

THE MERCY GIRL EFFECT

One Team - One Dream



Booklet dedicated to
Ms Lisa Fontenelli,
a Woman of Mercy

YOUR IMPACT

on others is bigger than you think. Someone still giggles when they think of that funny thing you said. Someone still smiles when they think of the compliment you gave them. Someone silently admires you. The advice you give has made a difference for people. The support and love you've offered others has made someone's day. Your input and opinions have made someone think twice. You're not insignificant and forgotten. Your existence makes a positive difference, whether you see it or not.

Unknown / Power of Words
presented by 



Introduction

What is Mercy?

Carol Rittner, RSM

Mercy is a mode of relationship among people. Mercy is wounded by the suffering of others. Mercy opposes injustice. Mercy propels one to action on behalf of those who are suffering.

Where there is evil, where there is sickness, where there is hunger, where women and girls are deprived of education, where there is human exploitation, people of Mercy take action to do something to relieve that human deprivation, suffering and exploitation.



To be a Mercy girl is to be a person who thinks not only about the person sitting next to you, but who also thinks about and is an advocate of a global voice for women and girls across the world who are suffering, who are deprived of educational opportunity, who are exploited and demeaned, who need our help – not next week or next month, but today. Pope Francis said, “There is no mercy without concreteness.” To be a Mercy girl is to join with others to do what you can, where you are, with what you have, as often as you can, to help others, even those you may never meet.

The Mercy Girl Effect programme is an opportunity for you to join with other girls in Mercy secondary schools to become an agent of change in our world.

Read on!

Be challenged!

Be Mercy in our world today!

What is the Mercy Girl Effect and how did it all begin?

The **Mercy Girl Effect** is a global ‘mercying’ movement with roots going back many years! The background and historical context are to be found in the **Mercy Conference of Secondary Schools**, begun nearly 50 years ago when high schools in the USA formed a coalition, bringing together schools from across the country to share ideas to further the mercy charism in secondary schools, develop a sense of national identity and foster dialogue among Mercy educators. Over the years, it became increasingly clear that much more could be accomplished when we worked together. One of the greatest thinkers, educators and vision-makers was Sister Carol Wheeler, who in 1987 articulated in her address to Mercy educators what the **Mercy Girl Effect** would become! Sister Carol said:

“We, as educators in the Mercy tradition, have something exceptional to offer in education at this time,” and “the quality of education we offer



could be strengthened by greater collaboration among our schools, by thinking of our schools and the teachers in them as ‘connectors’, by being mindful of what is happening in our world – significant currents, trends, movements, realities – and by addressing these issues directly and/or having our awareness of them inform the way we educate.”

Sister Carol also called attention to “the fact that more and more, the future of the Mercy tradition in secondary education will depend on the lay colleagues of the Sisters of Mercy, most of whom are in Mercy schools because they value the tradition.” (Mercy Education Conference, Clarkson, Michigan, 1987)



Over 20 years later, Sister Maureen Christi and Mrs Eileen Killeen decided that they wanted to help form a conference with a more global focus. Bearing in mind the aspirations of Sister Carol Wheeler, they contacted Sister Deirdre Mullan, the Mercy representative at the United Nations, to help them realize their dream. It was clear from the outset that the new focus would be a global movement, informed and

aware of the situation of girls worldwide, by partnering with our Sisters on the frontlines in various parts of the world.

From the outset, we wanted to be clear on our message and at the same time remain faithful to the vision and aspirations of Catherine McAuley and the countless Mercy educators who have made – and continue to make – a difference in the lives of girls.



