From the Desk of the Executive Director

You have heard SEW’s big news – and it’s very good news! The mission of SEW to empower women through the process of developing local businesses will continue in a new way. That mission is being transferred to our long time business partner in El Salvador, Leslie Schuld, Executive Director of the CIS.

What words can convey the graced and privileged journey that SEW has been for me? When I think of my time with SEW, what touches my heart and fills my memories are the remarkable people I have had the privilege to meet, to know and to work with, both here and in El Salvador. The courageous SEW women have taught me how to be joyful amid struggles, hopeful despite enormous obstacles, loving and persistent in face of displacement and loss. Leslie and our staff in El Salvador continue to inspire me. For them, no woman falls outside their sphere of concern and inclusion. And from the beginning, Sister Marie Chiodo has worked alongside me with abiding friendship, encouragement, humor and creativity.

Indeed it does take a village! And what wonderful villagers you have been. Committed board members expanded networks, sought grants and coordinated successful special events. Many of you were volunteers who sold Salvadoran crafts in the early years, made the Romero Cup Bowling event a fun fund raiser, hosted book signings and speaker events, and held “RUNs” for SEW.

The poet, Adrienne Rich writes that she must cast her lot with “those who age after age with no extraordinary power reconstitute the world.” The generous support and funding by so many donors, churches, religious congregations of sisters, schools, Family Trusts and Foundations enabled our SEW women to reconstitute their worlds in life-giving and culture-changing ways. Thank you for casting your lot with these indomitable women.

In this newsletter, there are opportunities for you to continue to be part of that mission through the Anne Marie Gardiner Women’s Empowerment Fund (p.11) and the CIS organization in El Salvador (p. 9).

These have indeed been graced and privileged years for me. Sharing the journey with you, knowing that together we are helping to reconstitute part of our world, is cause for celebration and deep gratitude.
Every day, I give thanks for the transformations and empowerment of youth and women that I am so privileged to be a part of. I have been living in El Salvador for 25 years, and can see some of the fruits of the seeds that have been planted by international solidarity. One of those seeds was a brainstorming session with Sister Anne Marie Gardiner and Salvadoran women here in El Salvador, out of which the idea of SEW was born. It took a lot of tending, weeding, organic fertilizer, organic pesticides, trial and error, but the tree of SEW is blossoming and growing.

CIS and SEW have been strategic partners in empowering women through business development. CIS is committed to continuing that work which we began together in 2003.

We have learned so much! We see the impact of our work with the women. With your ongoing support, the tree of SEW will continue to branch forth.

We will redouble our efforts in the absence of Sister Anne Marie’s accompaniment, leadership and questions. The diligent work of the SEW Board, the detailed and arduous work of fundraising, relationship building, and the beautiful SEW newsletter have kept us all connected. I want to let you know that CIS in El Salvador and our 501c3 LOS OLIVOS CIS in the U.S. will be a channel for your ongoing support.

I would like to share some of the work CIS has done in conjunction with SEW in El Salvador. We train our staff in women’s empowerment, organization and human rights. We build relationships through skills training, business planning and administrative workshops.

What exactly have we learned? We have learned how to raise chickens; how to ensure hygienic measures for food and baking; how to grow indigo; how to make organic fertilizer; how to make cheese; how to sew a straight line; how to dye clothing with indigo, using 21 different design techniques; how to register a business; how to get health permits, and so much more.

We have learned to be sensitive to the struggles of women with scarce economic resources, for example, not having anyone to care for the children; putting up with abusive relationships; dealing with lack of self-confidence to travel by bus to San Salvador to sell their products; not having bus fare because they had to buy medicine for their child; lacking formal schooling; not being listened to for being a woman; lacking clean water; the list goes on!

Perhaps most important, we have developed friendships and a sense of solidarity, so we can work together to empower women and change the injustices and inequality around us.
What Characterizes the SEW Board of Directors?

