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# Around the Neighborhood

## Investor Profile

### Blending Justice, Peace and Housing Under "One Roof"

*This is one in a series of articles profiling Member Investors of the Leviticus Fund and their support of community development efforts.*

On any given day, the York Street Project in Jersey City, New Jersey is awash in the sights and sounds of life: toddlers and children scurrying to early education classrooms while their mothers head-off to their own job-readiness or high school-level training. The dual focus on education for both children and their moms is not uncommon for a nonprofit agency. Yet what sets the program apart is its broad and bold attention to the housing, education and child-care needs of homeless mothers and

their children under one roof.

York Street Project is the passionate work of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace in the Eastern U.S., headquartered in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. It is just one of 11 sponsored ministries of the congregation, which is also recognized for its work at Holy Name Hospital, a 361-bed acute care facility in Teaneck, New Jersey.

The Sisters of St. Joseph are long-standing Member Investors with the Leviticus Fund and see a strong link between their investment and the congregation's commitment to peace and its work with the poor.

"People often refer to us as the 'Peace Sisters,'" explained Sr. Margaret Jane Kling, who recently ended her term as Province Councillor for the Sisters of St. Joseph. "From the start we have worked with the poor, especially with women and children and our founder had a particular concern for the situation of immigrant women."

Margaret Anna Cusack, known as Sr. Francis Clare, founded the congregation in January 1884 in Nottingham, England. She was a gifted writer who authored numerous books and articles on the social issues of her day, and publicly denounced abuses in housing and education that forced the poor – especially women and their children – to remain in degrading poverty.

When Sr. Francis traveled to the United States some ten months later, she quickly realized that her new surroundings mirrored much of the same



*YWCA residents display their creativity at an Ikebana flower arrangement workshop.*

## Borrower Profile

### "Green" Renovations to Enhance Housing Program

The YWCA of White Plains & Central Westchester prides itself on the diversity of both its programs and the women and children it serves. Steeped in an 80-year-old mission to eliminate racism and empower women, the YW offers a full-range of community-based programs. These include a nursery school, full-day childcare, after school and teen programs, summer camp, aquatics, gymnastics, and a fitness center.

One long-standing program is the agency's residential housing services for low-income women. First started in 1930, in an earlier era of economic instability, the YW's housing facilities were very modest; two small homes sheltered five women in need. In 1967 the residences transitioned to a permanent facility when the Presbyterian Church donated the historic, Tudor-style Kennedy Duncan Building on North Broadway in White Plains. Further expansion five years later added a second, adjacent building, Acheson Wallace Hall, to create a

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*Kenmare High School is one of four inter-related programs within the York Street Project, which focuses on housing, childcare and adult education for low-income women in Jersey City, New Jersey.*

## Under "One Roof" Continued from page 1

squalor and suffering she had seen in England and Ireland. Her hope was to establish a home for emigrant and working women. The Jersey City site was one of the first properties purchased to launch the congregation's new work.

Many years later, when the Sisters of St. Joseph re-examined their existing ministries and property in Jersey City, a decision was made to create something new, yet rooted in a timeless understanding of how homelessness and poverty are bound together.

The congregation established the York Street Project in 1989 and financed the buildings' extensive renovations with proceeds from the sale of its former orphanage, St. Joseph's Village.

The historic York Street site is now home to: the Kenmare Alternative High School for Women, a fully accredited program offering secondary-level classes and job training for women between 17-35 years of age; St. Joseph's Home, a transitional housing program for homeless women and children with capacity for between 21-23 families; The Nurturing Place, an early education program for the children of the mothers in Kenmare High School and St. Joseph's Home; and St. Mary's Residence, which provides residence to 53 single, working women with limited income. St. Mary's actually pre-dates the York Street Project and was founded in 1902 to provide shelter to newly-arriving Irish immigrant women. Sr. Ann Taylor, CSJP, who served on Leviticus' Board of

Directors in the mid-90's, was York Street's first executive director.

"Housing continues to be the most critical need for the poor," explained Sr. Kristin Funari, CSJP, who has served as York Street's Executive Director for the past seven years. "But you cannot only deal with one piece of the pie. Without an education, there is no movement out of poverty."



*Sr. Kristin Funari enjoys visiting one of the toddlers at The Nurturing Place, an accredited child development center for children from four months to 10 years of age.*

Sr. Kristin credits the residents of Jersey City with helping define the York Street Project and the Sisters with being good listeners. "It is the poor that dictated the programs," she explained. "We need to read the signs of the time and we need to listen to the poor. They know what they need."

