Jottings The AIC / MHA Alumnae Newsletter

The AIC / MHA Alumnae Newsletter Spring 2013



Alumna shares her journey from despair to hope

By Jackie (Perry) Daniels '96

In 1996, I left behind my safe place — the "Castle on the Hill," the "Dome," our Marian Heights Academy. I left behind my friends, teachers, and individual moments that created a treasure chest of memories I still pull from at any given point of my day. Just the other day I was explaining to someone our "Thursday Prayer Night," where we played songs and contemplated our relationships as a group, often expressing gratitude for our moments together. Sometimes we used that time to

grieve together during the most painful time of the year: when our friends from Mexico returned home at the end of the year.

On graduation day, we sang the traditional "Like an Eagle" and turned the tassels on our ceremonial caps. Fifteen minutes into our ride home, my father pulled the car to the side of the road for me to take a picture of a rainbow that had formed in the sky after a brief rain. This event was a foreshadowing of what was to come — a brief but violent storm that would lead to

a rainbow.

I started college at Indiana University in Bloomington in August of that year. I purposely moved into a residence hall named "Foster International" because I thought it would replicate the diverse community I had at MHA. I made friends and became involved on campus, just as I had done at MHA, but I constantly felt like something was missing.

I quickly discovered substances on our college campus, which were easily accessible and contributed to the social atmosphere. They created a false sense of security, lowered my inhibitions, and allowed me to be the rambunctious person I was at MHA. I never had a problem being my authentic self at MHA, so why did I need substances? I was scared. The pain from leaving MHA was so incredible that I drank to cover the pain and to feel connected to others without being scared they would leave me. I was also terrified that I would not be liked, and alcohol fixed that.

A few years later, I found myself with multiple with-

drawals on my transcript after dropping classes that I perceived as "too hard." I had a drunken driving accident, numerous failed relationships with men, and a very brief history dabbling in other drugs.

In February of 2000, I swallowed two bottles of pills and downed a liter of rum. My depression was so great I did not want to live anymore. I was sick of surviving each day instead of living. I had not become who I wanted to be when I was in high school. I was the complete opposite. I was not

Jackie currently works in the Division of Student Affairs at Indiana University Bloomington campus as Director of Office of Alternative Screening and Intervention Services (OASIS). In that position, she is responsible for campus prevention, education, and interventions in regards to substances. Jackie was featured in an episode of "Teen Trouble" on Lifetime in December. "I believe MHA saved my life (no joke), and I mention it in my story on the show. I just wanted everyone to know the inspiration behind my participation. Truly grateful!" (Pictured above: Jackie, her husband, Billy, and son, Bailey)

a proud, liberated woman. I had been harboring a pain so deep that I wanted to sleep forever. However, I was saved by my family and friends and woke up in the hospital the next day, upset that they messed up my plan.

A few months later I decided to try to save myself. I entered treatment for addiction. I quickly learned that the key to recovery is Hope. This seed was planted in high school through numerous lessons in and out of the classroom. It was reborn when I woke up sober on my second day in treatment. I had been convinced that

God had left me behind and was the reason I had suffered so much. However, the women in my treatment center told me that if I prayed, I did not have to believe, I just had to talk with God. For the first time since graduation, I was willing to follow directions — with positive results.

I left treatment two months later with a new realization and resolve. I was the reason I suffered so much. I lacked trust, not just of others, but of God. I had learned in high school that God does not leave us but waits patiently for us to call on him again. Trouble was, I was living for myself, for success, and the approval of others. I had been unable to show those around me who I truly was inside, out of fear of not being accepted.

I returned home and to a new life — new friends and routines. I got a full-time job. I also obtained a Bachelor's Degree in General Studies and a Master's Degree in Social Work. I once again had the desire to advocate for others, whether through listening or activism.

During my first week in graduate school, I felt a fire in me like I had not felt since MHA. I was connected to something bigger than me, studying positive social change made by everyday people through the years. I quickly became an outspoken student in my classes, and when I graduated two years later, I received an award honoring a student that expressed a strong desire to advocate for those with disabilities. The faculty member who

nominated me for the award knew that I wanted to concentrate on populations struggling with substance abuse and addiction, which propagates living a disabled life. That was the first time I received an award since my senior year at MHA. My parents were so proud that I had returned to being an ambitious woman with hope for the future.