One mission, diverse skills, passion for justice, analytic and critical thinking, clear focus, determination, decisive planning and accountability

From the midwives who launched SEW in 2003 –Maggie Quinlan, Patrice Flynn, Mary Leach, Patti Ann Rogucki, Marie Chiodo—to the members today, each person pictured above freely shared her/his talents, treasure and expertise. Working together with enthusiasm and humor, the Board, in conjunction with the CIS, designed a unique and successful SEW methodology for business and human development for the women. They ensured periodic evaluation and oversight of the programs and businesses. Board members visited the businesses in El Salvador, developed funding networks, coordinated special events and arranged for three Salvadoran Ambassadors to participate in SEW events. SEW applauds the past and present board members for their effective good governance. Under the leadership of current Board President, Patricia Flynn, SEW is managing a smooth transition of SEW’s mission to the CIS. To each Board member, a heartfelt “THANK YOU!”
The SEW business stories helped me to see a world that I do not know, and to rejoice as I read about each woman and her family. Their creativity: making indigo, raising animals, making new use of their mothering skills - and also making money! To start with only an idea and develop it into a professional business that is bringing women out of poverty - that accomplishment is rare. -Kathleen Feeley, SSND

How SEW Women Have Touched Our Lives

I’m a faithful supporter of SEW because I believe in SEW’s mission. Women are truly the ones who transform countries and bring awareness to social and economic disparity. They make a better life for themselves and their families. -Jennifer McGuire

Over the years I have been in awe of the amount of work that helped these women gain personal confidence and dignity, as well as power over the future of their lives. From simple down-earth-projects, an amazing amount of good has come about. Whatever new arrangements may take place, may they all have the same effect of improving the lives of these women who are so deserving of success. -Emma Rohn, DW

The foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mother Theresa, always had as primary concern the uplifting of women and through them, the uplifting of family and therefore, the world. SEW is particularly dear to our hearts. -The Bethlehem Community, SSND

SEW women aren’t receiving a hand out, but a hand up. They are learning how to run a business. They are learning self-reliance, self-respect and self-confidence. We seldom give money just to ‘give money’ because that doesn’t allow respect for the recipient and doesn’t encourage them to become self-sufficient. SEW is the best of both worlds: money to start an enterprise and money to educate the women - and what an example the women are giving to their own children, their daughters, especially! -Mur and Jim Hiltenbrand

While I know this transitions can be difficult after 17 years of faithful service to the women of SEW, it is my hope and belief that you, Anne Marie, Marie and the Board are grateful for all you’ve accomplished and are confident that CIS will carry your dream forward. My admiration and my prayers for each of you. -Sue Fox

For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential - created in God’s image. SEW has taken this message to heart and helped many women reach the fullness of their potential in the circumstances of their lives and culture. -Ethel Howley, SSND

I support this group because they are my sisters and I would like for them to have some of the opportunities that I have had in my life. -Mary Louise Chesley-Cora

SEW will always remind us that a little money can go a long way to restore dignity and enhance socioeconomic well-being: that microenterprise is a powerful antidote to war, global capitalism and injustice; that working hand-in-hand with a joyful committed group of Salvadoran women entrepreneurs, staff and donors can indeed change lives. Thank you, Anne Marie and Marie for making our shared dreams a reality! -Patrice Flynn

I gave my support to SEW because it was run by the sisters and the women thrived and looked so happy….It was a world charitable organization that I could trust to use the money where it is most useful. -Pat De Rubio

You believed in possibilities - 18 businesses all working their way out of poverty - believing in God and self - a force for good. Congratulations! -Marie Burke, SND

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The women’s stories reinforce what I believe: ask women what they want and support them to find their own answers… help them get started and move them to be independent. -Edna English, DW

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There’s No Business Like SEW Business - and No Staff like SEW Staff!

We are often asked: What makes SEW different from other organizations with similar missions?

We start with personal development of the women to foster a belief in themselves, counteracting cultural norms that diminish and often deny their potential. We engage them in education in self-esteem, gender equality, health care and leadership skills. Then we don’t assume that they can just sit at a sewing machine, learn to sew and start a business. We engage them in training for the business, which includes planning, marketing, pricing, purchasing supplies, office practices, etc. We ensure the women will know how to deal with customers, supply chains, government regulations, and legal issues. That is our process.

