

IHMs in Action



Sister Camille Brouillard, IHM, is the social work case manager for the IHM Motherhouse Health Care Center. She describes her ministry as making connections.

"I connect people to people and people to services," she explains. "As residents are admitted to our Health Care or Memory Care units, I meet with them to assess their needs - medically, cognitively, socially - and then set up services to meet those needs. I follow up to make sure appropriate services are provided.

"I'm an advocate for residents, and I serve as a bridge between residents, staff and administration," Sister Camille continues. "I'm part of an interdisciplinary team. We have daily meetings to discuss any changes in a resident's status, so we can make sure nothing falls through the cracks."

Sister Camille transferred to the Monroe IHM Sisters from the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa (known as the "Grey Nuns") in 1978. She ministered in Florida for 14 years, working with Haitian refugees and children with AIDS before moving to Monroe in 1998. She coordinated transportation for the Motherhouse residents for eight years and has served in her current ministry for the last two years.

"The changes in my life - transferring from the Grey Nuns to the IHMs, working with babies with AIDS and then with people at the other end of life's spectrum - have taught me to trust that I'll be where I'm supposed to be," Sister Camille notes.

She often uses that trust as she works with residents.

"I walk around and spend time with those in need," she says. "I'm frequently drawn to someone's room but have no idea why. The reason usually becomes clear as I talk to the resident. I try to be accepting of who she is and what she's feeling at that moment instead of trying to talk her out of any negative emotions. When people feel listened-to, they can often move beyond the negative."

Sister Camille also helps Motherhouse residents complete advance directives to make their health care wishes known if they are ever unable to speak for themselves. She works with those serving as a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) for any of the sisters to help them understand their roles. (DPOAs make decisions for the sisters only if they are unable to do so.) She also chairs the Grievance Committee and the Care Conference Committee, which meets weekly to go over the care plans for each resident, and sits on the Ethics Committee.

It's clear that Sister Camille loves her ministry, but she admits the paperwork involved is a challenge. The ministry can also be difficult on a much more personal level.

"These women are my sisters," she says quietly. "Watching people I know and care about struggle with declining health is hard.

"But the rewards are huge! A smile from someone who had been unresponsive, hearing people's stories - those are graced moments. I feel like I'm making a difference."

If you would like to partner with the IHM Sisters in support of their ministries, secure [online](#) giving is available.