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## **Joseph Colligan and Mary Jo (Gugino) Colligan began Angels of Mercy in 2007**

### **Mary Jo (Gugino) Colligan~**

Mary Jo Gugino Colligan, Founder and President of Angels of Mercy, began this ministry in 2007 with a mission of helping hurting girls and young women. Having experienced many challenges in her life time and that of her family, she did so with a true passion. Her desire of believing that every woman should be able to 'spread her wings and fly', certainly propelled she, her husband and team of dedicated volunteers into action! Through Angels of Mercy's coordinated efforts and Faith in God, they extend unconditional love to help women and girls to give hope and achieve FREEDOM, DIGNITY and RESTORATION.

The first born of Dr. and Mrs. Russell Gugino, Mary Jo has experienced the love, values, hard work, and giving of self to others that are evident of her Italian up-bringing. Watching her parents and grandparents give so much to others, she knew she wanted to do something to follow in their footsteps. She is passionate about preventing sex and human trafficking here, nationally and around the world. Since 2010, Dress A Girl events have been held on a monthly basis and now expanded to 40 locations within New York State, since the inception. As of February 2014, we have blessed and dressed over 94, 000 girls here and around the world. In 2013 we launched our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual STOP THE TRAFFICKING-END THE CYCLE RUN/WALK and currently hold Awareness events about what is known as "modern day slavery". Mary Jo believes that everyone has a "Gift" and wishes everyone the chance to "Shine".

Mary Jo is a 1970 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School and she pursued her studies of Dental Hygiene and graduated in 1972 with an AAS Degree. Colligan has been married for 32 years, has 2 daughters, one married and 2 wonderful grandchildren.

Her Professional and Community affiliations include:

- Registered and Practicing Dental Hygienist from 1972-present
- Associate of the Sisters of Mercy of the America's
- Member of IWCC (Italian Woman's Civic Club)
- New York State Ambassador/Rep for Dress A Girl Around The World
- Member of the Rochester Regional Coalition Against Human Trafficking
- Member of Rochester Monroe County Domestic Violence Consortium

Recognition /Awards:

- 2010 Italian American Civic Club 'Gala Recipient' for non-profit Charitable Work
- 2011 Recipient of the Irondequoit Chamber of Commerce 'Person of the Year'
- 2012 United Nations Association of Rochester 'Outstanding Community Organization Award' given for humanitarian work
- 2012 IACC (Italian American Community Center) 'Women of the Year Award' in the Civic Category
- 2012 Hope for Women International Recognition for Dress A Girl success
- 2014 Women of the Year, Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs
- Paul Harris Fellow Award for Community and Humanitarian Service from Rotary International
- 2016 Son's of Italy Humanitarian Award
- 2017 Church Women United, Key Woman Award, Annual State Assembly, New York State