But what really makes the difference is that our staff accompany the women for a 3-5 year period, helping them review successes and failures, expand their vision, become more self-confident and enterprising, thus growing the business until they become self-sustaining.

We cannot say enough about the dedication of our staff over the years. They spend long hours traveling by bus to remote villages month after month, year after year, to help women like themselves value their dignity, recognize their abilities and succeed in becoming entrepreneurs. They design training programs, network with government offices and universities, and broker services from other non-profits.

You, Delmy, Maira, Iris and Jenny, are such models for the women. You have been a force for change in their lives.

Thank you for the sacrifices you make for the women, for the listening hearts you bring to your work.

You have made the difference between women remaining isolated and invisible and women claiming their voice and bringing about change in their families and villages. Thank you for this amazing journey with the women! We are confident that you and the CIS will continue that journey of service into the future. -Marie Chiodo, DW

Through the Years: SEW Volunteers

Helen Keller once wrote, “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” How apt a description of our SEW volunteers through the years. All it took was a call or an email and our volunteers would be at the office door ready to take on tasks that moved forward the work of SEW. The bonus to each of us was the rich conversation about the women, the beauty and fragility of life in El Salvador, the plight of our nation’s immigrants, our varied involvements in justice endeavors and the delight of hearing about one another’s lives and journeys. And magically, it seemed, in the midst of becoming friends, we had expert proof-reading, readied the newsletter for mailing, completed inventories, updated data bases, and so much more. Thank you, Ed and Connie, Al and Pat, Mary, Jennifer and Kris for your work and your friendship.

Connie and Ed Kelly, Pat and Al Thomas, Mary Rein, Jennifer Mc Guire and Kris Leary
### SEW Women Are Open For Business

Here's what's happening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Some Principal Achievements and Needs</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Hope Women's Association, Ilobasco</td>
<td>Began process of evaluation and planning to promote and launch Reception and Food Service Business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tropical Fruits of the Pacific Ice Cream, Tam-</td>
<td>Completed training in making homemade ice cream and prepared to launch business. Organization and</td>
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<td>manique</td>
<td>leadership development work began 3 years ago and business training this year.</td>
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<td>Creative Hands Sewing Workshop, Estanzuelas</td>
<td>SEW donated seed money for women to broaden their market to Salvadorans living in the U.S. to sell</td>
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<td></td>
<td>handmade Salvadoran crafts. Formation in gender equality. Involvement of new women in initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Taste Cafetería Buen Gusto, San Pablo</td>
<td>Leadership development and organization of women</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tacachico</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Jiquilite Organic Agriculture Coopera-</td>
<td>Successful organic cultivation and processing of indigo; culmination of business plan, additional</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>tive, Monseñor Romero</td>
<td>organic training, cultivating worms. Next year they plan to broaden ways to generate income.</td>
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<td>Sausage a la Vista, Los Hoyos, Ilobasco</td>
<td>Facilitated business plan with SEW coordinator Yeny and marketing scholarship student, Josue. Training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>in sanitary measures and packing from CDMYPE.</td>
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<td>Divine Child Bakery, Los Hoyos, Ilobasco</td>
<td>Business coordinator got training in women's health and business administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women in Action – Candy Espíritu Santo - Isla</td>
<td>Increased orders and solid income. Need business plan and another stove to increase production. Need</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Espíritu Santo</td>
<td>computer and training course to fill out government business forms.</td>
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<td>Los Azules de Titihuape - The Blues of Titi-</td>
<td>The group had to suspend its work due to an outbreak of violence. Next year we will evaluate and see</td>
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<tr>
<td>huape (River)</td>
<td>if we can start anew or take another direction.</td>
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<td>The Basic Food Basket San Pablo Tacachico</td>
<td>Expansion of delivery route and clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las Delicias Bakery, Llano Largo</td>
<td>Business training; increased products and clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie’s Bakery – Zacatales, Comasagua</td>
<td>Increased production and clients</td>
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<td>Poultry Farm, New Dawn - Guacotecti</td>
<td>CLOSED DUE TO HIGH RISK AREA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Seamstresses</td>
<td>Purchased a tool kit to repair machinery with SEW donation, ceiling fans, and a bathroom.</td>
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We are proud that two “graduated” sewing businesses have been awarded government contracts. ACOPAMSLR, in San Luis los Ranchos has been awarded 6 school uniform contracts for 2018. The sewing and embroidery workshop Pajaro Flor in Suchitoto has been awarded school uniform contracts for the 8th year, as well as a contract from a Salvadoran department store for its indigo clothing. -CIS-SEW Business Evaluations, December 2017 CIS Newsletter
The women on the Island of Tasajera learned how to make purses and accessories. They fashioned their own designs. Through their work with SEW and CIS, the women decided to go back to school and take advantage of the CIS high school and university scholarship programs. The women only had a 6th grade education, so they had to go to junior high with their kids, since adult classes are only available from 10th grade on. They graduated!