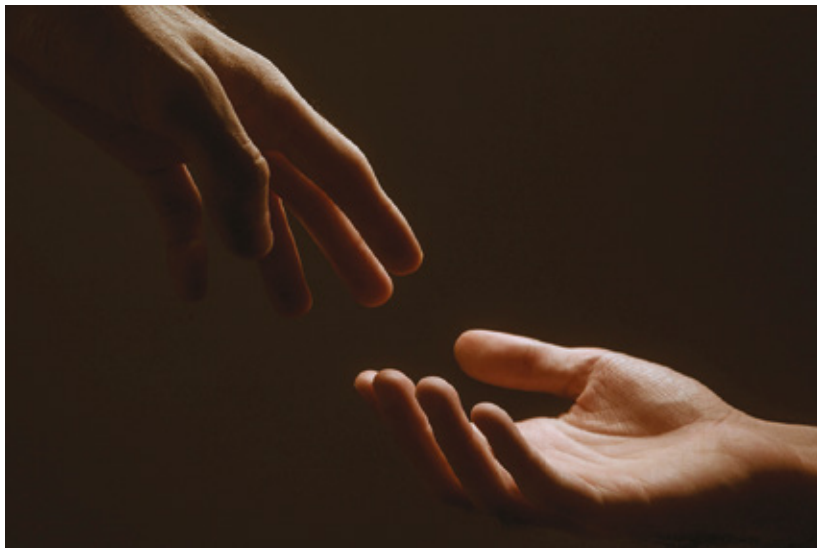
We were determined to harness and use our global connections by journeying towards each other, and we went into action believing in the task God had entrusted to us. As the Talmud tells us:

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief.

Do justly, now.

Love mercy, now.

You are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.”



Because of our involvement with the Working Group on Girls (WGG) at the United Nations and with UNICEF, we had access to global thinkers, statisticians, advocates and practitioners, as well as the expertise of our Sisters of Mercy on the ground, many of whom had attended the “Bridging the Gap” conferences held annually for over 10 years at United Nations headquarters in New York. With this as our backdrop, we were able to proceed.

We rebranded ourselves to become the **Mercy Girl Effect** (MGE).



The MGE core group, led by Sister Deirdre, Sister Christi and Mrs Killeen, engaged with our Mercy schools that had been faithful to the original conference and focus articulated by Sister Carol Wheeler. But we knew that it was now time to create an active Mercy Leadership Programme that would help develop the young women in our schools to be agents of change.

Our first *Mercy Girl Effect Global Conference*, bringing together schools from across the USA and Ireland, was held at Gwynedd Mercy University in 2007.



Fourteen schools sent students to be trained as ambassador-leaders. From the outset, we were very clear that the conference was about Functional Leadership, the Charism of Mercy and the Global Reality of Girls worldwide. We also pledged to be more than recipients of information and together committed to an action project to become Compassionate Actors for Change.

The workshop components consisted of:

- Leadership in the Tradition of Catherine McAuley;
- The Myers-Briggs Programme;
- School Witness in Action;
- How a Mercy Education informs how I interact in the workplace;
- UNICEF and Girls' Education;
- Messaging the story of the conference on return to our base schools.

Each participating school which sent 4-6 representatives to the conference set up a mobile display highlighting their school. The artefacts consisted of uniforms, photographs, awards, videos and school brochures. The pride each school took in their particular presentation was evident in the care and attention to detail, especially when they presented their 'Mercy' story to the whole assembly.


As well as this sharing by each school, there was a 'party' every evening, and on the final evening students toured the historic downtown of Philadelphia. The four-day event ended with Eucharist and a pinning ceremony, as our new student leaders were *sent in Mercy*.

Since that first conference, *The Mercy Girl Effect Global Conference* met annually until June 2020, when the pandemic forced us to go virtual. But it should be noted that, pandemic or no pandemic, the students remained faithful to the agreed action project, which in 2021 focused on the topic 'The Tea Pickers,' those who provide that 'Comfortable Cup of Tea' so beloved in the Mercy Tradition. Our collective actions and fundraising ensured that the young women tea pickers were not abandoned and left vulnerable to traffickers, by providing safe accommodation, education and awareness about the global pandemic. Education and raising awareness of human traffickers was key, as too often people smugglers use tragedy to strike and ensnare vulnerable human beings. We provided major funding for the "Arise Anti-Trafficking Organization" which was able to transfer the funds safely to our Sisters on the frontlines.

As the pandemic raged, the focus for the school season 2021-2022 was organized and once again our students rose to the challenge by providing wells in places with no access to clean water.



