



January 16, 2025

## January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

*How I wish that all of us would hear God's cry: 'Where is your brother?' (Gen. 4:9).*

*Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labor? Let us not look the other way."*

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

January has been designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Human trafficking involves exploiting a person for labor, services, or commercial sex.

**This year during National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security's Victim Assistance Program is bringing attention to the heightened vulnerability of persons with disabilities to trafficking victimization.** These individuals are often overlooked as potential victims and may not know how to seek help.



Although statistics about human trafficking crimes against individuals with disabilities are limited, from January 2015 to December 2017, the National Human Trafficking Hotline documented 2,116 potential victims who had a pre-

existing health concern or disability immediately prior to their trafficking situation (including a possible physical disability, mental health diagnosis, substance use concern, or intellectual/developmental disability). Also, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics emphasized the vulnerability of persons with disabilities [in a report](#) examining victimization in non-fatal crimes (including rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault). Specifically, the report found that from 2017 to 2019, the rate of violent victimization in these crimes against

persons with disabilities was more than 4 times the rate for persons without disabilities.

According to DOJ's Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, several [factors](#) may contribute to an increased risk of being trafficked for persons with disabilities, including:

- Caregivers who take care of the basic needs of individuals with disabilities can take advantage of this dependency and force them into trafficking.
- Some individuals with disabilities may have difficulties with communication and/or speech, making it difficult for them to seek help.
- People with disabilities may be sheltered and isolated and therefore crave connections and relationships, resulting in their being persuaded to engage in commercial sex or forced labor in exchange for money or friendship.
- People with disabilities may be desensitized to physical touch due to isolation or an abundance of medical procedures related to their disability. They may be unaware of their right to object to unwanted touching and unaware of their rights as crime victims ~ *Department of the Interior website*

### To Get Help for Victims

To report your concerns about a potential trafficking situation or get help for a person who may be a victim, contact the following helplines:

- **National Human Trafficking Hotline** - this confidential hotline connects victims with support and services, provides information, and receives tips about potential trafficking situations.
  - 1-888-373-7888
  - If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.
  - Text: 233733
  - <https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org>

---

#### **The Update – Publication Notice**

We are in the process of changing the email server for sending The Update. Many of you did not receive The Update last week and we apologize for the inconvenience. We have included that link this week in your cover email. Archived copies for each year can be found on the [www.mothercabrini.org](http://www.mothercabrini.org) website under the News and Publications tab.

Next week, due to scheduling in the Province Communications Office, The Update *will not* be published. The Update will resume on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Please make all submissions no later than Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at noon to [ncostello@mothercabrini.org](mailto:ncostello@mothercabrini.org) AND [cabrininews@mothercabrini.org](mailto:cabrininews@mothercabrini.org)

Thank you.

## National Shrine of St. Frances Cabrini Develops Partnership with St. Simon of Cyrene Parish

By joining and attending meetings with the Coalition of Spiritual & Public Leadership (CSPL), Sr. Laura Baldini, MSC and Laurie Halaska, Executive Director of the National Shrine, met people from numerous parishes/organizations throughout the Chicago area. One of these individuals was Tanya Ball. Tanya is a very active parishioner of St. Simon of Cyrene. St. Simon of Cyrene is the home of St. Agatha and St. Martin De Porres, where they serve some of the poorest neighbors in the Chicagoland area.



At this past Saturday's Mass, members of St. Simon's attended the Mass at the National Shrine where their Pastor, Fr. Thadeio Mgimba presided.

Through conversations between Sr. Laura and Tanya, a strong friendship and partnership has grown. Sr. Laura and one of our Outreach committee members, Bruno Beccaria, visited St. Simon's to learn about their parish's work to feed and clothe their neighbors. From that visit, our Shrine's Outreach Committee started a diaper/formula drive to help fill the largest need of basic supplies.

At this past Saturday's Mass, members of St Simon's attended our Shrine's Mass where their Pastor, Fr. Thadeio Mgimba presided.

Our Shrine's community donated 43 boxes of diapers containing 1,144 diapers, 21 boxes of wipes totaling 2,000 wipes, 102 different articles of clothing and 36 items for infant care and cleanliness.

