

## IHMs IN ACTION



Sister Anne (right) with Luther Haus resident Charlotte Stamm

Sister Anne (Michael Ann) Wisda, IHM, felt called to her ministry at Luther Haus the first time she walked through its doors.

Luther Haus, in Temperance, Mich., offers affordable housing in one- and two-bedroom apartments to people age 62 and above. Its 104 residents have a median age of 85. Sister Anne, a certified social worker, has been the services coordinator for the last 4 ½ years.

"Because I **am** a 'senior citizen,' I relate well with our seniors," Sister Anne laughs.

Sister Anne visits all newcomers within their first two weeks at Luther Haus for an orientation of the complex and its services.

"I explain about our social service, recreational and religious programs," she says. "During the orientation meeting, I also have people update their emergency contact list and medical information. Having details readily available has saved us valuable time in emergencies," she explains.

Sister Anne organizes speakers on health-related topics, works with local churches to provide religious programs and services and collaborates with area organizations to make sure the residents' needs are met.

She provides support to residents if they need to move to assisted living or to a nursing home and comforts survivors after a death. She sends cards to residents for their birthdays and when they are hospitalized.

Sister Anne assists residents about the complexities of Medicare D (she is a certified Medicare D counselor for the State of Michigan) and provides assistance with medical billing.

"A few of the residents have difficulty communicating on the phone because of a stroke or hearing loss or other challenges," she says. "I act as their intermediary to try to resolve the problems."

During tax time, Sister Anne organizes appointments with professional volunteers to help the residents apply for their Michigan Homestead Tax Credit. "This year, more than 70 people participated," she reported, "and as a result, more than \$35,000 was refunded to our residents!"

Sister Anne also is part of the IHM Haiti Working Committee and has traveled to that country annually for the last 18 years. She shares information about conditions in Haiti with the residents and has talked to them about the needs of migrant workers in Michigan and Ohio. "I try to help people become more socially aware," she says. "Our sponsoring organization, Lutheran Homes Society, expects social accountability, and this fits right in."

Sister Anne has an open door policy with Luther Haus residents. "Sometimes, people just need to stop by and talk," she notes. "Mine is a ministry of presence."