Our Global Action Projects

65 million girls are out of school.
14 million girls under 16 are forced to marry each year.
Schools educating girls are under attack by militants – but we can make a difference.....
\$50 will provide a girl with full tuition and board for one year.
By providing a scholarship to educate a girl – she is given a lifeline out of poverty and a cycle of violence.
Will you be her LIFELINE?

Education

The Gift that keeps on Giving



Mercy Girl Effect 2020 – 2021 Challenge

That Comfortable Cup of Tea!

The Mercy Girl Effect (MGE) is a non-governmental organization which works closely with UNICEF. Inspired by the wisdom and example of the Servant of God Catherine McAuley, MGE works to promote and foster collaboration between young women across the globe. Our aim is to develop female leadership and to empower our students to understand their place as Mercy women to become agents of change.

We are a 'mercying' movement which dares to invent the future.

Our focus for 2020-2021 is to look at **The Comfortable Cup of Tea**, and how we as the Mercy World who know that "cup of tea" might consider more carefully what exactly it means? The familiar phrase attributed to Catherine on her deathbed when she said: "Will you call the Sisters to get a good cup of tea, when I am gone and to comfort one another."

During our 2020-2021 Mercy Girl Effect awareness campaign, we invite you to explore the origins of this tea – and at the same time witness the kind of help that Catherine intended when she asked to comfort one another.

More recently, Pope Francis addressed the issue of justice and tea pickers when he shared the heartbreaking plight of the indigenous Khasi and Garo people of Bangladesh. These people live in devastatingly difficult conditions, typically working as "tea leaf pluckers".







Mercy Project 2016-2017 Focus: Nigeria

The Sisters of Mercy first came to Nigeria in 1969 and were located in Yorlanda, Adamawa State in Northern Nigeria. The sisters quickly assessed local needs and in response set up schools, clinics, hospitals and embarked on home visits. They worked closely with the local women who know best the needs of their community. However, during the 1990s the Sisters of Mercy were forced to their place of work because of the danger coming from Boko Haram. Currently the Sisters are looking after over 1000 women and children who have camped in the grounds of St. Theresa's parish.

At the Leadership Conference of Mercy Secondary Schools held in Philadelphia in June 2016, the modest leaders from the Sisters in the ground in Nigeria who said **more than anything the mothers and children needed shelter. They are then eligible to enroll at the local school. A small mid-house will accommodate 2-6 people at a cost \$500.**

Mercy students in the spirit of Catherine McAuley know that if a child is to get a chance in life – education is vital. They eagerly embarked on a commitment to help house some of the 1000 traumatically displaced people living in the church grounds.

Project Objective:

- * To build mid-houses for as many people as possible.
- * To provide shelter from the elements.
- * To get the displaced children back to school as quickly as possible.

One little house will cost \$500 – how many can your school provide?

How will YOU personally respond?

The commitment want us to remain afraid and do nothing. Let our response be a firm resolve to continue to make a difference, one girl, one child, one person at a time.

Mercy Reaches Mercy – Educating girls to Educate Girls.
DardennWilliams@aol.com




Why we do this work?



As we reflected and talked with our young students, we tried to encourage them to articulate **WHY** they do this work. Why are they concerned about people in far-flung places in our world?

To help with that question, Sister Deirdre told the story of “The Ruby” when she visited each school. She asked students to reflect on the question:

Are we wired differently? Have we been gifted with more empathy/compassion?

The Story of the Ruby



One day, two women went for a hike along the river. After walking for several miles, they decided to sit down on the bank and paddle their feet. The cold water felt really good. One of the women – Anna – noticed

