Sisters Provide Disaster Relief
See page 4

“Go... and proclaim the good news...”
Mark 16:15

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FRONT COVER

In this flooding crisis, Sister Juana Rivera Jara, SNDdeN does outreach visits to the homes in the shantytowns (pueblo jovenes). Even the youngest members of the family benefit from these visits from Tambogrande’s nurse.

Good Works

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Sisters Provide Disaster Relief

By Sisters Juana Rivera Jara and Evelyn Fitzke, SNDdeN

El Niño rains hit the Pacific coast of Peru in March and April 2017. In the rural north, the Piura region, where two communities of Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur live and minister, the devastation was particularly damaging. Floods devastated whole villages; they washed away houses, schools, and health centers; they destroyed roads, bridges and vast areas of crops. During the heavy rains and flooding, the Sisters in the Tambogrande Region rallied to help people suffering from the disasters to their homes and property. Everywhere, destruction and disease pervaded an area where many people are already vulnerable!

Sr. Juana Rivera Jara, SNDdeN is a nurse, living in Tambogrande in a community of four sisters, and working in the town’s health center. She talks about the pain and suffering that she is witnessing daily from those who are ill, living in poverty and at great distances from medical resources.

“The torrential rains have brought diseases, especially dengue hemorrhagic fever and chikungunya (deadly viral diseases transmitted by mosquitoes), and also the threat

 Sr. Juana Rivera Jara, SNDdeN hangs an IV for an elderly dengue fever patient. No fancy IV equipment or crisp bedsheets here! The patients walked many miles to reach the Health Center in town, where the dedicated staff offer the best they can with
of cholera. There have been many deaths,” she says sadly. “In my work as a nurse, I care for people with these illnesses. They are mostly those living in poverty in flooded rural areas.”

Sr. Juana comes from the village of Miraflores, high in the hills that border the town of Tambogrande. “I was born in the rural area, I grew up in the campo,” she tells us. “I appreciate and enjoy the countryside and nature and all its beauty. But there also have been moments in 1983, 1998, and now 2017 that frightened and saddened me. I feel now the suffering of the people from the disastrous flooding: whole villages cut off by damaged roads and bridges, mudslides, crops completely lost and domestic animals carried away into the rivers and mudslides.”

Facing Challenges
Sr. Juana realizes the challenges. The people who come to the Tambogrande health center are very poor, and often come great distances, from the rural communities that surround the town. With rivers and creeks swollen, roads and bridges destroyed, to reach the health center presents major obstacles for travel. In several rural communities, the small health clinics are completely washed away, so people have to make the long trek into Tambogrande.
Sr. Juana understands the problematic situations, hurdles and frustrations experienced by the people in the travel through raging waters and thick mud:

- parents bringing their child with a high fever and convulsions;
- the family transporting their grand-dad whose speech is slurred;
- the man and woman carrying their brother who fell and now is unconscious.

Once the people arrive, they need to pay for basic supplies, such as needles, IV equipment, bandages and medicines. They do not have health insurance; they do not have any money. With the bean fields washed away by the floods, the livestock drowned in the rivers and mudslides, these desperate people search for medical help for loved ones in this humanitarian crisis, caused by the severe flooding. Tambogrande’s health center, made of brick, is still standing, but desperately under-equipped and under-staffed. The flood waters are reaching the walls of the health clinic, and are now a focus of mosquitoes. There are not enough beds or mosquito nets or other essential equipment. When the emergency room overflows with patients, the medical staff must attend them on stretchers and benches in the hallways.

For the doctors and nurses, the situation is extremely difficult, Sr. Juana explains: “The hours are long, 12-18 hours per shift, which is longer than normal, due to the shortage of medical personnel. The conditions are not safe for the healthcare worker, either! I have often been afraid of contracting these illnesses, because we work surrounded by the mosquito that carries the virus.” The biggest challenge now facing Sr. Juana and the other medical staff at her health clinic is the current outbreak of deadly dengue hemorrhagic fever, carried by a mosquito.
breeding in the flood waters. In fact, Sr. Juana heard that 3 young healthcare workers, 2 nurses and a pharmacist in the neighboring city of Piura, have died from these illnesses.

