Saint Joseph's Center prepares for Christmas with a great sense of anticipation and excitement. Advent Masses celebrated in the Center's Chapel for residents, staff and visitors help with the preparations. Postings and prayers from Sister Lenore, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, remind everyone of the beauty in our world and the great gift that we are about to receive. The scenes depicting the Nativity are on display throughout all programs and facilities. There is a loving mix of the sacred with the secular. The December calendar is packed with parties for those who receive services in all programs and the length of the Christmas list is rivaled only by the North Pole.

Particular attention is taken for those whose challenges and circumstances are so significant that they require residential care. Providing as homelike an atmosphere, one filled with love and joy, balanced with active, ongoing treatment is the year round goal. Residential care is provided through a variety of programs. The largest is the Intermediate Care Program. These services are offered in the Main Center, the Apartment building on the main campus and in 2 community homes in Luzerne County. There are ninety-nine beautiful individuals who live amongst these facilities. The Christmas spirit is shared with reverence and good cheer in every setting.

Ranging in age from 2 to 57, each person, from the toddlers to the middle aged, is a privilege to know. Medical advances, educational opportunities and therapeutic interventions have enabled young people with complex issues to reach adulthood. As a result many in residence have lived at Saint Joseph's for years and have journeyed through life with their long-time caregivers. It is a unique and mutually beneficial relationship. Every day becomes a reason to rejoice. The holidays are a lovely reminder to celebrate and an invitation for others to share that spirit. Throughout Saint Joseph's history, bringing Christmas alive has been a real community effort. Many congregations and community groups help Center staff to make the holidays brighter. Visits from carolers and Secret Santas, Christmas cards and family gatherings, Saint Joseph's Auxiliary providing extra holiday treats for residents and staff, it all makes for a very merry season. So as the birth of the baby Jesus approaches, we remember with gratitude how near He always is in all the special people who are and who have been so very important in our lives.
Initiative for Direct Support Professionals

Fully acknowledging the daily challenges faced by those serving as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), Saint Joseph’s has invited current employees to join a nation-wide initiative designed to provide a certification process and career path for staff in these positions. Only the second facility in Pennsylvania to undertake this process, the Center is still in the early stages. Combining mentored opportunities with specific on-line training and testing, the goals are to improve the quality of the support individuals in various Center programs receive and to offer the DSPs an opportunity for advancement.

Nearing the end of this initial year in the program, Saint Joseph’s hopes to have members of the first class ready to meet the requirements for the Proficiency Level, the first of three levels. In order to achieve this recognition, participants must have completed many hours of individual and class training, demonstrated their proficiency in the assigned skill areas and taken steps to create a portfolio of projects that will eventually be submitted to the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. NADSP is the organization that developed the program and who provides the final credentialing. It is a time consuming but rewarding process.

Saint Joseph’s Center is committed to providing truly person centered, life enhancing care to each individual who seeks assistance and looks with gratitude toward the people who provide that care on a daily basis. Encouraging staff to see the enduring value of their work and enabling them to advance their skills and then compensating them for their example makes the effort positive for all involved.

Steamtown Marathon Cheerleaders

Residents, staff and volunteers turned out once again for the twenty third year to cheer for the marathon organizers, runners and wheelchair competitors. This race is coordinated and conducted solely by a team of volunteers. All who receive services through Saint Joseph’s Center are so very grateful to everyone who makes this annual event a reality.

Adult Day Program Helping Out

Participants in Saint Joseph’s Adult Day Program are assisting the Salvation Army with their Red Kettle drive leading into this Christmas season. Being active in the local community has always been a goal of the Adult Program and there is a renewed emphasis on finding opportunities that are both achievable and rewarding. The Center’s Adult Program is for people with an intellectual disability who have completed their education. Adult Day Services are offered at three locations between Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties and there are over 125 people enrolled in the program.

The Salvation Army has welcomed these young men and women into several of their gatherings. Returning the favor to their new friends, they have been greeting customers and ringing the bells at the Price Chopper in Dunmore for an hour at a time.