The needs voiced by residents pointed York Street in the direction of providing housing, education and childhood development simultaneously. As Sr. Kristin explains, for a

mother to support herself and her children she needs a good job, and she can only get one if she has a solid education. In order to get that education, a mother needs a decent place to live and someone trustworthy to care for her children while she is working or going to school.

"Most of these women have been homeless for most of their lives. Their families are much more fragile," Sr. Kristin said. "How can children learn when they are moving all the time; when a child sees his mother depressed and always crying?"

"Housing brings safety. Housing brings stability," she added. "It takes about six months and you take that pressure off and you begin to see the smile. You see a change in the mom. No one has sat down with them and asked them what their goals are, what are their dreams and plans. We plant the seed."

Planting the seeds for peace in family life, the church and society is a thread that weaves through all of the ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. It is also what guides the congregation in how it utilizes its financial resources.

"We are pleased to be able to invest in Leviticus and hope we can continue that well into the future," said Sr. Margaret Jane. "I have read what you are doing in housing. Housing is so critical and connected with peace. If we are ever going to have peace in our neighborhoods, our country and the world people must have decent housing. You can see what it does for their self-esteem." ■

## Welcome, and Thank you...

**To our new Associate Members:**  
Quincy E. Chanda  
Basilian Fathers of Toronto

**To our new Investors:**  
City First Bank of DC

**To our Associate Members who have increased their loans:**  
Jonathan Beard and Rachel Theilheimer  
Mary-Cabrini Durkin  
Angelo R. Nunez, Jr. and Joan Nunez

**To our Investors who have increased their loans:**  
Society of Jesus, New York Province  
Apple Bank for Savings  
Catholic Health Initiatives  
Ridgewood Savings Bank

**To our Associate Members who have renewed their loans:**  
Bernadette Cronin-Geller  
Victoria DiLucia  
Gadfly Trust  
Lawrence and Marjorie Donahue  
Mary-Cabrini Durkin

John & RoseMary Hunt  
Alan J. Kidder  
Elizabeth M. Leddy Trust  
Kathleen Murnion  
Angelo R. Nunez, Jr. or Joan Nunez  
Paul Ramsey  
Jennifer & Douglas Salvati  
Center for Spirituality & Justice  
General Board of Global Ministries  
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Milwaukee Province  
Ursuline Community: St. Angela's  
Ursuline Community: Liberty Street  
Ursuline Community: Mr. Vernon

## YWCA Continued from page 1

total of 185 units of permanent, affordable housing.

The YW's residence is the only one of its kind in Westchester County. In an effort to sustain that service for the future, the agency is undertaking \$22.7 million in renovations to both buildings. Leviticus Fund's approval of an \$800,000 pre-development loan paved the way for the initial phase by covering architect, engineering, permit and legal expenses.

Lori Stanlick, Associate Executive Director for the YWCA, explained that of the two buildings, Acheson Wallace Hall requires most of the work. Problems like a leaking roof and faulty plumbing have already resulted in the loss of five rental units.

The YW's proposed renovations are "green" in design, with considerable focus on energy efficient lighting and building systems, and energy and water efficient appliances. New windows, fire sprinklers and a new alarm system will also be installed in the multi-floor buildings. A new heat-reflective roof in the Acheson building is expected to generate significant energy savings. The renovations will also add eight additional rental units, bringing total capacity to 193.

"Rehabilitating the existing buildings instead of constructing new is green," explained Ms. Stanlick. "We're tightening up the envelope of the building and will see real cost and energy savings."

To qualify for the YW's housing, the women cannot earn over 50% of the area median income, which in Westchester is \$35,500. Common ground for the women is that they share some level of struggle, such as



YWCA's residence staff, from left to right: Cindy Jasmin, Juanita Dawson-Rhodes, Jennifer Giordano-Magriz, Lori Stanlick, Ann Timmons and Barbara Mulwaney (right foreground).

mental illness, substance abuse, domestic abuse, medical handicap or former incarceration.

Ms. Stanlick noted that a disproportionate number of the YW's residents suffer with a chronic illness like cancer or multiple sclerosis, and that often their poor health triggered job loss or homelessness.

"A lot of the women have family, but their family is living hand-to-mouth. It truly is a situation where there is 'no more room at the inn', she added.

With the intervention of staff and on-site case managers, the YW promotes one-on-one life planning sessions with each resident, which include opportunities for new skills development. As Ms. Stanlick pointed out, the YW places a lot of emphasis on wellness and personal growth, and expands residents' services by partnering with other non-profit organizations and agencies in the area.