I spent the next five years working as a therapist at a mental health center in Bloomington. I was passionate about my job and found my niche working with those with co-occurring mental illness and addiction. I also became the Spanish-speaking therapist for clients who did not speak English. I advocated for those with few resources, without families, money, and shelter.

In 2010, a few days before my wedding, I interviewed for another job at Indiana University. I would return to my roots, working on the campus where I had been such a failure, a mess-up and hoodlum. I experienced a breakthrough dealing with the pain I had carried with me for so long. I was in a safe space, was engaged to a man that supported me no matter what. He held my hand as I struggled. He is the closest friend I've had since MHA.

Over the last few years, I have blossomed into the person I have always wanted to be. I am no longer ashamed of who I am. I'm not someone who makes oodles of money, lives in a fabulous mansion, and has a sports car. But I believe that love, faith, and hope are worth more than any fancy pos-

sessions. I'm honest, accepting, and resilient, continually bouncing back after hardship. I'm a steward of the Earth, and I take nothing for granted. I am an authentic person because my outsides match my insides.

I've come to the realization that if I have hope, I have God. For a long time I didn't think I deserved God's love. Now I believe we are all worthy of God's love whether we think so or not. I also believe that I am called to be a beacon for others who have lost their way. If someone's light has been extinguished by disability, addiction, poverty, or prejudice, I want them to borrow mine. I have enough to go around.

I was promoted to my current position at IU in August of 2012. My journey as a professional on campus has been humbling, but never boring. I work with students who struggle with substance abuse. Every day I meet a student who has a story that resonates with me. They consistently tell me "this is not a reflection of who I was in high school, not what I expected of myself." I have had the honor to share my recovery with them and with many others.

I had to make peace with my past in order to move forward. I now live in service to others. I've learned that the secret to overcoming hardship is giving back. In the words of St. Francis, I try to live as a light in the darkness, sowing love and not hate. I have become the person I wanted to be when I was in high school.

AIC/MHA Alumnae News



Betty (Wagner) Jochim and Peggy (Zeyen) Blackwell, roommates during their junior and senior years, and Sister Mary Alice Schnur, all **1940 graduates**, spent time together at the monastery last October. These **90**-year-olds shared vivid memories from their Academy days 73 years ago. They laughed over pranks and jokes they played as students. Still witty and alert, they continued to tease each other. Peggy's daughter brought her to Ferdinand from Kokomo, Indiana, and Betty came from Evansville with her niece-in-law. Sister Marilyn Market '42 also visited with the group.

AIC/MHA Alumnae News

Kathy Ellison-Nixon, MHA teacher from 1990-96, shared what she's been doing recently as a writer. "I had a story published in the online journal 'Ninepatch' this summer under the name of 'Kate Nixon'. I am now (November 2012) busy putting the finishing touches on my first novel, *La Vincero*. The title means 'I will conquer' and comes from a lyric that a mother and then her equally headstrong daughter embrace as their personal credo, but with oh so different consequences. After I decided to place the novel in Louisville on the cusp of the Civil War, it just felt natural to borrow from my favorite MHA rooms, grounds, and architectural features when I needed scenes for parts of the story." Commenting on her experience with writing, Kathy says, "It has been lots of fun as well as hard work." Good luck with your "new" career, Kathy!

Rita (Rasche) Oeding '44 says she would love to hear from her Academy friends and classmates. They can call her at 812-482-4521. She jokingly said that many of her classmates are deceased so she doesn't expect to hear from them.

Theresa Bauer '67 posted on the monastery Facebook page: "I graduated from the Academy 45 years ago and have reaped the benefit of an exceptional education my entire life. Having stayed in contact with the sisters all my life, I can recommend "the hill" as the most hospitable, spiritual, and all-around wonderful place!"

Gretchen Logue-Stevens '80 had posted on Facebook a few months ago a request for prayers for her brother, Terry, who had been receiving "very potent chemotherapy" for cancerous tumors. "I wanted to give an update to all of you praying for my brother, Terry. Recent tests and scans have shown astounding results. His blood tests showed all levels to be 100%, better than when he started his chemo, and his tumors shrunk by 30%. He has even gained weight. The doctor called it a miracle; they are very optimistic and will continue to monitor his condition. I cannot thank you enough for all of your prayers. We have been praying for a miracle and this news has filled our hearts with so much joy. Please continue to pray for him. With God's mercy, he will overcome this.

