Tracking the Mission

By S. Judith Metz

What is the face of mission at our Sisters of Charity sponsored ministries? The College of Mount St. Joseph found that although there is both a board mission committee and a campus mission committee, activities that express the mission of the college are far more pervasive than the work that these two committees promote. Academic and co-curricular offerings give students many opportunities to learn about and express the values for which the college stands. Service Learning and mission trips, volunteer opportunities and retreats, lectures and the Web site are just a few of the avenues available for students, faculty and staff to participate in the mission. But what about off-campus constituencies, such as alumni, trustees, donors and the public?

At the suggestion of a board member, the mission committees developed a “Mission Activity Map.” Its purpose is to track all mission-supporting activities that are sponsored by the college and the audiences for which they are intended. Once the map was created it was possible to see at a glance what was in place and who was being targeted by these activities. It also provided us a tool whereby the committees could identify gaps in offerings and begin to brainstorm new initiatives that would enrich the overall approach to living mission.

The committees have found this tool very helpful in their work and offer it to you as a way to enhance your own program. This grid is entirely flexible and can be tailored to the requirements of any organization. We encourage you to give it a try – you will be pleasantly surprised at what is already happening in your ministry, and also motivated to create new possibilities.
News ’N Notes

St. Joseph Home has recently launched its new brand that reflects the vibrancy of its residents. The logo is expressed in the image of a song bird and a flame that represents warmth, guidance and energy. The songbird itself symbolizes the fragility and beauty of the Home’s residents, and signifies the voice the Home gives to its residents, who cannot speak for themselves. The tagline accompanying the graphic, “Possibility overcomes disability,” further emphasizes the nurturing atmosphere at St. Joseph’s. Board member and volunteer, S. Joan Carole Schaffner, emphasizes this point: “The residents offer us so much more than we might expect; I know I learn something new, or come away with a greater insight on life, every time I visit one of the residents at St. Joseph Home.”

Seton Family Center recently moved to a new location to ensure that west siders who require mental health services have access to care. Dr. Helmut Roehrig, executive director, said, “Part of our mission is to be able to provide services to children and families of all backgrounds.” The Center’s aim is to strengthen familial bonds by helping to identify common values, heal brokenness, and enable individual family members to live in healthy relationships. The environment at the Center has been designed to be welcoming and family-friendly, and it does not turn away people who cannot afford services.

Seton students walk to raise money for classmates. Photo courtesy of Seton High School

Inspired by the alumnae organization “Saints Helping Saints” designed to assist Seton alumnae in need, a group of current Seton students have initiated a student-led group that is focused on helping Seton students and their families. They named their group “Seton Helping Saints.” Kari Lockwood, senior, hopes “this club will educate students and make them want to join … because they are making a difference.”

Club members have had to figure out how to deal with confidentiality issues as well as requiring accountability from those who receive assistance. Senior Rachel Posten said, “We really want to help students, but we want to make sure they are comfortable asking for assistance. The club is off to a good start after raising their initial funds from a school-wide walk.”

Words of Wisdom

“Exceptional boards shape and uphold the mission, articulate a compelling vision, and ensure the congruence between decisions and core values. An exceptional board sees creating and upholding the mission, not as an exercise to be done once, but statements of crucial importance to be drilled down and folded into deliberations. The mission is integrated into fundraising, meetings and decision-making.” From the Board Source: “The Source: Twelve Principles of Governance That Power Exceptional Boards”

“Food For Thought”

“I am going to meet everybody in the grace of the moment, which we can never know till we find the humor and temper of the one we are to meet – the many mistakes all swallowed and comforted by intention, intention, intention.”

(Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, June 1816)

“All great works have had small beginnings. The great Master delighting to continue his own wise plan of producing from nothing as in the creation of the world, and other works of his almighty power: ‘He said, and it was done.”

(S. Margaret George’s Diary of St. Joseph’s)

Mark Your Calendars

The Corporation Board for Sponsored Ministries All Boards Retreat is scheduled from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2012, at the Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse.