

A Message from Sr. Veronica



*Dear Friends,
These days I seem to be even more aware than usual of how blessed we truly are to be here at Marydell. As we try to face the challenges Covid-19 gives us, I find the words on the memorial that stands outside of our convent very consoling.*

"This sacred space of mountain, meadow, river and all of nature is where we meet God's spirit of love and peace with all people."

And so, though like all of you, we have had to close down and not have any of the activities we normally welcome at this time of year, Marydell is still here, still a place of love and peace – waiting for the time when we can, once again, welcome you to experience this Spirit of God here, in this place.

I hope you enjoy the stories we have for you in this newsletter. I still smile when I remember George, our turkey, and I can only smile when I see the eagerness with which our volunteers work on the children's garden and our other programs.



ONE OF MY DELIGHTS DURING THIS PANDEMIC TIME IS WATCHING HOW OFTEN PEOPLE ARE STOPPING TO PRAY AT OUR CHAPEL. PRAISE GOD!



While you wait with us for a return of full activities, we hope you know how much we continue to need your support. John Barch, our Board treasurer, has written a small report for you that lets you know where we are right now. Though these are difficult times, we hope you can still help. I loved the song Jon Bon Jovi wrote for the Covid-19 fund raiser for New Jersey, "When you can't do what you do, do what you can." Do what you can is all we ask.

Know that you have the prayers of our Sisters, our Board of Directors and all of us at Marydell.

Sr. Veronica

OUR TIME OF SPECIAL NEED

John Barch, Board Treasurer

Like each of you, the Marydell Faith & Life Center is striving to support and serve others during this very trying time for so many in our nation and our world. Like some of you, however, we are also struggling to try to make ends meet at a time when one of our primary sources of income has disappeared without warning. The programs and events that we sponsor or host at Marydell provide us with slightly over \$100,000 in annual income, with over 80% of that total generated by Spring and Summer activities which have already been cancelled, or are in danger of disappearing from our calendar, due to the paralyzing effects of the pandemic that surrounds us.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Right now, we know that the months of March, April, May and June will yield virtually nothing in program revenue for Marydell, and though we still hope and pray that we may be able to resume some level of activity in July and August – the last two months in our fiscal year – it seems inevitable that, at best, our income for those months will be greatly diminished. Given our mission, an even greater concern is the prospect that the children from New Settlement in the Bronx, and Strawtown, who attend camp here each Summer may be denied that opportunity which they so eagerly anticipate, deserve, and need. If that proves to be the case, let this be the last Summer that Marydell cannot welcome them.

IF THERE WERE EVER A TIME

We really need your help. Despite the costs we have cut, the forgivable SBA Payroll Protection Loan we have secured to keep our small staff employed for at least the next few months, and the continuing and very generous support of the Sisters of Our Lady Of Christian Doctrine, it is certain that we will run a deficit this year. The only remaining question is how large it will be. Forecasting in the current environment is extremely difficult, but our current estimate is an income shortfall of \$40,000 to as much as \$85,000, depending on whether we can resume something approaching normal program activity in July and August or not.

So many of you have supported the good works of the RCD Sisters and the Marydell Faith & Life Center over the years – and we are truly grateful – but this is *Our Time of Special Need*. Our hope is to raise \$30,000 through this special appeal and we ask that you consider a one-time gift to help us through this very difficult time and ensure that Marydell remains to serve the needs of so many, as it has for so long. We thank you for any support you can provide and pray that you and your loved ones will stay safe and well through this challenging time.

TO MAKE A DONATION, YOU MAY GO TO OUR WEBSITE

www.marydell.org

or mail it to

Marydell Faith & Life Center

640 North Midland Avenue

Upper Nyack, NY 10960

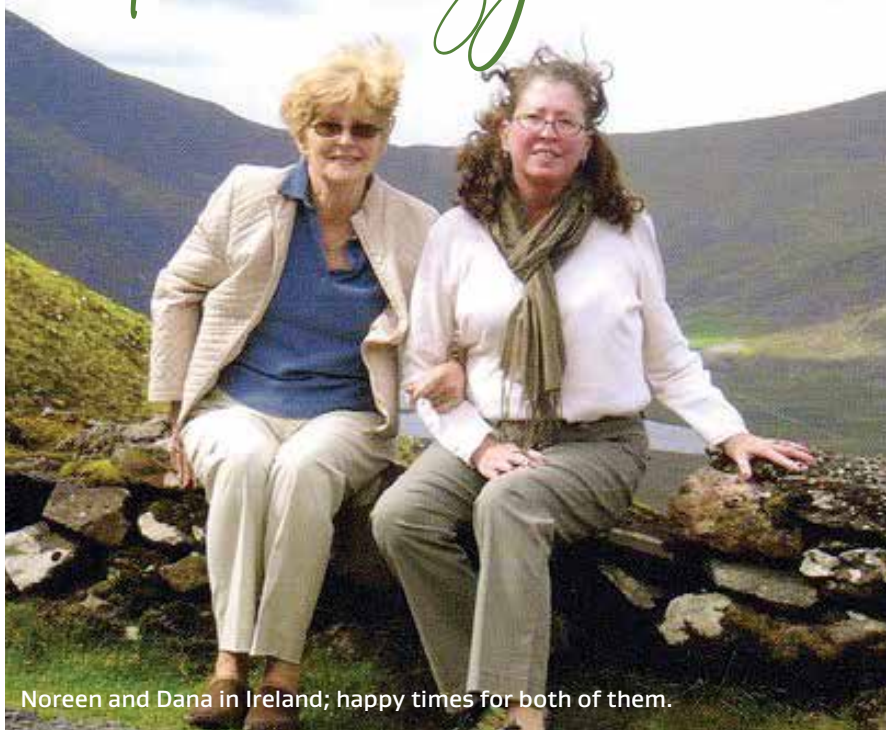
If you have any questions, please call our
Executive Director, Maria Joy, at 845-358-5399
or email her at marydellflc@gmail.com

Noreen Fitzgerald

During difficult times, the stories of others who have lived through and beyond challenges are inspiring. They give us perspective and insight. They remind us to keep moving forward.

