

SUMMER 2021



MISSION

Messenger

ST. BONAVENTURE

INDIAN MISSION & SCHOOL



The Director's Desk

A STRONGER RESOLVE

Dear Friend of the Navajo people,

Our resolve has been tested.

In the early days of the pandemic, fear and uncertainty placed heavy pressure on all of us to put our needs and safety ahead of others. As more time passed, the constant threat of the virus eventually forced us to weigh the risk of infection, illness, and death against doing the things we love and being with those we hold most dear.

Yet, after enduring more than a year of COVID-19, I believe our commitment to care for one another has only grown stronger. Your extraordinary generosity in support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School and the impoverished Navajo people we serve comes especially to mind.

This has been a year unlike any other in our more than 45-year history. From conducting the entire 2020-2021 school year remotely, to expanding our food and water delivery programs, to implementing a slew of COVID-19 relief efforts, including purchasing and distributing PPE to Navajo first responders and providing temporary housing to COVID positive members of our community – I'm proud to say our commitment to stand with the people of the Eastern Navajo Reservation has never been stronger.

In this issue of *The Mission Messenger*, I invite you to see once again how your commitment to St. Bonaventure touches the lives of the Navajo families, children, and elders we serve.

I am incredibly excited to share with you the news of our water delivery program now brought to life in the form of a children's book, *The Water Lady*, and our very own school and water truck delivery driver, Darlene, immortalized in its beautifully illustrated pages.

I also look forward to introducing you to our new school counselor, Clara, and her work easing the transition back to "in-person learning" for our nearly 170 students. As you will see, food distribution and water delivery also remain a primary focus of our daily efforts.

I want to thank you once again for strengthening your commitment to St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School this past year. It is only because of the great and unwavering resolve of friends like you that we dare to hope for a better future for the Diné, Navajo people.

Our resolve has been tested, and we have risen to meet these challenging times with an outpouring of charity and love.

With renewed and strengthened resolve,


Chris Halter



The Power of Storytelling

THE POWER OF YOU!

Stories have the power to change the world. As a benefactor of St. Bonaventure, you hear many stories about the harsh living conditions on the Eastern Navajo Reservation. You have listened to these sad but true stories of widespread poverty and you have responded with extraordinary goodness and charity.

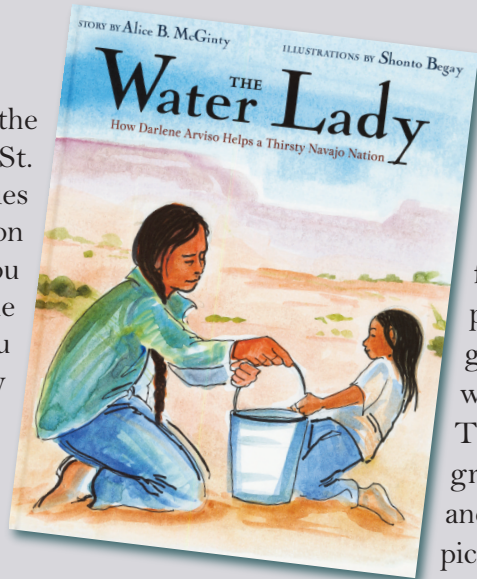
We share the following interview with award-winning children's author, Alice B. McGinty, to celebrate the recent publication of her new book *The Water Lady*. The book, illustrated by renowned Navajo artist, Shonto Begay, offers a glimpse into the lives of our St. Bonaventure school bus and water truck driver, Darlene Arviso, and a young Navajo boy named Cody. We hope you enjoy!

Can you tell us a little about yourself, and some insight into your journey to becoming a children's author?

I grew up loving books because they made the world feel magical. As my Dad read picture books to me at night, like *The Cat in the Hat*, I was swept away in the rhythm, rhyme, and sounds of the words. As I got older and read books like *Charlotte's Web*, I loved becoming part of the magical world of the story.

- 40% of children living on the reservation have no running water in their homes.

