

Society

A community making a difference in the lives of others

Little Sisters Auxiliary helps nuns help elderly poor

By Frank Brown
Peninsula News

Nuns represent a fast-disappearing facet of society. Yet, there still are thousands of women around the world who turn their backs on marriage, children and Manolo Blahnik \$945 spike heel shoes. Material girls don't become nuns.

They wear simple white robes. They tuck their hair under a cap. They wear something else — smiles. Such are the Little Sisters of the Poor who live in San Pedro.

When they need funds to support their mission of caring for the elderly poor, they actually go out and beg for it in downtown Los Angeles. Many times, the money comes to them.

The example the Little Sisters set inspires many Peninsulans and San Pedrans. The other night, more than 200 of the inspired gathered at the Jeanne Jugan home near the foot of Western Avenue to honor these women who are nuns and the men and women who are members of the medical community. The latter perform pro bono services for nearly 100 residents of the home.

The audience of nuns and supporters honored 11 of those volunteers. They were introduced and applauded for the combined 184 years of professional services they contributed working alongside the nuns.

Each of them was introduced by Rita Swartz, the home's development director. "I'm very much a behind-the-scenes person," she said. Each speaker then spoke briefly about their relationship with the Little Sisters.

First on stage was Dr.

Peter Sliskovich, who has served with the group for 24 years. He called the Jugan facility "a holy place that's halfway to heaven." He heads the medical volunteers.

The presentations were made during an excellent dinner provided by Chef Michael Shafer and his Depot restaurant crew.

Dr. Pacita Tan, who began her volunteer service in June 1979, said, "I didn't realize it's been 29 years. It's a beautiful place, and I really enjoy being here."

A dermatologist and San Pedran, Dr. Carmen Capodanno (26 years), demurred at his being honored. "I'm blessed to be here. But, it's the nuns who should be honored, not the doctors."

Dr. Russell Grootegoed, a podiatrist who logged a quarter century, helps seniors retain their mobility. "This is one of the best nursing homes. I'm going to put my name on the list." Fellow podiatrist Dr. Gregg R. Makovic, another quarter-century veteran, said, "The Little Sisters are dedicated; they're for real. I like being a part of this."

The late Peninsulan Dr. Joe Lenihan recruited many of the medical volunteers, including Swedish-born dentist Dr. Carl L. Mossberg. He said, "I've been serving here the past 20 years and have been overwhelmed by the Little Sisters." He, Dr. Virginia Gonzalez (12 years), a USC dental school graduate, and Dr. Guillermo Rubiano provide free dental care for the home's residents.

Dr. Krupa Shah (7 years), a family physician, said she was pleased at how well her patients at the home were taken care of. Dr. Mark Wagner (8 years), an emer-



Red Carpet Welcome From left are Little Sisters of the Poor Srs. Paul, Maureen, Mother Marguerite, Maria, Isabelle, Clotilde and Genevieve. They are representative of hundreds of other women like them who choose the religious life and provide a needed hand to the less fortunate.

gency medicine specialist, said that unlike the transient nature of an E.R., "At the Jeanne Jugan home, I can spend time with each patient and see how they progress."

Dr. Joseph Rodd, a psychiatrist, born and raised in a Jewish-Iranian family in Teheran, said he enjoys working at the home because of "the spirit of love and care ... being offered to the residents of

the home." Carol Stutzke, event co-chair, said, "Our Olympic champions this year are our doctors ... who regularly care for our residents."

The director of nursing, Sr. Clotilde, said, "Because of their (the doctors') dedication, our residents have convenient access to the benefits of early diagnostic and follow-up care that helps maintain and often improves the quality of

their lives." The fund-raising evening followed a strong theme, "Summer Olympics LSP Style." It was the work of the Auxiliary of the Little Sisters of the Poor, headed by its president, Dolores Sharp. "The Little Sisters depend on the kindness and generosity of friends like you," she said.

On Saturday, July 26 at 1 p.m., the Little Sisters invite the public to attend the

dedication of the new convent wing of the residence. There will be a blessing service in the chapel followed by a convent tour and refreshments.

If you plan to attend, please respond not later than July 18 by calling (310) 548-0625 or sending your request to info@lpsocal.org.

Pat Brown contributed to this story. fbrown@pvnews.com



Pat Brown, Peninsula News

You Gotta Have Hearts Standing in front of one of many theme hangings, hand-painted by Dawn Sliskovich, are, from left, Jan Borelli, Carol Stutzke and Dolores Sharp. Borelli and Stutzke co-chaired the event. Sharp is the auxiliary's president. "We changed the Olympic rings to hearts to symbolize the love and care that the Little Sisters provide to their residents," she said.



Frank Brown, Peninsula News

Crowd Pleaser Live auctioneer Charles Dreyer recognized Sr. Genevieve's signal contribution to the event when he instead called her Sister Vanna White. Her poster displays a weeklong stay in a condo at Puerto Vallarta, which went for \$1,500 to Larry and Jane McNeil.

Major Sponsors Early arrivals to the party, at right, were Dan and Gretchen Brandt and Regina and Chuck Leimbach. Regina is a board of advisors member.



Pat Brown, Peninsula News

I Love a Piano Gathered around the 88 are, from left, Leif Werneid, his wife, Jan, Alanna Kennedy and Jan Lauterjung, who brought in 62 silent auction items with Kennedy. The live and silent auctions garnered \$45,000 for the home.



Pat Brown, Peninsula News