**Assistance from a Community of the Sisters of Notre Dame**
How do we help? In any way we can. Sr. Juana often finds she has to help discretely, out of her own pocket with Notre Dame funds, to make up what is lacking in terms of medicine or critical supplies. Sometimes it may be only her own bottle of drinking water that saves the day. With Sr. Consuelo Zapata Crisanto, SNDdeN, a nursing student, Sr. Juana conducts home visits in some destitute neighborhoods. Sr. Miriam Montero Bereche, SNDdeN, a psychologist, provides post-traumatic stress counseling to individuals and families traumatized by the flooding. Sr. Evelyn Fitzke, SNDdeN,
visits the elderly through our St. Julie Senior Adult Program and ensures that they have essential medications and food.

Sharing is a primary value in the Peruvian culture. During the recent floods, the SNDdeN community as a whole worked in coordination with the local parish to obtain and distribute supplies of food and medicines to devastated neighborhoods of people living in poverty.

Recently, Sr. Miriam accompanied the members of the parish youth group to the town of Catacaos, which was completely destroyed when the Piura River overflowed. The group distributed emergency packages of food to families camped out on the side of the road or to whole families living under plastic sheeting or in tents. This project, initiated by people who themselves have lost so much shows how even the most vulnerable find some way to reach out to someone who has even less. Through their involvement in the parish, specific experience and training and the generosity of donors, the Sisters feel blessed to share and to offer some relief in a humanitarian crisis.

Please show your support for the people suffering from flood damage and serious illness.
Educational Vision Crosses Cultures

By Sisters Masako Miyake and Carol Shoup, SNDdeN

St. Julie envisioned the educational mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur to extend worldwide. That vision has unfolded in various ways into the 21st century. One expression of Julie’s early vision is the networking of “Sister Schools” internationally.

Exchange Students
Notre Dame Seishin* Girls’ Junior and Senior High School (NDS) in the city of Kurashiki, in the Okayama Prefecture, Japan, and

*(Seishin means Immaculate Heart)
Notre Dame High School in San Jose (NDSJ), California, U.S.A. are “Sister Schools” and even across a wide and deep ocean, relationships keep building. Every year young women from both schools have the opportunity to share their unique academic programs, cultures, and learning environments as exchange students. This year, Ms. Amy Huang, Director (NDSJ), organized the many details of the Student Exchange Program. On March 18, Amy and host families welcomed

12 Japanese students, their teacher, Ms. Kazumi Yamamoto, and their Principal, Sister Masako Miyake SNDdeN for two weeks of academic and social sharing.

The first week began with a welcome breakfast and campus tour, including a history of the City of San Jose given by Social Studies teacher Mr. Jim Floyd. Shadowing their host students to classes during the school week, our visitors experienced spotlights in classes in Global Studies Honors, Advanced Spanish Culture and Conversation, and in Biology Honors Class, where they examined and identified hominid skull casts. Then, hosted by Notre Dame Alumnae, they visited and toured Stanford University and Intel.

Students from “Sister Schools” enjoy classroom interactions.
Corporation, for glimpses of higher education and innovation in America.

**Highlights of Two Weeks**

Our new friends enjoyed highlights of the Woman’s Place Project, by the Ninth Grade class, who honor in original table settings, 163 women of history, as well as the Young Woman Advocacy Summit, presentations by the Seniors’ of their yearly service projects on issues of justice and peace. At the end of the first week, our exchange students delighted in a downtown culture walk, a visit and tour of City Hall and the office of International Affairs.

