



# The Rose

THE SAINT THERESE NEWSLETTER



SPRING/SUMMER 2025

**GIVING BACK**

INSIDE: VOLUNTEERS | AUXILIARY | ACTIVITIES

# The Rose

## SAINT THERESE NEWSLETTER

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Saint Therese

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2024, volunteers  
completed  
**18,679.92** hours of  
volunteer services.

*and*

The first Youth  
Volunteer  
Scholarships were  
awarded in 2011 and,  
to date, \$56,000 in  
scholarships have  
been awarded!

Dear Friends,

Our vision at Saint Therese is to "promote faith-based, person-centered care and support, enabling ALL we serve to live well." This vital undertaking comes at a time when seniors and caregivers across the country are facing increasingly complex challenges.



Last year, we identified four critical social issues to prioritize: **Access, Affordability, Living Well, and Workforce Dynamics**. We're committed to growing our mission and reimagining programs to meet evolving needs and address these challenges. As regulatory and funding changes loom, your financial and advocacy support becomes even more critical.

This issue of *The Rose* highlights how residents, volunteers, and donors are helping us tackle **Affordability** and **Living Well**.

- **Youth Volunteer Brings Joy and Connection:** Learn how a youth volunteer's small acts of kindness profoundly impact our residents.
- **Creating a Lasting Legacy:** Discover how volunteers built a legacy to address residents' financial challenges and support their well-being.
- **Turning Passion into Social Wellbeing:** See how a resident's passion positively impacts social well-being, enriching community life.
- **The Power of Your Financial Gifts:** Your generous gifts directly provide resources and opportunities that make a difference in so many lives.

I'm deeply grateful for everyone who helps us bring our vision to life. Your dedication to volunteering and donating enables us to address the most pressing issues facing our residents and communities.

Looking ahead, your continued support—whether financial, volunteer hours, or advocacy—will be more essential than ever. Together, we can make a difference.

Craig W. Abbott  
President and CEO



## TEEN VOLUNTEER BRINGS JOY AND CONNECTION TO SENIORS AT SAINT THERESE OF OXBOW LAKE

At Saint Therese, volunteers have always been at the heart of our mission, and in 2024 alone, more than 800 volunteers gave over 18,000 hours of their time to enrich our communities. Among them is Charlotte Selby, a high school senior whose kindness and dedication have left a lasting mark on the residents of Saint Therese of Oxbow Lake.

Charlotte, who attends Champlin Park High School in Brooklyn Park, was recently honored as a Volunteer of the Year by LeadingAge Minnesota, a statewide advocacy organization. She was one of just seven individuals recognized for their commitment to improving the lives of seniors.

Since her junior year, Charlotte has devoted her time to bringing warmth and companionship to Oxbow Lake residents. Whether leading craft sessions, helping care for campus plants, calling Bingo, or starting her own “Gardening with Charlotte” program, she has approached each task with warmth and enthusiasm.

Jamie Schlough, Oxbow Lake Volunteer Coordinator, said that Charlotte embodies our company’s mission of “doing ordinary things with extraordinary love.” Pastoral Care Director John Ilkka added that her kindness goes beyond assisting residents to church services. “She takes the time to truly connect with them—listening to their stories, sharing her own experiences, and making them feel valued.”

Charlotte was celebrated at the LeadingAge Minnesota annual conference earlier this year, as well as at a special gathering at Oxbow Lake. She shared



Charlotte (right) and family

heartfelt words with the residents and staff who had gathered to honor her, **“I care about this more than you all might think. Coming to Saint Therese is the highlight of my week. I look forward to it every time I know I’m coming here. Thank you all—I owe you so much!”**

As Charlotte prepares to head off to college this fall, her presence will be deeply missed—but the friendships she has built and the kindness she has shared will remain a cherished part of the Saint Therese community.



# A Legacy of Love

## The Saint Therese Auxiliary Carries On

Auxiliaries. It's a word you don't hear much anymore. But in their time, these volunteer groups played a vital role, offering fundraising, advocacy, and hands-on help to the causes they supported. They became especially prominent during World War I, when communities rallied around hospitals and the war effort, and continued into peacetime, backing civic and charitable organizations.

At Saint Therese, that spirit took root in 1967, when a group of women formed the first Auxiliary to support the residents of our senior community in New Hope. Their guiding mission was to promote the Christian philosophy of total patient care to older adults and to interpret that care through programs that benefited the community.



*Betty Hidding*



*Sr. Marcelline Jung at gift shop*

Nearly sixty years later, their work, their friendships, and their legacy are still being felt—even as the group prepares to formally disband.