After all these years, I now know why I attended Marian Heights and formed the friendships that I did. God bless you all."

Kathy (Steve) McMillan '82 posted on Facebook:

"Thanks to all who have taken the time to pray for my son, Gavin (26 years old). The doctor said after his tumor was removed, his blood work has been getting better at every visit and he may NOT have to have chemo treatments! The Lord is great! I also still make visits to my oncologist and recently received a great report. I had stage two breast cancer and still have to take Tamoxifen for a few more years. Thanks to my dear classmates from Marian Heights, to Sister Paulette and the rest of the nuns, and to others in my church who are praying for us. Having God and strong support from family and friends is truly helpful. I feel like I was never a religious person as I am now."



They weren't in costumes, but 11 members of the **class of 1949** spent a day together at the monastery last Halloween.

First row: Imelda (Meny) Balbach, Joan Quante, Helen (Begle) Gress, Eleanor (Frielinghausen) Buchanan, Sister Mary Leah (Ruth Ann) Baehl; second row: Sister Mary Claude (Lois) Croteau, Avila Brenner, Doretha (Klee) Wahl, Anna Lee (Jasper) Haug, Sharon (Swain) Werner. Bernice (Laake) Weyer left the gathering before photo was taken.



Alums from the **class of 1953** have been gathering annually for about the last 15 years. This past November they met at Anna Lee Haas's home in Newburgh.

First row: Kay (Voges) Etienne, Margie Backer; second row: Anna Lee "Cookie" (Hormuth) Haas, Jeanie (Hoffman) Rahman, Norma Lee (Baehl) Goedde, Mary Alice "Bootsie" (Lindauer) Jochem, Angie (Schaefer) Ebert, Doraine (Whitcomb) Rickard; last row: Annie (Vaal) Lange, Janice (Mallory) Wittgen, Kathy (Vaal) Meyer, Evelyn (Bolte) Schwoeppe, Shirley Remke.

Jeanie Rahman says: "We appreciate our education at the Academy and the friendships we formed. We've always been a close-knit group, and since we've been getting together every year, we've become even closer. We've been through a lot, so we try to 'be there' for each other and support each other. At first we met at area restaurants, and then we thought it would be easier and more fun and relaxing if we would meet in our homes. Norma Lee Goedde plans to host the group in October 2013."

"Breaking the chain of poverty one family at a time"

Since their arrival in Ferdinand in 1867, the Sisters of St. Benedict have always been committed to education. They established schools in Southern Indiana and have served as teachers and administrators in numerous educational institutions for the past 146 years.

Now, the sisters are developing another dimension of their education ministry by collaborating with Family Scholar House of Louisville to bring a new service to Southern Indiana. "We feel education is absolutely crucial for the family unit. We want to help the parent so their children are helped, too," says Sister Barbara L. Schmitz, director of mission advancement for the Sisters of St. Benedict.

Family Scholar House was established in Louisville in 1995 with a goal of ending the cycle of poverty by giving single-parent students the support they need to earn a college degree and attain a viable independent lifestyle.

The Louisville program seeks to provide academic advising and career support, case management, family and peer support, community activities, connection to other resources, and eventually, housing for qualifying single-parent students. It predominantly serves women, often single mothers, who are unemployed or underemployed and desire additional educational and career opportunities.

Cathe Dykstra, CEO and president of Family Scholar House, said, "We chose to collaborate with the Sisters of St. Benedict because of their commitment to community, hospitality, and service. We believe the location of the monastery in Ferdinand will serve as a good home base as we provide educational information and assistance to that area."

In the past year, sisters and Family Scholar House representatives have been meeting with community leaders, school administrators, and social service agencies to assess the needs for this service and to get referrals to single parents interested in entering the program and pursuing a college degree.