For example, a financial literacy class is being offered to the residents by Community Capital Resources, a CDFI similar to Leviticus. Project Green Thumb, which is run by the Westchester Food Bank, delivers

locally-grown produce once a month to the YW. The agency also partners with a local affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Breast Cancer Alliance to offer Encore Plus, a program providing education and mammography screenings to low income and un- or under-insured women over 40.

"The YW has always been able to do a lot with so little because we partner well with other community service organizations," said Ms. Stanlick.

A similar partnership is how Ms. Stanlick sees Leviticus' recent loan for the residences' renovations. "We like what Leviticus is doing in the area of housing. You have a significant impact in Westchester and it goes along with our spirit of collaboration," she added.

With the Acheson Wallace Hall roof recently renovated, the YW hopes to move forward with the more extensive renovations by May 2009, and be completed within two years.

"The renovation is both exciting and necessary and will ensure the YWCA's ability to provide women with affordable supportive housing for decades to come," explained Ms. Stanlick. ■

## Pathways Ahead

### Economic Stimulus at Work

The ongoing credit contraction has created exceptional demand for Leviticus financing. The Fund is completely lent out to quality affordable housing and community facility projects, and simply waiting for repayments before additional loans can be made.

\$7 million in applications have been turned away due to lack of funds in the past 5 months.

There may be relief soon as Leviticus awaits word on a \$2 million grant application to the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the US Treasury Department under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, often called the "Stimulus Bill." If awarded, Leviticus will borrow up to \$8 million against this new "equity" allowing us to make a significant dent in our backlog of deals.

Take Action!

**Justice for Immigrants** is a broad-based initiative working to build support and passage of a comprehensive, national immigration reform policy. JFI is specifically focusing its outreach to Catholic institutions and individuals, as well as people of good faith, to:

- Educate Catholics about the challenges that immigrants face in the U.S.;
  - Build support and work for the passage of a national comprehensive immigration reform policy;
  - Strengthen relationships between immigrant communities and Catholic dioceses across the country.
- The campaign has posted an **action alert** on its website - [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html) - inviting the

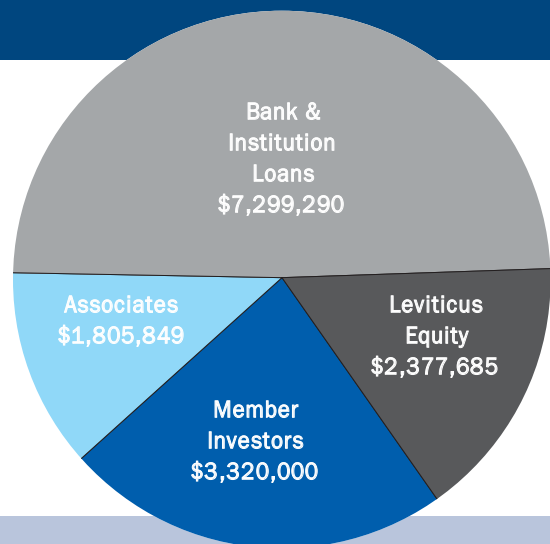
public to write their Congressional representatives urging passage of comprehensive immigration reform.

**Unprecedented market demand** is what Leviticus and many CDFIs are experiencing across the nation as the credit market continues to restrict. To date, Leviticus has received loan requests of \$7 million for “shovel-ready” affordable and supportive housing projects in our service area. Now more than ever, our Fund needs to increase its net asset base in order to leverage additional investments into our permanent, revolving loan pool. Please consider supporting this important capital campaign by visiting - [www.leviticusfund.org/gift.htm](http://www.leviticusfund.org/gift.htm)

**Leviticus Fund... at a Glance** [As of 2/28/09]

<b>Loan Capital</b>	<b>\$14,811,754</b>
Sources:	
81 Member Investors	\$3,320,000
72 Associates	\$1,805,849
14 Bank & Institution Loans	\$7,299,290
Leviticus Equity	\$2,386,615

<b>Current Lending and Commitments</b>	<b>\$13,847,172</b>
Sources:	
7 Loan Commitments	\$2,470,214
48 Loans	\$11,376,958



Since 1984		2008 & YTD 2009
1705	<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	407
3158	<b>Number of Children in Day Care</b>	210
36	<b>Number of Day Care Facilities</b>	1
34	<b>Number of Administration Buildings</b>	2
\$27,575,939	<b>Cumulative Lending</b>	\$5,610,033
\$196,034,750	<b>Public and Private Dollars Leveraged</b>	\$77,951,734