



MILWAUKEE  
CATHOLIC HOME

# FOCUS

Volume 18,  
Issue 3

Summer  
2011

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

Traditionally, when we think of our community here at MCH, we think of bricks and mortar – the beautiful buildings and outdoor spaces that our residents call home. This is a good starting place, and we will never lose sight of the importance of maintaining and enhancing our physical campus. However, who we are as a community goes beyond our grounds on Prospect Avenue. We create and foster the community of MCH through the partnerships we form and maintain in our neighborhood, in our city, and beyond.

Some of these partnerships are with other organizations who share our mission of compassionate care in an environment of Christian love and service. Some come

through staff members who are actively engaged in serving others through volunteer activities and community involvements. Others are with our generous donors, who recognize the vital services MCH provides and seek out ways to enrich and enhance these services for the next generation.



**CEO David Fulcher**

Many of these partnerships are featured in this issue of the *Focus*. Please take the time to read about the remarkable individuals who foster them, helping MCH continue to flourish and live out its values of compassion, benevolence, and stewardship, within its four walls and beyond.

## BREAKING NEW GROUND



There is no question that Audrey Komarek has left her mark on Milwaukee. From blazing a trail as one of the city's first woman executives, to leadership in education and charitable efforts, to a deep dedication to the life and activities of the Catholic Church, Audrey has made a lasting impact on her community.

Audrey has deep roots in Milwaukee's East Side, and remembers going with her two sisters on swimming outings to Bradford Beach. Her parents met as employees of Wisconsin Electric. Though a company policy required her mother to leave her job after their marriage, her father worked in the personnel department for 47 years.

***Audrey Komarek (right) picks up a shovel at the 1986 ground-breaking ceremony for the new wing of the Residence building.***

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**Focus** is published quarterly by Milwaukee Catholic Home, a continuing care retirement community, and can also be viewed online at [www.milwaukeecatholichome.org](http://www.milwaukeecatholichome.org)

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**Editor:** Therese Gotcher  
[tgotcher@milwaukeecatholichome.org](mailto:tgotcher@milwaukeecatholichome.org)



## MUSIC AT MCH: BIDINGER FAMILY MAKES LASTING GIFT FOR THE FINE ARTS

Music is a part of daily life at Milwaukee Catholic Home. On any given day, MCH residents might attend an outdoor concert as part of the Patio Pops summer concert series, rehearse with the MCH Resident and Staff Choir, or participate in a music therapy group to improve physical and cognitive wellness.

In his ten years as a resident at MCH, Franz Bidinger has experienced the many enriching musical opportunities MCH has to offer. He and his family recently made the decision to establish a lasting endowment for the Fine Arts at MCH, so that the organization can continue to offer residents a range of recreational and therapeutic music programs for decades to come.

In recognition of the Bidinger family's generosity, we'd like to highlight just a few of these programs and the community partnerships that make them possible.

### **East Side Harmony: MCH and the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music**

When Bonnie Jean Barzak was in fifth grade, she wanted to be a doctor. She went on to study vocal performance at Trinity College, but her love for the field of medicine never completely disappeared. After college, she worked for a bottled water company and continued to pursue music on the side. It was her church choir director that first introduced her to the field of music therapy. As she learned more about the discipline, she saw an opportunity to combine her two passions for music and healthcare. She pursued studies at Alverno College, and was Board certified as a music therapist.

Bonnie Jean is now Vice-President for the Great Lakes Region of the American Music Therapy Association, and the Chair of the music therapy



**Music therapist Karen Darga and resident Isabelle Buser share the gift of music.**

department at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. The Conservatory has been an East Side institution for over 100 years, and has been at the forefront of music therapy since 1990. The music therapy team at the Conservatory serves as many as 800 clients every year, and contracts with a number of organizations throughout southeastern Wisconsin, including Goodwill Industries, St. Camillus, and the county-funded Autism Waiver program. The partnership between MCH and the Conservatory started 11 years ago, and has brought huge therapeutic benefit to MCH residents.

Bonnie Jean emphasized that music therapy is a lot more than just leading a sing-along. Countless studies have demonstrated the clinical effectiveness of music therapy in improving cognitive and physical functioning in older adults, particularly those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related conditions. "Music therapy uses music in all its forms and possibilities to achieve non-musical, therapeutic goals," Bonnie Jean said. Everything from singing to percussion to musical technology can be used to stimulate brain function and help improve health and quality of life.



*Robin Puer and Friends perform as part of the 2011 Patio Pops Concert Series.*

Therapist Karen Darga from the Conservatory's music therapy department currently visits the Special Care unit at MCH every Thursday. Her first hour is spent with a large group of 15-20 residents. This group works on memory recall through musical reminiscence, range of motion and motor skills through the use of simple percussion instruments, and social wellness through musical activities that engage residents with those around them. The second hour is a smaller group of 6-8 residents. The small group setting allows Karen to give more one-on-one attention and focus on personal goals for residents with more advanced needs.