These women have a beautiful business and sell their products to cruise ships that stop on the island, as well as at the CIS store in the capital and local hotels. They had to spend $100 to get their sewing machines repaired. So, good business women that they are, they asked the CIS to get them a course on how to repair the sewing machines and SEW set them up with the tools they needed. “They learned faster than the men,” according to the instructor who informed us that it was his first time teaching women his trade.

-Leslie Schuld

SEW Women’s Community Impact

The Salvadoran government has a program to subsidize small farmers with seeds and fertilizers through the municipal mayors. But who would distribute them?

In Llano Largo, the people said they wanted the women at SEW’s cheese and dairy business to distribute those subsidies. Their reason: because the women know who the farmers are and who is in need and they will distribute money fairly! They knew that the mayor might well give it to his political donors, to people not in need and not even to farmers. The trust in SEW business women led to their being taken into account in a civic matter.

The trust placed in SEW business women highlights one of the many ways the women have felt themselves empowered to contribute to the well-being of their communities. They have done so by protesting metal mining by multinationals, by organizing to end violence against women and by their willingness to be agents of change in governance structures in their municipalities. - Leslie Schuld

How You Can Help Keep the Mission Going

The SEW mission is now in the hands of the CIS, our partner of 15 years. You can help women continue to work their way out of poverty through small business development by mailing your tax deductible donations to:

Los Olivos CIS (in U.S. dollars)
PO Box 76
Westmont, IL 60559-0086
Memo line: SEW

Debit/credit donations online:
www.cis-elsalvador.org/donate.html

Visit the CIS website at: www.cis-elsalvador.org

Leslie Schuld, middle, executive director of Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS), and SEW’s Anne Marie Gardiner, right, show Maryland State delegate Jimmy Tarlau, left, around the Romero Community, a Salvadoran village where people are building the community from the ground up with support from CIS and SEW. (Christine Bolanos)
IN HONOR OF

My cousin, Marie Ciccone, one of the best individuals I know, from Mike Villano
Honoring my Mom, Wilma Baumgartner, who just turned 95. Go Mom!, from Betty Bergeron
Celebrating my friends and neighbors, Pat and Al Thomas, from Betty Bell
  Honoring Matt and Claire Barry, from Marie Barry
  Honoring Bruce and Katie Smitt, from Marie Barry
  Honoring Sr. Jo-El McLaughlin, OSB, from Diane York
Daughters of Wisdom Jubilarians: Sr. Jeannine Boutin -75years; Sr. Veronica Byrnes - 70 years; Sisters Mary Jane Cashin, Pat Curreri, Edna English, Mary Jo O’Connor and Joanne Zielinski - 60 years, from Marie Chiodo, DW & Edna English, DW
Honoring: Betty Ward, Mary Clair Walsh, Kristine Howanski, Gail Colbeck, and Barbara Cochnar, from Carol Bleistine and Beth Dellow
Honoring Dean Jane Kirschling, School of Nursing, University of Maryland, a great friend, from Beth O’Connell
Celebrating a great woman’s birthday, Mary Allman, from Catherine Pownell, Cecilia Allman and Theresa Cuddy
  Planting indigo seeds to honor Megan, Paul and Isabelle, from Mary and Ted Tschudy
  Honoring Sr. Patty McCarron, SSND, from Mary Wingate
  Supporting the new ice cream business in honor of Dotti Moore, from Catherine Haddon
  Donating for industrial sewing machine to celebrate Elizabeth De Marco, from Eileen De Marco
Celebrating and honoring strong women everywhere, from Pat and Al Thomas
Honoring Sr. Cathy Arata, SSND, Sr. Clara Beall, SSND, Sr. Cass Botta, SSND, from Mary Gunning
Happy birthday Carleen Cekal, SSND, Marie McFadden, SSND, India and Phyllis Linsenmeyer, RN, from Jane Scanlon, SSND
Honoring Blanca, Salvadoran mother of five children, from Jane Scanlon, SSND

