



Home » Home Page » Knights bring Christmas joy to Precious Blood Sisters for 40 years

HOME PAGE / LOCAL NEWS

KNIGHTS BRING CHRISTMAS JOY TO PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS FOR 40 YEARS

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DAYTON – (Dec. 20, 2016) – As he makes his rounds each December, Santa never forgets the Precious Blood Sisters at the Maria Joseph Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Dayton.

On the Saturday before Christmas, Santa and several of his elves roam the third floor of the center’s Emma Hall handing out cookies and nuts to the Sisters and other residents who live there.

Santa and his helpers are from the Knights of Columbus chapter 4587 at Our Lady of Good Hope Parish in Miamisburg. Parishioners bake and bag the cookies a few days before Christmas. It’s a routine that’s been going on for nearly 40 years.

Like most traditions, the annual visit got its start as a simple gesture.

In the late 1970s Warren Gooley, a teacher at Bishop Leibold School in Dayton and a member of Good Hope parish Knights of Columbus, pulled together a group of girl scouts from the school and took oranges to the Sisters of the Precious Blood at Maria Joseph as Christmas gifts. The Maria Joseph Center serves as the infirmary for the congregation.

“That was the seed of it,” said Bill Brunner, a member of the Knights who has headed up the project for years. “Warren came back and told us how much joy the trip with the students meant to the Sisters.”

After a few years, Gooley moved away and Knights took over.

“We have been going up there since,” Brunner said. “The Sisters get such a big kick out of it.”

Brunner and the Stebelton family has been there from the begin-



Sister Marjorie Huelsman is all smiles during a visit with Santa at the Maria Joseph Center in Dayton. (Courtesy Photo)

ning. Roger Stebelton, now deceased, was the original Santa and loved the trip to Maria Joseph. Roger’s son, Randy, now plays Santa. This year, three generations of Stebeltons were part of the visit.

“It’s quite a feeling to go serve those who have been serving,” Brunner said. “You walk away feeling that you’ve done some good. And they are so appreciative.”

Story provided by Sisters of the Precious Blood