URSULINE SISTERS OF CLEVELAND

SPRING 2021
NEWS

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URSULINE PREAKNESS PARTY

A Preakness Party to benefit the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

Ursuline Preakness Party – A Virtual Success!

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URSULINE SISTERS OF CLEVELAND

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

The *Ursuline Sisters News* is published three times a year for friends and supporters of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland.

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DEVELOPMENT OFFICE SCHEDULE

Normal business day hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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We may be closed during holidays, but our ***WEB DONATION PAGE is always OPEN and SECURE!*** https://secure.ursulinesisters.org/Donation.php

Please remember the Ursuline Sisters in your will.

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Sister Maureen Grady

Dear Friends,

The English poet, William Blake, wrote in 1789: "We are put on Earth a little space that we may learn to bear the beams of love." Discovering why we ourselves are put on Earth and what are our own "beams of love" is a lifetime adventure. With you—our families, friends, colleagues, and donors—we embrace this adventure.

This issue of *Ursuline News* includes articles that are filled with examples of "beams of love."

> *"We are put on Earth a little space that we may learn to bear the beams of love."*
>
> – William Blake

Even as we Ursuline sisters try to reach out in love, we know that so many others, including you, have done the same for us.

In these pages we hear from Sister Anne Cecile, the last Ursuline sister to survive the fire of 1945 at St. Joseph Seminary—a school for boys on the campus of Villa Angela Academy. Note how the city rallied in replacing what the sisters lost!

Here also are photos and the story of our first—and we hope only—virtual Preakness Party. It was a testament to the creativity of our planners and the good humor of our donors! We bestowed the Merici Award on Bob and Dorothy Valerian for the exemplary witness of their support of the Ursuline mission and sisters.

The Covid pandemic has required everyone to learn to use technology in order to connect with others. You will read that this effort includes our sisters who have entered the world of Zoom to reach their students. We said farewell to one of our teachers, who was also a librarian, Sister Virginia Lang, who died in February, and we honor the passing of Sister M. Suzanne, a valiant and compassionate presence in her ministry and community. We join you in mourning the deaths of your family and friends who have completed their lives "on Earth a little space."

In the poem he wrote 250 years ago, William Blake described the "beams of love" we can bring to the world. Just three years ago, Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, said it this way:

> "May you come to realize what the word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life."

And so we ask, what are our own "beams of love"? What is the "message of Jesus" that each of us is to speak with our lives? Let's find out; the world is waiting!

Maureen Grady OSU

Maureen Grady, OSU
Ursuline Leadership Team

PANDEMIC STORIES
FROM AN URSULINE "STORYCATCHER"
PART I

By Sister Dorothy Bondi

The movie "Songcatcher," released in 2001, is about a "folklorist" collecting traditional songs in Appalachia in 1907. The music teacher in this movie came from England and went to great lengths to preserve this traditional music for future generations.

Today, the pandemic protocol discourages singing, so being a "storycatcher" rather than a "songcatcher" may be a more appropriate way to preserve the stories related to Ursuline sisters' life during the COVID-19 virus. In collecting these stories, it became obvious that history does repeat itself.

Sister Michael Francis, a renowned storycatcher, wrote *The Broad Highway*, a history of Cleveland Ursulines, and described the impact of the Spanish influenza on the city of Cleveland in 1918. At the request of the mayor and the bishop, the sisters closed their schools to assist in the care of the sick in the city and in the crowded wards of hospitals. After working many long hours every day, the news came that the danger was reduced, and the sisters were able to immediately reopen their schools.

Every person today has experienced the impact of the COVID 19 virus and its effect, not only on our families and in our city or state, but throughout the country and the world. Life, as we knew it, had changed. Everyone was asked to make major adjustments in their lives—work from home, stay home, attend virtual classes, etc.—and assist those in need.

Once again, the Ursuline Sisters responded to these special challenges, not as caregivers to the physically sick, but as teachers and in many other ministries of outreach and support.

The stories of today's unique environment have been shared with this "storycatcher" by the sisters who have found ways to stay engaged in ministry to others while being quarantined.

Continued ›

Sister Dorothy Bondi holds a Zoom chat with students.

