

Testimonials

The Enriching Lives Ministry has made a difference in so many people's lives. The number of smiles that break out when a nursing home resident receives a card in the mail or a visit from one of volunteers is incredible. The joy that we bring by giving others a ride to mass. The relief our volunteers bring by giving care givers a break and by doing simple tasks around the house is such a blessing. The list goes on and on.

People join the Enriching Lives Ministry for a variety of reasons. Sometimes a friend has invited another to help at an event. Often another group at church helps out with a particular task. Maybe a plea in the Bulletin caught someone's eye, and he realized this was something he could do to help in a small way. Mostly God found a way to call these generous people to step forward.

Here's our chance to share how the Holy Cross Enriching Lives Ministry has had a positive influence on others:

Why I Began the *Enriching Lives Ministry*

I had a very rough life as a youngster but somehow God was always there in my heart. I believe there were two reasons for growing up with God in my heart. First, my parents always went to daily Mass and Communion and my father always talked often to me about God. Second, I grew up under the influence of priests both as an altar boy at my parish and as a co-sports fanatic with a priest at a smaller parish. My story continues with my marriage to a sure-to-be saint in Heaven. In her simple ways, my wife, Lois, made sure God stayed in my heart! All through my life I wanted to help the less fortunate. I'm sure God had 100% to do with that. About 10 to 15 years before my retirement from Fermilab, I developed a much stronger urge to do something very significant to help needy people. This lasted until I joined St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP). After a few years in SVdP, although the organization helped the needy, I wanted to do more for the needy. My wife and I talked often about this. She suggested I start a ministry to help the elderly. I did and this ministry became the *Enriching Lives Ministry* (ELM). Soon after ELM started, I kept hearing of others in need and ELM soon expanded to help anyone in need. Today, ELM is as much a part of me as is my family. I have truly been blessed over and over again by this ministry. I've cried happy tears many, many times at the compassionate love so many ELM members have shown to the needy. My hope and prayer is that this ministry become both a ministry for our whole parish and that other parishes, Catholic or otherwise, begin a similar ministry. *Ed B*

Volunteer: I joined the ELM in 2008 when I first moved to Batavia. I wanted to help and meet people in the area. I started helping with Bingo at Batavia Rehab. Then I started being a card sender. My husband and I helped with the bus service for a short period of time. We joined the Rosary Crusade. I coordinated the card-sending ministry. As our family situation changed, my volunteer activities changed. I learned that I am a behind the scenes type of person, and God has given me strengths to help in that capacity for now. Praying my part of the Rosary Crusade each day, is a special time of my day to get focused on what's important and to think of others. I love knowing I'm praying with other people with the same prayer intentions. I feel God has led me to help by sharing our message to get more volunteers and to let people know we are here to help and bring joy to their lives. *Kay D*

Through the years many of you have baked goodies on special occasions for God's special people at Batavia Rehab. I wanted to share two pictures from their Valentines Day party (see attachments). You 'made their day'. God bless every one of you. I love this ministry! *Ed*



Words from a Lady Who was Helped by ELM Volunteers

I want to thank all of you for sending me beautiful cards, remembrances, thoughts, and prayers. I think that many times you may feel that this is unappreciated, and I am here to say that it makes a big difference in my little life. Every time I open a card that I've received, my heart is lifted, and I know that you are thinking of me and sending prayers. I can't tell you what that means to me now. I would never have imagined that it would mean so much, before my disability. When I am not able to come to church, you bring God's love to me.

As much as is in my power, I send you blessings and prayers of gratitude with love. Thank you doesn't seem like enough. Enriching Lives Ministry volunteers have gotten me through ten days without a caregiver, helping me with personal care, housekeeping, and shopping. You continue to be there for me in times of need, and to give me great peace of mind. I have had the privilege of meeting and knowing several fine ladies who have

come to help me. Thanks so much Enriching Lives Ministry volunteers for being there for me when no one else was, and for getting me through rough times. God bless you all.

