

## Meet our Associate Joanna Helm

Joanna became an Associate on April 29, 2012. Her companion is Sister Sandra Sudkamp.



My love for the Franciscan family began twenty-two years ago in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I was going through a very painful divorce and I signed up for a divorce recovery workshop being held at Mt. St. Francis. Sister Marilyn Uhing headed the group and it lasted for eight weeks. She invited me to help facilitate with the future classes; and she also asked me to serve with her on two boards that helped women. I became close to her and the other sisters at the Mount; I always found peace when I was on their holy grounds. The ten years I spent there were very rewarding.

When we moved to Illinois I found myself longing for the loving and holy women I had left behind. I know that the Lord knew of this void in my life and that I needed a new sense of direction. He led me to meet Eileen Hartke, who was an associate with the Sisters in Joliet. I attended my first prayer group in Effingham as a guest. I knew that first night that I had found my new home with a group of women who were willing to share their love of Francis and Clare. I

immediately began my journey to become an associate. The day of my commitment on the altar was one of my happiest days ever. It is so wonderful to look at the world through the eyes of Francis! It filled my heart and life with gratitude, love, peace and a willingness to reach out to others. My Franciscan family is such a blessing and inspiration. Each day is a journey with Francis and Clare as my companions.