After a weekend with host families and friends, the Japanese students were happy to see their Principal, Sister Masako Miyake, who came for the last week of the program, and curious and eager to explore a sister ND school and capture as much as possible on her camera. The students shared with Sr. Masako their visit to San Jose’s historic Japan town and Yu-Ai Kai, a Japanese-American senior center. The girls delighted the senior citizens with Japanese songs and stories and enjoyed lunch before returning to school. During the next two days, the group toured San Francisco, with so many sights, from the cable cars and Fisherman’s Wharf to Alcatraz and the Golden Gate.
The students share with Sr. Masako their visit to San Jose’s historic Japan town and Yu-Ai-Kai, a Japanese-American senior center.

Deepened Relationships
Reflection time and discussion were interspersed over the course of the two weeks, for increased understanding and deepening of relationships. The exchange program concluded in a Farewell Party, with certificates for completion awarded to our Japanese students. There were dances and expressions of appreciation, among laughter, smiles, and tears. ND Seishin school gifted to their Sister School some beautifully decorated wooden plates. In return, NDSJ presented our Notre Dame Seishin school with a clock, engraved with a customized quote, “Time does not take away from friendship…” (Tennessee Williams).
Thankful for their presence in our school community, teachers and students from NDSJ said farewell to these special young women, their teacher and principal from ND Seishin. Now, both schools begin to plan for ND San Jose students to visit ND Seishin, Kurashiki during the summer of 2018 in order to expand their vision of a Notre Dame Sister School and the culture and beauty of the “Land of the Rising Sun.”

Please show your support for educational efforts of the SNDdeN for cross cultural education.
In April 1812, in a letter to the superior of the community in Saint Hubert, St. Julie writes: “Everyone wants to come to Saint-Hubert.”

Faithful to Heritage in Saint Hubert

by Sister Monique-Marie Petit, SNDdeN and Mr. Patrick François*

In August 1809, Saint Julie Billiart founded the school of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) in Saint Hubert, Belgium, at the request of the mayor of the city. At that time, three Sisters became the community and opened the school with two classes. Even though much has changed from the early years, the Institut Notre-Dame celebrates today over 200 years of life as an educational institution! In 1985, the Institut Notre Dame joined with the Institut of the Marist Brothers in a merger school called: the Fundamental and Secondary Free School of Saint Hubert (Ecole fondamentale et secondaire libre de Saint-Hubert). The number of students continues to increase, with

* See page 19
700 students now in the secondary school and 240 in the pre-school and elementary schools.

**SNDdeN Presence in Disadvantaged Area**

A city of 3500 inhabitants, in the middle of the Ardennes Forest in the province of Luxembourg, Saint Hubert is considered an economically deprived area in relationship to the two nearest cities. Many families live and survive, inspite of unemployment, thanks to the Public Center of Social Action. The student body, both in the secondary as well as in the pre-school and elementary grades, becomes more financially and socially disadvantaged from year to year. In the secondary school, more than one student in three is not able to pay the entrance fee in September. The young people, 32 girls and boys who are welcomed into the boarding residence are for the most part children from one-parent families, with emotional and financial problems. Practically one-third of those students depend on youth-aid services. In 2016, the secondary school opened a special class to educate children of new immigrants welcomed into the region.

Two retired Sisters, *Sœurs* Jeanne-Emmanuel Pairon and Marie-Clotilde Gilles, SNDdeN live in the building and bring ready assistance and a happy presence to the life of the school. Another SNDdeN, Sister Monique-Marie Petit, SNDdeN, is a member of the Board of Trustees. Today, at the heart of this school, is an oratory, a place of calm, prayer and reflection. Faculty, staff and students, faithful to St. Julie’s spirit, visit frequently this oratory. The directors in the different sections of the school are particularly sensitive to the educational values transmitted by Saint Julie: one director, Mr. Patrick François,

*Sisters Jeanne-Emmanuel Pairon and Marie-Clotilde Gilles, SNDdeN play games with the student boarders.*
belongs to the group of directors organized by the South Belgium/France Province whose goal is the implementation of Julie’s charism in our heritage schools, in our time.