In addition to music therapy programs, Bonnie Jean also volunteers her time to direct the MCH Resident and Staff Choir. Residents and employees alike enjoy honing their musical skills and building community by singing together. This past spring, the choir had the opportunity to perform at the regional conference of the American Music Therapy Association, and will also be performing at the upcoming MCH Open House on August 31st.

### ***In Our Own Backyard: The Patio Pops Concert Series***

Milwaukee is famous for its outdoor music and cultural festivals, and residents of MCH enjoy frequent outings to participate in Milwaukee's musical opportunities. However, residents can experience many of the area's favorite musical performers just by strolling outside onto the back patio. During the summer months, MCH hosts a popular outdoor concert series known as Patio Pops. These concerts, held every other Wednesday from June through August, bring residents, staff, family and friends together for evenings of music and camaraderie.

*(continued on page 4)*

# MUSIC AT MCH: BIDINGER FAMILY MAKES LASTING GIFT FOR THE FINE ARTS *(continued from page 3)*

The series was started in 2002 by Director of Community Outreach Anne Catalane, who saw an opportunity to use MCH's beautiful outdoor patio for an enriching fine arts program. It is now in its tenth year, and draws in hundreds of individuals from the broader community.

This year, performances have included Bobby Way and the Fabulous Wayouts, Milwaukee Metropolitan Voices, Four Guyz in Dinner Jackets, and an array of other popular groups in a variety of musical traditions and styles. Many groups return year after year, though there are always surprises to broaden the musical horizons of those who attend.

The Patio Pops Concert Series strengthens the MCH community, as well as connecting it with the artistic riches Milwaukee has to offer. It provides residents with an unparalleled opportunity to re-live favorite memories and create new ones.

## ***The Franz and Virginia Bidinger Endowment for the Fine Arts***

The Bidinger family has a long-standing connection with the music community in Milwaukee. In the early 1900s, the father of MCH resident Franz Bidinger opened a music store in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The Bidinger Music House sold pianos and other musical instruments, as well as sheet music and music equipment. The shop was later passed on to Franz and his wife Virginia.

Franz and Virginia moved into The Residence at Milwaukee Catholic Home in 2002. They were regular attendees at Patio Pops concerts, and took full advantage of opportunities to enjoy music at MCH. Virginia Bidinger passed away in 2006, and Franz now resides in the MCH Assisted Living.

Franz Jr, the Bidingers' son, says that music was always an important part of his parents' lives, and that they have passed down a love of music to their children and grandchildren. He sees the endowment as a fitting legacy for his parents, and an opportunity to provide ongoing support for programs that are vital for the health, well-being, and quality of life of residents at Milwaukee Catholic Home. MCH residents and staff for many generations to come will owe a debt of gratitude to the Bidinger family for their generosity.



***The MCH Resident and Staff Choir, directed by Bonnie Jean Barzak.***

## MJ CARE AT MCH: ELEVEN YEARS OF TEAMWORK

Eleven years ago, MJ Care Therapy began its collaboration with Milwaukee Catholic Home, opening a location onsite to best serve the diverse therapy needs of MCH residents. MJ Care now employs eight full time staff members to provide occupational, physical, and speech therapy services to residents from all areas of the MCH campus.

MJ Care is one of the oldest privately-owned rehab companies in the Midwest, having been in business for 33 years. It is still owned by Mary Van Lehr, its original founder.

Jackie Grossoehme started as the therapy manager for MJ Care's MCH office in 2004. She loves her work at the Milwaukee Catholic Home, and speaks highly of the partnership between MJ Care and MCH. "Communication is great - we feel like part of the facility," she says, "And we have a vested interest in making this place work."



*Therapy manager Jackie Grossoehme works with a rehab resident.*

Having therapy services available on the MCH campus is also a great benefit for residents living in independent apartments. Jackie estimates that over half of the residents in the Residence have used MJ Care for therapy. Some residents walk over to the Health and Rehab Center, but transportation is available for those who need it.

## PARTNERS IN CARING: SHARING PASTORAL CARE WITH COLUMBIA - ST. MARY'S

Over the past several decades, Milwaukee Catholic Home and Columbia-St. Mary's Hospital have developed a close and lasting partnership. This has resulted not only from the proximity of the two campuses, connected by an underground tunnel, but also from the values of Christian love and service that both organizations share. In July of 2010, when CSM had an unexpected need for a Catholic chaplain, both organizations saw an opportunity to strengthen their partnership through a pastoral care collaboration.

