



Health care consultant Anita Butler, RN, MSN, visits Jesuits at Colombiere Center. While there she spoke with George Wallenhorst (left), SJ, and Paul Allen (right), SJ.

Lay Collaborators

by Carolyn Allen

WHEN GOD touches your life, sometimes the hand you feel on your shoulder belongs to a nurse. For the Jesuits of the Chicago Province, the hands of comfort are those of Anita Butler and Barb Mechley. While both women serve as consultants to all the Jesuits in the communities in their areas — Chicago in Anita's case, and Cincinnati in Barb's — they have a special focus on the needs, interests, and concerns of senior Jesuits.

After lives of active ministry, senior Jesuits in need of assisted health care now have, at Colombiere Center in Clarkston, Michigan, a community and mission to which they are assigned. Built in the 1960s as a novitiate of the Detroit Province, Colombiere originally had a 12-bed infirmary on one floor of the residence. By the mid-1980s it became clear

that the building would no longer be needed as a novitiate. Provincials of Detroit and Chicago decided to pool their physical and financial resources to restructure Colombiere as a bi-Province health care facility.

A highly successful fund-raising campaign made major renovations possible. Part of the old novitiate building remains a multi-purpose conference center for not-for-profit organizations. The remainder was restructured to provide a health center with medical facilities, nurses' stations, a new dining room, an enlarged community room, and, thanks to Joe Mooter, a handicapped-accessible chapel. Of primary importance was the provision of resident quarters: 68 beds with private space for each man.

The funds raised during the "Promises Kept" campaign for the renovations come from many kind benefactors. Special peo-

**Nurses Serve
Jesuit Health
Care Needs**

Friends Visit *Colombiere*

Benefactors to the Chicago Province visited the senior Jesuits at Colombiere, where excellent care is provided thanks to these generous partners.



Bob and Betty Schoettinger, with her brother Bob Schmidt, SJ, now assigned to Colombiere.



Benefactors John Muething, Carol Thaman, and Rosemary Auer recently visited Colombiere.



Virginia Martin-Witchger in front of Colombiere, which benefited from her kindness.



Jeanne Kluener is a loyal, generous friend to the Chicago Province and senior Jesuits.



Joe Mooter sits in the remodeled and handicapped-accessible chapel his gift provided.



Ministering to Faithful Servants

Barb Mechley works closely with Mike Brophy, SJ, in assessing health care concerns for Cincinnati Jesuits. She comments, "I enjoy the gentlemen so much. They are outstanding; it's a privilege to enter into their faith life. I've learned a lot from them."

ple who have helped to make the difference include Rosemary Auer, and Mildred and John Muething, residents of Cincinnati. They were among a group of benefactors who visited Colombiere early in June. Although the day of their visit was chilly, their hearts were warmed at what they saw. "It's a big brick facility—my favorite kind of construction," Rosemary says, "in a peaceful country setting with a large, beautiful chapel. The Jesuits who live at Colombiere are only there because their health wouldn't allow them to keep working, but you know they didn't retire, they simply reinvest their time." Rosemary is an avid volunteer for the past 16 years at Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati and shares a wonderful kinship with the Jesuits.

She explains, "I earned my way in the world and, as I was working, I kept investing and reinvesting. By the time I retired, I discovered I was financially secure. Well, I don't need a lot of money for the kind of life I live, so I set up a trust for the benefit of older Jesuits. They spend their lives serving others. I thought I would like to do something for them in return. This charitable trust is my way of honoring their service." Rosemary sums up her stewardship, "I think I made the best choice possible of what to do with what I've got."



Health care assistant Anita Butler visits Ed Cincoski, SJ, at Colombiere.

Attorney John Muething has felt close ties to the Jesuits ever since he attended Xavier University and later served on the board of St. Xavier High School, which his sons attended. He, too, was impressed by the comfortable, inviting facilities at Colombiere. "I never doubted that supporting the Jesuits of Colombiere was wise," he says, "and when we visited the Jesuits there, my feelings were greatly reaffirmed." While they visited, John says he noted that, "all the Jesuits seem most happy and content to be there. They continue their religious lives and their ministry of prayer. They also have excellent community life available to them. I have known many Jesu-

David McCarthy, SJ, attended by Assistant Superior Joe Casey, SJ, greets Anita Butler.



its, and I am familiar with the sacrifices they have made. I'm proud to help provide them comfort in their senior years where they can continue their ministry of prayer as a Jesuit community." John is pleased to support those he admires, "I think it's a fitting reward."

