



**Dominican Sisters**  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DOMINICAN SISTERS ~ GRAND RAPIDS FACT SHEET**

**Mission**

That of Jesus Christ – to be God’s saving grace in the world.

**History**

- The Dominican Order began in thirteenth-century Europe with the vision and work of Dominic de Guzman. Our specific Congregation traces its origin to Holy Cross Convent, a Dominican cloister for women religious in Regensburg, Bavaria in 1246.
- In 1853, four cloistered Dominican nuns left Regensburg and went to New York to minister to German immigrants.
- Answering a call for teachers in Michigan, six nuns from the New York group arrived in Traverse City, Michigan in October 1877. Less than one week later, the nuns opened a school in their small wood-framed home. Six students appeared; in two months there were fifty students.
- Additional missions were quickly added. In less than two decades, the Dominican Sisters staffed a parochial school system that flourished throughout the state for the next century.
- The Dominican Sisters came to Grand Rapids in 1889 to administer the newly-founded St. John's Home, which was a diocesan institute for the care of orphans and children whose parents could not care for them. Through this new ministry, social work and health care were added to the ministries the Sisters provided.
- In 1894, the Dominican Sisters became an independent congregation and in 1896, they were authorized to change from cloistered nuns to apostolic Sisters.
- In the 1920s the Sisters took on missions in New Mexico in the field of education and later added healthcare there and in California. Since then, Sisters have added ministries that serve a broad variety of needs. Wherever they found work, Sisters continued to teach and serve in schools, parishes, non-profits and healthcare institutions, throughout Michigan, New Mexico, several other States, Honduras and Peru.

## Ministries

- *Marywood Home Health* (in collaboration with Porter Hills)
  - Provides healthcare and services for people who wish to remain in their homes
  - Licensed nursing, rehabilitation therapy, health monitoring and personal care
  - Spiritual companionship provided by the Dominican Sisters
- *Dominican Center at Marywood* is a spirituality and conference center whose mission is to foster the growth and transformation of persons, communities and organizations through prayer, learning and collaboration in an inclusive, hospitable environment.
- *Partners in Parenting* has helped more than 8,000 parents enhance skills in managing anger, modeling positive behavior, discipline, dealing with stress and many other challenges that parents encounter with the goal of better parenting.
- *Word – ESL (English as a Second Language)* provides an intergenerational literacy program of services to enable individuals to improve the quality of their lives and their community.
- *Dominican Chapel Marywood* is a sacred space that welcomes all for prayer and quiet. A diverse community gathers for Sunday Eucharist to celebrate God’s saving love in our daily lives.
- *Pastoral Leadership* – many Sisters work in positions of pastoral leadership at the parish level, including remote or rural areas where there are few priests available. Sisters also serve at the diocesan level, in retreat houses and in chaplaincy positions.
- *Healthcare* - the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids have deep roots in the field of healthcare. Through nursing, health education, pharmacy, physical therapy, midwifery and chaplaincy, Sisters live their commitment to praise, to bless and to preach.
- *Care Resources* -- Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). The Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids saw the need for a PACE program in Kent County. They became partners with four community organizations to begin a PACE program in 2006. *Ministries Abroad* – For more than 50 years, Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids have taken part in fostering the growth of the Social Work Center in Chimbote, Peru, a health and maternity clinic that delivers about 300 babies each month. After Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Dominican Sisters joined the mission in San Pedro Sula in Honduras to build houses and a community center for families left homeless after the hurricane. Today’s ministry there focuses on ministering to families with children who have HIV/AIDS and with people who are imprisoned.
- *Aquinas College* – Begun by the Sisters 125 years ago, Aquinas College is flourishing as an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic and Dominican traditions. Aquinas College provides a liberal arts education with a global perspective, emphasizes career preparation focused on leadership and service to others, and fosters a commitment to lifelong learning dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the common good.
- *Marywood Health Center* will open soon as a collaborative ministry with Porter Hills that provides licensed skilled nursing care with a focus on short-term rehabilitation.