

Mercy Bridges



*A sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Mercy
of the Americas*

1437 Blossom Road
Rochester, NY 14610
585-288-2710
mercybridges.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Mercy Bridges, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy, welcomes and serves adults, including immigrants and refugees, independent of religious affiliation, providing basic literacy education and English as a second language, with compassion and acceptance, in collaboration with the Greater Rochester community.

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Spring/Summer 2020

(July 2020)



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30 Bermar Park-Ste. 2
Rochester, NY 14624



Letter from Mercy Bridges . . .

Dear Friends of Mercy Bridges,

Ministry means so much when we yield to the Lord. Mercy Bridges has continued to reach out to our Learners/Tutors by email and phone calls. Mercy Bridges continues to minister to those that struggle day to day and in ways we may not understand. Just by lending an ear or discussing ideas has been nurturing to our Learners. Thank you, Lord, for giving us opportunities to be positive in a difficult time.

We featured a letter from a former Advisory Board Member in our Spring 2019 Newsletter. This spring, we wanted to share a special story from a current tutor. Be blessed and encouraged as we walk through COVID and learn more of what God has for us to share.

Blessings from Mercy Bridges

Sr. Dolores Ann Stein, RSM
Sr. Katherine Ann Rappl, RSM
Natalie Depew

Notes from a tutor: Thank you Mercy Bridges!

I am a retired elementary school teacher. Hoping to employ my teaching skills, I joined the Mercy Bridges program a year and a half ago. I was matched with a lovely young woman from South Korea and I have watched her skills and confidence grow during our time together. This was the outcome I hoped for and expected. But my experience has been so much larger than that.

My progressing multiple sclerosis forced me to retire from teaching early and this was extremely difficult; teaching was so much more than a job for me. Initially I volunteered in a city school classroom, but eventually even that became too fatiguing. Mercy Bridges, with its one-to-one program, sounded perfect. At our first meeting, my learner impressed me with her willingness to be taught and inquisitive nature. One of my strategies to help her learn was for her to write a short essay or journal entry each week.

(continued)

This journal writing and sharing has become a weekly activity for both of us and we eagerly await and pour over each other's essays. In addition to this, we read books together and discuss them. We are always anxious to discover what each of us finds interesting or puzzling. These activities are great ways to expand her comprehension and word usage. Both promote questions and discussion of all kinds of issues and values. Our weekly meetings have resulted in heartfelt sharing and a growing friendship.

Mercy Bridges has given me an opportunity to continue to do what I love. I have a chance to use my skills and extend them by responding to an interested and inquisitive student. I signed up to be a tutor and I have ended up with so much more! Thank you, Mercy Bridges!

Sue Spoonhower – Tutor

WE MOVED!!!!

Mercy Bridges has had so many changes since Thanksgiving of last year. We planned to have our former office painted and spent many hours organizing, cleaning and packing our most needed materials. Then, there was a call to change things up even more! Early in 2020, we were asked to change spaces with Kate's Tea & Gift Shop/Office to accommodate the new reception area and give the gift shop more visibility for visitors of Mercy Center. This was a very exciting time for both ministries to update their look and organize our new spaces. Jane Stava was instrumental in sorting useful materials and donated those items we no longer use. She brought items from her home to decorate and make the new Resource Room very cozy. As soon as it is safe to socialize, we will invite all of you to see this new space.

David Uerz, the Mercy Bridges Advisory Board Chair, brought in some faithful helpers from the Knights of Columbus – Trinity Council in Webster, NY. The guys really moved a lot of books and furniture and made the move go so much quicker than imagined. Also, a big thank you to the many volunteers that stopped in to help put books on the shelves. You never let us down!



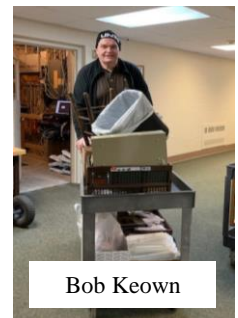
Leo Giannavola



Knights of Columbus – Trinity Council

(left to right)

Joe Bradbury, Dave Uerz, Bob Keown,
Leo Giannavola & Mike Donovan



Bob Keown

Happy Birthday, Sr. Katherine Ann Rappl!

