

Greater Cincinnati Region

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Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly

Anne Holbrook



It has been only a few short months that I have been serving the shut in seniors in the communities around greater Cincinnati with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly--a very much, needed program serving the forgotten, lonely senior shut ins. ☺ They are really

angels sent as reminders of His love.

During this time, I have learned much about myself and the Lord through these wonderfully delightful children of God.

First, do not worry about being late for an event because another senior is not ready to be picked up. It is more important to pick them all up and arrive a little late than to leave anyone behind. This is no one's fault or blame, it just "is." ☺

Next, that it is funny to make a wrong turn in a completely unfamiliar neighborhood. No problem, I have it on good advice that memory is not always reliable and so just go back the way you came and think again really, really hard. It will eventually come to you. (I have never used google maps and SIRI so much!) The seniors like SIRI and want her to tell them how to get back home. Unfortunately, it sadly doesn't work that way.

Third, that remembering things from long ago are more reliable and happy than what has happened an hour ago. It is more fun to remember when you were younger and carefree, so, act accordingly. Laugh, love, and have fun when with others because you may not see them again. ☺

And finally, you may meet your Maker today so remember what he has told you to do, "Love your neighbor." God has a good place for those servants! My seniors tell me when I am driving what a great job I am doing and that they really appreciate it --at least every 5 minutes. ☺

But, it is they who I must thank. The Seniors make me realize how little time it takes and so much happiness it brings to do God's work. I plan on giving up my other servant work, housework--the rewards are not comparable! ☺ <http://cincinnati.littlebrothers.org/>

"Will Mr. Bill come back?"

When I met Bill Mackey over a year ago, I had been working on a grant that would include funding for an afterschool program with Making Sense of Language Arts (see inside for more info). As we prepared the grant I questioned whether I could really take on more myself to run an afterschool program. Then I got the call from Bill. Not only had Bill taught before, he had worked for 20+ years for John R. Green, the areas most trusted (at least mine) seller of school supplies. Bill knew the value that "stuff" plays in developing learning minds. Who better to help children who didn't have the "stuff" to play with to develop the neurology (brain development) to learn and communicate language. When Bill went on vacation recently a teary eyed youngster came to me and asked, "Will Mr. Bill come back?" "Oh yes," I assured him and his frown turned to joy. In six short weeks Bill has won the hearts of our little ones ☺

Making Sense of Language Arts

"What is your heart's desire?" That's a phrase I often hear from my spiritual reflector. Ten years ago when I interviewed to be the Regional Director of IVC I would have said to empower volunteers to serve those in need through the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Sam Schloemer, my able predecessor got the job and brought IVC to Cincinnati! God's plan for me was to continue working with the Woman's City Club, a 101 year old civic organization whose mission is to educate, empower, and engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati to participate together in promoting the common good. During my years with WCC they embraced my kindergarten tutoring program, Making Sense of Language Arts, by providing tutors at the school we served and expanding the program to two other Cincinnati Public Schools. Six years later Sam retired and I applied for the IVC position again and this time got the job. In those six years with the help of Woman's City Club, MSLA's mission "to bridge the literacy gap for children from low income neighborhoods" had reached 100's of more students and given purpose to over 100 retired seniors who tutor the children.

Part of what appealed to me about the Regional Director position was that it is part time and I can continue to serve as the Director of Making Sense of Language Arts as well. A pleasant surprise is that Ignatian Volunteers have chosen to join us in our mission to bridge the gap.

I wear three hats with the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. As the Regional Director I reach out to volunteers in need of purpose, community and spiritual growth and to agencies in need of these volunteers. As a volunteer I continue my work with Making Sense of Language Arts, a 20+ year work of bridging the literacy gap for children in low income neighborhoods, involving 40+ other volunteers. As director of Making Sense of Language Arts I also supervise Ignatian Volunteers in their service placements. Seven other Ignatian Volunteers are also involved with MSLA as tutors or staff.