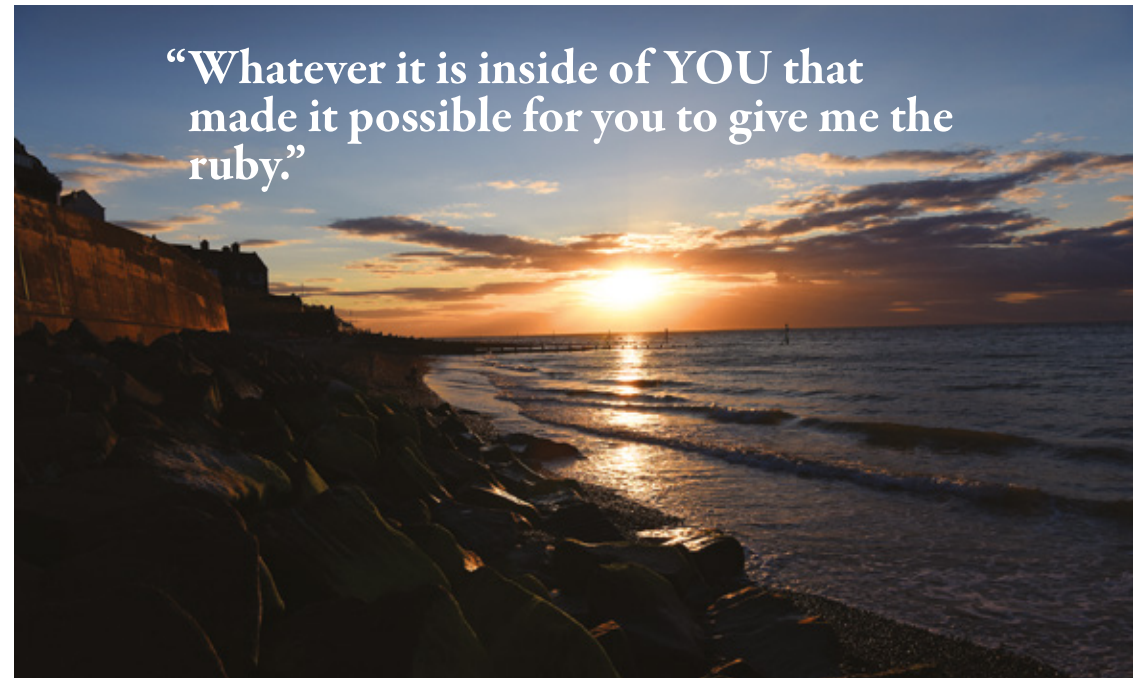
something glittering in the water and bent down to pick it up. It was a stone; it was red and it was shiny. It looked like a ruby.

She put it in her pocket and they resumed their hike. When they reached the small town at the end of the trail, they went and had something to eat. During the meal, Anna took the stone from her pocket and both women agreed it was very beautiful. Joanne, Anna’s friend, asked her for it. Without hesitation, Anna handed it over to Joanne.

They parted company and went home. Later that evening, Joanne arrived at Anna’s door with the stone. It was a ruby. Joanne said to Anna, “I actually don’t want this stone, my friend, nor do I care that it might be a precious stone. I want instead whatever it is that is inside of you that made it possible for you to give me the ruby.”

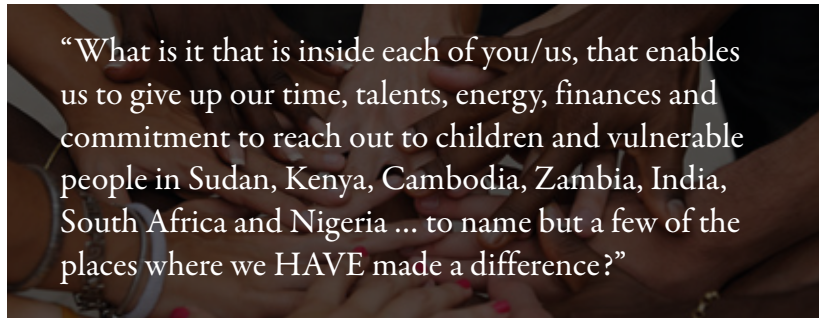


“Whatever it is inside of YOU that made it possible for you to give me the ruby.”



The story of “The Ruby” is a reminder of the countless Mercy Girls who are part of the **Mercy Girl Effect**. I have been privileged to work with students both at the conference and in their individual schools.