When I grew up, I wanted to create that magic with my words and stories. I had never met an author and I had no idea how to get started, but I began to write my stories and send them to publishers — and collected rejections for over 10 years! I didn't give up, though. Joining a critique group and a fantastic writer's organization (www.scbwi.org) and attending conferences and workshops helped me slowly learn the craft and business of writing children's books.



Why children's books?

When my two sons were young I read them picture books (our house was filled with them!), I figured I'd write picture books but I assumed as my sons grew and read longer books I'd grow with them and write longer books too. That's not what happened though. They grew up and read books for older kids and I didn't want to give up writing picture books. I'd found my passion! I truly love the art of writing books for young kids, from preschool to grade 2 or 3. The low word count forces me to find the heart of a story, whether it's fiction or nonfiction. It's like creating a diamond in the rough and then polishing it, every word, until it shines. I love it! Writing these books and knowing that they're being read by children and their families is a joy and a privilege I'll never take for granted.



What do you believe is the power of storytelling?

Storytelling, like reading, is magic. It takes us on a journey to new places and introduces us to new people, whether they are real or fictional characters. It opens

- Darlene travels over 80 miles every day to bring water to over 200 families!

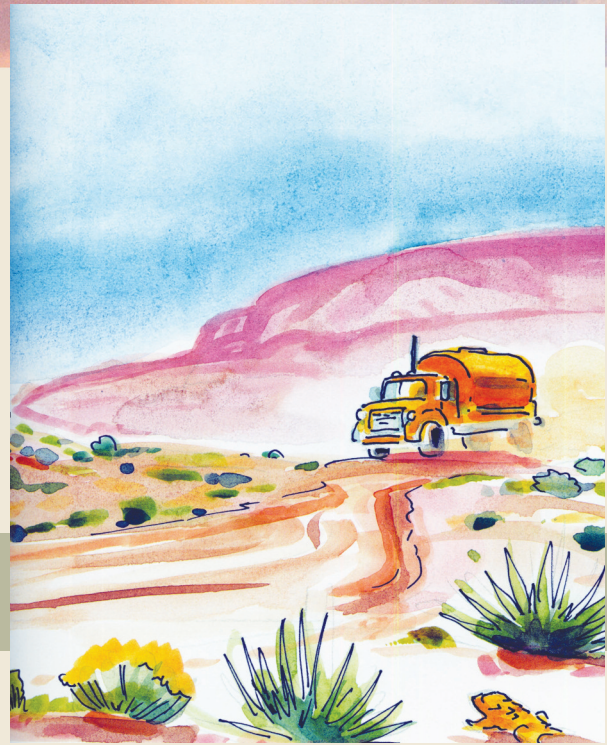
our eyes to people who are different than we are and gives us the rare chance to spend time in someone else's head and in their heart. Through this window, we can develop understanding and empathy. That's the power of storytelling, and we need it desperately right now in our world.

*What inspired you to write *The Water Lady*?*

I have a wonderful agent named Steven Chudney, who occasionally sends me magazine articles, links, or video clips with the question: "Do you think this could be a picture book?"

One day in 2015, he sent me a link to a CBS news clip about the water situation on the Navajo Reservation, which included an interview with Darlene Arviso. I watched the clip and wrote Steven back with a resounding "YES, I think this can be a picture book." Darlene's warmth and her devotion to her community touched me. I knew for many reasons that this was a story that needed to be told.

I read what I could find about Darlene and the situation on the Rez, and when I was ready, I called the Mission and spoke with Darlene. She kindly allowed me to visit and ride with her on her water delivery route, and that's how the book began.



Did you know anything about the living conditions on the Navajo Nation prior to writing the book?

I did not know nearly as much as I should have, and what I did know of the conditions felt distant to me until I made this personal connection.

What did you learn about life on the reservation as a result of working on your book?

I saw with my own eyes the beauty of the open land, and I fell in love with it. I also saw its harshness — the unrelenting wind, the dust that coats your throat, the desert dryness that chaps your lips, the blazing hot sun. It's rugged and you have to be strong to survive here.

