

IHMs IN ACTION

Sister Margaret (Mary Hofbauer) Alandt, IHM, finance manager for MOSES (Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength), credits "a fluke of filling out a form" for her current ministry.



"Years ago, I filled out an IHM congregational survey, and one of the questions asked if I had ever considered a career in accounting," Sister Margaret explains. "I had a math background and decided to work in the Congregational Business Office while earning my master's degree in nonprofit business administration."

From there, Sister Margaret ministered in North Carolina, Brazil and in Detroit with Groundwork, an education and advocacy group focusing on issues of peace and justice, and at St. Boniface Parish, which closed in 1989. This closing took her into work in community organizations as finance manager. One of these was WDIFCO (West Detroit Inter-Faith Community

Organization), one of three grass-roots organizations that merged to become MOSES in 1997.

"MOSES trains lay and clerical leaders to put their faith into action in the public arena," says Sister Margaret. "We teach people how to influence public policy."

MOSES is a faith-based and multi-issue organization drawing members from diverse religious, racial, ethnic, economic and social backgrounds. Its 45 current members include congregations from many different faith traditions, as well as colleges and universities in metro Detroit. The IHM Sisters have been official members for three years.

"Teaching congregations to use their faith traditions to organize and band together to work for justice is what MOSES is all about," Sister Margaret notes. "One of my passions is anti-racism work. My ministry has allowed me to connect with other groups and organizations concerned with the same thing."

"We tackle social justice issues, such as public transportation, crime and safety, urban sprawl, health care, education, insurance redlining and civil rights," she continues.

Sister Margaret cites the recent passage of an anti-profiling ordinance with the City of Detroit as one of the group's successes.

"The new ordinance bans profiling people based on race, immigration status, ethnicity, dress and appearance, and other factors," she explains. "It means that police officers can't ask about someone's immigration status without criminal cause."

Sister Margaret is also a board member for organizations such as the Michigan Coalition of Human Rights, the Michigan Interfaith Trust Fund and the Marygrove Housing Board.

"My ministry at MOSES and my involvement on boards are ways for me to use my financial background to assist others in doing the good work," she says. "I like to see other people learning the financial aspect of an organization and then knowing how to do it themselves."