May 2, 2019

**JOURNEY OF ONENESS UPDATE: Association**

**Association moves forward on guidebook, structures**

It’s no small challenge: As the Journey of Oneness advances, association will become an Institute, rather than a Community-by-Community, experience. To achieve that reality, implementation project coordinator and Associate Ty Barnes cites two major tasks at the center of current implementation work:

- Compiling a guidebook for association across the Institute, and
- Mapping a decentralized structure for association that will complement the centralized structure of three full-time positions at the Institute level.

Following recommendations from the Association Design and Development Teams, “We’re pursuing an ambitious timeline,” Ty explains. “We want to be ready for consultations with associates and sisters as the calendar turns to 2020.”

As chair of the Association Design Team, a member of its development team, and the current director of association for the South Central Community, Ty is “depending heavily” during this implementation phase on the steering committee of the Mercy Association Leadership Council (MALC) and the current directors of association across the Institute.

Such broad representation means that the emerging guidebook “pulls from the different Communities what speaks to all of us,” she reports. “We want commonality on core matters like identity, mission, formation and so on, while including some freedom for local customs within our Institute reality.” CCASA is observing development of the guidebook and considering applicability for its nations; Jamaica, Guam and the Philippines are part of the process and plan to use the guidebook. An initial draft is due to be completed this month.

Work on the decentralized portion of association’s organizational structure will occupy the summer months. Again, it will be the MALC Steering Committee and current associate directors who will lend their experience and vision to this work. Existing structures such as area
leaders and an advisory council, as well as possible new structures, will be among considerations for the future. Consulting and advising on both these implementation projects are the Association Leadership Teams in each Community; a Leadership Advisory Group, composed of the Community Leadership Team liaisons to association in each Community; and the Institute Coordinating Committee, composed of the Institute Leadership Team and Chief Operating Officer Ruth Thomas.

“We’re trying to establish processes and structures that work for everyone across the Institute,” Ty concludes, “and we’ll be seeking input from associates and sisters before we complete this implementation phase.”

For more about Ty Barnes and her commitment to Mercy, see “Mercy Associate receives Mercy International fellowship” later in this issue.

Photos: (From left) Sister Pat Coward and Associates Ty Barnes and Anne Wood engage in a lively discussion at the 2018 MALC Conference.

Associates and sisters from across the Institute, including members of the MALC Steering Committee, gathered last fall for the 2018 MALC Conference in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, for three days of updates, discussion, kinship, prayer and service.

Credit: Bob Keenan