



MEDICAL MISSION SISTERS

100 Years of Healing Presence

Spring 2024



The Medical Mission Sisters' 69-acre property, tucked in the northwest curve of Philadelphia County, is lively with trees and plants, birds and animals, flower and vegetable gardens. The ground echoes with the footsteps of hundreds of MMS who have walked on this particular, beautiful land. In the early days the space was used for barns and farm animals and enormous gardens to feed the Sisters, but the needs of MMS have changed over the decades.

In an engaging discussion of values and vision in 2012, we asked ourselves, "What can we do, what should we do with this abundance of green space? What project or possibility aligns with our values? It was clear there was no desire to sell the land to the highest bid of a development company, selling the land for the building of large fancy houses.

After careful discernment, we decided to help provide access to housing for individuals who may never otherwise experience what it is like to live midst trees and grass. Sisters Frankie Vaughan and Denise Elliott were asked to create a plan for the development of affordable housing that would be lived in by both the local community and some of our Sisters. The vision: offer an affordable place of peace, rest and beauty to those who had no access to this kind of green. Additionally, older Sisters who may be limited in their mobility, would have opportunity to stretch into a new mission of healing presence.

Inglis House, an organization dedicated to providing affordable housing for those with disabilities, was invited to join MMS in the project. The head of Inglis, Gavin Kerr, was inspired by how the missions of caring for marginalized and under-resourced people of MMS and Inglis aligned. He loved that both were founded by or inspired by women - even sharing (continued on reverse side)

Medical Mission Sisters have been dedicated, for close to a century, to bringing healing to our broken world. The edges of brokenness are particularly sharp and jagged right now and we sometimes wonder how to respond meaningfully. Fr. Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation teacher, Mirabai Starr recently shared the following thoughts on mending the world: "We do this through every act of loving kindness ... through every act of ... generosity, hospitality. ...It's an offering of ourselves, even when it's not convenient and not comfortable." She adds that our loving, kind thoughts count too – they help mend the world.

Please join us in prayer, in action, in your thoughts of loving kindness and with your financial support to MMS. Together we can bring light and healing to the brokenness, and hope for those who are suffering.

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SP124

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the same name of Anna! The proposed residence was a pioneering venture for Inglis House too in that this would be their first living facility in which individuals with disabilities were living side-by-side with others with no disabilities.

Sr. Frankie describes a multitude of meetings with Inglis, politicians, contractors, investors, and lawyers; the months of work were a weaving of expertise, creativity, vision and commitment. She says that the people who came alongside MMS and Inglis during this time were “awesome” for their dedication and commitment and went out of their way to help the project move forward. Remarking on Mission Green, she said, “It is our hope that Mission Green will be a place of sharing and extending our charism of healing to our neighbors and friends. Think of it! This is a unique expression of affordable housing: having Medical Mission Sisters, neighbors and people from Inglis come together to live in and enjoy this land which we have cherished for 74 years.”

In the fall of 2014, Mission Green opened its doors to the first residents, with a grateful blessing and fanfare of celebration. In the ten years since then, the Sisters and Associates living there have created community with women and men from a large variety of backgrounds. Sister Eunice Cudzewicz, who is living in Mission Green currently, shares that “we are simply neighbors with each other, helping when asked, and in our own way, trying to be a healing presence.”



The new building, adjacent to the MMS Administration building, features solar and other renewable resources.

Sister Frankie Vaughan stands in front of Mission Green during construction.



Sister Pat Edelen (L) chats with her neighbor Barbara Wallace.



Sister Eunice Cudzewicz (R) listens to Mary Ellen McGowen tell her story.

“I love living here!” This was Mary Ellen McGowen’s comment when she was asked to talk about her experience of living at Mission Green. Mary Ellen has lived in the building since it opened and greatly appreciates the peaceful setting of her home. She commented that everyone cares for each other, offering rides to appointments and sharing sugar or butter when needed for a recipe. Although her experiences with nuns as a child were not the most positive, she is effusive in her appreciation of her MMS neighbors!

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