Dear Friends,

Have you ever run into an old friend or colleague with only a few minutes to chat and they ask how your job is going? While there may be a lot of different things happening, you don’t have the time to fill them in, so you short-hand the discussion by saying “Everything is good, just busy.”

I am often asked that question. It’s a hard one to answer, because St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center is a place that is always a bee hive of activity. It’s never dull and there is always a lot of traffic. In the rare moments of quiet, it’s an opportunity to catch our breath and catch up on the never-ending tracking, data keeping, researching and paperwork. But we are also always looking to continuously improve the services that the Center offers, so there is always something going on, such as developing a new process, recruiting new students, strategic planning, assessments, etc.

How do you articulate that in a brief conversation? It’s a challenge because education isn’t particularly “newsworthy”. It’s not glamorous or something that is interesting enough for continuous social media postings. We aren’t opening new buildings, playing with cute animals, distributing food and we don’t announce exciting medical breakthroughs. It’s not like building a house in a day, where there is immediate gratification and visual results of your efforts. There are few photo opportunities and results take a long time to accumulate and talk about.

It is hard work. It is emotionally intensive. Education is about being meticulous in building the brain of a human being. And each human being is different. It takes different things to make education click in each individual. Imagine building a house, where every brick is a different size, shape and texture. It wouldn’t fit a mold. And neither does education. Just because you can’t see, feel, taste or touch it, doesn’t mean it’s not happening.

However, at SVSF, you can hear it! In our hallways, in our offices, in the conversations with students and volunteers. Listening to the interactions, the “A-ha” moments when an element clicks for a student or the encouragement that a student receives when they aren’t understanding a concept. The staff discussions identifying a new pilot program to offer more assistance to our students, or the passing on of the learnings from one person to the next. You can close your eyes at the Center and hear the buzzing of the bees. And those moments taste sweet as honey.

But, how do you tell someone that in passing and they ask how your job is going? “Good, just busy.”

Wishing you the best,

Diane Renaud
Executive Director/CEO
This year’s Celebrate the Center was another wonderful event, where we celebrated not only the graduates and accomplishments of the Center from the previous year, but also our 175th Anniversary. As part of the event, we showed a video of the Center’s evolution since its inception. Please visit our website at https://www.svsfcenter.org/library/. You might see some people that you know!

We had a special guest at our 175th Anniversary Celebration: Sr. Susan Sheehan who worked at our former location in Farmington Hills, when it was a residence. She wrote a moving remembrance of her time at the Center, that is unfortunately too long to include here. But please visit our website at https://www.svsfcenter.org/library/ to read a little bit of what it was like “back in the day”.

Also, we recognized some special individuals:

**2019 Volunteer of the Year**

**John Paul Hessburg**

In honor of the many things that he has done for the Center in his 12 years as a Trustee and decades of volunteering.

We also celebrated our **Director of Adult Education, Sharon Wheeler**, for 20 years of outstanding service to the Center and the community.

And last but not least, we honored the founders of the Center, the **Daughters of Charity** for their selfless life of service.

**Summer Education**

Our Summer Children’s Program was very busy and included educational field trips to Crosswinds Marsh, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, Green Living Science and the Detroit Parade Company, as well as learning about art, nutrition and of course, time in our Urban Garden.

For 2020, we are changing the format and the venue for the Celebrate the Center event, so that more people will be able to join us and be a part of a special day celebrating our students, volunteers and impact. It will be a Family Movie Day on Saturday, April 18, 2020 at the historic Redford Theatre, featuring the famous Redford Organ! More information will be coming in the Spring, so mark your calendars. We hope that you will join us!
In June, we lost our beloved Board Member Jane Perzyk, who had been serving as a Trustee since 2011. While Jane's passing after a long illness was not entirely unexpected, it was still a shock because she was a fighter. Even through her health struggles, she was still a staunch advocate for our students and the Center.

The first time I met Jane in person was to pick up a rocking chair she was donating (which is still used by Santa when he comes to visit each year). What I thought was going to be a simple exchange became an extended conversation about education, serving others and the vision for the Center. Suffice to say, that set the tone for the rest of our relationship – one that I deeply value and miss tremendously.

Jane was a seeker of knowledge throughout her life, which did not diminish in her later years. She challenged assumptions, researched trends and stayed current on anything that may be beneficial to the Center and its services. She was a driving force in ensuring that changing the lives of our students was at the core of every strategic move of the Center. Her insights and wisdom from a life in education were profound and her legacy of caring will continue to bloom.

In that spirit, the Center planted hydrangeas as a daily reminder of the beauty of this devout woman, who was rooted in being there for others. We miss you Jane!

Diane Renaud

Rooted in Love, Always in Our Hearts

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Rooted in Love, Always in Our Hearts
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For more information, please call us at (313) 535-9200 or visit www.svsfcenter.org.