In October, Family Scholar House

established a Ferdinand campus with an office at the monastery and Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz, Academy alum of '55, as the on-site coordinator to begin the program's implementation in Dubois County, and eventually in surrounding counties. She sees her immediate job basically as "telling the story of Family Scholar House and its mission and goals, ascertaining resources in this area, generating community support, motivating and keeping the spirit, energy, and connections going." In a nutshell, she describes the goal of the program: "to discover the needs of the single parent student hoping to obtain a college degree, match the needs and connect the student with the resources and support systems available, and develop and support an educational environment that motivates and sustains life-long learning."

She continues to learn about and connect with area resources and services, such as WorkOne, federal student financial aid (FAFSA), and Crisis Connection Center and Tri-Cap in Jasper.

According to Sister Barbara C, Academy alums, Beth (Weyer) Stein '69, founder and executive director of the Crisis Connection Center, and Jane (Beckman) Chappell '65, former director of Tri-Cap Family Health Services, are vitally involved in this project. Beth says she sees a real need in the area for such a program, noting that many people they serve "could very definitely be candidates."

A Family Scholar House orientation session was offered at Vincennes University Jasper Campus in late January for single parents, most of whom are attending college.

The next phase is to offer classes, e.g. understanding finances, résumé writing, healthy boundaries, good nutrition, etc., to FSH participants. And participants will be given information about and connected with the resourc-



Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz, Family Scholar House coordinator for the Sisters of St. Benedict, discusses paperwork with a potential Family Scholar House participant at the first orientation at Vincennes University Jasper Campus on January 31, 2013.

es they need to pursue their education and care for their children.

"The good news is that there seems to be an abundance of support and excitement in Dubois and surrounding counties about this program," Sister Barbara C. said. She gave an example of community engagement. "There are several people, including two sorority groups, who have volunteered to teach and help in other ways with this project."

She envisions enormous potential and success for this program. "It's an idea that can't go wrong. Universities, social agencies, school systems, businesses, civic and community organizations, and the Sisters of St. Benedict — all collaborating to help bring it to fruition."

Dykstra says: "We look forward to having the sisters involved as tutors, mentors, encouragers, and supporters of those seeking to improve their lives through education. To educate a mother is to bless her child. The sisters will be involved in laying a strong educational foundation that promotes prosperity for families now and for generations to come." Breaking the chain of poverty one family at a time.

Academy Alumnae Reunion — June 29-30, 2013

Let's celebrate!

As alumnae board member Connie (Holmes) Egloff '73 says, "We need to celebrate us NOW!" Our alumnae membership might be aging, and decreasing somewhat, but our spirit is forever young and our lovalty is strong. And we continue to renew and strengthen our friendships – our sisterhood – and to keep our memories alive. That's what we celebrate each vear at our Academy Alumnae Reunion and in other ways and places throughout the year.

Classes continue to bond at special gatherings they have in Chicago, Louisville, Indianapolis, Newburgh, Ferdinand, or elsewhere. Many alums keep in touch and support one another and meet new alumnae through Facebook or other social media. We encourage alums from far and near to find ways to stay connected and to preserve the memories.

We know the obstacles to traveling to Ferdinand for the annual summer reunion, especially the time and expense if coming from a great distance.

The board has added something new to entice and facilitate more alums to come to the reunion on "the hill." We have reserved the MHA gymnasium as a "gathering place" for those who come on Saturday, June 29, before the "official" reunion on Sunday, June 30.

Given the fact that Academy girls are ingenious and capable of providing their own fun, we decided not to plan events for Saturday afternoon. It will be open for visiting, reminiscing, playing cards/games, shooting hoops, etc. We suggest you bring your snacks, drinks (no alcohol), and memories. Board member Ruth Metzger '72 has offered to prepare a photo slide show that we can view throughout the afternoon. If you have pictures from your Academy days that you would like to submit for this, e-mail them to Ruth (remetz6872@gmail.com), and she will prepare the "entertainment." With the picture, include the year and brief identification.

The gym will be open from 2 to 7 p.m. Eastern time. This will give you the evening time to go to dinner with classmates and friends and to your hotel.

Other Reunion Details

Classes who graduated in years ending in 3 or 8 will celebrate special anniversaries at the reunion. The class of 1963 is the "golden anniversary class." We hope for record attendance for anniversary classes and classes not celebrating anniversaries.

Please register for Alumnae Day by June 12. Use the form on page six or register online at thedome. org/alumnae. We need to know in advance how many are coming in order to set up for the dinner and order the food.