In the pre-school and in the elementary school, a special effort is made to have the children eat the noon meal at school and also to have staffing for supervision/counselling for student-boarders. Offering this possibility demands a big investment of time and energy for supervision of the students by the teachers and brings peace, security and enjoyment for the children.

**Educational Values**

A major objective of the school is to educate the whole person and to help every young student to find his/her way and place in life. The administrators, faculty and staff welcome each child to the school, whatever may be his/her way, and allow each one to have new opportunities, and sometimes a third or fourth chance to succeed. These students, like all others, are “lifted up” to Christian values which motivate and guide the adults serving in the school. The full staff has the will to help the weakest and most deprived, which is a strong value.
inherent in this school. As a goal of our Notre Dame foundresses, this value inspires teachers and administrators to form these young people to the best of their abilities. Among other Notre Dame values, the school is a place of respect and welcome, an inclusive community where differences are lived out each day by students from different cities, town, social classes, and enrolled in different academic programs or options. Sharing and good relationships are born in exchanges among students and teachers from day to day.

In order to give the children in the early years more quiet spaces in their life and apprenticeships, a renovation of the buildings was undertaken in the summer of 2016. Now the pre-school and elementary classes are located in one large building, on a green and ventilated site. During recreation time for the elementary school, constructive activities take place in order to involve students and limit any conflicts. Also, the space reserved for games is more self-contained, with the yard divided into different zones: discussion, games, sports and ball games…etc. Consequently, the secondary
school uses now the property from the elementary school which enables a greater cohesiveness for their sports teams.

Welcome and inclusion of students from a disadvantaged milieu becomes possible, thanks to creativity and the involvement of many people. To permit each student to pursue his/her studies and to have some materials involves great financial efforts at the school. The members of the Board of Trustees, administrators, teachers and the students organize lucrative activities to accomplish these ends/aims: fancy-fair, plays, sale of lasagna, etc. This is a challenge each year. The young people are aware of these charitable and disinterested actions in participating at gatherings for increasing funding sources. They learn to contribute to projects for fighting against leprosy or tuberculosis in the Third World, for animation in day nurseries or homes for the aged, and become involved in other service projects.

“Among other Notre Dame values, the school is a place of respect and welcome, an inclusive community...”
As a former student of the Institut Notre-Dame and the merged Institut Saint-Joseph, Sr. Monique-Marie realizes that this school has remained faithful to the educational values of Saint Julie and Marcellin Champagnat (Marist Brothers’ Founder). In spite of difficulties experienced, St. Julie’s spirit is active and alive daily in Saint Hubert: “Ah ! Qu’il est bon le Bon Dieu.”

**Sister Monique-Marie Petit, SNDdeN is a Member of the Board of Trustees at Saint Hubert. Mr. Patrick François is Director of the first degree level at the school and also a member in the Association of French-speaking Congregational Schools in Belgium/France (ASSOEC)---See Good Works, June 2012, pp.12-14

Please show your support for the heritage schools carrying forward St. Julie’s legacy of education in disadvantaged areas.
A Success Story in Medical Centre

By Sister Rose Ndianefo, SNDdeN

“You really saved my life!”

Bello, a mother of four children nearly died as a result of gastroenteritis. She was rushed to our hospital at 2:00 a.m. on that painful day with a case of stooling and vomiting. She had been sick for about four days. On her arrival, she looked very weak, dehydrated with sunken eyes, dry mouth and skin. She was barely able to talk, because of her general state of weakness. According to her husband, she had been using a lot of herbs, but to no good effect. When her husband saw that her condition worsened, and Bello was almost at the point of death, he decided to bring her to our hospital. He was panicking, as he said, “I am afraid that she may not make it, if I wait till daybreak, and I do not have any money to care for her.” When he was asked why he did not bring her to the hospital sooner, or why he waited so long, he repeated that he had no money.