Sister Martha Owen meets virtually with students.

Ministering to Children

Preschool in-person classes required many adaptations to the physical learning environment, and conscious adherence to measures of disease prevention. Sister Jane Morgan shared stories of these necessary but strange new arrangements, and their impact on children. She related how difficult it was for her to keep children distanced in the classroom, at lunch tables, and at play. At times, Sr. Jane found it especially difficult to console a tearful child without giving them hug.

Teachers working with children in "virtual classrooms" faced many different challenges—negotiating the technology and being creative with lessons and teaching materials. Keeping the children's interest, without being personally present and without the stimulating interaction with classmates, made teaching and learning a completely different kind of experience.

Teaching Teens

Sister Martha Owen shared a different experience: "I teach Spanish virtually to Beaumont freshmen and sophomore students. Once the virtual connections are completed, the classes are one-to-one. The biggest challenge for the Beaumont women is getting connected and on-time for the sharing session. The greatest challenge for me is not having enough time in this setting to get to know the students personally. St. Angela would not be happy with how little interaction is possible by meeting virtually. I try to let students know that they are more important than just a translation or verb conjugation."

Thoughts from Sister Maria Berlec who teaches 10th grade Religion and Spanish at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School reiterate these classroom challenges: "In a newspaper article, someone said that teaching during a pandemic was like flying an airplane while building it. I liked this image. It reminded me of the Ursuline core value of embracing change. It goes without saying, that when it came to technology, we all had to change. We had to step up our game and be flexible.

"What also came clear to me was how fundamental community and socialization are to education. Independent learning has its values, but students thrive and flourish together in an in-person learning community."

Sister Martha Owen and Sister Dorothy Bondi met with 5th and 6th graders at Ss. Robert and William Catholic School in an informal Zoom session during Catholic Schools Week. Children from home and some from their classroom joined in an enriching informal discussion on various topics that were raised and shared by the students. Dialogue topics included: The history of the school, the importance of education, the Ursuline presence, religious life, and vocation discernment.

"What also came clear to me was how fundamental community and socialization are to education. Independent learning has its values, but students thrive and flourish together in an in-person learning community."