I asked them:



And I think I know the answer! We too have each been given a **ruby called MERCY** – and it was gifted to us by Catherine McAuley. It is in our DNA and manifests itself in compassionate action, empathy and outreach. We are linked in a circle of Mercy which goes round and round; and it will never give up because we belong to a ‘mercying’ movement which dares to invent the future, recognizing that words alone are not enough. We must ACT!

Since its inception, the **Mercy Girl Effect** has built several schools in Cambodia, Sudan and Zambia. We have provided thousands of scholarships and school uniforms, as well as refurbishing a library and school kitchen in Kenya. We even ventured into the housing market and provided small house-huts for families forced to flee the atrocities of Boko Haram. We have been responsible for the planting of thousands of trees along Africa’s Great Green Wall and have provided wells in places where water, that most sacred of resources, is made available for people with no access to that precious commodity!

Recognizing that the Mercy Girl Effect is about developing and empowering young female leaders to understand our world and their opportunity as Mercy women to become agents of change, the following pages recount words from some of the students and our network of loyal

supporters, who believe with us that opportunities are not given but taken!



Megan Riesberg, a Junior from Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska, says:

“I love working hard to raise money and awareness for our Mercy mission. It makes me feel great that as a young woman, I am able to make an impact on the world. I am able to help other girls who don’t have all the resources that I do. I also enjoy having the opportunity to encourage the girls at my high school that they can do the same. In doing this work, I am able to follow Jesus’ example of serving God and others.”





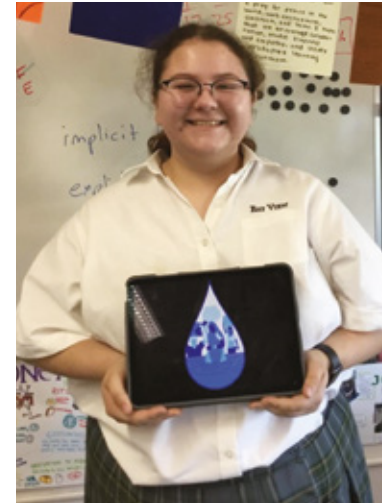
Sophie Mace – Senior – Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska

My name is Sophia Mace, and I am Student Council President at Mercy High School in Omaha, Nebraska. Working to raise money for the Mission and spread awareness about its purpose every year helps me develop a love for service. We accomplish more service for the Mission by working together than by going it alone, and I've learned the value of teamwork time and time again through this feat. There's truly no greater gratification in the world than that which is earned from service.

Sister Marybeth Beretta, President – St.Mary's Academy – Riverside, RI

Mercy Girl Effect Project

Bay View is joining other Mercy schools around the world to raise awareness and funds for a special charity through the Mercy Girl Effect. This year the Mercy Girl Effect theme is: *Women at the Well: Water as a Human Right; Girls as Water Carriers*. All proceeds raised will support a UNICEF program to build wells in communities without access to clean drinking water. Our contributions will have a real effect in people's lives, especially the lives of young girls who will now be able to focus on their education instead of walking miles for water.



Upper School girls held an art contest to design a special logo that illustrates the theme. The winning logo is being printed on sweatshirts which are being sold as the Bay View fund raiser. (Congratulations to Jessica Lamoureux, artist)

Ava McGinn, Thornhill College, Derry, N. Ireland

“Following the global virtual celebration of the Mercy Girl Effect, I felt inspired to initiate change amongst young people, particularly those struggling with mental health. Only a few hours before the conference, I had been appointed Head Girl of Thornhill College, a coincidental blessing to initiate my journey of leadership.



The Myers-Briggs Personality test, led by Cathy Johnson, shed light on my strengths as an energetic and motivational leader. Sister Deirdre spoke of our mission as women of Mercy to help those denied the right to water, and although she was thousands of miles across the world, her message struck home in Derry. She reminded us that behind every devastating statistic, there is a human being struggling, feeling lost and hopeless. My mission as a global citizen is to apply the Mercy values of love, compassion and kindness to minimize the damage caused by mental health deterioration.”



