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PROCLAIMING THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

real-life 'ANGEL'

Guardian Angel Settlement carries on Daughters of Charity's legacy of serving people in poverty

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Sister Annalee Faherty opened the door to the classroom and stepped inside. The children jumped up, eager to greet her and tell her about what they have been doing. Soon, she was high-fiving several of them. At the urging of their teacher, Rosemary Bourrage, the youngsters let out a loud cheer for Sister Annalee.

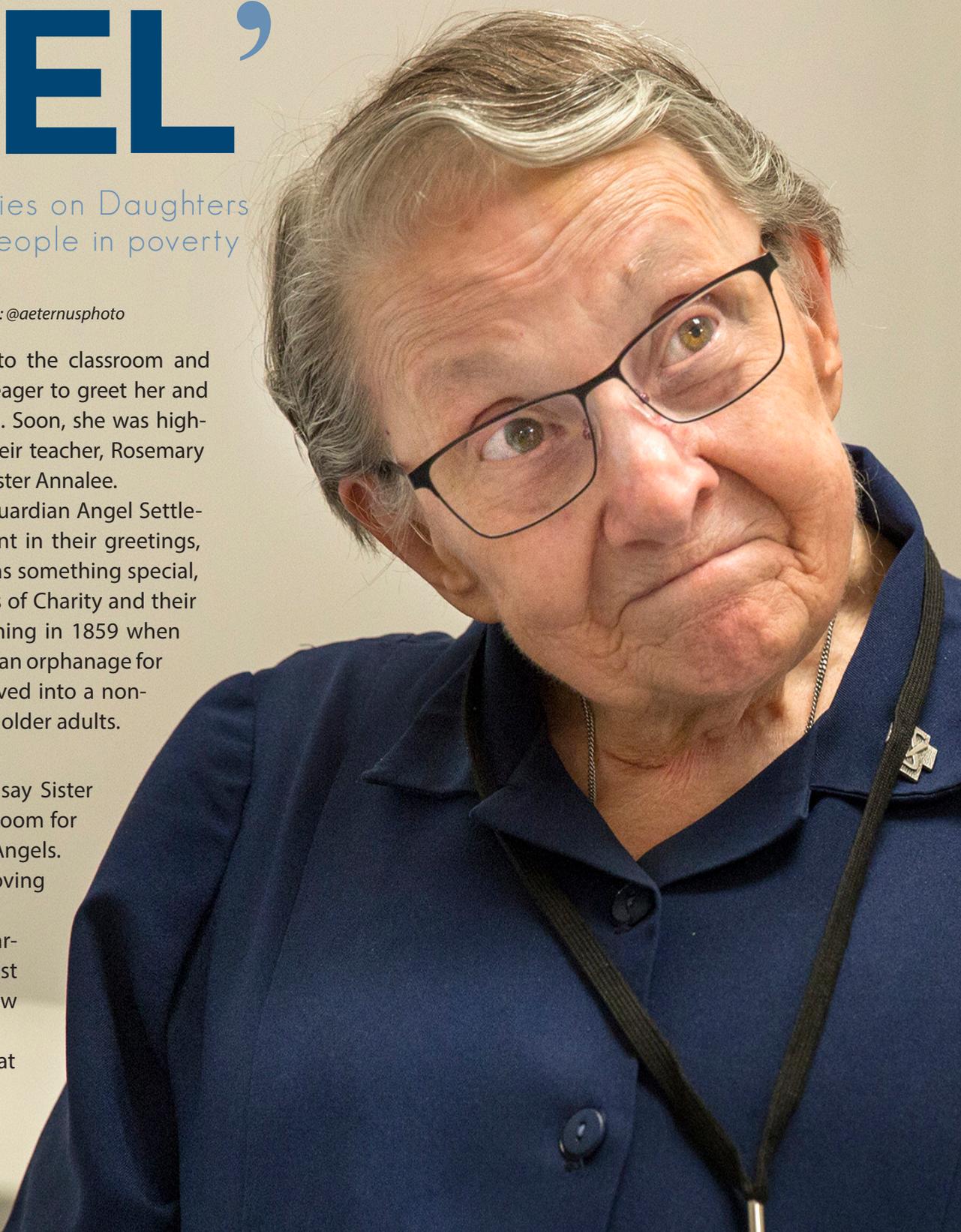
While the children in the child-care center at Guardian Angel Settlement Association are perhaps the most exuberant in their greetings, the adults there likewise recognize her presence as something special, even inspiring — representative of the Daughters of Charity and their history of serving those living in poverty, beginning in 1859 when they established the House of the Guardian Angel, an orphanage for young immigrant girls. Eventually that work evolved into a non-profit agency serving children, teens, families and older adults.

