

Crosscurrents at Cranaleith



Cranaleith Spiritual Center

Spring 2017

Celebrating Women of Strength and Vision



Main House/Mill-Rea has been added to the National Register of Historic Places

On a warm day in October, Cranaleith hosted a special event to celebrate its historic home and highlight the contributions of women associated with Cranaleith who helped advance women's causes. More than 100 people attended, many first-time visitors.

Cranaleith's history is steeped in stories of notable women. The stately Victorian Main House that sits at the center of the property was commissioned in 1890 by the suffragette Rachel Foster Avery. She often invited fellow activists, including Susan B. Anthony, to her home for meetings. Minerva Parker Nichols, the first American woman to practice architecture independently, designed the home. The property sits on what once was the land of the Lenni Lenape, a matrilineal Native American tribe.

The home's historical importance has not gone unrecognized. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "Preserving sites associated with suffrage is critical," said Stephanie Toothman of the National Park Service during the event ceremony. She emphasized the importance of recognizing women and other marginalized groups' contribution to American history.

"This event would not have been possible without our **generous sponsors, donors and volunteers**" said Mary Trainer, RSM, founder of Cranaleith. Among them were students from the Villa Joseph Marie High School and a member of the Mercy Volunteer Corps who performed historic reenactments of Susan B. Anthony, Rachel Foster Avery, Minerva Parker-Nichols, and Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Volunteer docents gave guests tours of the house and supporters joined a new membership group: *Women of Strength and Vision*.

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More than 100 guest attended the event on October 29, 2016

At a morning panel discussion, a distinguished group of professionals shared their thoughts on the topic of “Women and Social Responsibility.”

Maureen McCullough, former Cranaleith board member, served as the panel moderator. Carrie Baker, a women’s studies professor at Smith College and great-granddaughter to Minerva Parker Nichols, spoke about how education can help women to have a voice in society. Sheila Jacobs, president of the Women’s Business Forum emphasized including family in acts of service to others. Noted entrepreneur and author Judy Wicks, discussed making business decisions from the heart. The audi-

ence responded with lively questions and one memorable comment, “I wish we could talk about this subject all day,” said attendee Anne Hagert.

[View Media Coverage](#)

[View Slideshow of Event](#)

Donor Spotlight: An Unexpected Gift



Donna Buckley

Donna Buckley’s first experience at Cranaleith was 15 years ago when she attended an Advent program led by Sr. Marie Michele Donnelly RSM. What she didn’t know was that the experience would transform her outlook and result in a long-lasting relationship with Cranaleith.

During the program, Sr. Michele spoke about Advent as a time to expect God’s intervention in our lives. It could be dramatic or – more typically – quiet and perhaps not immediately evident. “What I learned had a great impact on me,” said Donna. “Since then, I always seem to come upon an unexpected gift. I’ve passed this lesson on to my children. Every year I get a call from one of them telling me about a surprise experience. It could range from a blooming flower to an act of kindness. This has so enhanced my life.”

Why does Donna give to Cranaleith? “I feel it’s important to know exactly where my money goes. Cranaleith is what it says it is: a place of respite, reflection and renewal. It is true to itself and I can clearly see the impact on anyone who comes here.”

Her dedication is not only evidenced in her giving history. For the past 3 years, she has served on the Cranaleith Board of Directors and 8 years on the Development Committee. She is also a new member of the Mission Committee and founding member of the *Women of Strength and Vision*.

When Hospitality is a Matter of the Heart: A Reflection by Cathy Maguire, RSM



Cathy Maguire, RSM, Program Director

This is my first spring at Cranaleith as Program Director and I have to say it's pretty amazing. Coming onto these sacred grounds each morning helps me to understand the comments of so many, as well as the Gaelic meaning of our name, "Sanctuary of Trees." The concept of sanctuary -- providing safety and refuge -- is so important. When people feel safe they can allow themselves to open up and see differently, both in themselves and in their surroundings.

At Cranaleith, *sanctuary* is communicated from the first moment of welcome.

A leader (I'll name him Jack) of a group from the non-profit organization CATCH (Citizens Acting Together Can Help) said to me as he was leaving, "We love coming here because we know we are wanted!" He reminded me of how crucial that sense of hospitality is. I used to take that word for granted, even though I am a Sister of Mercy and it is a hallmark of our foundress Catherine McAuley.

Catherine's words capture her understanding of hospitality:

There are things the poor (and we are all poor/needy in some way) prize more highly than gold, though they cost the donor nothing; among these are the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look, and the patient hearing of their sorrows.

Sister Marilyn Sunderman, RSM in Meet Catherine, part 1: Hospitality, says "A matter of the heart, hospitality lends an ear and extends a hand. In essence, hospitality mirrors God's welcoming, cordial, tender care."