Janeen C

My son, daughter and I were bus assistants on Oct 13th. During that time we were chatting with the riders and one enthusiastically shared "what a great program this transportation ride is for us". She expressed how grateful she is to have a means to getting to church. Another rider said "yes, just wonderful. We have communion brought to our facility, but it is so nice to be able to get out of the building and actually attend service at the church."

I shared how great that is to hear. -*Monica*



I have started visiting someone at Batavia Rehab. Although I've only visited twice so far every single time I go she lights up! She is delighted to have someone there only for her. Someone who wants to talk with her and spend even a few short minutes with her. What a great feeling - as a volunteer - to have someone 'waiting to see me'!! *Monica*

I do not have specific people to write about, or a special story to tell.

My moving experience has been in all the love and 'giving' of prayer on the behalf of so many people in need. It humbles me in that so many people really need our prayers and the prayer intentions that keep come in are for healing, peace, discernment and divine intervention for the people they know, love and care about. There are so many of us with stress, hardship, illness and pain and it warms my heart and humbles my soul to know we are making a difference in one another's lives. *Arlette*

About a year ago my mom and I started sending cards to seniors at the Holmstad and North Aurora Care Center. My mom is the best at sending out cards, so I thought this would be a great way for her to brighten someone's day. Also, it's something we can do together. We send out monthly cards and birthday cards to our ten senior friends. Recently I had my 13 yr. old start sending out cards as a service to others in making his confirmation. It's a good feeling knowing that a simple card can brighten someone's day. Thanks, *Lisa Tracy*



I have known E... for so long, it's hard for me to write anything. I hope this is useful - if not, tell me what I need to 'fix'. BTW, she called me today. She is with her grandkids for the next few days. I think she returns on Saturday. She told me she had a fall just before she left so her leg is messed up. Along with the 7 stitches in her arm from the surgery. I want to roll her up in bubble wrap! *Andrea*

I have been visiting E... for about two years. She suffers greatly from the seizures that began after an auto accident a few years ago. When I first met her, she rarely accepted visitors and was very lonely. We steadily became close friends during our weekly visits. Sometimes we paint or go shopping, and other times we just sit and talk. She has taught me a lot about courage with the way she faces her challenges head-on. Our friendship is something very special and I am so grateful for ELM introducing us to each other. *Andrea*

Here's one of the wonderful experiences I've had by working in the enriching lives ministry.

It is always a joy to visit with the elderly at the Batavia Rehab center. The residents I have visited have been a pleasure to talk to; even the ones who were a bit forgetful seemed to remember old stories. There was a sweet woman named R... who I used to visit. Though she was on the forgetful side, I didn't mind hearing the same stories being told to me because R... seemed so happy to have the company. She would listen intently to my stories, too, and we would laugh over the humorous ones often. Though R... has passed on, she taught me patience and how to listen to others; I encourage anyone who likes to brighten other people's days to consider joining the Enriching Lives Ministry. --
Sabrina Lau



Thank you so much for all that you do! The opportunities to minister through Enriching Lives are endless and they are all so wonderful!

I am part of the card sending brigade and the Rosary crusade. These are easy and yet such impacting parts of this ministry. Every day when I pray for the current Rosary crusade intention, I am taken aback by the impact of so many people praying the same day for the same thing! Oh, how God has to hear those prayers! What a Catholic, Christ centered thing to do! We all join together to pray and be unified in love of each other! AWESOME!! I travel for a living and I have begun collecting post cards from my various destinations to send to my assigned seniors. I can't tell you the joy that I receive in sending these simple cards. It gives me a chance to pray, to minister in such a small way no matter where I am!!

