

Behind the Scenes Under the Dome

Alyssa Tasto



Left: Cheryl (left) at a Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity house build with Sister Lisa Rose (right) and another volunteer

Right: Cheryl (right) enjoys a hike with Sisters Patricia Ruether, Patricia Snizek and Lisa Rose (left to right)



Even for those who have followed different vocations in life, there is something special about spending time with a monastic community. The Benedictine Live-In Experience at Saint Benedict's Monastery provides an opportunity for Christian women to break away from the routine of daily life and refresh their spirituality by sharing in the prayer and work of the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict. Cheryl Cyert is a former math teacher living in Mauston, Wis., and an alumna of the College of Saint Benedict. She has participated in the Live-In Experience every summer since 2021.

"During 2023, I retired," Cheryl said as she recalled previous summers spent at Saint Benedict's Monastery. "I think that the third year was more like I needed just some place to recharge and think about what the next years are going to bring." She pondered what called her to keep returning to the monastery, saying, "I think ultimately, it's because I find the sisters very inspiring. There's something about serving the sisters that have served people for so many years ... that draws me back."

Cheryl arrived at the monastery June 12, 2025. On a typical day, Monday through Friday, she prayed with the sisters at 7 a.m., worked a morning shift, joined the sisters for Midday Prayer and lunch, and worked a second shift until 3:30 p.m.

She stayed with a living group of sisters and spent the evenings taking personal time or participating in activities with her living group such as watching game shows and movies, taking walks, and enjoying off-campus activities like birthday celebrations.

Through the Live-In Experience, Cheryl has worked in environmental services, the monastery kitchen, the guest house, the monastery Archives, and as a driver and helper to individual sisters. On Wednesdays, she worked at Saint Scholastica Convent, our community's retirement facility in St. Cloud, Minn. She personally requested to continue visiting Saint Scholastica Convent this year: "On Wednesdays, Sister Christian Morris does *lectio* on the memory care unit ... that's always very insightful to me."

Because of the nature of the Live-In Experience, it is possible that participants are present for uniquely special moments in the lives of the sisters. Cheryl is honored to have been present for the final professions of two sisters, Sisters Bridgette Powers and Laura Suhr, in 2022, as well as the passing of a sister at Saint Scholastica Convent.

Cheryl returned home to Wisconsin in early August. She looks forward with joyful anticipation to her next visit to Saint Benedict's Monastery—perhaps again as a Live-In volunteer next summer!

To learn more about participating in the Benedictine Live-In Experience, visit www.sbm.osb.org/ministry/live-in or contact Sister Mary Catherine Holicky, Live-In coordinator, at liveinex@csbsju.edu or (320) 363-7028.