

“A Nano Moment”

The Presentation Sisters always inspired total trust in God. As an Associate in San Antonio, Texas, I desired to experience this trust for myself by working with sisters in Africa in 2001. Sr. Wiona Engel, the Congregational Leader at the time, connected me with Sr. Sheila Sheehy in Zambia, and I was invited to live with Sr. Mary Brennan in the Chipata Compound, a slum area in Lusaka, to teach English to the students there. This work certainly fulfilled Nano Nagle’s desire for the Sisters to work with the poorest of the poor! While there, I was inspired to set up a class for Special Needs children living in the compound. Through Sr. Mary’s networking with a physical therapist who had visited all the sandstone huts in the compound, she discovered there were several children with disabilities (cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and mild retardation) left in the huts and never allowed to go to school. Our challenge was to set up a classroom to accommodate these children so they could have an opportunity to learn. A real “Nano Moment”—an elevated experience—occurred as we watched these precious children come to school with their piece of bread in a small bag and a big smile. Through the generosity of people Sr. Mary had contacted, we provided them with a hot breakfast of porridge and carpeting to sit on, since several of them were unable to sit at a desk. This ministry continues today. -Mary Jo Quinn



NANO of Watts

On Christmas Eve, 2020, the anniversary of the founding of the Presentation Sisters, Erandi arrived at our door to present us with a gorgeous portrait she had painted of Nano. Erandi is a 20-year-old Friend of Nano and a volunteer at Presentation Learning Center in Watts, California. She is finishing her second year of college and is a natural-born artist. Erandi is an immigrant from Mexico, currently in the DACA (Deferred Action for Child Arrivals) program. No words can begin to describe the joy her gift brought us. It was in the middle of the worst surge of COVID in Los Angeles, and all was dark around us. Many we know were sick, some had died, and the majority were out of work. To have Nano come into our home on the night of the birth of our Lord, who “pitched his tent among us,” and on the anniversary of the founding of the Presentation Sisters was a true grace from God. We heard Nano and Jesus saying, “Don’t be afraid. I am with you.” Please remember Erandi and all the other young adults in the United States who are counting on immigration reform.

From Sisters Jane Bonar and Catherine Burke in Los Angeles, California



Farewell to a Sacred Home

On November 18, 2020, ten Presentation Sisters and twenty Friends of Nano gathered on the Presentation Convent grounds at 8931 Callaghan Road, to pay homage to nearly 70 years of history which the site represents for so many San Antonio residents who attended (pre-)kindergarten there and visited their beloved sisters in their beautiful home, bequeathed by the Judd family decades ago. All gathered marked the seventh day of the Presentation Novena with scripture, music and prayer. Then Mary Jo Quinn and Cary Lochte recounted some engaging memories, and we raised a glass in honor of the convent, the sisters, the congregation, and the awesome founder Nano Nagle as well. Cynthia Jasso, the director of the Presentation Ministry Center (PMC), joined us and shared an update on the Center's activities during the pandemic. The PMC, on the west side of the city, where Sister Mary Margaret Barrett ministered for many years, provides many free services to immigrants in the community and will remain a living tribute to the work of the sisters. They also left their mark in numerous other parishes, where some still serve. However, the loss of the convent as their common home marks a momentous occasion, as this was the place Saint Mother Teresa slept when she visited San Antonio in 1976. The ceremony fittingly concluded with "One Step Beyond." While the lights may go out at this historic site, the lanterns brought from Ireland by the first three Presentation sisters in 1952 have multiplied exponentially and will be carried into all corners of the city and the globe by all who embrace the charism of Nano Nagle.

