



**Marianist
Environmental
Education
Center**

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Dear Friends

December, 2017

As I reflect on the gifts of the past year and hopes for the next, I am so grateful for your partnership with us in the “great and magnificent work” of MEEC. These words were favorites of Father Chaminade who founded lay communities from which arose the Marianist Sisters in 1816 with Mother Adele de Batz de Trenquellion, and the Society of Mary (Marianist brothers and priests) in 1817. As the two-year bicentennial celebration of the vowed religious concludes this January, I am struck by the relevance of their universal missionary vision for re-building a just society through a network of dynamic and engaged communities. It is as applicable to MEEC’s justice work of ecological restoration and environmental education today as it was to the societal needs of post-revolution France.

Through your support and the partnership of the University of Dayton Hanley Sustainability Institute (UD-HSI), MEEC is hosting intern Peter Evans through Marianist PULSE (Partners in Urban Leadership, Service and Education). This is a formational, post-graduate year of service and community-living experience offered by MEEC’s major sponsor, the Society of Mary. Peter is helping us to expand by increasing our land volunteer base, student service outreach and urban partnerships. Drawing from ten years of volunteering experience with MEEC Peter is giving back to his *alma maters*, leading Chaminade-Julienne high school students in their community service projects and working with UD student programs.

We’ve expanded our native plant outreach, including new installations at Mission of Mary Cooperative and Lincoln Hill Gardens in partnership with East End Community Services and UD, at SunWatch Indian Village and on UD’s campus. Our own native plant restoration work at Mount St. John continues as well, and we’re grateful for our community of volunteers who help with everything from seed collection to invasive species control. If you would like to help, we have regular groups on Tuesday mornings and the first Saturday of the month from March through November. We also rely on volunteers to help with our weekly butterfly monitoring walks from April through October, and in 2018 will launch nectar plant surveys. Contact us if you’re interested in volunteering to help multiply our efforts.

MEEC Founder Bro. Don Geiger’s outstanding contributions and leadership in invasive plant management and habitat restoration were recognized this year with an Award of Recognition from the Ohio Invasive Plant Council and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association. Our staff continue the work he started every day. In 2017 we offered more than 160 events and activities here at Mount St. John and beyond that helped youth and adults connect with the natural world and find solutions to protect and improve it. This year we’ll host the tenth annual Midwest Native Plant Society conference from July 27 through 29 (midwestnativeplants.org).

We also host the Greater Dayton area WILD Ones Chapter that meets monthly. They promote natural areas as models for landscaping and offer field trips, guest speakers and networking opportunities. See our website or call for more info. We're also glad to help you plan for introducing native plants to solve landscaping issues or reduce mowing, and to enhance pollinators and other wildlife in your own yard, neighborhood, or organization. Give us a call.

MEEC continues to help bridge the science and faith communities to address environmental justice issues in our region and nationally. Through our UD-HSI partnership, I gave presentations at science conferences in Portland, Boulder and New Orleans. I was also honored to co-lead the Dayton portion of the National prayer tour of superfund sites to advocate for continued EPA funding for pollution cleanups. Partnering with the Catholic Climate Covenant, we also helped gather signatures of Catholic leaders on a letter to President Trump and Congress urging the reassertion of US leadership in the global effort to address climate change.

This year Michele continued her services on the Ohio Invasive Plants Council Board and Tara hers on the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative Steering Committee. Tara led a workshop on living environmental sustainability for the triennial Continental Assembly of the Marianist Lay Communities of North America and I spoke on living Pope Francis' integral ecology to the Marianist Sisters General Chapter in Rome in July. A major new initiative is facilitating collaboration between the three Marianist Universities around environmental sustainability, particularly climate change and water. I traveled to San Antonio for the first meetings at St. Mary's University, and will next head to Chaminade University in Honolulu. Bringing together the assets of diverse cultures and ecologies strengthens our call to address climate change and other environmental challenges for all people.

In the new year, our pre-Lent Winter Wisdom Retreat on February 10th will feature ways to enjoy the beauty of winter and integrate the experience of our everyday life into the greater call to sustainable living and interconnectedness. Keep an eye on our website for registration materials and a brochure is enclosed. On June 10, 2018, Marianist founder Adele will be recognized with beatification for her faith-filled passion for community-building and advocacy with the economically poor. Her ability to see God in all creation and her self-giving from her nobility inspires our work.

As we enter the new year, we would appreciate your financial support. You can also include a gift for our Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (www.msjc.net) within your enclosed MEEC donation envelope. Together our communities bring seeds of hope to our world. We are grateful and blessed to partner with you in this ministry. Please know of our prayers, and our deep gratitude.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne".

Sr. Leanne Jablonski FMI, PhD
for the MEEC Team