

Ask Sister Suzanne (Marie Peter) Sattler, IHM, about her ministries and her face lights up.

She talks first about her current involvement as chair of the board of directors for Detroit's Matrix Theatre Company.



“IHM Sister Barbara Johns had been on the Matrix board for years,” Sister Sue says. “When Sister Barb moved to the Motherhouse in Monroe, she asked me to take her place on the board. I have really come to love and respect the organization.”

Among other services, Matrix Theatre Company provides a youth program in southwest Detroit that uses theatre to change lives, build community and foster social justice.

“Matrix was founded in 1991 with the belief that creativity is a power that can change lives and transform the world,” Sister Sue says. “It engages children and teens through all aspects of theatre – acting, writing, directing.

“Matrix offers young people ages 5 to 18 their own community – a drug, crime and gang prevention program – where they're free to be themselves. Even the youngest children are involved in writing and performing in plays. Older kids are able to write some very adult plays based on their own experience, such as a recent one dealing with immigration and what happens when parents of American-born children are deported. They take a local situation, research it and make it come alive for others.”



Performances take place at the Matrix Theatre as well as throughout the Detroit area.



Sister Sue is employed as a member of the IHM Sisters' Monroe Campus Long-Range Campus Plan (MCLRMP) team, a group instrumental in the sustainable renovation of the IHM Motherhouse and other vital projects that continually expand the campus as a learning laboratory. Her work includes leading many of the Motherhouse tours for groups interested in the inspiring work of the sisters.

“Tours bring out the teacher in me,” Sister Sue laughs. (She taught at Immaculata High School for six years before attending University of Detroit Law School and becoming an attorney.) “And as part of teaching, I always have to ask myself, ‘do I do this?’ in order to be authentic.

“I have the privilege of seeing how others are inspired and motivated about what the IHMs have accomplished through the sustainable renovation of the Motherhouse.”

Her background as an attorney has helped Sister Sue provide legal expertise to MCLRMP's planning and research work. She also has served on the Marygrove College Board of Directors for many years, working with six of the college's presidents.

"Marygrove's leadership has done a great job of adapting to the different times," she notes.

"There is so much 'social capital' in Detroit – wonderful things that people are doing for each other, for the environment, for peace and justice that often go unnoticed," Sister Sue reflects. "Part of the joy of my life has been to be part of that social capital through my volunteer activities, such as serving on boards, and with my employment positions over the years. Both components make up my ministry."