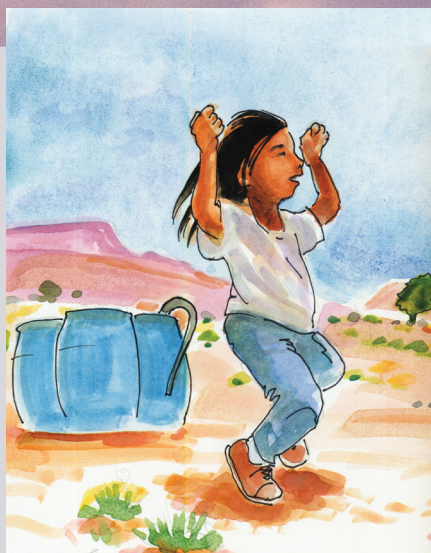
I also saw the poverty, and living conditions that broke my heart. There are many people crowded together in small, rundown homes and trailers, not only without running water but without electricity.

There's a richness to the community too, though, which holds everyone together. There's a sense of cooperation because everyone needs each other to survive. And a spirituality in the Navajo culture that we don't have in our lives outside the Rez. I felt it deeply — a sense of peace and acceptance, a connection with the land, a mindfulness, and a prayerfulness.

In visiting the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School, I also had the opportunity to connect with the kids on the Rez. Through this, I felt their sincere and earnest wish to do well in school and to live a good life. I wish this for them as well!

Why do you think it is important for Darlene's story to be shared as a children's book?

Children are open to the world, to taking in new things, and to opening their hearts. That's why I wanted them to know Darlene and to read this story. I believe Darlene is a hero in her devotion to her community and I want children to see the power of helping and caring and to be introduced to the Navajo people as they live today.



why I was having such a difficult time with the writing. It was because I needed to tell TWO stories — Darlene's story and the story of the community she delivers water to, and I was having problems telling both stories at the same time.

It was my editor who suggested that I try going back and forth from Cody's point of view to Darlene's. As soon as I heard that suggestion, I knew it was exactly the right solution. It gives readers a child to connect with, allowing them to see things from the community's point of view, and also tells Darlene's story as she goes about her day, doing her jobs.

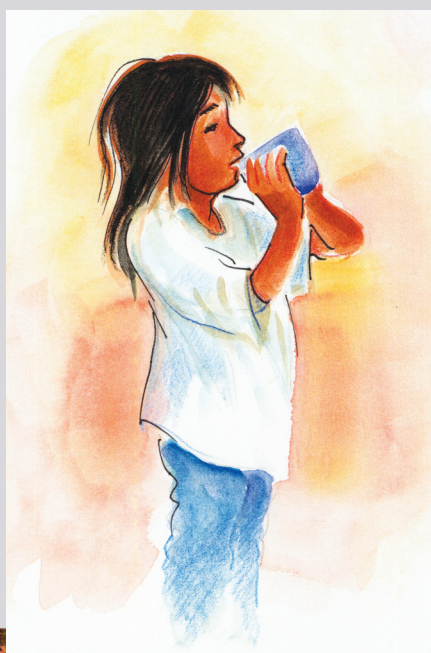
What do you want the main takeaway to be for your readers?

I'd like readers to see what it's like to be a helper and hero in the modern day setting of the Navajo community. There is no Superman here, but instead real people living real lives and a devoted woman who is helping her community. I'd like readers to understand how much one person's actions can mean to others.

- Every day we deliver 14,000 gallons of life-saving water!

Why did you also decide to tell the story from Cody's perspective?

After I met Darlene and rode with her on the water delivery route, over the next couple of years I wrote and rewrote the story MANY times to try to tell it in just the right way. For a time, I lost hope that I would ever get it right. But I persisted because I knew this story should be told. Somewhere along the way, I realized



To purchase your own copy of *The Water Lady*, please visit:
www.BeehiveKidsBooks.com
www.CollectedWorksBookstore.com
www.Bookshop.org

Meet our new school counselor

CLARA LANDAVAZO

For many of our Navajo students, the deck is stacked against them. Poverty, hunger, high rates of abuse and domestic strife; these are just a few of the challenges they face in their everyday lives. Add in a life-threatening pandemic and being forced to isolate at home for an entire school year, and school staff and parents grew increasingly concerned for the well-being and long-term academic success of these young children.