– Sister Maria Berlec

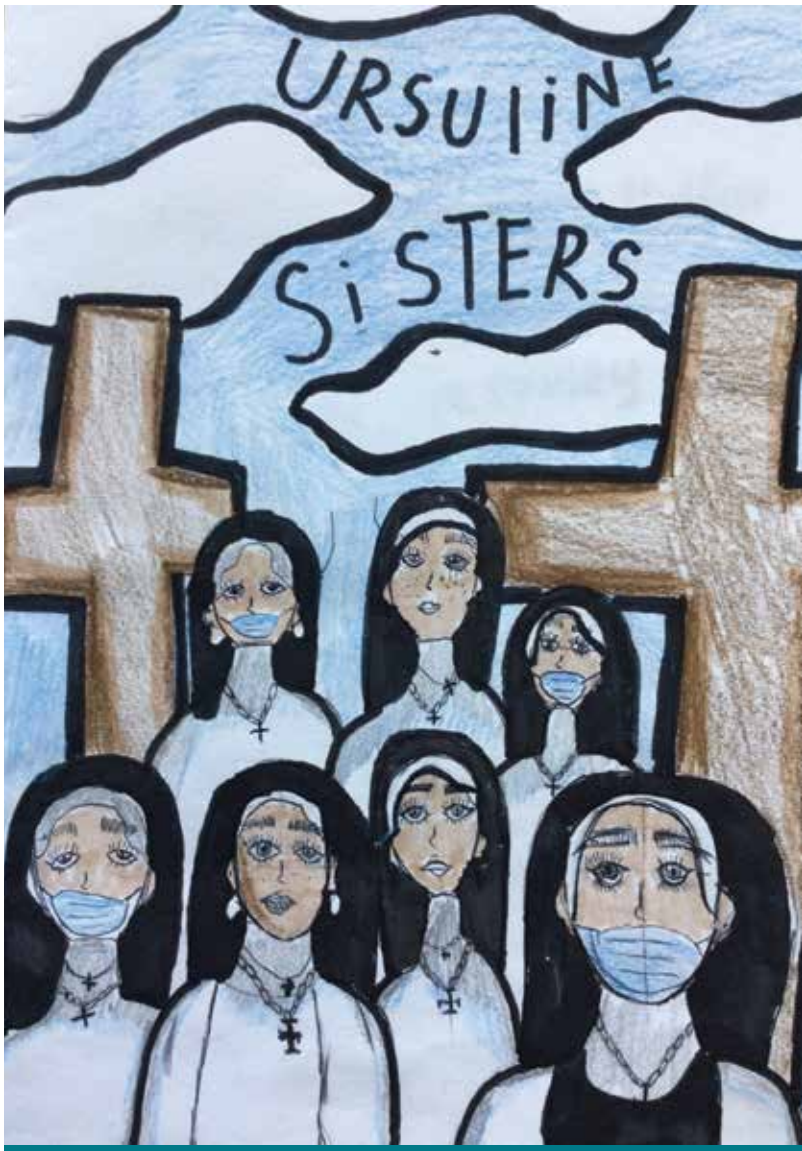
Tutoring

Sister Mary Jane Jones, who is a trained tutor in the Laubach Reading Program, worked with adults prior to COVID-19 at the Warrensville Heights Library. She now tutors her students by phone.

Other virtual tutoring programs have also continued through zoom meetings: Sister Susan Mary corrects written essays online, and Sister Patricia Kukwa helps prepare students for college entrance exams.

Sister Beverly Anne LoGrasso has been tutoring two sisters from Vietnam in English, and talks about how much she enjoys working with Sister Uyen Do, who is studying at Ursuline College and will begin her graduate studies in the fall. Since the borders are closed for COVID protection, Sister Uyen has not been able to go home to see her family, but Sister Beverly continues to work with her and is grateful for all she has learned from both of them. She especially appreciates their graceful spirit and faithful devotion to the Gospel.

Sister Colette works online with an Ursuline College graduate in the field of art therapy. Sister Ellen Themes is anxiously awaiting the opportunity to return to tutoring math, working with art therapy, and especially, to helping to orient her "beloved adopted Iraqi family," immigrants whom she has been assisting with art therapy and tutoring for many months.



Students show their appreciation through art.

The great storyteller, Dr. Seuss created a poem for teachers which describes well what the sisters were doing while in quarantine during the year-long pandemic of 2020-2021.

It reads: *I will teach you in a room*
I will teach you now on "zoom"
I will teach you in a house,
I will teach you with my "mouse"
I will teach you here and there,
I will teach because I care!

What were the sisters doing while in quarantine during the yearlong pandemic of 2020-2021? This "storycatcher" will confirm that sisters were doing what they were called to do: responding to the needs of others albeit in a different sort of way….because…..they care!

Stay tuned…more stories will follow!

Ursuline Preakness Party – A Virtual Success!

By Mary Moran, Director of Marketing and Communications

The Ursuline Sisters annual fundraiser took place Saturday, May 15 and we can say with certainty it was one like no other! What is typically an "in person" Kentucky Derby Party at First Energy Stadium was, for this year only, a Virtual Preakness Party.

Sisters Janet Moore and Beverly LoGrasso cheer on their Preakness horses!

Sister Mary Lou Tadsen models her hat.

Although Ursuline Preakness Party 2021 proved challenging and unique, it did not deter our devoted and generous supporters from "showing up" in support of the sisters. Just as they do each year, friends, family, sponsors, donors, staff and volunteers spent an enjoyable evening with the sisters to show their gratitude and support of the Ursuline community. For this the sisters are so grateful.

Thanks to the talented professionals at Raise the Roof Entertainment and The FORM group we were able to provide an interactive live stream event right on the Ursuline Sisters website.

The evening, or virtual "show," began with a welcome by Ursuline Sisters President, Sister Ritamary Welsh. She expressed the disappointment in not being together physically but assured the viewers that the sisters were determined to make this virtual event enjoyable for them and she was thankful they were tuning in.