The Principal of Winton Hills Academy for the last 19 years, Dr. Christina Russo, was a steady advocate for MSLA and assembled a great teaching staff. As she prepared for retirement she introduced her successor to the program and encouraged an expansion to an afterschool program to serve those who needed intervention more than one hour per week. This effort was to be funded by a 20th Century Grant. At this time I also met a

potential volunteer, William Mackey, who was qualified and expressed interest in running the after school program after he would retire in January, (he's cut back, not retired).

The Jesuits have had an active presence in this school as well. St. Xavier High School provides tutors to their students and has a bridge program that mentors the older students and if they persist in their academic growth they are given scholarships to St. X. The president of the Local School Decision Making Committee of Winton Hills Academy is a Jesuit and the Animator of Cincinnati's Ignatian Volunteer Corps, Fr. Joe Folzenlogen. He works from Mother of Christ Church across the street from WHA.

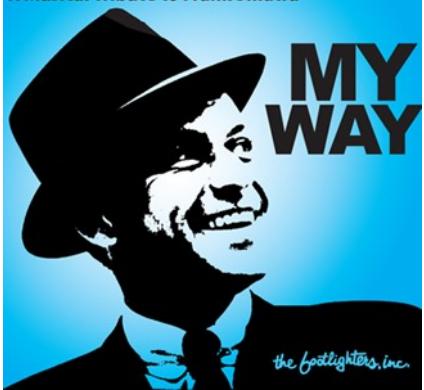
When the grant fell through MSLA was asked to offer an afterschool program anyway. Linda Wihl currently finds funding for the 2 IVC partnership positions and requested that the school come up with the funds to support a third volunteer for the afterschool program if desired. By January we had not heard back and began to prepare the willing volunteer for other roles. Then two weeks into the new year we were asked to start the program the 2nd week of February. Keep in mind that in addition to the volunteer who would be running the program we needed to fill 36 hours a week (3 days a week with 12 students) with volunteers who would do the individual tutoring. The Friends of Winton Hills Academy, a foundation founded by the outgoing principal, had had a very successful end of year fund raising campaign and had come up with enough money to pay the partnership fee for the remainder of this school year. Bill Mackey was excited to be able to serve in the capacity he had felt called to do. We began to recruit tutors from St. Bernard's church, IVC's home base in Cincinnati, pastored by a Jesuit no less. We also recruited, trained and supervised seven sixth graders from the school to tutor as well.

Recently, Beth Lea, Ignatian Volunteer and a former elementary school teacher at St. Agnes in Ft. Wright, Kentucky, has joined us and contributes her valuable skills to the education and development of our children at Winton Hills.



IVC is now heavily involved with the afterschool program at Winton Hills. I am currently helping to get the program up and running and will be available for support when the Ignatian Volunteers are ready to fly solo.

Jaydan is tutored by IVC volunteer Kelly Spataro. Not only has he learned to read, write and comprehend, he won this Behavior leadership award!



Fun Raising Our Way

After over 36 years of ushering at award winning Cincinnati Playhouse in the park, I admit to being jaded and a critic of live theatre. So when IVC volunteer, Beth Lea invited me to see

"Jesus Christ Superstar" at a community theatre, (Stained Glass Theatre, with Footlighters, Inc., an all-volunteer organization), I wasn't sure what to expect. Was I ever delighted!! I've seen the play before with nationally acclaimed performers and this was even better! The set was great; the band and costumes were good; the soloists and ensemble were great. Most of all the spirit was alive and represented well the last six days of Jesus' life. It was Holy Thursday. What a great way to immerse oneself in Holy Week!

