School Sisters of Notre Dame News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Sisters of Notre Dame Launch Capital Campaign

July 1, 2005 ST. LOUIS, MO – For the first time in their 147-year history in the St. Louis area, the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) have launched a major capital campaign, *Inspiring Hope*, to raise $7.5 million. To date, donors have committed $5.23 million in gifts and pledges to the campaign. *Inspiring Hope* seeks to secure funds to bolster the retirement and operating funds, and to provide resources for ongoing ministries. The School Sisters are making campaign appeals to family, friends and alumni/ae in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, California and other areas where the sisters have served.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived in the St. Louis area in 1858 and established the St. Louis Province in 1895. They, along with members of several other orders of women religious, built the Catholic school system in St. Louis and surrounding areas, providing thousands of children with quality educations. Today, 564 School Sisters of Notre Dame of the St. Louis Province teach in 82 elementary schools, high schools and colleges in Missouri, Illinois and 16 other states and in nine countries abroad. They also work in a variety of social service, health care and other ministries serving the poor.

More than 260 of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the St. Louis Province are over the age of 70. During their years in active ministry, the now retired sisters received only minimal stipends for their work. Consequently, Province needs to secure funds to provide for their care. While the average annual cost of caring for a retired SSND is $21,000, the average annual Social Security Benefit is $5,205 per sister. If the Province does not secure the resources needed to build a sufficient retirement fund, subsidies for ministry will have to be diverted to retirement. Hundreds of people in need would lose the benefit of the SSND ministries that are helping them build better lives.

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The School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) are an international congregation of approximately 4,100 Catholic sisters who live and work in the United States and 36 other countries on five continents. The mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is to proclaim the Good News, directing their entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus was sent. That mission is embodied in the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. Committed to this goal, the School Sisters of Notre Dame respond to the varying needs of the church and world through a diversity of ministries such as education, healthcare, social outreach and pastoral ministry. The St. Louis Province numbers 564 women who serve in a variety of ministries in 18 of 50 states in the U.S. and Japan, Nepal, Korea, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Italy.

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