



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI CIRCLE AWARD RECIPIENT



THERESA ORLANDO '78, M.S. Ed.

Executive Director (Retired)

Miryam Shelter

For 15 years Theresa Orlando '78 served as the executive director of Miryam Shelter for Bethlehem Haven in Pittsburgh, Pa.

In this position she worked for an agency providing direct service to homeless women dealing with mental health issues and other risk factors. Her responsibilities included program development, staff recruitment, training and supervision.

Originally hired as a case manager, Ms. Orlando earned certification in addiction through Robert Morris University to further her knowledge of addiction and mental health. Later she became the director of Bethlehem Haven's Day Program, which reached 25 to 70 homeless women each day. In this role Ms. Orlando administered contracts from the City of Pittsburgh and federal government, and supervised and trained workers from the Department of Human Services.

For 23 years Ms. Orlando was a director of Christian formation in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, serving in five different parishes. She started this career after Vatican Council II, and she developed the training and enrichment for all liturgical ministries. Ms. Orlando also was responsible for Pastoral Council and RCIA program development.

During her involvement with the Diocesan Catechist Training Program, Ms. Orlando helped with the creation of lesson plans for Communion and face-to-face reconciliation. Over the years she recruited, trained and supervised hundreds of professional and volunteer teachers, initiated and facilitated numerous workshops and seminars for adult learners, and designed and facilitated Liturgy of the Word for children and family catechesis.

"My experience at La Roche College was one of acceptance and affirmation of what I had to bring, and presented the challenge of what my God-given direction was," she said. "I have tried to bring that spirit of acceptance and affirmation to whomever and whatever I have been involved with."

Ms. Orlando holds a bachelor's degree in theology and religious studies from La Roche, and a master's degree in education from Duquesne University.