Emily Murphy, Merion Mercy Academy, Pennsylvania

“Expanding Merion Mercy’s Mission Week into a Mission Year to further spread the positive effects of the Mercy Girl Effect Project has been a wonderful experience. It has been so exciting to see students come together as one to live mercy.”



Sophia Tiboni, Mount Saint Mary Academy, New Jersey

“My name is Sophia and I am 15 years old. I live in New Jersey and I am a Freshman at Mount Saint Mary Academy. Mount Saint Mary is a Mercy school, and we are taught the Mercy core values. I wanted to live out the values we were learning. When I heard about the Mercy Girl Effect and their ‘Women at the Well’ initiative, I knew I

wanted to act. I was saddened to learn that girls had to walk miles each day to obtain clean water for their families and, as a result, missed school.

I wanted to help these girls in need. I have a passion for sustainability, especially in the fashion industry. It takes a lot of water to make a single dress and the dyes that tint the dress pollute the water. The ‘Dress Express Boutique’ was an idea to conserve water and promote sustainability in the fashion industry, while also helping construct a well for those in need. The idea was simple: collect gently worn formal and semi-formal dresses and offer them to girls who need them in return for a donation to the ‘Women at the Well’ campaign. Girls donate dresses, other girls repurpose the dresses, and the donations raised build a well for girls in need. I wanted to make a positive impact on the world. Everyone deserves access to clean water. As Catherine McAuley said, “Water is a free beverage, and everyone has a right to water.””



Moira Vaughan, Student Council, Merion Mercy Academy, Pennsylvania

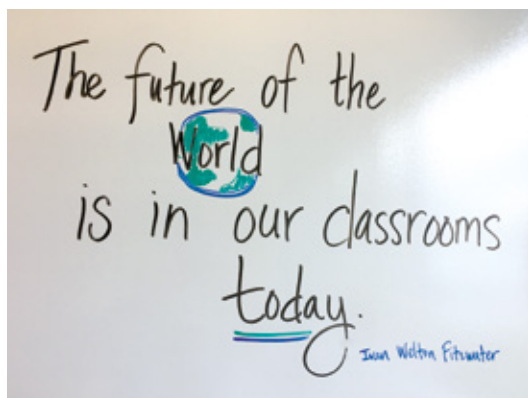
“The Mercy Girl Effect Project has not only made an impact on myself and the Executive Board, but the entire student body. We have realized we can use our education and Mercy spirit to give to others, which has been extremely rewarding. What is so admirable about Merion’s community is their sheer willingness to come together as a sisterhood to make the world a better place for other young women in need.”



Marguerite Hamilton, Participant/Presenter, Derry, N. Ireland



“I was delighted to be a teacher participant in the Mercy Girl Effect Programme. As a Mercy girl myself, who was inspired by the Sisters in Thornhill College to take part in a support programme in Valparaiso back in the '70s, I was encouraged to see the work that was being carried out decades later. The Mercy Girl Effect encourages girls to reflect on their own lives and gives them opportunities to actively respond as members of the global community. The Mercy Girl Effect is enriching for all the participants.”



Sister Pat Hartigan, Co-trustee, The Santulli Family Foundation

“The Santulli Family Foundation has been supportive of the Mercy Girl Effect program because of its commitment to

advancing the rights and lives of young girls/women across the globe. The Foundation believes that connecting those who have had many opportunities to advance their futures with those who have not is a profound way to change the perception of women in society, as well as our own attitudes about other cultures and people. Kudos to a job well done!”



Kathryn Wert, Merion Mercy Academy, Pennsylvania

“This year’s Mercy Girl Effect project, ‘Women at the Well’, has been really impactful both on a personal level and a school-wide level here at Merion Mercy. I have become so much more aware of how privileged I am to have access to safe drinking water every day, and I’ve become much more educated on the topic and on the need for safe drinking water globally, as water should be a right, not a privilege. As a school, we (the Student Council) have worked throughout the 2021-2022 school year to provide students with factual information, resources, and engaging ways to use our gifts and school spirit as a Mercy school to raise funds and awareness to help young female water carriers in Ethiopia. Our hearts as an entire Merion Sisterhood have surely all been touched by this project due to its relevance to our school’s mission of “Living Mercy and Seeking Justice”. We are truly blessed to be able to extend our call to become educated young women and to serve those in need through this year’s Mercy Girl Effect project.”



