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Lumen Christi Award Recipients

Since 1978, Catholic Extension awarded the Lumen Christi Award to deserving missionary working in the United States. Sr. Bernie was an honoree: 1998 Sister Bernadette Kenny, MMM, Virginia

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A R T I C L E S

Diocese gives \$224,000 for St. Mary's Health Wagon

by Jean Denton
of The Catholic Virginian

Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo has announced a newly-restructured endowment fund to provide \$224,000 for the St. Mary's Health Wagon, a mobile health care unit that for more than 30 years has served the uninsured, underinsured and disenfranchised in far southwest Virginia.



St. Mary's health wagon.

The bishop approved new bylaws and renamed the Southwest Virginia Catholic Health Care Endowment Fund in November and, at the request of the Health Wagon Board of Directors, authorized using \$100,000 of it toward the construction of a new clinic in Wise.

The fund also supports the vehicle, equipment and various medical services of the mobile unit as well maintenance of the new clinic.

Health Wagon Executive Director Teresa Gardner said, “Diocesan support has always made a tremendous difference for us because the needs we serve are very extensive, and we appreciate that the bishop and the diocese recognize that need.”

“Having funds designated for the clinic, she added, “will benefit the entire region as we can reach more of our vulnerable population.”

The Health Wagon was founded in 1980 by [Sr. Bernadette Kenney](#), a member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, who started the mobile health service in her Volkswagen Beetle.

Since then it has grown steadily to a 12-member staff that last year provided comprehensive health care services to more than 2,600 patients in Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Wise counties.

The new stationary clinic in Wise is being constructed on two acres of land donated by the Wise County Board of Supervisors. It will allow the Health Wagon to expand its geographic base of operations and provide specialty care services, especially chronic disease treatment, while furthering its working relationship with the University of Virginia.

The endowment fund carries an express condition that the Health Wagon will abide by ethical guidelines that are consistent with Catholic teaching.