

## IHMs IN ACTION



Sister Barbara (right) and Elizabeth Martin display Elizabeth's first quilt.

Like the quilts she makes for relaxation, Barbara (Ann Damien) Cardinal, IHM, has taken the pieces of her life and skillfully created something beautiful and lasting through her ministries.

After serving in education, pastoral, probation and non-profit ministries, Sister Barbara earned a master's degree in special education that led her into a new ministry in the field of mental health

"Now I'm an independent facilitator and trainer, working with the Detroit and Oakland and Macomb Counties' mental health systems and Wayne State University Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI)," Sister Barbara says.

As an independent facilitator, Sister Barbara works with people with mental illness or developmental disabilities to help them develop a "person-centered plan" (PCP) for the next year, determining their goals and what kind of support the need to reach them.

The client decides who will help develop the PCP. It can be a family member, social worker or an independent

facilitator such as Sister Barbara.

"The PCP is a requirement of the Michigan Mental Health Code for every person with a developmental disability," Sister Barbara explains. "There is always an agency written into each PCP to supervise the services provided and the money spent."

Sister Barbara also provides training to those who work with people with developmental disabilities or mental health issues.

"The training can be challenging at times," Sister Barbara notes. "Because it's required by the state, sometimes staff is resistant to information they need to pay attention to."

Always the student, Sister Barbara learned to quilt three years ago. She has found a way to weave her ministry experience into her new craft.

"I've worked with a young woman named Elizabeth Martin for many years," Sister Barbara says. "She has physical and developmental disabilities, and I originally worked with her and her family to get her mainstreamed in school and to develop her PCPs.

"Elizabeth's mother learned I had taken up quilting and asked if I would teach Elizabeth. It took us six months to complete her first quilt, but Elizabeth is justifiably proud of the result and of her efforts.

"And so am I," Sister Barbara says quietly.