

IHM^s IN ACTION



Sister Jean (Jean Celeste) Morsch, IHM, has always thought “outside the box,” and her current ministry – nursing – in a congregation traditionally made up of teachers, reflects that.

“I call nursing my ‘encore ministry,’” Sister Jean laughs. “Before I became a nurse, I taught in junior high and high school; was principal of a grade school and co-principal of a high school. After 23 years, I’d seen it all and wanted to do something different.”

She enrolled in nursing school – she describes it as being “like a second novitiate.” After her 1980 graduation, she took a job as a staff nurse at a hospital in Detroit. Sister Jean headed to Florida in 1983, ministering first at the Lee City Migrant Health Clinic in Ft. Myers and later in settings as diverse as Savannas Hospital in Port St. Lucie and the Martin County Jail in Stuart, Fla.

After more than 20 years in Florida, Sister Jean moved to Santa Cruz, Calif., to minister as a psychiatric nurse in a hospital emergency room. She worked with patients with drug or alcohol

addictions in addition to working with those with a mental illness.

Since 2008, she’s lived and worked in Albuquerque, N.M.

“I minister in the nursing department of the University of New Mexico,” Sister Jean explains. “I monitor the student nurses participating in the Geriatric Education Health Maintenance (GEHM) clinics.

“Students come to senior centers with GEHM clinics in order to learn how to provide health services to older adults. Services might include monitoring blood pressure or glucose levels, medication review or nutrition and education counseling. The GEHM clinics help older adults achieve maximum independence and offer an excellent learning environment to students.”

As a teacher – and in her previous nursing ministries – Sister Jean had the opportunity to get to know those with whom she worked. The GEHM clinics are different. She sees many of the same older adults, but as the students rotate through, she works with the same group only one day a week.

“I work with the students for a just a couple of hours a day, one day a week. It’s a challenge for me because I don’t have the chance to get to know them.”

Sister Jean also works part time in an optometrist’s office as the office manager.

“I really enjoy the different people there,” she notes. “We see a good cross section of patients from age 3 to 90.”

Sister Jean says her favorite ministry would be a toss-up – teaching or nursing.

“I **loved** teaching,” she emphasizes. “And I didn’t leave the profession when I became a nurse. As a nurse, I’m always teaching.”