Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Office of IHM Mission Advancement
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...our mission: to evangelize, to catechize, to teach



For Maureen and John Rizzo, support for the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) is rooted in family, faith, and a lifetime of meaningful connections to the congregation.

Maureen's earliest connection to the IHMs came through her aunt, Sister Regina Bernadette. Known simply as "Aunt Dorothy" to her family, Sister Regina Bernadette provided Maureen with her first introduction to the IHM community and its values of service, education, and faith.

Growing up, Maureen was also taught by many IHMs, experiences that helped shape her appreciation for the congregation's dedication to Catholic education. One of her favorite memories dates to her freshman year at Archbishop Prendergast High School.

After her family moved, Maureen prepared to begin high school and discovered that her Aunt Dorothy was one of two Introduction to Physical Science teachers. The prospect of having her aunt as a teacher left her more than a little nervous.

"I was panicked thinking I would wind up with my aunt as my teacher," Maureen recalls with a laugh. "I knew it would be a no-win situation." She was assigned to the other science teacher, much to her relief.

Those family ties continue today through Maureen's younger sister, Sister Eileen Tiernan, IHM, who serves as Director of Religious Education at St. Patrick Parish in Malvern. Having a sister in the congregation has made the IHM mission even more personal.

"I often tease that we donate to the community so the IHMs keep my sister and don't give her back," Maureen jokes.

Beyond her family connections, Maureen also spent several years working as a nurse at Camilla Hall, where she witnessed firsthand the care provided to retired IHM Sisters and the vibrant

community that exists within its walls. The experience gave her an even deeper appreciation for the women who had dedicated their lives to serving others.

For John, who oversees the couple's charitable giving decisions, the support they provide reflects their shared belief in the congregation's mission and values. This year, that support included a generous stock gift to the congregation, a meaningful investment in a community they deeply value and trust. Together, they see their philanthropy as a way to help ensure that the Sisters can continue their ministries of education, spiritual leadership, and service well into the future.

Earlier this year, the Rizzos had the opportunity to enjoy a special tour of the Villa Maria House of Studies Heritage Room and the beautiful Sacred Heart Chapel. The visit offered a deeper glimpse into the congregation's rich history, traditions, and mission. The Sisters welcome visitors who would like to learn more about the congregation, and tours of these special spaces are available to anyone interested in exploring the heritage and legacy of the IHMs firsthand.

The Rizzos admire the Sisters' ability to embrace progress while remaining firmly rooted in their core values and commitment to the Gospel. They believe the congregation's witness is especially important in today's world, where messages of hope, peace, and faith are needed more than ever.

From family ties and Catholic education to ministry and service, the IHM Sisters have touched nearly every chapter of Maureen and John's lives. Their continued support is both a gesture of gratitude and a vote of confidence in the congregation's future.

As Maureen reflects on why she and John choose to support the IHMs, she says it best:

"My husband and I feel that the IHMs are an organization worthy of our charitable dollars. They continue to proclaim the message, peace, and hope of our Jesus. And in today's world, that's not always an easy task."