




# Heart, Love and Soul Partners with Niagara University

Looking toward the future in its Strategic Plan of 2006, the Board of Directors of Heart, Love and Soul realized that it would need a community partner to assure the stability of its mission well into the future. The Sisters of St. Francis at Stella Niagara had been appointing one board member and approving the appointment of all board members, but because of the aging of religious life in the United States, this could not continue far into the future. Heart and Soul approached Niagara University, asking if the university might serve as its partner.

The strong fit of the mission of the two organizations was at the heart of this decision, since both St. Vincent de Paul, founder of the Vincentians, and St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan movement, desired to serve the poor from a position of deep respect.

Also, there were various connections between the organizations. Students from NU volunteer at Heart and Soul. The Sunday worship community at NU has been preparing and serving a meal one Sunday a month at Heart and Soul for the past five years. The university has assisted Heart and Soul with printing the newsletter and keeping the Heart and Soul computers running.



The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding, outlining ways they would connect with one another. As Sister Barbara Pfohl, executive director of Heart and Soul, commented, “We are grateful to have Niagara as a partner. This solid and well-respected partner will provide stability to Heart and Soul far into the future.” 


Left to right: Sister Mary McCarrick, OSF, of Heart, Love and Soul; the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president; Sister Barbara Pfohl, OSF, executive director of Heart, Love and Soul; Sister Candice Tucci, OSF, and Sister Dorothy Mueller, OSF, from the Sisters of St. Francis at Stella Niagara.

## It's a Celebration!

Sister Barbara Pfohl, executive director of Heart, Love and Soul, will celebrate her 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Francis on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009, at 4 p.m. at Heart and Soul. Please join all of us in honoring her commitment with prayer, a simple meal and line dancing. If you would like to attend, please call 282-5981 and leave your name, address and the number attending. Deadline for reservations is Aug. 14, 2009. 

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# A Prayer Answered

During Holy Week, some of the guests gathered to pray. One woman offered this prayer:

“Oh, God, I’m lost. I tell myself I am okay, but I’m lost. I lost my job. With that we lost the house. I tell myself I’m safe and dry, but I’m lost. All that we’ve lost; I’ve lost myself. My two daughters are here with me. We’re living with my mother while I work two jobs. I’m lost; please find me, God, find me a home. Find me, God, and bring me home to you.”

You can imagine our joy to receive this note:

“Since the last time you saw me, my life has improved drastically. I once was lost, but now I’m home; God found me and God found me a home. My girls and I now have a two-bedroom flat to live in and it is furnished fine. I got an old clunker that gets me to work. I have a full-time job and another part time. I’ve had my own miracle. I met giving and respectful people and they gave me new faith in people. Thanks to each and all. Thanks above all to God.” 🍷


## Summer Fun at Heart and Soul

Each summer Heart and Soul offers some activities for children to brighten the summer break while providing intellectual stimulation. Some 30 children per day come to lunch. They are welcome to attend art classes, participate in reading club and enjoy a time of summer fun sponsored by Mt. St. Mary’s Hospital.

Heart and Soul will offer Reading Club again this summer. An experienced grade-school teacher works with students to help them find interesting books at the appropriate reading level. The child reads the book and meets with the teacher to discuss the book and work on language arts activities related to the book. When the child completes work on a book he or she chooses a small prize.

“Art and Soul” is a painting program for children and adults. Each participant is given the three primary colors as well as black and white. The artists mix their colors to create a wider palette and create paintings. The group often decides to work together to create a mural.

**We remember with gratitude the lives of Jimmy Stynes, faithful volunteer; Tom Heine, executive director of the Food Bank of Western New York; Jewel Carmody, supporter of Heart and Soul; Theodore Crogan and William Davidson, who shared table fellowship with us. May they receive the reward of their goodness.**



At the end of the summer program, children are given backpacks and school supplies to get the school year off to a good start in September.

Adults are not forgotten. On picnic days, we cook outside, pop popcorn and enjoy Dale Campbell and his guitar. A few games of bingo are also much appreciated on a hot afternoon. 🍷



## Amazing Support: Neighbors Reach Out to Help One Another Through Heart and Soul

The guests of Heart, Love and Soul receive support from many caring individuals and groups. Here are a few of the recent gifts for which we say “THANK YOU!” In May and June, for example:

- Mamie Simonson and Claudia Marasco asked the Lewiston Village Board to allow Heart and Soul and Community Missions to collect food from people attending the “Tuesday in the Park” concerts at Artpark.
- The Postal Carriers’ Union collected nonperishable food from the generous people of Western New York. Some 17,000 pounds of food were given to the food pantry at Heart and Soul.
- High school students of St. Stephen’s Parish, Grand Island, and St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Niagara Falls, contributed hygiene items for guests.
- The Lioness Club of the Town of Niagara donated proceeds from their bake sale, while the Mazur family of Youngstown gave the proceeds of their yard sale to Heart and Soul.
- We received a note from a frequent traveler. It seems he tosses his change into a bag. He cleaned out his van and sent a check for the amount of the change he had collected. 🍷

## Social Worker Assists Guests in Improving Their Quality of Life

Heart, Love and Soul has a two-fold mission: “to feed those in need . . . to provide opportunities to improve their quality of life.” The presence of a social worker at Heart and Soul four days per week greatly improves the quality of life of many of the guests. Janet Smith has worked at Heart and Soul since December 2006. After pursuing a career with the federal government in Washington, D.C., Janet earned a degree in social work from University of Buffalo. Janet describes herself as a “connector,” reaching out to those who have needs to connect them with others who have the resources that might help them and many are the resources she uses! Janet has acquainted herself with resources in the frequently requested areas of housing and nutrition, as well as in cyclical concerns such as income tax filing and utility assistance.

Sometimes the use of a variety of resources over years makes a stunning change in a family’s situation. Janet connected an immigrant family with a program for English as a Second Language for the parents and a program for after-school education for the children. Janet assisted them in finding assistance with income taxes and explained U.S. withholding procedures on their pay stubs. Janet directed them to a program for first-time home buyers. Recently they came looking for assistance in studying for citizenship. “Social work is something I have wanted to do for a long time,” Janet said. “I have been fortunate through my life and I want to give back to others. It is a challenging to work at Heart and Soul but so rewarding to support others in time of need and to see what can be accomplished.” 🍷



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## Poverty in Niagara County Continues to Increase

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Of the 26 “developed countries,” only the United States and Mexico have childhood poverty rates of 20 percent. The poverty of children in Niagara Falls, at 33.5 percent, is much higher than the national incidence of poverty for children.

According to the American Community Survey (2007 data recently released), poverty in Niagara Falls has worsened since Census 2000.

- The percentage of children in Niagara Falls living in poverty in 2007 was 33.5 percent, up 3.3 percent from 2000. Nationally in 2007, 18.3 percent of children were being raised in homes with incomes below the poverty level.
- The percentage of families in Niagara Falls living in poverty in 2007 was 17.2 percent, up 1.6 percent since 2000. Nationally in 2007, 9.8 percent of families were living on incomes below the poverty level. 🍷

Your gift of \$60 buys enough food for a family of four to prepare at home for 12 days.



Your gift of \$160 buys the food for one meal in Heart and Soul’s dining room, which serves an average of 150 people per day.