Beth has also arranged for IVC to host a fundraiser at the Stained Glass Theater with Footlighters Inc. They allow nonprofits to invite guests and sell tickets for their dress rehearsals. We are blessed to be hosting a dress rehearsal for "My Way" on May 4th. *My Way: A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra will be directed by Peggy Kenney and Robert Weidle. Ol' Blue Eyes lives again for a night in this nostalgic song-and-dance revue. "My Way" celebrates the pivotal moments in Sinatra's life. From the swinging '40s to the bright lights of Vegas in the '60s and beyond, MY WAY incorporates songs pulled from throughout the Chairman of the Board's musical career. The cast of talented singers will perform everyone's favorite numbers, including "Strangers in the Night," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Fly Me to the Moon" and of course, "New York, New York."* http://www.footlighters.org/show.php?show_id=53050

You can support the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (and indirectly the 20+ agencies we serve) by purchasing a ticket for the performance. Tickets cost \$35.00. Contact Linda Wihl at 513 477-3428 or mail a check with names of those who will attend to Ignatian Volunteer Corps, 4714 Chickering Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45232. Your financial support empowers us to nurture those who nurture others, providing monthly gatherings & spiritual reflection with spiritual directors, staff support, preventing "compassion fatigue" & burnout so that our volunteers continue to serve those in need. Please join us and invite family & friends. P.S. I heard one of the Footlighter volunteers raving about the My Way cast.

Thank you to our
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who empower us
to nurture those
who nurture others!

Michael Heinrichs
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Janet Ziegler
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Winton Hills Academy
Making Sense of Language Arts



In the Hands of God

*More than ever I find myself in the hands of God.
This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth.
But now there is a difference;
the initiative is entirely with God.
It is indeed a profound spiritual experience
to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands.*
—Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Linda Wihl, Regional Director
Ignatian Volunteer Corps
4714 Chickering Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45232

Tel: 513 477-3428
Email: Lwihl@ivcusa.org
Website: ivcusa.org

Thank you to those of you receiving this by email. Not only are you empowering us to “Care for Our Common Home” as Pope Francis urges, you save the expenses we would incur.

To support the Ignatian Volunteer Corps Cincinnati with a tax deductible donation you can do so online at
<https://www.gifttool.com/donations/Donate?ID=2033&AID=1984>
(Be sure to designate Cincinnati in the drop down menu.)

Or send your donation to:
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4714 Chickering Avenue
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Greetings!

I'm finding it so hard to believe we are already in the Easter season! The daffodils and tulips bloomed and then, when the frost came back, bowed their heads and withered. God followed that with a carpet of wild violets that beacon spring to come back. The birds are busy nesting and the deer don't seem to notice that the urban traffic stops and stares. In the midst of violence on the streets and worldwide it's easy to get discouraged but "hope springs eternal".

One of our volunteers introduced me to his priest friends who recently shared his Good Friday sermon: *Often, when I speak about experiencing crucifixion in our own lives, hitting a brick wall, facing a crisis that we can't neatly or easily "fix," I use the phrase – "If you've ever been to Hell and back. . ." And the most important part of that phrase is "and back." It makes all the difference in the world if you experience a Hellish situation and wallow in it, remaining there, griping and complaining all the way VS. you experience a taste of Hell, complain as needed, and then begin the long, slow process of coming back or climbing out of that hole. The difference between those who have been to Hell and back and those who are still there requires two things: the ability (1) "to stop feeling sorry for ourselves" and (2) "to let go." Initially, when bad things happen to us, like Jesus we have every right to lament, "to cry over spilt milk." "Father, let this cup pass me by!" "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Whether it's our fault, or somebody else's fault, or merely bad luck, we have a right to name it, feel it, and shake our fists a bit. But with time and after a little self-pity, we are challenged to move on."* Fr. Dick Sparks

My prayer for you this spring is, that whatever kind of winter you've had, health problems, family problems, wishes that didn't come true, you really do "Let go and let God" and experience the freedom of being in the hands of God. Witty and wise catechetical trainer, Rita Foley used to say, "There is no Calvary for which there isn't an equal or greater measure of Resurrection!" Have a blessed Easter season & spring!