When our friends from St. Simon's arrived, they were brought to tears of joy and happiness. Our friendship with St Simon's will continue to grow & flourish in the coming year. ~ submitted by Laurie Halaska, Executive Director, National Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Chicago

# Cabrini Women Embrace STEM During Fascinating Science Lab Activities

At Cabrini High School in New Orleans, science comes to life through engaging, hands-on learning experiences that inspire curiosity and feed the school's increasing number of young women interested in a future in STEM. Under the guidance of Kasey Laird Dennies (Class of 2008), who infuses the class with her passion for science, Human Anatomy students have recently participated in cutting-edge lab activities that explore the inner workings of the body, blending traditional knowledge with interactive technology for a truly immersive educational experience.

These budding scientists kicked off their exploration of the cardiovascular system with the use of EKG (electrocardiogram) machines. The devices provided a fascinating glimpse into how electrical signals keep the heart beating in rhythm. Through real-time monitoring of heart activity, students learned how different factors, such as



**CMG Claw Machine Challenge:** Students used muscle-generated electrical signals to control a robotic claw, merging science and fun in a bioelectricity lab adventure.

physical activity and stress, can affect heart rate and rhythm. Equally exciting was the

use of an EMG (electromyography) claw machine, which allowed students to see how electrical signals from their muscles could control a robotic claw. By attaching electrodes to their arms, students were able to understand the science behind

neuromuscular control and bioelectricity, gaining firsthand experience with how the body communicates and responds. Both the EKG and EMG machines were met with fascination by the girls as they went on bioelectricity lab adventures. **To be continued.**



**EKG Exploration:** Monitoring heart activity during lab sessions showed students how electrical signals maintain heart rhythm and respond to external factors.

*~ submitted by Anne Argus DiPaola, Communications Director, Cabrini High School*



## Continuing the Joy of the Christmas Season

Christmas is truly a special time in our lives. The birth of the Christ-child calls us to share the love and the joy of the season. Several of our children and high schoolers from Cabrini Immigrant Services (CIS), Dobbs Ferry, shared their Christmas joy with the residents at St. Cabrini Nursing Home.



What a jolly group from CIS-Dobbs Ferry, NY came to visit the residents of St. Cabrini Nursing Home bringing Christmas greetings, songs, and a holiday skit. They brought their Christmas cheer and were surprised with a visit from Santa! Everyone had a wonderful time.

The students made special cards for the residents wishing them a wonderful Christmas and New Year. As the children arrived, they shared the cards with the residents. Then, our storyteller, Dr. Wendy Mages, told the story, Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett. The children and the residents enjoyed the story. After the story, the children sang many Christmas songs both in English and Spanish. Following the singing, our high school students put on a skit about 'The Grinch who Didn't Like Christmas.' Everyone did a magnificent job!

What would a Christmas program be without a visit from Santa Claus? The children were so surprised when Santa (a/k/a Kristen McCauley, the Director of Therapeutic Recreation) arrived with gifts for all the children. It was a wonderful afternoon. The sparkle in the children's eyes matched the joy on the faces of the residents. That is what Christmas is all about. May that wonder and joy carry well into this new year for youngsters and the young at heart.



A visit from Santa ALWAYS brings smiles!

*~submitted by Lorraine Campanelli, Director, Cabrini Immigrant Services, Dobbs Ferry, NY*

# Prayer Requests



## ***Children with RSV***

Dr. Candi Sicoli, Professor Emerita at Cabrini University, requests prayer for a friend's great grandchildren who are suffering from RSV. May these youngsters quickly recover.

## ***Nancy Golen***

Please continue your prayers for Nancy as she recovers from surgery. We know she appreciates your prayerful support.

## ***Emily Gudas***

In last week's Update we shared the good news that after 125 days in the hospital, college student Emily had been discharged on New Year's Eve. Unfortunately, her time at home was brief. She is back in the hospital and has undergone another surgical procedure at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Please pray that the medical staff can relieve her pain and pinpoint the source of her ongoing illness. Please pray for her parents and sister as they accompany Emily.

## ***Josephine Ruopoli Napoli***

Your prayers are requested for Josephine Ruopoli Napoli who is in hospice at home. Please pray for her comfort and serenity at this time. Josephine is a cousin of Sr. Antonina Avitabile, MSC.

# In Loving Memory



## ***Lorraine Kester Avitabile***

Sr. Antonina Avitabile, MSC requests prayers for Lorraine Kester Avitabile who passed away this week. Lorraine was a cousin by marriage. She was a good woman, gentle kind, caring and prayerful. May she Rest in Peace. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

## ***Anne Iskrant***

Your prayers are requested for Anne Iskrant, former faculty member at Cabrini University who passed away recently. Anne was devoted to her students. May she rest in God's eternal light.