This led us to hire much-needed help at St. Bonaventure Indian School.

Meet Clara Landavazo. Clara received her master's degree in special education and has decades of experience working as a school counselor in the Gallup McKinley County School District.



Clara has been a Godsend already! Hitting the ground running, she has met with St. Bonaventure teachers to identify at-risk students and offer additional academic and emotional support. Teachers anticipate an even greater need for Clara's skills when the students return to school this August. Many of the children have been traumatized by their experiences during the pandemic, including the loss of family members and loved ones.

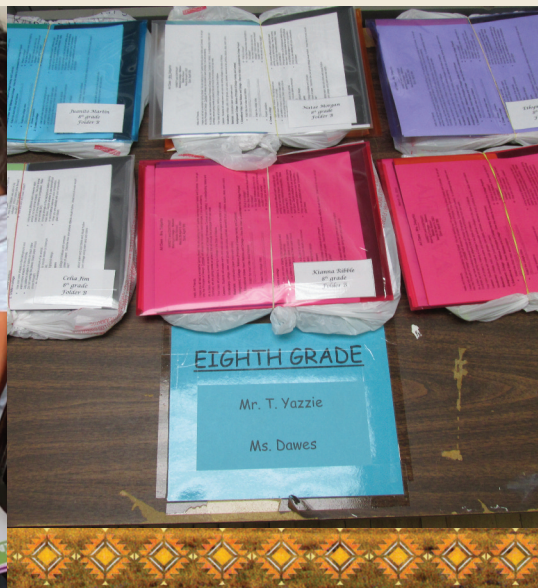
Currently, Clara is preparing for summer school, designing a specialized curriculum geared toward our students' special needs. She is hard-working, dedicated and we are very grateful and excited to be adding Clara to our team. Welcome, Clara!

Ted Talk "DISTANCE LEARNING" ON THE NAVAJO NATION

It is hard to believe, but St. Bonaventure students have not been on campus since mid-March of 2020! Teachers and staff continue to do our best to teach through a variety of video-conferencing technology. Unfortunately, many of our students have little or no access to the internet. For these students, we must prepare and deliver packets by school bus along with breakfast and lunch. Every Monday we pick up their work and deliver the next week's work. That is how classes have been conducted for many of our students

this entire school year! We know our students miss being in school and seeing their classmates. The faculty and staff would like the students to be on campus as well, where they can be taught more effectively. We look forward to this possibility as we look in hope to the 2021-2022 school year.

Ted Penn has been part of the family at St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School for over a decade. Today, Ted serves as a teacher, bus driver, meal deliverer, coach, and so much more!



The Rest of the Story

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Do you remember Paul Harvey's? His radio career spanned 8 decades, and perhaps is best remembered for the part of his broadcasts he called, "The Rest of the Story," when he would share the interesting details about a person or an event, the details of which very few were aware.

At Saint Bonaventure Indian Mission and School, we also have something interesting to share; what follows is one of our "rest of the stories."

You probably have heard of a charitable gift annuity before. But please, keep reading; there's more to this than meets the eye; there are aspects of a gift annuity that some might call the "secret" parts of this giving opportunity.

First, the basics: when you create a gift annuity to assist with Saint Bonaventure's mission, you not only "give," you also "get." With an irrevocable gift of \$5,000 or more, in return you will receive payments back for the rest of your life. The rate of payments is tied to your age (minimum age is 60) and the rate will never change. We can even make the payments to you AND another.

Sample Charitable Gift Annuity Rates

AGE	RATE	AGE	RATE
60	- 3.9%	80	- 6.5%
65	- 4.2%	85	- 7.6%
70	- 4.7%	90+	- 8.6%
75	- 5.4%		

* Current rates at time of publication

BUT THERE'S MORE.

By creating the gift annuity, you receive a charitable deduction and your payments will be partially tax free. You can fund the gift annuity with a check or with stock; there's an extra advantage when you use appreciated stock.

BUT THERE'S EVEN MORE.

