someone really paid attention to her, she felt respected and appreciated for who she was, even though she was almost totally dependent on others for everything. She showed me how giving your time and undivided attention meant the difference between feeling part of a family or isolation and loneliness."

A great privilege that the Sisters have is to sit and pray with the dying. Sister Veronica recounts one blessed memory: "A former volunteer wanted to die in our Home. He arrived around 5 p.m. I had the 8 p.m. to midnight shift to sit with and pray for him. I read and prayed and spoke to him. At 11:30 p.m. I heard a voice within me say, 'I am here for him. Look up!' I looked up and he smiled and breathed his last."

Genevieve, a 90-year old Resident, told Sr. Kathleen, "I figure our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph have the whole world to worry about. My guardian angel has only me to worry about, so I turn to my guardian angel whenever I need help." This insight gave Sr. Kathleen a better appreciation of her own "private intercessor."

Our chaplain, Father James Sullivan, reflects: "I often think of the Residents as my graduate school faculty, who pass on the wisdom of life lessons they have learned through experience. One such teacher was Charles D., a man who never forgot the lessons taught to him by his parents: Be grateful. Never let a day go by without saying thank you for someone's service. A thank you doesn't cost much but it makes a difference." We thank all our Residents for making a difference in our lives.

Mary Lou D.'s three granddaughters surprised her with a 90th birthday party, inviting friends and neighbors, some whom she hadn't seen in years. "I told them no party, but I had a great time!"



Grateful to Be Here



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your warm welcome to the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection! I was overwhelmed by the joy and love that greeted me at my arrival. I am so grateful to be able to begin my time at Holy Family Home. I look forward to sharing and devoting my life and the love of my religious vocation with each of you.

My first two months here have been packed full of days of anticipation and planning. All of these occasions have created opportunities for me to accustom myself to the specific flavor of Philadelphia, PA. As summer draws to a close and we look forward to the coolness of fall, we are reminded of the inevitability of change and, at the same time, the sweetness of God's unchanging, steadfast love.

On July 25, before the feast day of Saints Anne and Joachim, we celebrated the very first "World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly," instituted this year by Pope Francis. Our Holy Father established this day because "grandparents are often forgotten, and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on" what we receive from the elderly. Our Mother Foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan, had a prophetic vision and she has left us this legacy. As we celebrate her birthday on October 25, let us ask her to help each one of us to grow in our love for the elderly and, like her, honor and respect them as we would Jesus Christ Himself.

Stay well and safe.

May God bless you,
Mother Celine Thérèse

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Visit us at www.littlesistersofthepoorphiladelphia.org

Keep In Touch

We have been updating our blog more frequently as our Residents want to share their lives with you. Please go to our website, littlesistersofthepoorphiladelphia.org/blog/, and see what our Residents have been involved in.

Plans continue for our new building and the architectural plans are being finalized. Work on the capital campaign, run through The Catholic Foundation, is moving along. Go to the Facebook page they developed for us – click on the Facebook icon at the top of our website's Home Page.

Are you an Amazon or Amazon Prime user? Please sign up for AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) and choose **Holy Family Home** as your charity. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to us. Shopping through AmazonSmile is an easy way for you to help us receive additional funds!



Ida B., one of our apartment Residents, happily celebrates her 91st birthday. She is so grateful for the years she has been here at Holy Family Home.

Lightning Strike

This summer has been quite an unpredictable one weather-wise. We've had heavy thunderstorms, floods, weeks of heat waves, and even tornadoes.

Even we have felt the impact of the weather. On June 8, lightning struck our chimney stack. The power went out and our emergency generator kicked in. As the maintenance staff went around, they discovered damage to the bricks of the chimney; electrical transformers were fried; annunciators to the emergency generator were damaged; and the electrical panel to the hot water system was not functioning.

Things were made even more difficult as the temperature that day was over 90 degrees. Staff scurried around plugging fans into working outlets, switching to paper products for the meals, making sure Residents were hydrated, checking the room temperatures, and passing out flashlights and batteries.

With St. Joseph's intercession, within 24 hours our electrical vendor had temporary transformers installed and our power was restored. Repairs to the chimney and other systems were also made.

Despite the damage and the scare, what we are most grateful for is that everyone was safe and that the damage was not worse. Blessed be God!



A lightning strike hit not only our chimney stack, but also traveled through the building, damaging a number of our electrical systems.



Our electrical transformers were damaged beyond repair. Luckily, temporary ones were put into service until new ones can be installed.