

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Volume 50 Number 4

April 2015

Dear Friends of Joseph House:

According to the *Farmer's Almanac*, on the first day of April there were 12 hours and 42 minutes of sunlight. By the end of the month the amount will be 14 hours and 1 minute.

Maybe these extra rays will help us shake off the chill of winter. Nature is already at play. The crocus and daffodil have shown their faces, and the winter-bleached grass is looking greener. Life is beginning to nudge forward.

At the Joseph House, we do little things to celebrate the arrival of new life. Flowers are planted along the front steps of our convent, while the men from the Joseph House Workshop begin their vegetable garden.

But where would we be without the long-standing trees, whose roots go deep in the earth and hold the ground together? Old growth trees dot our neighborhood, filling the air with birdsong and providing shade in the summer. These stately sentinels of time are essential members of the community of life. It wouldn't be the same if they weren't here.

In today's world, there's not always a lot of respect for what is considered "old." This is especially true when it comes to **people**. The present generation would be nowhere without the one that came before them. This is a fact of life: they literally would not exist. And yet instead of honor, our elders tend to get pushed aside and forgotten, their value unappreciated, their wisdom unused. This exclusion is a loss for everyone.

You may have noticed that a good number of the people we help at the Joseph House are senior citizens. It's not surprising. New measures of poverty, which take into account rising costs for housing and health care, show that the number of seniors who are struggling is higher than previously thought.

An elderly person can face a number of challenges: health care costs, food insecurity, transportation needs, mobility issues, and loneliness, for example. Without support from family and others, these challenges can lead to a crisis situation.

Nevertheless, many of the seniors we meet give an amazing example of perseverance and faith.

At 85 years old, **Annette** was born during the Great Depression. She has seen countless changes in culture, technology, and politics. Her personal life was shattered when she was widowed. Now Annette lives alone in a trailer park, trying to get by on a meager fixed income.



PRAYER REQUESTS: USE RETURN ENVELOPE OR E-MAIL TO LSJM@COMCAST.NET

O Lord, hear my prayer: _____

Annette came to the Joseph House after she was released from the hospital. She was concerned about her heating oil bill: it was much larger than she was able to pay. We sent \$250 to the oil company so Annette would not be without heat during the extreme cold of last winter. One of our volunteers also helped Annette apply for assistance regarding her hospital bill.

Tara is 64 and out of necessity is caring for her newborn great-granddaughter, **Alicia**. It seems more and more of the senior generation are accepting this type of responsibility. Tara is also receiving chemotherapy to treat her ovarian cancer. Although she loves Alicia, Tara's stamina for mothering is not what it used to be. She wants to give Alicia the best possible life, however, and this desire gives her strength.

At some point Tara will need help raising her great-granddaughter. In the meantime, the Joseph House sent \$350 to her landlord to halt eviction proceedings because of a past-due rent payment.

People of all ages need help. **Josefina**, 44, is dedicated to her three daughters. She does not want welfare and works hard at her minimum-wage job. Her annual income is about \$16,800 — not enough for a family of four. Josefina has cut her spending down to the bare essentials. Her children do not have an excess of material things, but they do receive love and care.

The winter was hard on Josefina, as it was on many. We paid her overdue gas bill of \$290 to avoid a shut-off.

It wasn't just the cold, it was illness that caused **Andrew**, 47, to fall behind in his gas bill. He works for a chicken processor, but his take-home pay has been averaging \$200 per week because of his need to take sick leave. He has an intestinal condition that results in severe abdominal pain. Two surgical procedures have brought some relief. We paid Andrew's gas bill of \$286 and also purchased the medication he needs to take.

Charlene, 56, is in failing health. She suffers from COPD and has a grave cancer diagnosis from her doctor. Bottled oxygen and a nebulizer help her to get through the day. Charlene lives in an old house in a small rural town. Trying to stay warm this past winter was very hard. She closed off rooms and used kerosene



We older people can remind ambitious young people that a life without love is barren.

We can tell fearful young people that worrying about the future can be overcome.

We can teach young people who are in love with themselves too much that there is more joy in giving than receiving.

Pope Francis



and electric heaters. A water leak added to her troubles. Charlene came to the Joseph House after receiving a large electric bill. She scraped together \$234 to make a payment. We paid an additional \$300 to keep the power from being turned off in her home.

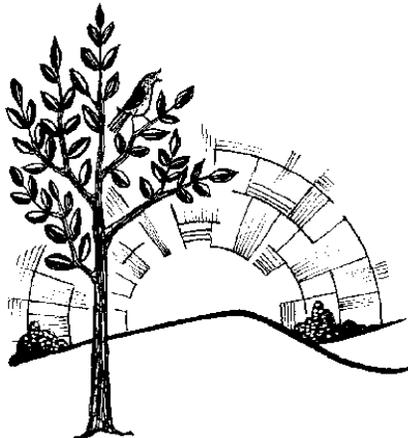
The gas was turned off in the home of **Holly**, a young widow of 54. She and her grandson were losing hope: every place they went to for help was out of funds. Fortunately they came to the Joseph House, and we were able to pay the past-due bill of \$214.

May God bless you for your kindness, shown through your generosity and prayers.

The empty tomb was the first witness of the Resurrection. It was a silent witness. Taking a moment to pause can help us see the miracles right in front of us. May this holy season of Easter be a time of not only seeing, but believing.

Thank you for being part of our mission to the poor. Our prayers are with you for the blessings of Easter, for good health and lasting joy!

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary



*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
They shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Those who are planted in the house
of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing.*

Psalm 92:13-15