For longtime members like Mary Hartkopf and Sharon Dukinfield, being part of the Saint Therese Auxiliary was more than volunteering—it was a calling. Hartkopf began her journey in 2002, having made it one of her personal goals to serve at Saint Therese. Dukinfield joined not long after.

“It felt like being part of something bigger than ourselves,” Sharon said. “We weren’t just giving time, we were making a difference.” From the care center to the apartments, the Auxiliary stepped up. “If there was a need, we tried to fill it,” said Mary.

And fill it they did. At its peak, the Saint Therese Auxiliary had well over 250 members. These volunteers ran the gift shop, hosted social events, funded innovative programs, organized fundraising efforts that directly supported residents’ needs and hosted outings for residents that weren’t able to get out as much, such as Twins games and lunch at The Sunshine Factory. Their gifts over the years included specialized furniture, a 12-seat bus, umbrellas for the patios, an organ, decorations, innumerable TVs, art and music therapy programs and new technology.

Now, with fewer than ten active members and a shifting organizational structure—including the transfer of ownership of New



*Pat Popp*



Hope—the Auxiliary can no longer operate as it once did. Yet its impact is far from over. The spirit of the Auxiliary will live on through two permanent endowment funds for Minnesota-based communities, ensuring the work of these dedicated volunteers continues for generations.

- **The Saint Therese Auxiliary Caring Fund Endowment** was created to support residents struggling to afford senior care. The principal of the endowment is \$85,000, and each year a portion of the fund's investment earnings will be distributed to help those in need—ensuring the gift continues to give in perpetuity. “We realized people were having a tough time and we wanted to continue helping in a way that would last. It represents who the Auxiliary was—something lasting, something we can feel good about,” said Mary and Sharon.
- **The Donna Stelmaszewski Auxiliary Endowment Fund**, funded through a bequest from a beloved member, ensures entertainment and resident life parties—those little extras that bring joy—will continue. “Donna was our party person,” Mary recalled with a smile. “She brought in money for resident events.” The current principal amount is approximately \$56,000 and like the above Caring Fund endowment, only a portion of the annual earnings is distributed—providing ongoing support for programming Saint Therese might not be able to fund.



*Donna Stelmaszewski*

While the group may be dissolving, its mission has been carefully, lovingly preserved. “This was homegrown,” said Sharon. “From day one, this was about people caring for people.”

The Saint Therese Foundation oversees nine family-named permanent endowments. Annual distributions from investment earnings of these endowments support a variety of vital programs and services, including:

- Pastoral Care
- Community Life
- The Caring Fund
- Quality care and innovations in providing care
- Beautification of the grounds of our communities.

As of December 31, 2024, the combined principal of these nine endowments totaled \$689,545.95.

In addition, the Catholic Community Foundation manages the Foundation's general operating endowment, which had a principal balance of \$174,917.51 as of December 31, 2024.

The women of the Saint Therese Auxiliary stand on the shoulders of those who came before them—women like Betty Hidding, Ursula Choromanski, Pat Popp and Mary Potyondy and so many others.



*Ursula Choromanski*

The Auxiliary may no longer gather, but its legacy lingers in the halls, the laughter at resident events, and the quiet comfort of knowing that someone cared enough to leave something behind.

“It's hard,” said Dukinfield. “It feels like losing a part of yourself. But we know we've done something good.”

And that good will carry on—for generations to come.

# A Ukulele Forming the Bonds of Community

At Saint Therese—IHM Senior Living, a simple ukulele has become a powerful connector, all thanks to resident Jack Schwab. A talented musician, Jack missed his pre-pandemic ukulele club. His passion sparked an idea: why not start a program at IHM Senior Living?



Jack Schwab

Thanks to generous donors supporting community life, the Foundation funded three ukuleles, tuners, and straps. With instruments in hand, Jack was ready to teach.

“It’s not too late to learn,” Jack says. “It’s simple, and I can teach it.” Every Tuesday, Jack leads ukulele lessons, starting with familiar songs and gradually moving to more advanced tunes. Residents can even check out ukuleles from the library to practice between sessions.

But Jack’s musical generosity doesn’t stop at lessons. He now shares the joy of music with memory care residents, performing informal ukulele concerts featuring nostalgic tunes from the early 1900s, beloved hymns, and Johnny Cash classics. He hands out song sheets, and soon the whole room sings along.

“I thought I wouldn’t be able to play the ukulele for an audience again,” Jack shares. “And here I am. It’s uplifting. It’s fun!”