- A gift annuity can be created to benefit someone you care about, and you don't even need to be related: it could be a child, but also a friend or perhaps a caregiver or former employee.
- Did you know that you can create a gift annuity for a loved one through your will? Some use this strategy to ensure that the person who will receive the gift annuity payments doesn't squander an inheritance.
- Those who are still working can fund a deferred gift annuity: the payments can be timed to begin at retirement age in exchange for a higher payout rate, while the charitable deduction can be applied to the year in which you make the gift.

SO, NOW YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY!

If you would like to learn more about how a gift annuity might benefit you, or to receive a no-obligation illustration, please call Marie in our Planned Giving office at 505-862-7847. She will be happy to send the information to you right away.

Easter Blessings:

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Sister Josephine Mangampo, SFI

After months of separation and darkness, the most beautiful thing happened at the mission, a celebration of faith!

On Saturday, April 10, family and friends gathered in our St. Bonaventure Chapel to witness and welcome one of our students, two of our teaching assistants, and the daughter of one our teachers into the Catholic faith. Father Gil had his hands full, performing all three sacraments of initiation - Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation! God is really working and calling His children to be closer to Him, gifting them with the Sacraments. God is Good!

Sister Josephine Mangampo, SFI, is a member of the Congregation of the Franciscan Immaculatae Sisters, an international order of religious women dedicated to the formation and education of children and young people, pastoral ministry in parishes, and missionary work. They are currently ministering in parishes and schools worldwide, including Brazil, Italy, the Philippines, India, Australia, Indonesia, and the United States.



EVERYDAY Essentials

Covid has only exacerbated the need for *Everyday Essentials* on the reservation.

The Thrift Shop and Food Pantry provide our families with some clothing, household and personal items but there is always a need for more. Your donations are always welcome and very much appreciated!

You can send a donation box via UPS or FEDEX to:

St Bonaventure Indian Mission & School
25 Navarre Boulevard West • PO Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323



Please send me a confidential illustration of a Charitable Gift Annuity based on the following information:

Name _____ Birth date _____

Note: If you are not the person to receive payments, please indicate that person's name here:

Projected gift annuity amount \$ _____ Quarterly Semi-annual Annual

Type of asset (check one): Cash Appreciated Stock

Name of additional person (if any) to receive payments for life: _____

Relationship _____ Birth date _____

I have questions, please call me: Telephone _____ Best date/time _____

Return completed form in the enclosed envelope to: St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School
PO Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323-0610



JOIN THE CIRCLE OF LOVE!

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND WE ARE HIS SHEEP

But Jesus calls all of us be to be good shepherds.

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them -not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;”

1 Peter 5:2

As a member of the Good Shepherd Circle, YOU will be God's shepherd, caring for the most impoverished, isolated people among us - our Navajo elders, children and families who have been lost and forgotten for so long.

You will make a real difference in peoples lives. Even the smallest regular gift, will support our mission to:

- **PROVIDE CLEAN WATER** - to over 200 families through our water delivery program.

- **FEED THE POOR** - provide two meals a day to our school children and deliver emergency food boxes to elders and families in crisis.
- **GIVE SHELTER** - and provide home repairs to families living in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- **EDUCATION** - help provide Navajo children with tuition-free Catholic education and a chance at **A BRIGHTER FUTURE.**
- **FIGHT COVID** - purchase and distribute PPE, disinfectants, and other life-saving supplies to Navajo frontline health workers and families.

Please consider offering monthly gift as a member of the Good Shepherd Circle to ensure St. Bonaventure Indian Mission can meet the demands of this emergency and continue to reach out to those most in need.

REMEMBER WHEN ORDERING GO TO **SMILE.AMAZON.COM** AND ENTER ST BONAVENTURE INDIAN MISSION AS YOUR CHARITY ~ SHOP AS ALWAYS!



YES! I would like to join the Good Shepherd Circle.

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ in support of St. Bonaventure Mission & School.

Monthly Quarterly

I would like to charge my gift to:

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Card # _____ Security code _____

Join by Phone: 505.862.7847 or call Toll free: 877.989.4100

GOOD SHEPHERD CIRCLE • St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School • P.O. Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323-0610