IN MEMORY OF

Celebrating the life of Ginny Lynch Graf, from her many friends, Dr. Peter and Petra Brand, Richard and Donna Kowalczyk, Julia Hartenstein, Joanne Beaulieu, Sr. Carol Gnau, SSND, Robert and Jane Edwards and Cynthia Turnes
Remembering Harry Hobson, Tim Troutman and Albert Victor Peterson, from Victor and Roberta De Marco
  Remembering Joan Maier, SSND and Joan Hart, SSND, from Jane Scanlon, SSND
  Remembering Carole Dillon, from Judy Schurman and Sisters Anne Marie and Marie
  In memory of Geraldine Dillon, from Jane Scanlon, SSND
In memory of Mary Russell, Kathy Meisz, Joan Spurrier, from Carol Bleistine and Beth Dellow
Recalling with joy, the life of Sr. Joan Hart, SSND, from Sisters Anne Marie and Marie
Celebrating the life of Donald Chiodo, Pat’s loving husband, father, grandfather, and brother of Marie, Jerry and JoAnn
Women’s Empowerment Fund
Goal: $25,000

SEW is establishing a fund to honor the vision and work of its foundress, Sr. Anne Marie Gardiner, SSND. This Women’s Empowerment Fund will be a gift to the CIS in recognition of her dream that all women, no matter their humble beginnings, could be nurtured and empowered to do great things, to work their way out of poverty with dignity and hope. Over the years, hundreds of women have benefited from SEW trainings.

The transformation of women’s lives through small business and personal development is the goal of the Anne Marie Gardiner Women’s Empowerment Fund. As SEW transfers its operation to the CIS, our strategic partner, and Leslie Schuld, CIS Director, we are confident that the work of transformation will not just continue, but grow.

With the establishment of the Anne Marie Gardiner Fund we offer you a vehicle to honor a great woman and to continue your support of the amazing Salvadoran women you have accompanied for years.

Enclosed find my donation of ________________ for the Anne Marie Gardiner Women’s Empowerment Fund

Tax deductible donations can be made payable to SEW and mailed to:
SEW
416 Branch Drive,
Silver Spring, MD 20901
Memo line: AMG Women’s Empowerment Fund
Credit card donations can be made online: www.sewinc.org

Please post all donations by June 15, 2018. Thank you!

They Have a Dream

As 2018 dawned, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) ramped up its arrests of immigrants across the country. Church groups and justice advocates have increased their efforts to speak out for intelligent and compassionate legislation for DACA – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. DACA was a policy established in 2012 for those brought to the US as children. They are called Dreamers after the 2001 bipartisan Dream Act bill that would have provided a path to citizenship for DACA individuals.

Gatherings of justice seekers in state and national congressional offices have raised their voices for the Dreamers and their families. This is not merely a political issue. It is a moral issue.

Do we, as a nation, have the moral will and conscience to address the fate of Dreamers and their families?

In Washington, DC in the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda, we gathered to pray and talk with our elected officials, urging them: “Time is running out. Come together. Protect Dreamers and their families. Craft comprehensive immigration reform legislation.”

Forty people, laity, sisters, and priests, were arrested in the Senate Rotunda for “crowding and obstructing.” Their real “crime” — acting in solidarity with the hundreds of undocumented languishing in detention centers or being deported.
Salvadoran Enterprises for Women
Sister Anne Marie Gardiner, SSND
416 Branch Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Economic and Social Justice for Women through small business development

Every great dream begins with a dreamer.
Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion
To reach for the stars to change the world. - Harriet Tubman