Sister Joan Mitchell captures the spirit of the dynamic community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet when she connects their history, values and ministries. Undoubtedly, the Sisters of St. Joseph have a history built on service to their communities. According to Sister Joan Mitchell, even at the time of the creation of the order, the Sisters’ “houses were to be hubs of hospitality, caring, and outreach to our neighbors” (p. 8). With their beginnings in 17th century France teaching prostitutes how to support themselves making lace, the Sisters began a humanitarian response to their community’s needs that has persisted. In fact, a constant force throughout their history has been the Sisters’ enduring values. The Sisters have identified four values that have been the foundation of their work: “hospitality and caring, concern for the dear neighbor without distinction, addressing the needs of the time, and striving for excellence” (p. 8). As a testament to these values, the Sisters have worked to empower students through providing access to higher education, including educational opportunities at the two campuses of St. Catherine University. Finally, the Sisters’ innovative spirit is evident in their ongoing ministries. As Mitchell described: “In the past thirty years, sisters have developed new ministries that offer sites for volunteer work, internships, and mentoring programs” (p. 11). The Sisters’ dedication to progressive community outreach extends into counseling programs that serve abused women, single mothers and struggling addicts. The Sisters of St. Joseph have built a legacy and a hopeful future by committing to enduring values that drive them to respond to the needs of the time.

Reference