



## Seabees, Safety, Swinging and Smiles

We are grateful to God for bringing us here forty years ago to this beautiful Navajoland. Our Home continues to serve us well, but is showing wear after four decades. We are very thankful for God's Providence and the protection of St. Joseph as we continue our mission of caring for the elderly poor of Gallup.

Winter has passed, spring flew by, and now summer is in full bloom. This is the season with longer daylight hours to complete some projects that help to ensure the safety of our Residents. Our entrance driveway had become too dangerous with cracks, holes and uneven pavement. It was a hazard that had to be addressed. We sought advice from our friend, Mr. Jeremy Boucher, Southwest Indian Foundation's director of operations, who works for Mr. Bill McCarthy, president of the Southwest Indian Foundation. Both of these men have been great resources and generous benefactors to our Home over the years.

Jeremy understood our need and sent his contractor, Ben Macik, SWIF construction manager, to come to the Home to study the situation and advise us about what needed to be done. Before Ben left, he told us that he would send the military over! The following day, a group of 14 men and women dressed in military fatigues arrived at Villa Guadalupe ready to work. The group is part of the U.S. Navy SEABEES (United States Naval Construction Battalions or CB for short), Unit NMCB18. They were working with the Indian Foundation for their annual two week training for the Innovative Readiness Training Program (IRT). The IRT program has been delivering unique training opportunities in support of

military readiness, while benefitting local communities, since the early nineties. The program creates positive outcomes for all involved as hands-on learning takes place to compliment what is taught in the classroom. This year, our Home was blessed to be one of IRT projects.

The hardworking crew was able to repair some cracks and replace some foundation where the ground had been sinking over the years. Since they were already using concrete for that project, we requested their help in another project that required concrete — a flat, level and sturdy foundation in order to install the large wheelchair swing given to us by our Home in Denver.

The projects were efficiently completed with a little time to spare. The SEABEES then refreshed our curbs, which needed a new coat of paint. We are so grateful for their help. We know that many hands make light work, and within a week, the SEABEES had three projects accomplished for the benefit and safety of our Residents. May the Lord bless them for their service to our country and to those in need!

After the swing was installed, the Residents were very eager to try it. It was easy to see the joy that the experience brings by the smiles on their faces. Comments from the Residents included, "I can't believe that at 103, I can still get on a swing!" "This is so much FUN! I would love to come every day!" "I cannot believe I am swinging while staying in my wheelchair!" "This is amazing!" "I can eat popcorn, listen to music and have fun!" "I feel like a kid again!" "I am going to swing again tomorrow!" Indeed, as our Mother Foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan said, "Making the elderly happy, that is what counts!"

## Changing of One Season to the Next

*"A time to plant and a time to harvest."*

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asked all of us to "care for our common home." Our ongoing efforts to do this include praising our Creator God for each one of us, his children, and for the earth he has given us to care for, cultivate, and cherish. We do this in order to pass on a better world to future generations.

Each season has its own unique character and most of us have our own favorite season. For many of us here in Gallup, spring and summer are the seasons that bring delight. Towards the end of spring, on May 18, we had the joy of welcoming James and Joyce from Spirit Farm to Villa Guadalupe once again. They came with their co-workers to help us prepare our vegetable garden on the west side of our Home. They brought compost to show us how to put it in the soil to enrich it for better results in growing plants. These experts also encouraged the use of our compost system that will be put to use during the season.

When the farm's representatives saw a couple of Sisters and some ladies from our staff who came out to work with them on this special planting day, they said, "Where are the guys?" Of course, the response was, "You're looking at them!"

It was a delightful learning experience and it made for a joyful afternoon celebrating God's gifts in his creation. We learned to help heal the soil at the same time by learning how to keep the soil moist and breathable for the roots to grow and give nutritious fruits during harvest time.

Just a few weeks later, at the beginning of summer, we began to see the new shoots coming up from the soil. Now in the middle of summer, we are awed by the beautiful green plants filling the garden. We are learning to

distinguish which are the weeds and which are the vegetables. One of our Navajo Residents, Winora Draper, pointed out that some of the greens were indeed weeds and needed to be pulled out because they will take a lot of water away from the vegetables. Harvesting the first fruits of our garden brought such delight to some of our Residents during the last week of July.

Spirit Farm is going to teach us how to correctly demineralize the local water so as to make it chemically



balanced for plant and vegetable growth. We will also be learning from them the water drip technique so as not to waste water and to help it to seep into the soil in a well-balanced way.

Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*, that Saint Francis of Assisi, "lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace." We appreciate the kindness of our friends at Spirit Farm for teaching us to be better caretakers of our garden, for being a wonderful support to our mission, and enabling us to cultivate plants that will be

used for meals at our Home. We also thank God for the harvest that will come from our garden in the coming months.



# Celebrating Our Mothers

The day began with a beautiful crowning of Mother Mary, which took place prior to a Mass offered for our living and deceased mothers. Janelle Salaz, the daughter of Resident Vicky Marrs, had the honor of crowning our Blessed Mother.

Guests were then treated to a Mother-Daughter luncheon following Mass. The dining room was festively decorated for the first family gathering since the outbreak of COVID-19 more than three years ago. Centerpieces were created for

the celebration by the collaboration of staff and the Little Sisters. Joy was seen on the faces of all present and the room was buzzing with delight as stories were shared, laughter was heard and precious memories were made. Our kitchen staff really outdid themselves in preparing the meal in order to make this day very special for everyone.

Residents who did not have family in the area approached some of our staff members to ask if they would be a “daughter for the day.” Our staff

were quite touched by the request and were happy to come and bring flowers for the Residents who invited them.

We are grateful for the values and lessons passed on to us by our mothers, for the opportunity to once again gather in a family celebration at Villa Guadalupe, and for the wonderful spirit of collaboration that exists here for the benefit of our elderly. No doubt, our Blessed Mother and our Foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan were smiling also.



## Mother's Message

Dear Friends,

“Yá’át’ééh!” Greetings from beautiful Gallup in the most holy name of Jesus Christ!

Our little family here at Villa Guadalupe once again is adapting the best we can to the changing of seasons, especially enjoying the outdoor activities.

The saying of our humble Mother, St. Jeanne Jugan — “Making the elderly happy, that is what counts!” is engraved in the hearts of each Little Sister as we strive, with the help of AJs, staff and volunteers, to be creative in our activities for our Residents.

Our Mother-Daughter Luncheon on the eve of Mother’s Day brought great joy to all, especially to our Residents, after three years of restricted visitations.

June weather allowed us to host an outdoor picnic this year. Everyone was happy to don a lei, a hat and of course a big, beautiful smile. We honored the men of Villa Guadalupe on Father’s Day with a Father-Family-Friend Luncheon. The Southwest Indian Foundation came to our aid when we needed a safe and sturdy foundation for the wheelchair swing we were given from our Home in Denver. Hardworking and gracious military men and women, working on a project for the Indian Foundation, not only replaced the cement in front of the entrance of our Home but also secured a place for the swing. It has become one of the favorite places of our Residents for relaxing in the fresh air.

July was busy with activities leading to the celebration of World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Our Residents participated by watching a PowerPoint presentation explaining the importance of the relationship between the Elderly and the Young, and learning a song for this occasion composed by a Little Sister. Writing cards to young people, attending talks about the native’s place of Respect for the Elderly as well as Pastoral Care for the Elderly, were other opportunities for participation. We held our version of the Olympic games which brought young people from age three months to 16 years old to our Home. Fun, laughter and cheers brought joy to all, especially to our Residents.

Most recently, harvesting some fruits from our garden has brought great pleasure to the Residents. We are always grateful to our friends from Spirit Farm who encourage and support us with our gardening.

We continue to raise up our prayers of thanksgiving to God for the tremendous, loving and ongoing support of all our benefactors, families and friends. We faithfully knock on the door of God’s heart for all the requests recommended to our humble prayers. We remember all who have gone to the Father’s House in our prayers, especially one of our Residents, Lorraine, whom God called to himself last month. All our dear Residents, staff, AJs, and Little Sisters join me in sincerely thanking each and every one of you for your wonderful assistance with our mission.

Ahéhee’ and God bless!

Gratefully in Christ,

*Sr. Theresa Louisa, l.s.p.*

## Ways to Give

### Recurring Gifts:

If you donate online, you can choose to schedule donations that repeat automatically at a frequency that works best for you.

### Matching Gift:

To make your donation to our mission go even further, check to see if your employer has a matching gift program.

### Planned Giving:

Leaving a legacy of providing for the elderly by choosing Little Sisters of the Poor of New Mexico as a beneficiary of your will or trust.

### Honorariums or Memorials:

Give a donation to honor a special person in your life, to recognize a significant achievement or anniversary, or to remember a loved one.

“If God is with us, it will be accomplished... God will help us; the work is his.”

—Saint Jeanne Jugan