Wow! Thanks to your generosity, the Dominican Life Center (DLC) Reflective Garden is a reality! Over the last several months, we have been completely overwhelmed by your kindness and support for this very important project. Thank you for helping us to reach – and exceed – our goal of $150,000. You are amazing!

Because of your generosity, our elderly Sisters will now have a beautiful and safe place to enjoy the outdoors. This edition of our newsletter is dedicated to all of you who helped make the DLC Reflective Garden come to life.

We’ve received so many thoughtful comments about the reflective garden.

One benefactor wrote, “One of my greatest pleasures every time I come to Adrian is being able to walk the grounds. How can I not give the same gift to others?”

Another said, “What a wonderful idea! I’m sure my aunt, an Adrian Dominican Sister now deceased, is smiling down upon you. She was a farm girl and would have loved the garden.”

I’ve had the opportunity over the last few weeks to take Sisters on a tour of the garden. Watching their faces as they take in the flowers, the benches, the paver stones and each of the amazing details has brought me true joy. One Sister said, “I feel so safe!” Another said with tears in her eyes, “This is ours? This space is for us? Please thank each and every person that made this possible. I’m so happy.”

We are blessed by your goodness and thank each and every one of you for your kindness to our Sisters.

We hope you can join us for the Dedication on August 25. If not, stop by another time! Come and see what you’ve made possible for our Sisters.

Amy Palmer, MA, CFRE
Director of Development

Reflective Garden Dedication

Please join us at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 25 for the dedication of the Dominican Life Center Reflective Garden. The formal dedication will be followed by refreshments and the opportunity to explore the beautiful garden that you have helped us to create through your generous support. RSVP to Jolene Witt at 517-266-3480 or JoWitt@adriandominicans.org. The dedication will be videotaped and posted on our website for those of you who are unable to attend in person.
The DLC Reflective Garden was designed by a local Motherhouse campus committee in partnership with Adrian Design Group, specifically to meet the needs of Sisters with dementia.

- The vinyl fence surrounding the garden is high and solid, providing a safe enclosure and keeping the Sisters from being distracted by outside activities.
- Seating along the garden’s walking path provides ample resting places. A sealant prevents the metal furniture from getting hot, and center armrests make it easier to get into and out of the benches.
- Accessibility is key. Six-foot wide walkways add to stability, and handicap-accessible raised garden beds allow the Sisters to be involved in planting.
- A sensory garden with carefully selected, colorful plants, brings a sense of calm to the Sisters. Some, such as lavender, mint, and sage, are aromatic.
- Plants were also chosen to attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
- The main path was created as a simple loop, leading the Sisters along a journey of colorful plants and then returning them to where they began.

As our generous donors continue to contribute funds for the DLC Reflective Garden – and as plans are underway for a formal dedication on August 25 – Adrian Dominican Sisters who reside at the DLC are already coming to appreciate this new addition to their home.

“This is a place of solace and quiet and meditation, just to appreciate the beauty of nature,” said Sister Mary Schmagner, OP. “I find it a great source of joy just to look around and find something growing. Everything is green and very welcoming.”

“There’s beauty all around the garden,” added Sister Margaret “Marge” Mehigan, OP. “Beauty comes from our Creator and it’s the center of what we’re all about.”

Sister Marge believes the reflective garden will be a great place to come with a book, while Sister Mary sees it as an ideal place for small groups to...
gather. “We’re all creative women,” she noted. “We could come up with different ways to enjoy this garden.”

The garden brings joy and comfort to Sisters in what in many ways is a difficult time of life – reminding them of the God who created them and loves them. “This is a dream come true for me,” Sister Marge said.

She also ministered in the DLC – for eight years in occupational therapy and then as a nursing assistant until her retirement in 1999. She frequently visited other Sisters, especially those suffering from dementia or other ills.

Dr. Pigott believes that the plaque is an especially fitting way to remember and honor her aunt. It represents the generous donation of 14 family members – nieces, nephews, and brothers-in-law – from six states. “Some went above and beyond the $25 I asked for because they wanted to be part of the legacy.”

Dr. Pigott highly recommends making donations to the DLC Reflective Garden in memory of a beloved Adrian Dominican Sister. “I think it’s an incredible way to honor them.”

Memorial of Beloved Sister Benefits Adrian Dominicans

Judy Shepherd, a 1966 graduate of St. Joseph Academy in Adrian with long ties to the Adrian Dominican Congregation, found those ties deepening when her sister, Gretchen Greening (formerly an Adrian Dominican Sister), died in April 2016 at the age of 70. Because of the family’s connection to the Congregation, Gretchen’s love for nature, and the family’s long-time nursery business in Monroe, Michigan, they asked that Gretchen’s memorial gifts be used for the DLC Reflective Garden.

As an Adrian Dominican Sister, Gretchen was a teacher and lay minister, a musician, and an

Sister’s Family Pays Tribute through Plaque in Garden

The family members of Sister Theresa Martin Pigott, OP, will always miss and remember her, the “connector” of the family. Now, thanks to the generous donation of Sister Theresa’s family members, visitors to the DLC Reflective Garden will see her name on a plaque in the butterfly garden – and know of their deep love for her. “She gave so much of her life to God and to the service of the Church and the Adrian Dominican Sisters that I want her name somewhere for eternity,” said Dr. Theresa Pigott, her niece.

Before she died in 2015 at the age of 92, Sister Theresa Martin was still alert and ready to help her family in any way. She served as a teacher, and later as a certified occupational therapist.
Among the paver stones in the new DLC Reflective Garden is one that looks quite like the others – but carries with it the esteem and gratitude of Adrian Dominican Associates based in St. Louis, Missouri, for the four Adrian Dominican Sisters who helped to form them as a committed group of Dominicans in their own right.

“The paver stone offers gratitude to Sisters Peggy Coyne, Joan Delaplane, Maribeth Howell, and Patricia Walter. The Sisters had ministered in St. Louis and had helped to foster the St. Louis Associates. They have since left the area for ministries elsewhere, but the group of Associates continues. The Associates meet monthly with the guidance of Sister Joan, who attends the meetings through Skype and who offers spring and fall days of reflection in St. Louis.

The gift is “a permanent, lasting way that we can let them know how much we appreciate their spiritual guidance, their support of our formation, and their encouragement,” said Dee Joyner, Chair of the Congregation’s Portfolio Advisory Board and one of the 12 St. Louis Associates.

Associates are women and men, at least 18 years of age, who make a non-vowed commitment to the Adrian Dominican Sisters and to the Mission and Vision of the Congregation. In many cases, Associates are integrated into mission groups and ministries with the Sisters. But a growing number of Associates throughout the United States have formed “Sojourner” groups predominantly made up of Associates.