At Notre Dame Medical Centre in Amoyo, Nigeria, we admitted Bello into the female ward; she underwent a medical assessment and her treatment began. The laboratory investigations revealed not only gastroenteritis, but also typhoid and malaria. Hospitalized for five days, with multiple medications and treatments, she got better eventually. When she was discharged to go home, her husband was not able to pay even a penny for the highly subsidized costs of the drugs and laboratory tests.

This grateful woman certainly appreciated all our care. Thanking the Sisters and members of staff, she said: “You really saved my life.” She told us that she knew about the care and special treatment at our Medical Centre; she realized too that we would give her the treatment, even though she and her husband did not have any money. Her husband confessed that when
his neighbors told him to take his wife to another hospital in the town; he refused by telling them that no hospital would care for his wife if he did not have any funds. Only Notre Dame Medical Centre would help them.

**Multiple Services for Limited Staff**

The Centre is open 24 hours for emergency care; it offers multiple services, including many normal deliveries and some Caesarians, ante-natal care, nutritional counselling for mothers with new babies, treatments for hypertension, diabetes, gastro-intestinal problems and various diseases (hepatitis B, malaria, typhoid, etc.) and necessary immunizations/vaccinations. Sisters Rose Ndianefo and Mary Bernadette Eboh, SNDdeN serve as staff nurses and midwives who work with one doctor, a laboratory technician, two nurses aids and two health care workers. Three persons assist with maintenance and security. Sister Antonia Uwakwe, SNDdeN is a community health worker for the Medical Centre.

All staff members aim to give quality care, in a cost-effective service to the people; we offer sessions on preventative health care and child welfare. Last year, even with 100 new patients and 284 returning patients, we began a program for orphans and vulnerable children. At times, even with limited resources, our medical staff extends to home care for the elderly and to two outreach clinics, including a mobile clinic.

People have hope when they come to our Centre for medical care. The Notre Dame spirit is alive and active, with St. Julie’s option for those living in poverty and for the sick in an under-served community. *The people in Amoyo recognize God’s goodness in this health care ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.* In September 2014, I was missioned to the Medical Centre, a special kind of place where our Sisters are called to work. This is

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*Sr. Rose Ndianefo, SNDdeN gives a hepatitis B injection to a patient, a clinician prepares the documents and Sr. Antonia Uwakwe, SNDdeN prepares the next injection.*
an area where the people hardly eat two times in a day. They cannot afford medical care either and often, they rely only on herbal medicine for cures.

In our Centre, we have a policy not to send anybody away just because she/he does not have money at hand. Of course, our policy results in outstanding debt, with challenges to search for funding through grants, sponsorships and fund-raising efforts.

We continue to network with other hospitals/clinics, churches and organizations. We do what we can to alleviate pain and suffering for underprivileged patients, living in poor situations, as they testify continuously. Bello’s story shows that we give the people some hope for getting well in Amoyo, and we will continue to bring the good news in our good works for those in need in Nigeria.

Please show your support for saving lives by funding medications, necessary treatments, and preventative care.
The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur welcome and appreciate your financial support as we continue our ministries around the world.

We thank you for your prayerful and generous support.

*How good is our good God!* 

1/We would like to continue to support for the following:
- The ministries of the Sisters of Notre Dame internationally.
- The Jubilee Fund for Health Care and Education of the Sisters.

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Good Works
Worldwide Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

St. Julie’s characteristic phrase:
“How good is the good God!”

expressed her special gift of unique trust in God. Today Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur on five continents make known God’s goodness.

SNDdeN Mission

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, women with hearts as wide as the world, make known God’s goodness and love with and among people living in poverty, through a Gospel way of life, community and prayer.

Continuing a strong educational tradition, we take our stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children, in the most abandoned places.

Each of us commits her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all.

Africa
Democratic Republic of Congo
Congo
Brazzaville
Kenya
Nigeria
South Africa
South Sudan
Zimbabwe

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Belgium
France
Italy
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Latin America
Brazil
Nicaragua
Peru

North America
Haiti
United States
(27 states and the District of Columbia)

Asia
Japan