

INTRODUCTION

We extend heartfelt appreciation to our generous benefactors, who, through the Ministry Appeal, have significantly impacted the IHM Sisters' work.

Thanks to your collaborative efforts, we continue our ministries in 13 states, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Your support also allows us to work in partnership with various organizations and religious orders, expanding our influence and fostering positive change in our global community.

This year's ministry appeal features the ministries of **SISTERS ANN OESTREICH, KATHLEEN (KATE) O'BRIEN** and **SISTER MARÍA ANTONIA (TONIA) ARANDA DÍAZ**. We provide a glimpse into their ongoing dedication to help those in need. They engage in community service with a particular focus on combating human trafficking.

Together, we uphold the IHM Mission:

“Urged by the love of God, we choose to work with others to build a culture of peace and right relationship among ourselves, with the church, and with the whole Earth community.”

Please consider a gift to the Ministry Appeal.
Your generosity plays a vital role in advancing our mission
and positively impacting the lives of those we serve.

WE SERVE GOD BY SERVING OTHERS

Consistent with our mission, we offer yearly grant opportunities. These grants provide assistance to ministries with which individual sisters and associates are personally involved. Grant applications are accepted in the spring; then, applicants are interviewed by the ministry grant board. Grants are awarded in June. Last year, ministry grant funding totaled \$50,000. The ministries awarded funding for 2023-2024 are:

- Crossroads of Michigan for *Child Opportunity Program* submitted by Elizabeth Walters, IHM
- CWO Farms for *For the Sake of the Children of all Species* submitted by Gloria Rivera, IHM
- Elm House/Home Inc. for *door replacement* submitted by Loretta Schroeder, IHM
- Friends in Solidarity for *Helping Hands Initiative* submitted by Joan Mumaw, IHM
- IHM Community for *A Bridge to English for Migrants* submitted by Mary Ann Penner, IHM, Maureen Kelly, IHM and María Antonia Aranda Díaz, IHM
- IHM Community for *Spiritual Retreats Ending Homelessness* submitted by Betty Leon, IHM
- Our Lady of Fatima Parish for *Empowering the Laity* submitted by Barbara O'Neill, IHM
- Paula's House for *Recovery, Wellness and Retreat* submitted by Candyce Rekart, IHM
- Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (S.O.A.P.) Project for *Second Wind Trafficking Survivor Support Group* submitted by Kate O'Brien, IHM
- Siena Heights University for *Teaching and Learning Collective* submitted by Diane Brown, IHM
- Spirit Mountain Retreat for *Return to Yourself: A Resiliency and Healing Retreat Series for Women Veterans with PTSD* submitted by Margaret Mary Leusch, IHM Associate
- Strangers No Longer for *Downriver Engagement of Immigrant Women and Parishes* submitted by Rebecca Vonderhaar, IHM
- U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking for *Creating Awareness in the Fight to End Human Trafficking* submitted by Ann Oestreich, IHM



SISTER ANN OESTREICH

Sister Ann Oestreich began her ministry to prevent human trafficking in 2011. She coordinated the training of hospitality workers prior to the 2012 Super Bowl in Indianapolis. Along with other sisters from Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, they trained hotel employees to recognize the signs of human trafficking and how to report suspected incidents safely. Over 50 reports of trafficking were investigated that weekend, survivors were rescued and several arrests were made.



The Alliance to End Human Trafficking now has 120+ congregations of sisters as members, along with many coalitions, organizations and individuals. Together, they are making a difference – making presentations, producing educational materials to promote awareness and prevention, and survivor-informed advocacy with access to services that offer life-changing possibilities for many. A world without human trafficking is a better world for all!

The Alliance has (and continues to) produce educational videos and resources to educate parents, teachers, healthcare workers and others about preventing trafficking.

Sister Ann says that ministry to prevent trafficking is “a privilege” and her “passion in life.”

In 2013, Sister Ann and 14 sisters from different communities in the U.S. founded a national, faith-based organization to educate the public about human trafficking, advocate for legislation to prevent human trafficking and offer access to services to empower survivors to reclaim their lives.



SISTER KATHLEEN (KATE) O'BRIEN

Sister Kathleen (Kate) O'Brien is deeply passionate about working towards the eradication of human trafficking. She dedicated her time to volunteer with the Alliance to End Human Trafficking and Monroe County Anti Trafficking Coalition.



Sister Kate appreciates her relationship with Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (S.O.A.P) Project's Second Wind Survivor Support Group. This resilient group of trafficking survivors are embracing a new life of freedom and opportunity. Assisted by a trauma counselor, social worker and former policewomen, all are dedicated to a community approach to healing. Second Wind started with a seemingly simple mission: to empower human trafficking survivors to care for themselves in all realms of wellness and growth together.



Supported by IHM Ministry Grants, Second Wind members continue to heal as they gather for their monthly therapeutic meetings guided by a professional therapist, who addresses their concerns and fears in a safe and supportive environment. During their outings together, they enjoy new and unique experiences. Beyond therapeutic meetings, Second Wind members partake in enriching activities such as equine therapy, adventures at the Midwest Challenge course, a Michigan State women's basketball game and a Detroit River Cruise are just a few examples. A seasonal event that Sister Kate and other IHMs enjoy is the Christmas cookie decorating and gift exchange.

Being part of this vibrant healing community is much more than a ministry. It is a gift! Just ask Sister Kate.

SISTER MARÍA ANTONIA (TONIA) ARANDA DÍAZ

During her graduate studies in Mexico City, **Sister María Antonia (Tonia) Aranda Díaz** chose to care for women in prostitution as her professional practice and social service. Through this experience, she tried to understand the puzzling reality of these women criminalized by society.



As Sister Tonia accompanied these women, she learned their struggle to survive and obtain a dignified life for their families. Their reality as victims of exploitation, discrimination, racism, mistreatment and violence led her to reflect theologically about the search for human good, freedom and the realization of these women as daughters of God. She even wrote her Master's thesis on this topic.

For six years in Ciudad Juarez, Sister Tonia has carried out the ministry of comprehensive care and accompaniment of migrants on the Mexico/US border, assisting

migrants and displaced vulnerable people to recognize and choose better life options.

“Prostitution and trafficking are present among migrants on the border. Our mission is to serve them: unaccompanied children, families and single mothers who experience persecution, kidnappings, exploitation and violence along the way. We offer physical and mental health care, legal and employment guidance, document management, food, housing and ecumenical pastoral care.”

Sister Tonia says, “This experience has been like a light that is received, heard and embraced in difficult moments as a way of continuing to live the Liberating Mission of Jesus.”