Alumnae raffle – The Board will have a raffle of special items they contribute. You can purchase tickets on any of the items for \$1 or 6 for \$5. Winning tickets will be drawn at the reunion dinner on Sunday.

The \$25 fee charged for Alumnae Day helps cover the cost of the meal, setup, continental breakfast, and the publication of Jottings, the alumnae newsletter. Payment may be made when you register (by June 12) or when you check in on Alumnae Day.

If you need accommodations for the weekend, check the hotel list on page 7.

Alumnae Reunion Schedule

Saturday, June 29

- You are welcome to visit and spend time on campus.
- Gathering of the "girls" in MHA gym from 2 to 7 p.m.
- Tickets may be purchased on raffle items displayed in gym

Sunday, June 30

- Sign in/confirm registration/pay if you didn't pre-pay (near Assembly) - 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.
- Continental breakfast in the Assembly 8:30 to 10:30
- Mass in the monastery church 10:30 a.m.
- Dinner in St. Gertrude Hall in the monastery 12 noon
- Annual meeting following the dinner: class recognitions/photos, winning tickets drawn for raffle, attendance prizes, announcements
- · Visiting throughout the afternoon

All times are Eastern Dauliaht

Register by June 12 if you want to be included in the meal count on Alumnae Day, Sunday, June 30.

We hope to see you in June!

Alumnae Reunion — June 29-30, 2013 Registration Form

Return this form or complete the online form posted on the Academy web page by June 12. You may pay now or at the door on Sunday, but you must preregister if **you plan to attend the dinner**. Send to:

> Alumnae Association 802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532

Or, register online at thedome.org/alumnae.

Alumnae — \$25 Adult quest at dinner — \$12 Children under 12 at dinner — \$6

Name		
Address		
City	State Zip	
Grad year	Phone	
E-mail address		
 I will attend the gathering on Saturday. I will be at the Sunday dinner. I will bring guests for dinner. 		
Amount enclosed \$		

Hope @ the Dome **Youth Rally**

Help us spread the word! Saturday, July 6, 2013



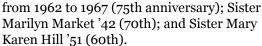
High school youth are invited to an outdoor extravaganza of prayer, service, and celebration at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, hosted by the Sisters of St. Benedict.

What is this "Youth Rally?" Find out as details are released at 1

Sister alums will celebrate special anniversaries in 2013

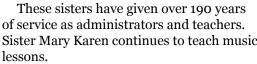
The oldest sister in the monastery, Sister Dolorosa Hasenour '34, and Sister Assunta Highbaugh '33 will celebrate 80 years of their monastic profession of vows in October of this year. These two sisters served in ministry, mostly in education and in school and community administration, for a combined total of 138 years.

Other sister alums observing their anniversaries of monastic profession in October are Sister Mary Esther Steckler, Academy principal

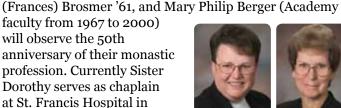


These sisters have given over 190 years of service as administrators and teachers. Sister Mary Karen continues to teach music

Three alums and one former faculty member are part of the golden jubilee class in the monastery this year. On August 24, Sisters Dorothy Graf '61, Mary Ann (Dolores) Verkamp '61, Anna Marie



faculty from 1967 to 2000) will observe the 50th anniversary of their monastic profession. Currently Sister Dorothy serves as chaplain at St. Francis Hospital in Indianapolis; Sister Mary Ann is librarian at the monastery and ministers in support services; Sister Anna Marie serves in the monastery's Hildegard Health Center as an LPN; and Sister Mary Philip works in the monastery archives and as director of volunteers, and teaches at the Guadalupe Center in







Sister Anna Marie



Sister Mary



Huntingburg.