Fr. Chuck Keefe has served the Milwaukee Catholic Home as Chaplain for 18 years. In January, he accepted the new challenge of dividing his time between MCH and Columbia-St. Mary's. He serves both organizations by saying Mass, administering the sacraments, and providing spiritual counseling. Due to his long experience in serving seniors, he is frequently asked by his colleagues at the hospital to visit patients experiencing the unique physical and spiritual challenges of aging.

Fr. Chuck also acts as Liaison to Senior Citizens for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, serving as a resource for over 20 parishes that offer a specific ministry towards seniors.

As MCH looks towards its 100th Anniversary, we look forward to continuing to share our pastoral ministry with Columbia-St. Mary's and the broader community in new and exciting ways.

## RESIDENT PROFILE - AUDREY KOMAREK *(continued from page 1)*

Audrey attended the Business Institute of Wisconsin, which is now Bryant and Stratton College. A few years after graduating, Audrey had the opportunity through a former boss to take a position at the newly-founded Panef Manufacturing Company, a contract packager of lubricants, chemicals, and personal care products. Working for a company that was just getting off the ground allowed Audrey to challenge herself and learn more than she had ever learned in the classroom. "When a company starts, you do everything," she said. "It was an enormous opportunity to learn all aspects of running a company."

The wide-ranging knowledge she gained in these first few years made her an invaluable asset to the company, and allowed her to move up the ranks until she was eventually elected President in 1966. As one of Milwaukee's only woman executives, she often encountered skepticism about her ability to successfully lead the company, but accepted this as just one more challenge to overcome. Eventually, Audrey became sole owner of Panef, and was able to sell the company and retire in 1984.

In addition to her work at Panef, Audrey took on leadership roles in other for-profit and non-profit organizations. She was the first woman to serve on the boards of First Savings and Loan Association and the Management Resources Association. Audrey has also been a strong advocate for higher education in the Milwaukee area. She served on the Board of Trustees for Cardinal Stritch College from 1983-1989, and later endowed scholarships at both Marquette and Cardinal Stritch. Appropriately enough, the Audrey J. Komarek Endowed Scholarship at Marquette is designated for women pursuing studies in the College of Business Administration. She looks forward every year to receiving a letter from that



*Audrey Komarek prepares the St. Anne's Chapel for daily Mass.*

year's scholarship recipient, and learning a little bit about the young woman whose life she has impacted. In 1990, Audrey was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Cardinal Stritch.

Audrey's involvement with Milwaukee Catholic Home began in 1979, when she was asked to become a member of the MCH Board of Directors. Audrey was struck by the care and compassion underlying each decision made by the leadership at MCH. "A decision was never made on the Board without asking the question, 'How does it affect our residents?'" she says.

Audrey's time on the Board was an exciting period of growth and transition at MCH, and she was part of a decision to expand the facility by building what is currently the South Building of the Residence. A picture from this time shows Audrey wearing a hard hat, shovel in hand, breaking ground for the new building. This picture seems a fitting portrayal of a life of embracing challenges and breaking new ground to better herself and her community.

*(continued on next page)*



Audrey moved into the Milwaukee Catholic Home in 2002, and says she is “just plain happy.” She loves being part of a caring community, and values her freedom to take part in MCH’s many social opportunities while maintaining her privacy and independence. Although she claims her life has slowed down, she continues to be active in organizations such as Marquette Women’s Council and the Pilot Club, and also volunteers in the Health Care Center and at the annual Milwaukee Catholic Home Bazaar.

However, she can most often be found in the St. Anne’s Chapel, filling a vital role as volunteer sacristan. As sacristan, she supports the pastoral care team in preparing for daily Mass, funerals, and other liturgical celebrations at MCH. “The Chapel is my first love,” she says. “The best thing about living at Milwaukee Catholic Home is daily Mass and being able to stop in to the Chapel at any time.”

Audrey told me sincerely that she does not think of herself as a pioneer. “Everything that came my way was to me an opportunity to learn, and hopefully to give from my experience,” she says. She also emphasized that, as she looks back on her lifetime of achievements, the most important are not those that meet the eye. She remembers a point midway through her career at Panef, when she decided to take a home-study course for business executives. One part of the course asked her to spell out her goals in several different categories. She found it easy to articulate her financial and career goals, but was taken by surprise when the course also asked her to reflect on her spiritual goals. From that point forward, Audrey embarked on a lifetime of learning about and growing in her Catholic faith. Through her years of leadership and achievement, she identifies this as one of the most important decisions she has ever made.

## HERE COMES THE BRIDE

This June, residents from all areas of the MCH campus enjoyed one of the most highly-anticipated events of 2011: the Wedding Show. This special celebration takes place only once every three years, and is the culmination of months of planning by the recreation therapy department and many staff and volunteers. The event includes an outdoor fashion show of wedding attire from across the decades, followed by a festive dinner and wedding cake.

