



WOMEN'S RESPITE PROGRAM

Refreshing Bodies

Restoring Hope

Renewing Spirits

Volume 30, Issue 1

Sponsored by the
Sisters of St. Francis
at Stella Niagara, NY

The Women's Respite Program provides women in need with opportunities for rest and renewal in a safe, comfortable and healing environment.

The Women's Respite Program has weekend programs for mothers with low income, women with cancer, grandmothers (or kin) raising their grandchildren, and women raising children on the autism spectrum.

2026 postcards

Spring newsletter



What a joy to host 18 women (not all in photo) in February! Seven were joining us for the first time. Some women were in remission from cancer; some in active treatment; all were wonderful. In this pic, they had just completed forming a web of yarn to symbolize our connectedness to one another.

When we pause, we are able to observe our interdependence— from a harvest taken from the soil by a stranger's hands to the electrician who keeps the lights on. We are surrounded by the abundance we create for each other.

Joe Primo, CEO
of Grateful Living



Eighteen alums enjoyed a March weekend respite. All had originally attended a summer program. They got to rest, shop, use the pool, and best of all, be reminded that they are not alone.

More postcards



In April, we hosted 17 grandmothers, two aunts, and a great grandmother raising their grandchildren, a niece, a nephew, and a great grandchild. Thanks to Catholic Charities Kinship Program, we often serve women from the Southern Tier, including this year. We're happy they are willing and able to make the drive.



When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control the way you are responding to what's happening. That's where the power is.

This quote is often attributed to Viktor Frankl or Lisa Nichols, sometimes even to Epictetus who lived in the 1st century AD.



We get to use the pool this year!
Special thanks to Stella Niagara Education Park for letting us use it.
Extra special thanks to the Center of Renewal for finding us a lifeguard.



Special Guests

The two women standing on the right and middle are siblings Joan Malone and Lynn Rice. For more than two decades, they have provided the Respite Program with door prizes that everyone receives on Sunday before they leave. Before passing away, their sisters Pat and Kathy and friend Pru were part of the door prize gifting.

We were delighted that Joan (far right) and Lynn (middle) could join us for lunch in April and spend some time with the grandmothers, an afternoon they thoroughly enjoyed.

Joan and Lynn, thank you for the many years of generosity.



On a scale of 1 to 10, the Respite Program got a lot of 10s thus far this year. Here's why the women gave us that rating on their evaluation forms.

"Because of the camaraderie of other women, being able to relate with each other without any negative judgment."

"Because the staff, the environment, the people were awesome."

"Because I feel so blessed and renewed in every way."

"Because everything was great."

"Because it was much needed self-care and a relaxing weekend."

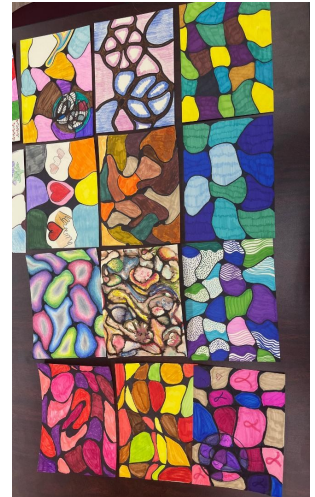
"Because all my accommodations and experiences this weekend were fantastic. The people, the atmosphere, the food, the grounds. Wonderful weekend overall."

"Because being here gives me the peace I need."



Just about everyone says they come to the Respite Program to rest and relax. At a closing meeting this year, one woman told us she came to have fun and laugh. Did she succeed? You bet! We hope she also got some rest and relaxation.

We were so happy to welcome back our great crafter cum art therapist, Barb Murak. In February, she taught the women to make neuro-graphic art, a soothing technique that involves drawing chaotic lines on paper, "rounding" all intersecting corners to create a smooth, connected web, and adding color. This pic shows 12 different blocks by 12 artists.



The Mosaic by Gerdine Wilson

A torn piece here
broken piece there
A life nearly shattered
pieces everywhere.
Sleepless nights
Tear-filled eyes
Each one gathered
Has uttered a cry.
Cries of anger
Of rejection too
A myriad of emotions
press their way through.
Mishandled, neglected
pushed to the brink of gloom
There are so many pieces
gathered in this room.
Each piece but a reflection
of stories yet untold
Like pieces to a mosaic
Such beauty to behold.
Colors of resilience
Determined to stand
No longer willing
to make failure the plan.

So many broken pieces
Many colors to display
Speak mosaic speak!
You have somethings to say.
Each woman gathered
through brokenness has stood
Having weathered more storms
than you thought you could.
Like the tiles in a mosaic
with beautiful colors to show
We create a picture
and don't even know.
Tear-colored tiles
mixed with smiles, too
Come now Sister
Show the tile in you.
Mix your color with mine
Let love be our glue
Before we know it
A mosaic's in view.
A vast array of colors
It's a beautiful design
We make quite the picture
your shapes, colors, and mine!

Ms Wilson has attended many Respite weekends. In March, the craft was making paper mosaics which inspired her to write this poem. Reprinted here with her permission.

Moving? Got a new number?

Remember to send us your new numbers.

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Things you can control

1. Your attitude
2. Your words
3. Your manners
4. Your actions
5. Your efforts

Two more Respite Program Weekends This Year

To attend, women must be at least 25 years of age. We give priority to women with low income. Anyone with alcohol or substance issues must be sober for one solid year. All attending must find their own childcare.

Moms with limited financial resources

June 12 to 14

The June program is for women who have never attended before. The deadline to apply is May 22. Besides the application, you will need a written referral from a professional who knows you.

Women raising children on the autism spectrum

Sept 25 to 27

If you are an awesome mom who has been to a weekend before, expect an application by mail in mid August. If you are raising a child on the spectrum and have not attended, please inquire.

Call for information or an application: 716/877-6896.

Stay for One-Night Offer

Would you like some quiet time to yourself for a day and a night? Maybe it's time you took advantage of this offer. The Respite Program will cover the cost of your room for one night plus up to four meals at the Center of Renewal (COR). It's possible that we could help with transportation depending on where you live. Two or three alums can come at one time. If you'd like to

extend your stay, you can pay the additional cost.

This is NOT a Respite Program; you will have to entertain yourself. There are the beautiful grounds for walking and free wifi. We recommend making a reservation at least two weeks in advance. You can stay during the week or on the weekend as long as COR has a room. You must call Teresa for a reservation; have some dates in mind: 716/877-6896.

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