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Sister Marv



Sister Marilyr



Sister Mary Karen



Sister Dorothy



Philip

Need a place to stay during the reunion? Check out these local accommodations:

Harvest Moon B & B, Ferdinand	812-367-1881
Comfort Inn, Ferdinand	800-424-6423
Best Western Inn, Dale	812-937-7000
Motel 6, Dale	812-937-2294
Sleep Inn, Jasper	800-424-6423
Days Inn, Jasper	800-742-7482
Hampton Inn, Jasper	800-426-7866
Jasper Inn, Jasper	800-872-3176
Holiday Inn Express, Jasper	888-465-4329
Santa's Lodge, Santa Claus	812-937-1902
Quality Inn, Huntingburg	800-228-5151

May they rest in peace

Alumnae: Esther F. Schepers '29, Edith (Schneider) Dunn '39, Rose Marie (Ziliak) Porter '46, Mary Ann (Hartmann) Hoffman '48, Joan (Eckerle) Schipp '49, Mildred "Millie" (Eckstein) Stemle '50, Mary (Venne) Hollkamp '52, Angela M. "Tootie" (Schutz) Sinclair '53, Patricia (Stone) Scott '58, Kathleen Ann (Gadlage) Schnell '64, Beverly (Lechner) Mehling '69

Husband of: Lorette (Vieck) Holl '50, Ruth (Bradley) James '51, Henriella (Kares) Montgomery '56, Rose Mary (Knebel) Higgason '62

Son of: Clara Mae (Schnell) Messmer '56

Mother of: Sandy (Stiles) Hammons '57, Sister Romaine (Phyllis) Kuntz '58

Father of: Carol (Stemle) Roach '66, Ellen Kuhn '80

Brother of: Anna (Dehon) Williams '48 (Apologies to Anna for listing <u>her</u> in the fall 2012 *Jottings* as deceased rather than her brother), Sister Doris Market '55, Sharon (Jahn) Cavanaugh '59, Bonnie (Zint) Ambrose '63

Sister of: Sister Helen Maurer '39, Kathy (Lechner) Weyer '67

Our deepest thanks!

On behalf of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, I express our heartfelt gratitude to all the alumnae and former staff members who have so generously contributed to our community and our ministries in the past year.

Here is a summary of your financial support to the sisters from January 1 through December 31, 2012.

In our Mission Advancement database, we have current addresses for 1605 Academy alumnae. Of that number, 325 (20%) made contributions to the Sisters of St. Benedict in 2012 for a total of \$163,302.20. That is \$48,764.63 more than the previous year. Former staff members contributed \$7,925.82 in 2012.

Classes with the highest percentage of members who made contributions are

1953 57% 1945 50% 1955 45% 1947 44% 1948 and 1950 42%

The top five classes for total amounts given are

1965 \$59,799.71 1956 \$24,770.00 1959 \$6,225.00 1945 \$5,095.00 1958 \$4,635.80

Donors can choose various levels and ways of giving. Currently, 12 alums are members of the "Women of the Rule" group, 37 are "Partners of the Sisters," and 56 (12 of whom are deceased) are members of the St. Hildegard

Society. If you would like to learn more about these ways to support the sisters, visit our website at www.thedome.org and click on "Make a Gift."

We thank you for the many ways you support us. We pray daily for you and ask that you do the same for us.

May God bless you, Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau *Prioress*



Class of 1967

Interested in finding out what other alums are doing? Join the Official Alumni Group on Facebook!

Search for "Marian Heights Academy/Academy Immaculate Conception Official Alumni Group"

You can also visit the Sisters' Facebook page at **facebook.com/Ferdinand OSB**. You do not need a Facebook account to see the information posted on their page!





AIC/MHA Alumnae Association

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Sisters of St. Benedict Spirituality Ministry

The sisters' Spirituality Ministry offers a buffet of nourishing, enriching, and tasty food for your soul and spirit. Check out these three upcoming programs, and invite a friend to join you at Kordes Center on the hill. For more information visit the sisters' website at **thedome.org/programs** or phone 812-367-1411, ext 2915.

- April 20, 2013 "Harvest of Wisdom: Exploring the Benedictine Blessings of Prayer, Work, and Hospitality"

 As an alum, you're somewhat familiar with these "timeless treasures" of Benedictine spirituality. Take this day to immerse yourself in these values.
- May 4, 2013 "Song-Prayers of the Heart throughout the Ages"
 Experience the Biblical Psalms in a new way as a dialogue with God about your deepest feelings and emotions.
- May 4, 2013 "A Day Apart: Rest and Reflection"

A wonderful opportunity to step away from your busy life and be alone with God. Spend time on the monastery grounds and at Kordes Center to just "be."