What began as one resident’s personal passion has blossomed into a joyful community program, proving it’s never too late to make music. Jack has not only rekindled his love for the ukulele, but also brought joy and connection to the entire IHM Senior Living community.



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# Gratitude Report

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

With your support, Saint Therese continues to do ordinary things with extraordinary love for all those we serve. We are so grateful for the many ways our community has supported us and are pleased to share information on our work with you.

Total funds raised: **\$547,454.66**

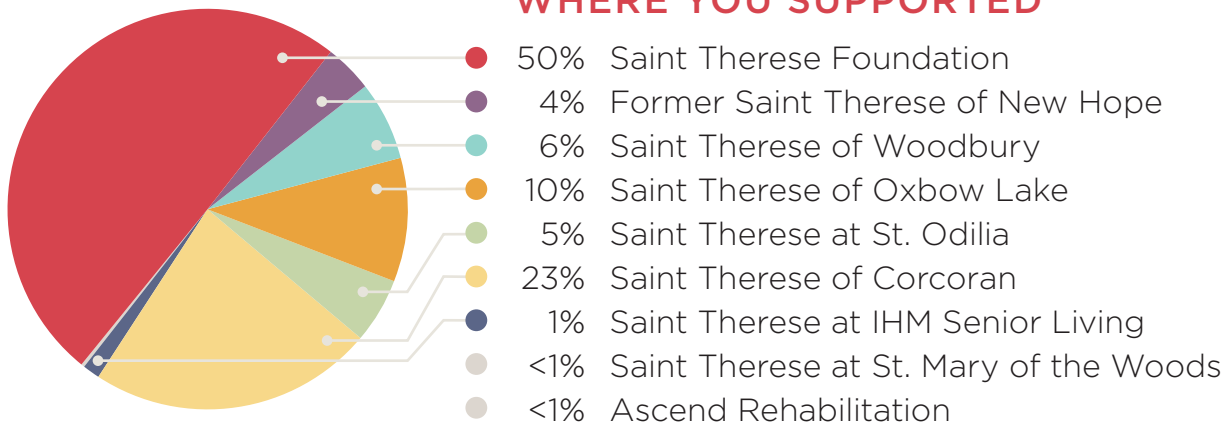
**2,816**  
gifts by  
**632** donors

Employees  
donated  
**\$17,079.76**

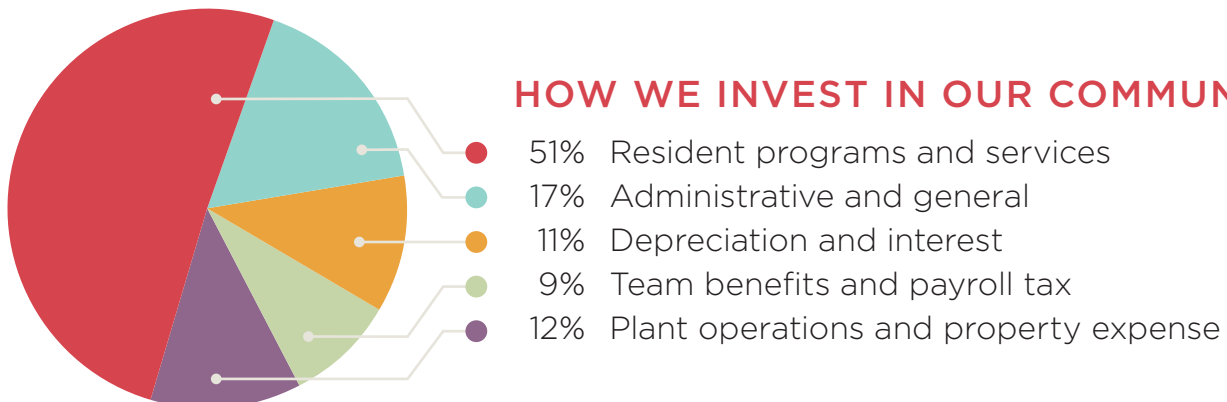
**367** tribute  
gifts totaling  
**\$72,547.78**

**1,133** pastoral care  
gifts totaling  
**\$59,595.27**

## WHERE YOU SUPPORTED



## HOW WE INVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Our donor list is available online at [sainttherese.org/annual-report](https://sainttherese.org/annual-report).  
For a printed copy, please call our staff at 952.283.2219.

# JOIN US!



## 20<sup>TH</sup> GOLF CLASSIC

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**For more information about the tournaments, please visit:  
[sainttherese.org/foundation](http://sainttherese.org/foundation) or contact the Foundation team at 763.531.5443.**

*\*sponsors committed as of July 01, 2025*

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