Loving, generous

"When you say Guardian Angels, you have to say Sister Annalee," said Eddie Morris, a teacher in the classroom for 4- and 5-year-olds. "She is the face of Guardian Angels. She never changes. She is the same consistent, loving and generous person."

Fredda McCoo, also a teacher of 4- and 5-year-olds, called Sister Annalee "a breath of fresh air. Just to see her strength and fearlessness lets others know they can make it."

Brandon Sterling, development director, said that having a woman religious in the building "is really



>>> powerful. It softens the edges on us. We're all professionals and committed to the work we do, but having her and others like her here reminds us of the spirit in which the work should be given. ... There's a charity of spirit that's really important."

Sister Annalee jokes that some people, seeing her gray hair, think she has been around since the founding of the House of Guardian Angel when the Daughters were invited to St. Louis by Archbishop Peter Kenrick in 1859.

Recalling the history, she noted that the Daughters of Charity first set up in a building at 1029 Marion St. south of Downtown St. Louis, remaining there for 104 years as services expanded to helping immigrants find jobs and housing.

"History repeats itself in a way," she said, explaining how the center once again serves immigrant and refugee families resettled in St. Louis.

Today, the need for child care is immense, Sister Annalee said. The parents who come to the center are working at low-wage jobs, looking for work or going to school.

While child-care services are the "face" of Guardian Angel, social services are a key aspect as well, ranging from family services and senior citizen programs to holiday programs and youth services.

"When you say Guardian Angels, you have to say Sister Annalee. She is the face of Guardian Angels. She never changes. She is the same consistent, loving and generous person."

Darst-Webbe

Eddie Morris,

a teacher at the child-care center at Guardian Angel Settlement

Sister Annalee had earlier worked in Mobile, Ala., working as a houseparent and school teacher and taught in St. Louis. As a houseparent, she stayed up nights waiting for the girls to make curfew and protected them from a neighborhood nuisance. And as a teacher, she had to hold in laughs at the students' pranks.

She has been assigned to Guardian Angel for three stints, with her latest stop going on 25 years, dating to 1989. Before that, Catholic Charities of St. Louis had offered scholarships to St. Louis University's School of Social Work in exchange for two years of work for one of its agencies. The offer was relayed to Sister Annalee's community, and her superior chose her as one of the first to attend.

She worked at Stella Maris, a Catholic Charities child-care agency in St. Louis, and at the same time at Guardian Angel Settlement. She lived on the sixth floor of public housing at the Darst-Webbe complex south of Downtown St. Louis with 10 other Daughters of Charity. Guardian Angel had moved to the housing complex in 1963 and later to Holy Angels Parish down the street from the complex. Sister Annalee started a food pantry in a double-door cabinet at her office with the help of the mother of the city's mayor who was the president of >>>



Children surrounded Sister Annalee Faherty, DC, at the child development center of the Guardian Angel Settlement Association. They were celebrating "senior week" as they are ready to graduate in a few days to kindergarten.

SISTER ANNALEE FAHERTY

EARLY ON: Born in Perryville and entered the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in 1954. She is 78

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in English from the former Marillac College in 1964 and a master's degree in social work from St. Louis University in 1966.

TEACHING: Taught at St. Louise de Marillac School, 1961-64; in her ministry at the former Marillac College, Sister Annalee began the social work program and was instrumental in coordinating accreditation for the social work program. She later served as associate professor and chair of the social work department, 1968-74.