Arianna Salerno, Mount Saint Mary Academy, New Jersey

“My name is Arianna Salerno and I am a Senior at Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, New Jersey. I hold the position of Director of Communications on the Student Council executive board. As a board, we spearheaded many events in which the proceeds went to this year’s Mercy Girl Effect project. We held a school-wide dance, teacher auction, created merchandise to be sold, and much more. Working on this project meant a lot to me; I felt extremely accomplished as I knew that I was raising money for a great cause. I knew that my actions would help the quality of life of someone in need.”

Mary Ella Marion, Mercy High School, Baltimore MD, Teacher/Participant

Mercy High School In Baltimore has been involved in the Mercy Girl Effect from the beginning. Inspired



by Sister Carol Wheeler’s *Global Education Center*, Mercy High School has tried to ensure that the students know they are part of a global mercy movement. The Mercy Girl Effect project has allowed our students to understand the global work of the Sisters of Mercy. It is important for our students to learn how they can support and raise awareness for causes and people that the Sisters of Mercy are working with every day.



Rachel Wallace, Thornhill College, Derry, N. Ireland

“During the Mercy Girl Effect Conference earlier this year, I enjoyed working alongside similar-minded women in maintaining the Mercy ethos within our own schools, learning from the words spoken by Sister Deirdre and the key speakers of this event, and understanding what is happening to girls my age across the globe.”

Aoife Smyth, Our Lady’s Grammar School, Newry, N. Ireland

“Our focus for this year as Young Mercy Leaders was to look at the water crisis and to help provide wells in places in the developing world. We successfully raised awareness of the pressing issue of water through the delivery of an assembly to the entire school community, in which we highlighted that it is our responsibility to care for each other and our common home. Through organizing a sponsored social media ban in the senior school, we raised money to help build wells in places that need them most and help ensure that young people, like ourselves, have access to clean water. A luxury for them and something that we take for granted! It is extremely rewarding to know, as a Mercy Leader, that I have helped make a difference.”

Rachel O’Hanlon, Our Lady’s Grammar School, Newry, N. Ireland

“In our school, like others in the past, we formed the Mercy Girls group in



U6 and got some of L6 to come on board to help us put our ideas into action within our school. We presented a PowerPoint we had made at our school assembly in October and together we organized fundraisers to raise money for the water project and further promote the global awareness issues we had discussed at the Mercy Girl conference.

I hope to be an ‘agent of change’ wherever I am in the future.”

Sister Ann Doherty, Coordinator Derry-Donegal Outreach Support Group, Ireland

“By raising awareness, we give the people in Derry and Donegal an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many poor children and their families in various parts of the world.

We support the Mercy Girl Effect, as we believe in the Ministry of Education as a means of alleviating poverty, by providing school uniforms, scholarships, educational equipment and school builds. The people who so generously donate are living witnesses to the Gospel in Action.

This year in particular we have helped to provide wells in places with no access to clean water.”



Molly Duffy, Thornhill College, Derry, N. Ireland

“The conference sparked so many thoughts in my own mind. It highlighted the importance of leadership amongst young women and reminded us that there is always space for us to take up that role, whilst simultaneously highlighting the need

for strong team-working skills, especially if we are to progress with mercy through a secular world.”

Sister Rebecca Odu – Dawaki, Nigeria

Dear Sister Deirdre – when I got the message that the Mercy Girl Effect was providing the resources for three wells in our rural communities, we feel so blessed! We cannot thank you enough for thinking of us. Lack of clean water is one of the biggest problems the villagers here face and too often they share the muddy water with animals, and so often the small children get sick. Giving them clean water will mean giving them life.