We had the opportunity to say Happy Birthday to Sr. Katherine Ann on May 11, 2020! Thank you to the St. Rita's Community for arranging the most inspiring surprise birthday parade! See the video on our website! *Pictures/video provided by (Barbara Castle – MB Advisory Board Member)*

Sr. Katherine Ann's parish, friends and former students drove by to wish her well on her 80th Birthday. To kick-off the parade, the West Webster Fire & Webster Police Depts. came by to lead the parade, blowing their horns and blaring their sirens in joy for a beautiful Sister. The parking lot was packed from 4 PM – 6 PM with families and colleagues to wish her blessings. Sr. Katherine Ann so appreciated all the well-wishing and cards from those she loves and thoroughly enjoyed seeing every family she has taught, nurtured and cared for throughout her many years of service.

God bless Sister Katherine Ann in her next years of ministry.

We love You!



MERCY BRIDGES FIELD OF HONOR® 2020

FLAGS ARE ON SALE NOW!

So many people encouraged each of us during COVID-19 and it will be a concern for many more months to come. The list of heroes has certainly changed to include ANYONE during the COVID-19 health crisis. Who is your HERO? Fly a Tribute Flag(s) in their memory/honor. The 6th Annual Field of Honor® will be held Patriots Weekend 9/10/20 – 9/13/20. Any health professionals, medical lab technicians, cleaning teams, volunteers, truckers, grocery workers, etc. This list is endless, please encourage family and friends to participate. The Tribute Flag Form is available for printing at mercybridges.org. Please call (585) 259-7405, if you need a form mailed to you,

Due to the serious health concerns of the virus for the Sisters living at Mercy Center, there are guidelines for participating this year. We will not be able to have a ceremony. Visitors/Volunteers **will not** have access to Mercy Center during this event. Beginning on Thursday – 9/10/20, the Field will close at 8PM each evening. Visitors may drive around the circle daily between 8 AM – 8 PM only. We ask that you do not leave your cars to enter the Field. There will be a list of sponsors and dedications available when you visit the Field. We want all dedications to be listed appropriately in our handout, please mail all dedications before **August 20, 2020**.

We thank Sister Mary Ann Ayers for giving Mercy Bridges permission to remember those that have cared for the citizens in our country and communities.

Sign up to Volunteer - Bring a friend with you!

Volunteers needed for vigil in 2-hour shifts – (2 people per shift only)

Thursday – 3 PM to 8 PM, Friday & Saturday – 8 AM – 8 PM & Sunday – 8 AM – 3 PM

Help tag flags on Thursday – 9/10/20 around 1 PM. (2 - 3 people only)

Vigil Hospitality - (Volunteers come for 2-hour shifts during the 72 hours the Field is open).

Help with dismantling the flags on Sunday- 9/13/20 at 2 PM – 4 PM.

*Thank you in advance for volunteering your time and talent to support
the Field of Honor® and Mercy Bridges.*

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Anonymous Donors,
Tutors & Volunteers**

CONTINUED PROGRAM NEEDS!

TUTORS NEEDED: (All Year Long)

Mercy Bridges, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy, needs volunteer tutors for this adult literacy service. Tutors typically commit to 1 ½ - 2 hours of instructing a learner each week. Tutoring takes place in a public place such as:

- * A library
- * Community Center
- * Church Hall
- * Coffee Shop

Some tutoring takes place at the Mercy Bridges Resource Room located at 1437 Blossom Road. Learners vary in their educational experiences and instructional needs, including about 80% from foreign countries who are eager to learn English. We have an abundance of instructional materials in our recently updated resource room and tutor training is provided by professional instructors. On-going consultation and professional development are always available for individuals and small groups of tutors. If you are interested in knowing more about Mercy Bridges and becoming a tutor for an adult learner, please call 585-288-2710 Ext. 121 for an appointment.

LEARNERS ALWAYS WELCOME: (All Year Long)

Mercy Bridges would like a little help from our readers and supporters. We have met many new learners this year and have been blessed to have tutors waiting for them. We are working to reach out with other agencies to find adults needing our services. However, it has been a slow process and we know that there are so many not being reached. If any of you good people find an adult that could use a little assistance reading better, needing help with applications for employment, studying for driver's license exams, etc., please encouragement them to come see us. We have assessment testing on Tuesday mornings; and if a potential learner needs a different day/time for their assessment, they can feel free to communicate that with Natalie.

We have flyers in different languages (Arabic, English, Nepali, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese) which are distributed to the local libraries, but any help and encouragement from a friend is always more beneficial. Thank you for passing our service on to other friends, family and agencies.

Mercy Bridges
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas-NyPPaW
1437 Blossom Road
Rochester, NY 14610

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