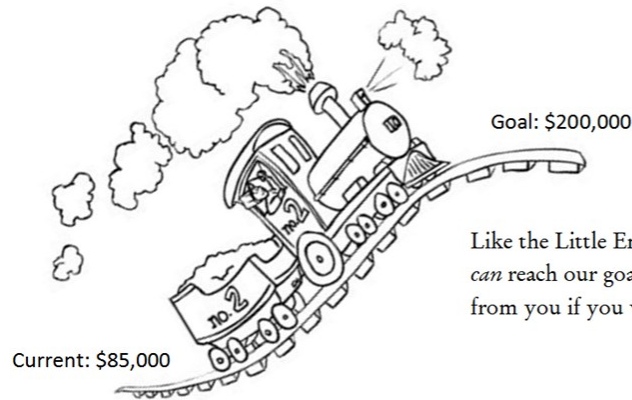
How Jack's simple sentence has touched me. So many people, in their workplace or living situation, know what it is like to be unsafe or unaccepted. I witness the transformation of people when they feel accepted and cared for. They unfold the layers of protection that sometimes cover up who they really are. When this happens discovery, creativity and an awareness of God's giftedness arises.

In this time leading up to Easter, let us remember as a model, Jesus who was the ultimate person of hospitality, who welcomed all to the table! Remember also the words of Catherine, it is something "...prized more highly than gold, yet costs the donor nothing..."

So, in the spirit of Mercy, we welcome you to visit us so we can offer you a bit of Cranaleith hospitality and hopefully you will discover what is already there within you!

View our upcoming programs at www.cranaleith.org

Give us a push!



Like the Little Engine That Could, *we think we can* reach our goal. But it will take a big push from you if you would.

In the face of unrelenting pressures, ever growing to-do lists and endless messages, many have found solace in the midst of the silence and natural beauty of Cranaleith. Others have rekindled their dreams when hope was lacking. And those isolated, demeaned and lost have come alive again within a welcoming, accepting community.

These transformative moments are possible because supporters like you believed in Cranaleith's mission, and made a commitment to support it, some of you since our beginnings in 1998.

We need that support to continue. Many of the capital improvements which were done before we opened are now approaching their 20th year and need replacement. We count on our annual appeal to cover these costs, as well as to underwrite the discounts we offer to those with limited means.

Last year, 57% of the groups we served were underwritten in whole or part. We embrace our mission to assure those who live and work on the margins have access to spiritual support. We can't live-out this mission without partners like you.

This year, we are relying on individual donations to raise \$200,000 -- one-third of our total operating costs. To-date, we have raised \$85,000 in gifts and pledges.

Click to donate online, call 215-934-6206 or pay by check to:

Cranaleith Spiritual Center
13475 Proctor Road
Philadelphia, PA 10116

In these difficult and turbulent times, by giving to Cranaleith you make our mission of mercy part of your own mission, to heal and transform ourselves and the world.

Thank you to our FY 2015-2016 donors

Former Director Moves On

You may have noticed a few staff changes here at Cranaleith. Former Executive Director **Veneta Lorraine**, has decided to move on from her work here after nearly four years, and in particular, after a draining period of accompaniment of her husband Ken who passed away in October. Veneta, a Mercy Associate, was dedicated to the Cranaleith mission and has left her mark in the Women of Strength and Vision initiative. This included the addition of the Main House (Mill-Rae) to the National Register of Historic Places. We are grateful for Veneta's years of service and wish her every blessing.

Other Staff Changes

Cranaleith welcomed new Program Director, **Sister Cathy Maguire, RSM**. Cathy brings extensive experience to her role, having served as Executive Director of Siloam, a mind, body, spirit wellness center for the HIV/AIDS community. Cathy is trained in the area of pastoral ministry and spirituality and, in the past, has worked in vocation ministry and in prison ministry. For many years she has been involved in the HIV/AIDS community in the areas of retreat work, counseling, and spiritual direction.

Sister Maria DiBello, RSM, who had been Program Director since the opening of Cranaleith 18 years ago, has begun a year of Sabbatical. When she returns, she will continue participating in the spiritual accompaniment of individuals and groups.



Other new additions to the Cranaleith staff include Administrative Assistant, **Lisa Hnat** who has offered both warmth and efficiency to our staff and to each guest.

Tom Flanagan is our new Property Manager. When he is not fighting snow storms, he is helping to make Cranaleith's grounds more beautiful.



Calling All Volunteers: It's Spring!



Volunteer, David Nuessle

The time is now. The seeds are being sown for the start of this year's garden. **You can participate in our *Garden Days* every Thursday, (weather permitting) starting on April 20th!** Help us by preparing our garden beds for planting and other tasks.

Join as a volunteer and:

- Learn about organic gardening and get invitations to future garden events
- Reap the benefits by sharing in our harvest lunch
- Work with our eco-therapy clients from area non-profits
- Experience the sheer joy of being with others and playing in the dirt!

For more information on volunteer opportunities, **Contact Kathie Ulinski** at kulinski@cranaleith.org or 215-934-6206.

Mission: Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Cranaleith offers a contemplative space for all those seeking wholeness and transformation for themselves and society. We are committed to making Cranaleith accessible to all, especially to persons who are poor and those who work in solidarity with them. We seek to invite those at the center of need and those at the center of influence to reflection, reverent dialogue and meaningful partnerships.



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