And an enjoyable evening it was! Emcee Andrew Grover kept the excitement level high as he provided the viewers with important details and introduced some familiar faces. Folks were able to participate in a large gift basket raffle, a 50/50 raffle, a silent auction and/or send their "Moving the Mission" gift all on line, from the comfort of their home.

Cameras rolling in many different places allowed everyone to see all the action. We heard a message from our event chair, Antoinette Kula. Sisters discussed their favorite horses for the race and we watched sisters excitedly watch the Preakness. Sister Diana Stano presented an explanation of this year's "Moving the Mission" cause, the need for technology tools and education for the sisters. And of course, the show included the award presentation.

Always a highlight of the event, the presentation of the Merici Award is given to an individual or individuals who live and act in the spirit of Ursuline foundress Saint Angela Merici. This year, (postponed from last year) the award was presented to Bob and Dorothy Valerian for their valued partnership with the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. A well-deserved honor; congratulations!

Thank you to all who tuned in and participated in our Ursuline Preakness party 2021! And thank you to our sponsors.

As enjoyable and successful as it was, the sisters prefer to be with all of you in person! **So please save the date for next year as we go back to "normal" at First Energy Stadium Saturday, May 7, 2022.** See you at the 2022 Ursuline Derby Day!

Andrew Grover (left) introduces Sisters Ritamary Welsh (center) and Laura Bregar (right).

Sister Nina Vitale races her steed to the finish line!

Preakness Zoom: Sisters connect via Zoom to viewers, Left to right, starting from the top: Sisters Linda Martin, Susan Durkin and Susan Zion, Gretchen Rodenfels, Kathleen Flanagan and Janet Moore, Martha Owen, Maureen Doyle, Jennifer Corlett and Mary Ellen Brinovec; emcee Andrew Grover.

Sister Ritamary presents the Merici Award to Bob and Dorothy Valerian.

Sister Diana Stano describes Moving the Mission to viewers.

NO ENVELOPE? NO PROBLEM!

You can make your donation safely and securely at https://secure.ursulinesisters.org/Donation.php.

If you need assistance or have any questions, please call Sister Elaine at 440-229-5624 or email her at eberkopec@ursulinesisters.org.

For more information, please call Cindy Johnson at 440-229-5634, or email her at cjohnson@ursulinesisters.org.

A fateful day in Ursuline history

By Sister Janet Moore with Sister Anne Cecile

Sister Anne Cecile

On February 4, 1946, a disastrous fire of unknown origin totally destroyed St. Joseph's Seminary. It was one of two main buildings on the Lake Shore property, the other being St. Mary's. St. Joseph's was the Ursuline residence for approximately 60 postulants (first-year members), novices and younger professed sisters; St. Mary's was residence for a number of older sisters and also housed Villa Angela Academy.

The fire was first noticed shortly before 7:00 AM just as Mass in the second floor chapel had ended. All the sisters and the priest evacuated safely; multiple fire companies took several hours to completely put out the flames.

On Feb. 4, 2021, Sister Anne Cecile Muldoon noted that it was the 75th anniversary of the event that she alone could personally describe because she was the last living sister to have experienced it. The remainder of the following article is provided in Sister's own spontaneous words.

St Joseph before the fire

After the fire

It was February 4th, 1946, the day that Saint Joseph's burned down. Mass was just over. I was in the first pew. I could hear some mumbling going on in the back of chapel. A door opened and closed. Someone began to smell smoke. Then Mother Delphine [the novice mistress] told us, "Sisters, there is a fire. We will leave chapel in rank order: oldest first." The usual signal was given and we began to file out in order. Upon looking up we could see a small flame had started curling along the molding of the ceiling. It was not difficult to get down the steps and we left in very orderly way; we just picked up our shawls off the hooks and went out the side door to the driveway. It was very cold outside, not much snow, but very cold. When we got outside we stood in silence. Were we told to keep silence? I don't think so; we were just stunned. One sister who had just completed typing her thesis the night before ran back into the building to retrieve it, which she did, and came right back out safely. We were outside no more than five minutes when we could see that the whole top floor of the building was on fire; flames were shooting up from the roof. That was when some of us began to cry. Mother Marie [the General Superior], who resided in Saint Mary's, had been called; she hurried down the long road in the dark as fast as she possibly could. The first words she called out when she got to us were, "Are all the Sisters out and safe?" Yes, we were all accounted for. She then told us to kneel down right there where we were and she led us in prayer of thanksgiving. She then told us to walk over to Saint Mary's — and she added "And do not look back."