Anita Butler, R.N., M.S.N., a member of the board of trustees of Colombiere Center, and the consulting health care nurse for the Chicago Province, views Colombiere fondly since her introduction to the Jesuits in 1978 at Loyola University Chicago.

Anita was asked to help care for an elder Jesuit for "a couple of days." Those days turned into many. "From

the time I started working for the Jesuits, I was very well accepted," she says. "It was wonderful. It took a little time to get established, but I had a great professional relationship with a physician who also loved the Jesuits."

In 1981, while she was teaching full time at the Loyola School of Nursing, Jerry Grosh, SJ, the rector of the Loyola University Jesuit community, whose vision was to have a nurse to staff a clinic for the local Jesuits, offered her a job. She accepted the offer and changed from a faculty member and part-time volunteer to a full-time employee, serving all the Jesuits on the Loyola campus in addition to managing a 6-bed infirmary which was staffed 24 hours a day.

As Anita's work expanded, former Provincial Bob Wild, SJ, took note. "Father Wild saw me going to the communities, making health assessments and, if anyone needed more care, arranging for it either within the community or suggesting another location," she says. "In 1987, he offered me a job as a consulting health care nurse for the Chicago Province." As before, she eagerly accepted.

Anita "makes the rounds" annually as she goes into the field to give flu shots at ev-



Bill Topmoeller, SJ, was pleased to see nurse and friend Anita Butler. She says, "I've learned a lot working with the Jesuits. They have taught me more than I could ever learn in a formal program about the problems and blessings of aging, and about how to promote healthy aging."

ery Jesuit community in Chicago. "In addition, many come to my office at the Jesuit residence on Loyola's campus to see me, or I make personal visits."

Over the course of her years as a lay collaborator, Anita says, "I've learned a lot working with the Jesuits, especially with the older ones. They have taught me more than I could ever learn in a formal program about the problems and blessings of aging, and about how to promote healthy aging. One of the earliest lessons I learned was that, as far as possible, the Jesuits should be responsible for decisions about their own lives. These are very intelligent people; I can make recommendations and give them information about their choices for their consideration.

"I have come to appreciate what senior Jesuits experience at this time in their lives. This realization had a big impact on me, and it helped me change my approach. Earlier, I might have said, 'You should do this.' Now I say, 'There are a couple of different ways you can go, and the choice is yours.'"

This empathic connection to the Jesuits she serves and the strength of her own faith support Anita as she assists when the time comes for their assignment to Colombiere. "My faith is very strong, and it is the foundation for my living and for everything I do," she says simply. "You can sense the grace when someone is praying for you. I know from personal experience that prayers are powerful, are heard, can make an enormous difference, and offer the greatest comfort possible. I love the work I do; I eagerly look forward to coming to work every day. The people in the administration and those I take care of are kind, sensitive, and delightful."

In the Cincinnati area, Barb Mechley, R.N., generously agreed to serve as a volunteer, both caring for senior Jesuits in their communities and helping them get ready for assignments to Colombiere. It seemed to her like a natural extension of the work she was doing already. "I had been involved with Good Samaritan Hospital for 30 years," Barb says, "and I knew a lot of Jesuits. A situation came up with a brother I knew well, and I was happy to go with Fr. Verbyrke to take Br. Mac to Colombiere.

"I work at Good Samaritan Hospital part time as a staff nurse," she continues, "and since 1994, I have been the nurse consultant for a group of religious sisters who have their own infirmary at St. Ursula Academy."

The course of Barb's work for the Jesuits takes her to all five communities in the Cincinnati area. "I consult with superiors and make referrals to physicians, offer hands-on care for those who are incapacitated, accompany Jesuits as they go into surgery, and provide surgical follow-up."