This year, over 40 historic and contemporary wedding and bridesmaid gowns were included in the show, ranging from the 1920s through today. The show also included a spotlight on gowns and traditions from the 1960s, including typical wedding gifts. Many of the gowns were donated by MCH residents, who enjoyed reliving some of their favorite memories.



*Administrator Patrick Shaughnessy escorts Dietary Technician Tracy Fatland down the runway.*

# SUMMER FUN AT MILWAUKEE CATHOLIC HOME



*Resident Ada Dziewanowska seizes the opportunity to become a sailor for the day. Residents from The Residence recently enjoyed an evening on Lake Michigan aboard the Dennis Sullivan.*



*Residents in Assisted Living don hats fit for a royal wedding and enjoy an elegant Afternoon Tea.*



*Residents Bill Force (right) and Maxine Gilboy (center) with Recreation Therapy Director Bridget McNair at Livestock Day in the Health and Rehab Center courtyard. The event closed out State Fair Week, a week of fair-themed fun including produce and flower displays and a cream puff eating contest.*

# BONNIE ANDERSON TAKES FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER BEYOND BORDERS

When most of us are asked what we do in our free time, we might talk about catching a movie or cooking out in the backyard. Bonnie Anderson, manager of the MCH Generations Adult Day Center, loves to be asked that question. It enables her to talk about something she has been passionate about for the past 19 years: breast cancer education and prevention efforts on a local, national, and global level.



**Bonnie Anderson (right), at the Lagos Teaching Hospital in Nigeria.**

In 1991, Bonnie found out she had breast cancer. She was lucky enough to be diagnosed in the early stages of the disease, and had a strong support system of friends and family to help her through treatment and recovery. “For me, it was a walk in the park,” she says. But as she soon discovered, many women are not so lucky, particularly among minority and other underserved populations.

Bonnie got involved with an outreach program called Reach to Recovery, run by the American Cancer Society. She met many women facing breast cancer without support or financial resources. Many had been diagnosed late due to a lack of educational outreach in their communities, and were facing a grim prognosis as a result. The women she spoke to were confused, scared, and unsure where to find the support they needed. “They didn’t have a clue,” she says. “So I thought – okay, I could help with this.”

Bonnie’s involvements gradually grew in scope. She started a Breast Cancer Support Group for African-American women, which she still co-facilitates. She has also served in leadership and board positions for several organizations, including Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition, and ABCD (After Breast Cancer Diagnosis).

Bonnie’s passion for her work is contagious – other Milwaukee Catholic Home staff have gotten involved, particularly with the organization known as Sisters Network. This national organization, which Bonnie brought to Milwaukee, reaches out to inner city communities, offering education, free clinical breast exams, and referrals for mammograms. Several MCH nurses currently volunteer their time for Sisters Network, and the organization is growing quickly. In addition, Bonnie organizes a yearly Breast Health Program for MCH staff.

This summer, Bonnie’s achievements were recognized with an exciting new opportunity – to travel to West Africa as a guest speaker for the global organization Courage To Dare. Bonnie spent ten days in Nigeria, providing education to medical students in the cities of Abuja and Lagos, and visiting rural communities to raise awareness of breast health and the importance of self-examinations and early detection.

Despite the international scope of her work, Bonnie keeps her focus on reaching individuals, one at a time. “If we can talk one woman into having a mammogram, we’ve done a good thing,” she says.

*For information on the Sisters Network, or other ways you can support breast cancer education, research and prevention, contact Bonnie Anderson at (414) 220-3240.*



# GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Milwaukee Catholic Home gratefully acknowledges our generous benefactors. Gifts of cash, property, securities, bequests and other gifts assist us in providing outstanding retirement and health care services for our residents. We encourage gifts in memory or honor of a loved one. We will be happy to notify the individual or family member of your generosity.

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# TEE OFF A GREAT NIGHT!

MCH is holding a special fundraising event to benefit the new Resident Putting Green. Please join us on Thursday, September 15th for a tasting and presentation by local distillery Rehorst, followed by a steak dinner and music by the Tom Sorce Jazz Trio. Cost is \$125 per person. Please RSVP by Friday, September 9th to Anne Catalane at 414-220-3250.



## SAVE THE DATE!

Join us at The Residence for an Open House Wednesday, August 31st to close out the Patio Pops concert series! Apartment tours and hors d'oeuvres will be offered starting at 5:30 pm, followed by a performance on our patio by Carolyn Wehner and Friends. Please RSVP at (414) 220-3216.

Milwaukee Catholic Home's Annual Fall Bazaar will be held on Thursday, September 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The bazaar features handmade ornaments, crafts, books, household items, jewelry and baked goods. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Anne Catalane at (414) 220-3250.

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