During these challenging times, the story of one special woman – Noreen Fitzgerald – and her incredible family, has inspired us and enabled Marydell to continue moving some of our most important work forward.

Please read what Noreen's son, John Fitzgerald, has written about his mother's life:



Noreen and Dana in Ireland; happy times for both of them.

"My mother Noreen moved to our home on Midland Ave. in 1966 from the Bronx with her husband, my older sister Dana and myself. My brothers, Scott and Neil, were born a few years later. Shortly after Neil was born my father left and had no further contact with our family. At the time my mother had no job, no driver's license, no college degree and four children between the ages of one and eight. Our family became members of St. Ann's parish immediately after moving to Upper Nyack with all four children attending St. Ann's School and attending church there. My mother never remarried and raised all of us with incredible determination, providing everything we needed to flourish as individuals at all levels. Noreen worked for several employers including Rockland Psychiatric Center, Mann & Mann Law and ultimately Orange and Rockland from which she retired after over twenty years. Noreen endured many hardships over her lifetime beyond raising four children as a single mother; she survived breast cancer, developed emphysema and became legally blind as a result of an infection. My mother leaned on her faith and remained involved in St. Ann's and at some point also became involved with Marydell. Her desire to help those less fortunate than herself was probably at least partly rooted in her own difficulties in life and financial hardship as well as her faith. Noreen was drawn to helping the homeless, the hungry and others in need knowing how close we all were to becoming all of those things and that it can happen to anyone, at any time, good or bad. Noreen passed unexpectedly in May of 2016. She was in Florida helping my sister Dana, of course, who

was having surgery and my mother wanted to be there for her. My mother took a fall and suffered a brain injury from which she didn't recover but she died doing what she always did, taking care of her family."

The contributions that Noreen made to the St. Ann's Food Cupboard as a volunteer in our Garden of Faith and the many other roles she played steadfastly supporting others are honored by Marydell. We are delighted that her legacy will continue to thrive on our grounds with a generous donation from her family in memory of Noreen and her daughter Dana. The incredible gift will be used to maintain and strengthen infrastructure and programming in the Marydell Children's Garden.

We look forward to honoring Noreen and Dana each day that we enter the garden and see the plaque with their names on the gate, witness the wonder and joy of our young visitors as they garden in our beautiful space, share our harvest, and sit quietly and reflect on the natural majesty of the Hudson on the benches dedicated to the memory of Noreen and Dana.

We are deeply grateful for the generous gift from the Fitzgerald Family and thank them on behalf of our community and the many children who visit and grow in the Marydell Children's Garden.

We thank them for their generosity and the inspiring story of their mother, who reminds us that – together – we can move through challenging times.



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E-mail marydellflc@gmail.com

FUTURE EVENTS

Our **Family and Friends Picnic** should be on July 18 but, in all honesty, due to Covid-19 and its consequences, we are not sure we can have the picnic this year. For now we are scheduling it. If we cannot have it, we will let you know.

Hopefully the
Lighting of the Tree of Peace & Light
will happen on
December 5, 2020!

Peace pole pollinator garden planting day

A rebirth of this sweet garden is taking place! Staff of the Pollinator Pathway, a local conservation team of Dana Harkrider and Lorien Barlow, have directed us in planting planet friendly perennial plants that are hosts to butterflies, bees, and wildlife.

Staff from Marydell Faith and Life Center and Strawtown Studios, under their direction, will keep this a place of beauty, of Peace and of contemplation for years to come!



IN MEMORIAM SR. MARY REGIS

On Friday, May 8, at about 6:40 pm, Sr. Mary Regis of the Annunciation went home to God. In vain we pleaded with her to hold on so we could have the bang up funeral she always planned. The Lord was calling and Regis was not going to wait to go home to the One she loved. The love Regis had for her



Lord was obvious. I am sure that had a lot to do with everyone loving her. She was especially loved by those who met her at Marydell Camp. This picture with former campers and counselors, Monica Lepore and Melissa Nugent, is very telling of the love she had for them and they for her.

Sr. Mary Regis, pray for us.

GEORGE

About this time last year it became obvious to us that the turkey who had hung around all winter had no intentions of going anywhere. As you can see by the picture the little poult of the summer had grown into a majestic adult. As far as he was concerned, this was home. We did not mind his hanging around and Bandi, our caretaker, even named him George. The original George was the last of our cow keepers. Bandi found a piece of wood in the forest that said "George likes it here." Since the turkey obviously liked it here, he was named George. However, Marydell is visited by all kinds of people and groups. Though George had gotten used to those of us who live and work here, he was still a wild animal and did not always know what behavior was proper with the groups that visit us. Fortunately, we found a home for George in the Bear Mountain Zoo. The keeper from the zoo came to Marydell with a cage and with Bandi's help, George was caught and relocated. Later Sr. Angela Reames and I went to visit George in his new home. He has made friends with the other turkey that was already there and, to the frustration of the zoo keepers, he not only gets out of his fenced in area, he has taught the other turkey how to get out also!



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