Kathy Wheeler, Program Assistant in the Center’s Adult Day Program assists Christine, who attends the Day Program with her mealtime goals. Kathy performs many other duties throughout her work day that enable Christine and her fellow participants to realize their full potential. Kathy is currently involved in the DSP certification process.
Renovations on Center Grounds

It has been a busy year on Saint Joseph's Main Campus. Of course with multiple properties there is always something that needs work. This year among many other projects, the most noticeable were the new roof and siding on the Apartment building and the replacement of the retaining wall and ramp at the rear of the Center leading to the lower portions of the campus.

The Apartment building, located on the Main Campus on the south side of the property was originally an office building put in place in 1987. By 2003 it became necessary to convert the facility into accessible apartments. Increasing ages and sizes of those living in the Center along with their therapeutic equipment, led to somewhat crowded conditions in the main residence. Nineteen people moved from the main building into 4 open design apartments just across the parking lot. With these recent renovations the building is more structurally sound and has a fresh new look thanks in large part to a grant from the Edith L Trees Charitable Trust from Pittsburgh. This Trust has been very generous in helping to fund improvements to Saint Joseph's facilities for many years.

The 20 year old retaining wall that had some critical areas beginning to crumble, also supports the ramp leading from the upper areas of the campus to the lower sections. This anxiously anticipated wall and ramp project was often delayed by the rainy summer weather. Its recent completion provides a safe, functional and visually appealing addition to the Main Center campus. It is most welcome.

Challenger Sports Award Banquet

Grinning with excitement as he waits for his name to be called, Matthew, who lives at Saint Joseph's, was being recognized for playing on both the Challenger Soccer and Baseball teams. The banquet and dance party, with a Halloween theme, recently acknowledged over 100 players before their family and friends, for their participation in the Challenger Leagues. Designed to offer the spirit of competition and the joy of team membership to young people diagnosed with a disability, the Challenger Leagues have provided wonderful opportunities to so many area residents.

Every year, Saint Joseph's Center is the honored beneficiary of bequests made by friends of the Center. Each bequest, whether large or small, has an impact on Saint Joseph's well beyond the time the gift is made. For more information please visit the website at www.stjosephscenter.org or call 570-963-1260 to request a Planned Giving brochure.

Thank you and may God continue to bless you for your kindness to Saint Joseph's!
Dear Friends of Saint Joseph’s Center,

Without any fanfare, Saint Joseph’s Center marked a milestone of 130 years of ministry on November 20th. As with the passage of time, this anniversary just quietly happened as we prepared for Thanksgiving and were busy about so many things. Reflecting on this worthwhile work is always inspiring. The good intentions of a small group of volunteers with a humble desire to offer safe, nurturing homes for children whose parents felt desperate began what is known today as Saint Joseph’s Center.

As you know, the mission has evolved with the influence, advancement and differing needs of each generation since the foundation in 1888. New resources are offered in the name of Saint Joseph’s to meet the changing needs of our time. Throughout this history there are some relationships which have been consistently present from whom we have inherited this life-giving mission. In broad categories, they are caring volunteers, generous benefactors, Sisters of IHM, dedicated staff members, loving family, and, most importantly, those who trust us and ask for assistance. From each, we learn. For each, we give thanks. Together, Saint Joseph’s continues.

Christmas is always a special time at Saint Joseph’s Center. Decorations adorn every home and workplace. Bright lights, beautiful decorations and Christmas trees bring an excitement and joy. Cookies, candies and favorite treats are shared. Cards arrive daily and soon packages will too. All are reminders that this is no ordinary time of year. Advent is a season of preparation, so that we are ready, in our homes and hearts, to welcome Jesus as the Prince of Peace.

May you enjoy this joyful time of year with your loved ones. Thank you for remembering Saint Joseph’s Center in your prayers and with your continued support. For you, we are grateful. May each of us welcome the birth of Jesus, the celebration of Christmas, and be renewed in the lasting gifts of peace, joy, hope and love.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With prayer and gratitude,

Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM

President/CEO