Julia Petrozza, Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Syosset, New York

“I first became involved in the Mission Week project last year, mostly to help out with little things in my school community, but I soon realized that it was much bigger than that. Working with a group of faith-filled girls similar to me, I have been able to plan events and fundraisers that truly impact groups of underprivileged women around the world. Being involved in Mission Week has taught me the extent of what it is to be a Mercy girl. Although I will be leaving Mercy soon, I will not leave behind the lessons of compassion and service that Mission Week has taught me.”



helping find the best ways to fundraise, while incorporating a relevant theme to the cause. I enjoy participating in all the raffle baskets, dress-downs, presentations, and more, and truly believe in supporting each cause to the best of our school’s ability.”

Stephania Martorella, Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Syosset, New York

“I am personally involved in the Mission Week project because I enjoy bringing awareness to worldwide issues and helping those in need. Through the Mission Committee, we are able to help the student body and faculty members become aware of situations going on throughout the world like the Bangladesh Tea Pickers and the Women of the Well. This helps these situations to have the money needed to improve their lives raised for them, and for people to know their stories.”



Alessandra DiMaria, Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Syosset, New York

“I decided to join the Mission Week project because it offered a great opportunity to educate myself and my classmates about a new cause. After learning more about Mission Week and how the Sisters of Mercy choose a social justice cause to focus on each year, I realized that Mission Week not only supports a cause, but it connects members of the Mercy community worldwide. Whether it is raising awareness for female tea pickers in Bangladesh, or raising money to bring wells to supply clean water to people in need, each cause presented an amazing experience. Our school has had the ability to contribute by raising money and increasing awareness, and I am extremely appreciative for the opportunity to be a part of it. Over the past two years, I have looked forward to





Acknowledgements

This little booklet tells the story of an amazing network of people who have come together from across the globe, recognizing that we each rise by lifting each other. As the late Sister Marie Chin said so prophetically:

“Those we think we are rescuing are in fact our liberators as we cannot be liberated without them!”

From the small children in Scoil Mhuire National School in Stranorlar, Donegal, who as part of their Confirmation commitment bought school uniforms for children in Nuba, Sudan, to the high school students in our Mercy schools in Ireland and the USA, the response over the past 12 years has been phenomenal. Ranging from schools being built, to trees being planted along Africa’s Great Green Wall, to temporary housing being provided when families had to flee because of the threat of Boko Haram, to kitchen refurbishment, to wells being provided, the practical miracles have been inspirational. The welcome provided by our Mercy administrators when I visited each of our schools; the student leadership who carried

the message and challenge of the annual conference to each school; the reactions and touching messages we received from the students whose lives had been impacted by new schools, scholarships, safe water, safe housing: all are testimony that we *can* make a difference when we link hands across the globe. And link hands we did, with each of our sisters’ schools and right into the hearts of others who contributed and supported our work. We are grateful to Paul, Annamarie, Mary, Andy, Cora, Marianna, Lisa, John, Marguerite, Sister Nuala, Sister Ann, Sister Teresa, Sister Michael, Sister Assumpta, Sister Rose Ann, Grainne and Pat. Many Sisters of Mercy have been involved in these projects: the Northern Province of the Sisters



of Mercy, Ireland, and especially during lockdown, the support for our work from our Sisters in nursing home and care settings was both touching and very practical. Thank you!

I am also indebted to Dr Wendy Whitworth for her editing skills and to Glen Powell for his usual magic, turning words into creative design.



And finally, I acknowledge the great, late Archbishop Desmond Tutu who had frequently urged the world to believe in our common humanity. The idea of common good comes from the Zulu phrase *ubuntu* and has its roots in African philosophy, where the idea of community is one of the building blocks of society. *Ubuntu* is that nebulous concept of common humanity, oneness – humanity, you and me both.

In his book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Tutu describes a person with *ubuntu* as “open and

available to others, affirming of others ... [with] a proper self-assurance.” The *ubuntu* this person possesses comes from being part of a greater whole. The Mercy students, administrators and supporters of the Mercy Girl Effect certainly live out the late Archbishop’s dream.

Deirdre Mullan RSM
Mrs Eileen Kileen Killeen
Sister Maureen Christi RSM





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