SOCIAL SERVICES MINISTRY: Served as an adoption and social worker at Catholic Charities and an intake worker for Stella Maris Day Care Center and Guardian Angel Settlement Day Care in St. Louis from 1966-68; began her continuous work at Guardian Angel Settlement Association in 1989 where she has served as a social worker, director of social services, director of social services programs, director of special program assessment and, currently, part-time development associate; also has ministered in social services in Alabama, Missouri and Texas.



Jamiro Madison was drawing the figure of a man on the playground with chalk. He was very careful to draw the "torso" of the figure since his friend's drawing left that body part out of his artistic endeavor. As he drew and wanted to change perspective on his piece, Madison started to spontaneously scamper from side to side of his drawing. He will be graduating from the Guardian Angel Settlement Association in a few weeks to begin kindergarten.



the Ladies of Charity group at St. Vincent Parish in south St. Louis.

"Food is one of the basic needs, and it becomes more stringent with each passing generation," Sister Annalee said.

Serving the needs in the housing project was a challenge, she noted. With 824 families living basically on top of each other in a two-block area, the outreach was "a monumental, unmatched situation. This was definitely one of the poorest, if not the poorest poverty pocket in the City of St. Louis at that time," she said.

When the buildings were razed, Guardian Angel assisted people who were seeking to find housing.

A new facility

In 1971, Guardian Angel, a United Way agency, established the St. Patrick Day Care Center at 1200 N. Sixth St. in a building with St. Patrick Center. De Sales Day Care Center at 2652 Iowa St. in south St. Louis was opened by



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY ARCHIVE

Sister Annalee first worked at Guardian Angel Settlement in 1966, and has worked there continuously since 1989.

Guardian Angels in 1988. When St. Patrick Day Care Center closed in 2000, St. Gabriel Child Care Center opened at Cochran Community Center.

After a capital campaign and while retaining every family, Guardian Angel Settlement closed its other facilities and opened the new Child Development Center on North Vandeventer Avenue in 2009. The approach is to provide a safe place for children with recreation, discipline and learning through

activities in math, language, science, blocks, art and more.

Gloria Sewell, child-care director, said the children, 160 from birth to age 6, learn through play. "We spend quality time with the children. It's a slow, learning process and something they learn to love to do."

The social services and child-care sides of the agency interact because both serve people who are economically challenged. The child-care center provides nutritious meals for the children,

and staff take notice when a family is struggling and getting them help from the social service side.

Sister Annalee's focus has been on the social services, which today operates from Hosea House at 2635 Gravois Ave., using a case management focus and offering food, clothing, a thrift store and utility and rent assistance. She said being with the poor has taught her respect, care and concern as well as the importance of advocacy. Being a voice of the voiceless is a difficult task, she noted.

Angels are depicted everywhere at Guardian Angel Settlement's new building. Sister Annalee recalls one time when a family went for a tour after registering their young boy. She saw the boy trailing behind, slowing up to look at the figures on the wall, then reaching out a finger to touch one of the angels. "I knew it was a new beginning at that point," Sister Annalee said, adding how pleased she is at the progress the agency has made in its ability to reach out to those in need. 

ENDOWMENT HONORS SR. ANNALEE

In honor of Sister Annalee Faherty's years of service to the community, Guardian Angel Settlement Association established the Sr. Annalee Faherty, D.C., Service Endowment. Sister Annalee this year is celebrating her 60th anniversary as a Daughter of Charity.

The endowment provides Guardian Angel with a reliable and unrestricted source of annual income to address critical community needs related to early childhood education, emergency assistance and self-sufficiency.

As an endowment, the principal or gift amount is retained and cannot be spent. Only earnings from these gifts are used to support programs and services of Guardian Angel, ensuring Sister Annalee's legacy will continue to support Guardian Angel for many generations to come.

Tax-deductible gifts may be sent to: Guardian Angel Settlement Association 1127 North Vandeventer Avenue St. Louis, MO 63113 or visit www.stlouisreview.com/Y31

For more information about Guardian Angel Settlement Association, including volunteer opportunities, visit www.gasastl.org/join-us/ or call (314) 231-3188. The center also seeks donations of food, including baby food and formula, and other items such as diapers. The agency also partners with others, including St. Vincent de Paul Parish in south St. Louis, on programs throughout the year.