The pleasure Barb finds in her work with the senior Jesuits is evident. "I enjoy the gentlemen so much," she says. "They are outstanding, and it's a privilege to enter into their faith life. I've learned a lot from them. They notice and appreciate when you have time for them, that you're not rushed, and that you identify with what they're doing. I feel this work is a ministry for me."

Barb adds, "I have found that when the time comes for a move to Colombiere, they do an important life review. This transition is an assignment and mission for them, and



of course, like all transitions, it can be difficult."

Anita agrees, noting that initially there was a fear of going to Colombiere because it was perceived as being too far away from Chicago. "Barb and I sometimes have informal sessions with a Jesuit's family to assist them with this transition. We always try to get the phone number at Colombiere before the Jesuit arrives, so his family will know they can be in contact with him right from the start. We work to make the change as easy on everyone as possible."

Anita recalls one special journey she took to Colombiere. "Father John Henry, SJ, who had worked as a chaplain at Cook County

Volunteer Barb Mechley, RN, works with Jesuits in the Cincinnati area. Recently she helped George Traub, SJ, recover from hip replacement surgery.

Hospital for years, became ill with cancer. I accompanied him to Colombiere. On the way he said to me, 'You know, Anita, I've been talking to people about dying my whole life, and I never realized that was what was happening to me.' When we got to Colombiere and he saw his room he said, 'This is the most wonderful room I've ever seen. The Society really does care about us, and cares for us.' He was used to a more Spartan environment during his lifetime, and he was touched to find himself in a community that would provide for his needs now as he had been providing for the needs of others all his life."

In sum, Anita says, "I don't think of this service as a job; I consider it my vocation." ❧



Jim Gschwend, SJ, (left) provincial assistant for special ministries says, "Anita and Barb provide a personal health service the Jesuits truly appreciate." Here he visits with Paul Allen, SJ.

Celebrate

the Eternal Life of...

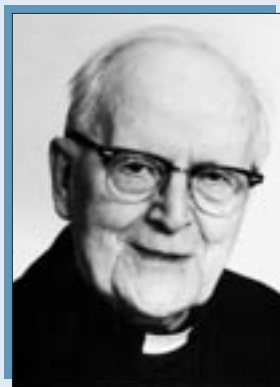
Fellow Jesuit Fr. Gerald Grace described his friend John as having "the Irish gift of storytelling and a sparkle in his eyes. He was very gentle, had a winning personality, liked people, and was appreciated for his warmth and friendliness."

John's 60 years of active service as a Jesuit priest were almost equally split between ministries in the United States and India. Originally he was a member of the Chicago Province. In 1959 he transcribed to the Patna Province (in northeast India).

John was born in Chicago, attended Visitation and Blessed Sacrament grammar schools and Quigley Preparatory Seminary. He entered the Society of Jesus at Florissant, Missouri, in 1923 and continued his studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, and St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1936.

John taught for two years at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and at Loyola Academy in Chicago before leaving for mission work in Patna, India. He served there from 1944 until 1970, as a teacher at St. Xavier School in Patna, as vice-rector and rector at Khrist Raja School, Bettiah, and finally preaching parish missions.

It is his ministry in India for which Fr.



John E. Mahoney, SJ, 92

April 26, 1998
Colombiere Jesuit Community
Clarkston, Michigan

Mahoney will be most remembered. Norman Harland, SJ, who served with him there for several years, credits John with helping train the young Indian Jesuits who now lead the Patna and New Delhi missions.

"He helped create the rapport, the beautiful spirit that has always characterized the American missionaries' relationship with their Indian colleagues," recalls Norm. "Now the mission is predominantly governed by an indigenous clergy, and the Society itself is governed by Indian Jesuits.

That transition from American to Indian leadership was one that was admired by Jesuits and church people throughout India. John contributed a lot by training the young Jesuits who subsequently became the backbone of the mission in Patna and other parts of north India."

In 1970, John returned to Chicago and served as a chaplain at Cook County Hospital. In 1982, he was assigned to St. Ignatius Parish in Chicago where he assumed Hispanic ministry among other parish duties. He also presided at Mass with the Hispanic inmates at the Federal Correctional Center in Chicago. His final assignment was to a ministry of prayer at Colombiere Jesuit Health Care Community in 1996.