Many blessings to you and your family, *Peggy Young*

I joined Enriching Lives Ministry to get my kids more involved and to try to follow in my mother's footsteps. We started with writing letters to people in local nursing homes. I remembered visiting my grandmother when I was younger and seeing such happiness a simple card or picture brought to her face. We found happiness in the thought of sending a smile to our new friends. We were overjoyed when one person's daughter wrote back to us and conveyed how much her mother enjoyed our message. We also visited a special lady at Batavia Rehab Center. Having one grandma who lives out of state, my daughters enjoyed having another grandmotherly figure in their lives. I am grateful that ELM has allowed me to brighten the day of special people and teach an invaluable lesson to my children. Please consider donating a small amount of time and make a big difference in someone's life. *Maureen Walrath*

When I joined the ELM I had no idea what to expect and quite frankly was a little unsure of myself when I received my first match with a senior at Heritage Woods.

I was so concerned about what I would say, if I had anything to say, if I would be "a positive" in this persons' life and so on and so on....

The night before I was to visit a frail woman with Parkinson's, I prayed to the Holy Spirit

to be with me and give me the words I needed to be able to connect with her.

The next day after work I entered Heritage Woods where I began my mission to represent Holy Cross and the ELM ministry! I knocked on the door and stood before the sweetest frail individual who immediately apologized because she was afraid to meet me - she said had nothing to say, she had no life within the walls of Heritage Woods and was slow in speech. She confessed that she was going to call and cancel because she didn't want to waste my time.

I sat down, looked around the room to find clues as to who she was and what her life had been before. I noticed a beautiful antique hat pinned to the wall with a wedding photo of her and her husband. I love antiques and times past and the stories that might be attached to such treasured item.

I made a comment about the "beautiful hat" and handsome man in the army uniform. Those were the words that - opened the door and took us on a journey of a young woman who met and married this handsome young man. She lived in Germany, and met a US soldier...and so the story began to unfold .

I didn't need to talk, all I needed to do was listen. An hour and half went by before we said our good-byes. I felt so good, so happy and so connected to someone I had never met before. She let me into her life and just wanted to talk about those days. It was precious and it was a treasure for me.

Our seniors just want to be heard, most of them just want to reminisce about days gone by. I sometimes feel like I'm cheating because I enjoy my time with the seniors and get more out of the visits than I feel I put in. *Carol Trator*

My teenage daughter and I have been visiting a senior in an assisted living facility for almost two years. Our visits are brief but always delightful as "our senior" is a fascinating person with lots of stories to tell. We always leave in good moods and look forward to future visits! All of the other residents seem genuinely happy to see us and especially my daughter – they love children!! *Anonymous*

A little feed back for our Rosary Crusaders....after two years on the market I asked the Rosary Crusade to help me pray for my grandma to finally sell her home in Florida, and for my mom to sell her house in Elburn so the two of them can find a home near our church and live together. I was humbled and amazed when my prayer was answered. They both sold and closed the same week! I'm thrilled to report they are living together now in a nice home near our church. I can't thank you enough for all your prayers.

Now, last Friday my grandma landed herself in the hospital with a perforated stomach ulcer which required immediate surgery. She was asleep in bed crying in excruciating pain. I can't help but think...if she were still in Florida when this happened it could have turned out differently. I thank God she was home and my mom was home with her. Please add her name to the Rosary Crusade, she could use a few more of your loving prayers, to get her strength back so she can be home for the holidays with all her family. Thank you and God Bless, *Anonymou*



I love being a part of the ELM; Rosary Crusade. When this ministry first started in 2010 I felt pulled into seeking a closer relationship with God. I wanted a deeper connection with Jesus and to know Mary, Our Lady of Grace, on a more intimate level. I also felt drawn to help others and make an impact in their lives but my time was very limited. This ministry takes up five minutes of my day and it has changed my life.

My prayers are deeper and it humbles to me to know there are so many people in our community with needs. Many are living in fear, with sadness, frustration or desperation. They have great needs and desires, and I love that so many Rosary Crusaders are willing to offer them prayers of hope. Although we don't always get feedback of the outcome for each prayer intention, when we do it is often heartwarming. It is good to know we Rosary Crusaders are all in communion with the Holy Spirit together, even when we pray in our own time and space, we are all making a difference in one another's lives through prayer.

God Bless, *Arlette*