I don't think it should be forgotten what the nuns have gone through in that time, and how people have remembered the Ursulines with an outpouring of love any time whether from the Century Club that was started then or any time.

We were graciously met by the Sisters who took us down to the refectory and gave us hot cocoa. It tasted so good because we were both cold and wet.

How did you feel as the day went on? I don't remember; I don't think we had time to feel. The majority of us were teachers and so they had got on the three buses they usually took to go to their respective schools. They had classes to teach. The rest of us, six second year novices and two postulants, were sent to the laundry because it was our charge to do the laundry for the entire community that day as usual, and it was a full day's work. It was probably good that they kept us busy; we talked about the fire but I don't remember how I felt. I do remember wondering when I would get a chance to call my mother to let her know that I was safe. One at a time we were given a nickel so we could use the phone and call home. It was late in the day when I finally had my chance to call.

Where to put us came next. The high school was called off for a couple of days. Several classrooms were emptied of all furniture so they could be set up as dorms. There was an outpouring from near-by parishes, from our own nuns, from other religious communities, from surrounding neighborhood people bringing things the sisters could use: slippers, robes, sheets, blankets, pillows, even cots. That night, I wish you could have seen us in whatever the neighbors had brought for us to wear – robes and slippers of many colors (not the usual black ones). We sat on our cots and laughed and sometimes maybe cried. They let us talk all we wanted for several nights; nobody mentioned "grand silence."

Yes, February 4, 1946, is a day I will always remember. It was my birthday, by the way. I was 19.

Why am I the last one? I don't know. Thanks be to God, I still have my faculties and I can remember how grateful I am that we didn't all go up in flame. God has taken care of me for 77 years in this community. That is why I don't think it should be forgotten what the nuns have gone through in that time, and how people have remembered the Ursulines with an outpouring of love any time whether from the Century Club that was started then or any time. There is something about Ursuline. I am so blessed. Why am I able to live in this beautiful facility [Merici Crossings] at this age? We were happy at all of the places where we lived and God knows it wasn't always easy, but we have one another and our biggest strength was community. Our community will go on. There's laity who know us. They were educated by us. There is something about Ursuline that they will not forget. I am blessed and I thank God for what he has given me.

And we are blessed to have you, Sister Anne Cecile, woman of faith!

Villa Angela students and faculty watch and pray as firefighters try to quell the flames.

St Joseph chapel interior

Remembering Sister M. Suzanne,
faithful and compassionate servant

Sister M. Suzanne Cubbison was a modest and humble presence in the world, quietly contributing to the reign of God in a variety of ways. Her innovative ministry in her latter years is a testimony to her enduring generosity, dedication and dynamic adaptability. Although she was rarely the center of attention, she was determined and enthusiastic. She wanted nothing more than to use her skills to serve others and improve their lives. Sister Suzanne continued in this vein until she was 91.

Sister M. Suzanne Cubbison

Cora Marie Cubbison was born March 3, 1928 in Butler, Pennsylvania, the oldest of five daughters born to Evelyn and Raymond Cubbison. When she was very young, the family moved to Cleveland. She attended high school at St. Francis High School and Villa Angela Academy. Three months after graduating from Villa Angela, she entered the Ursuline Nuns of Cleveland. When she began her novitiate a year later, she was given the name Suzanne. She professed her final vows in 1952.

Even before completing her college education at Ursuline College and then St. John College, Sister Suzanne became a kindergarten teacher at Christ the King School (Cleveland). After graduation, Sister spent many years teaching in elementary schools, including St. Mary Magdalene, St. Mary (Mentor), St. Paul, St. Catherine, Immaculate Conception (Willoughby), St. Francis de Sales, St. Joseph (Collinwood) and Holy Cross. During this time she also served as CCD (PSR) principal and Religion Coordinator at various schools. In 1984 Sister Suzanne became the Assistant Business Manager at Villa Angela Academy and then assisted in the creation of the new, merged school, Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School.

With her well-honed business and financial skills and her steadfast spirit, she moved into new ministries outside of education. She served at Security First and Stamco & Sopko.

Then Sister Suzanne courageously moved to Pittsburgh, PA, where she served as manager/assistant manager at Beechview Manor, Christian Housing, Inc. and Germaine House. While at Beechview Manor, her compassion and concern were noted and appreciated. Her skills also contributed to an award for Beechview from HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs which selected the facility as one of the country's top 1,000 performing properties. Additionally, she wrote a grant to fund the purchase of new computers and for training for senior residents who were new to the world of technology. During this time she also became a part-time secretary for Housing and Urban Development in Pittsburgh.

As a young-at-heart octogenarian, Sister Suzanne moved back to the Cleveland area and began to work in the congregation's Finance Office. It was only when her health forced her to leave the office in 2019 that she moved to Regina Health Center where she was residing until she left for residential hospice care. In her last innovative decision, Sister Suzanne chose a natural burial for her final resting place. She is leading the way for other Ursuline sisters who have made the choice for green burial when they die. Sister died on May 11, 2021 at David Simpson Hospice House.

She is survived by her sisters Rosemary Smrekar and Annette Iorfida and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and two sisters, Rae Ann Busic and Eileen Schade.

"Life is like a notebook.
Two pages are already written by God.
The first page is Birth and the last page is Death.
Center pages are empty.
Fill them with smiles, service and love."

– Unknown

Remembering Sister Virginia Lang,
faithful servant

Sister Virginia Lang was a woman of quiet determination, skill and devoted service. She was a faithful community member for 69 years, a beloved sister and sister-in-law as well as aunt and friend.

Virginia Jean Lang was born in 1933 to Anthony and Evelyn and was raised with two siblings, Marylyn and Anthony Jr. She was baptized and confirmed in her Cleveland parish, St. Aloysius, and became a Euclidian with a move to Holy Cross during her grade school years, followed by high school at Villa Angela Academy.

Sister Virginia Lang

In 1951 Virginia entered the Ursuline Sisters and was given the name Sister Rose Anthony at her religious reception. She was perpetually professed in 1957. Sister earned a Bachelor's degree in Education from St. John College and a Master's degree in Library Science from Case Western Reserve University.

Sister Virginia spent her earliest years in ministry teaching grade school children at St. Jerome, St. Mary (Mentor), St. Therese, St. Patrick, St. Mary (Collinwood), St. Francis de Sales and St. William. Then she moved into high school ministry, serving at Villa Angela Academy as librarian and Secretary of Alumnae.

Her attention to detail and focus on accuracy continued to serve her well at Ursuline College, in the Christ Child Learning Lab and the Registrar's Office. From there she went on to care for the sisters as she assisted at the motherhouse in the General Treasurer's Office, in the local Treasurer's Office and the gift shop.

In 2017 Sister Virginia was one of the pioneer sisters who moved to Light of Hearts Villa in Bedford, preparing the way for others who would follow. It was a courageous act on the part of the first sisters and she was proud to be among them. A brief illness necessitated a final move to Regina Health Center where she was grateful for the care she received in her final months of life. Sister Virginia died peacefully at Regina On Feb. 24th while her sisters and family held her in prayer.

Sister Virginia will be remembered as a woman who faithfully served without great fanfare or fuss, behind the scenes and always dedicated and supportive. She will shine brightly in the communion of saints, remembered with love.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother and brother-in-law. She is survived by her sister, Marylyn Huffard, her sister-in-law, Nancy Lang, and her nieces and nephews.

Funeral Services for Sisters Suzanne and Virginia will be held at a later time because of the pandemic.

Memorial donations may be made to the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland at www.ursulinesisters.org.

Funeral and burial arrangements by DeJohn-Flynn-Mylott.

URSULINE SISTERS
OF CLEVELAND

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
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Thank you!

Visit www.UrsulineSisters.org to submit prayer requests.

THANK YOU

for Making the *Virtual* Ursuline Preakness Party Such an Overwhelming Success!

We hope to see you in person at the next Ursuline Derby Day, May 7, 2022!