



Franciscan Community  
Volunteers

# Community Connections

## FCVs dive deep during fall retreat

*Augie Lindmark*

If Minnesota has a heart, I suspect it beats somewhere in central Minnesota. After a weekend retreat at the Motherhouse in Little Falls, I'm convinced a key component of Midwestern hospitality rests within those welcoming walls.

The FCVs competed with the sun regarding who would rise first on the morning of October 25. We piled into two cars and after 30 miles on the road, we found ourselves in Little Falls. We gathered as a group in fellowship, prayer and reflection to build on the foundations of community living.

A common theme during our retreat was an exploration to the depths of our faith journeys—as individuals and as an interconnected community. Our time together afforded us compelling discussions on discernment of vocation and the importance of relationship building with God, as well as individuals placed in our everyday lives.

The weekend passed quickly, but not before our laughter produced tears and we ate a stunning amount



Kelli Wilbert, Ian Peoples, Pat Schlauderaff, Nick Anderson, Augie Lindmark, Kaitlin Depuydt and Nneka Arinze

of popcorn. We left recharged and returned to St. Cloud knowing that the power of community made our hearts pulse a little bit stronger.

## Thank you, dankie, merci, danke schoen, mille grazie, gracias...!

*Pat Schlauderaff*

However you say it... for me it is a way to express my appreciation for the great success of the Give to the Max day. The FCV program raised \$1,735 which was matched by generous donors for a grand total of \$3,470!!

Our thanks go beyond that generous day of support to all of the support for this amazing ministry. As I start my sixth month as the FCV Program Director, I reflect upon the bountiful blessings thus far.

First and foremost I give thanks to God for the amazing volunteers. The work they do every day is truly in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare. Thanks to the nonprofit service agencies for the welcome and support you are giving to the volunteers. Special thanks to the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls for the prayers, companionship, and support of the program. We couldn't do it without you all! And finally, thank you to all of our supporters: for the gifts of prayer, companionship, dedication, and financial support.

Thank you, dankie, merci, danke schoen, mille grazie, muchisimas gracias...!

FCV is a sponsored ministry of:



**FRANCISCAN SISTERS**  
OF LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

# Welcome to two more Franciscan Community Volunteers!



**Kristen Wall** is from Rochester, Minn. She did her undergraduate degree at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., studying Spanish and global studies. This past year, Kristen was a long-term volunteer with the Young Adults in Global Mission program in Hungary. Her service experience there kept her busy at soup kitchens and a women's shelter and with home visits to the elderly. Kristen will be serving as a Franciscan Community Volunteer with the Casa Guadalupe Multicultural Community in Cold Spring, organizing a youth leadership program for Latina girls ages 10-16 and other programs provided at Casa Guadalupe.



**Alison Swoboda** joins us from Belle Prairie, Minn. Alison is no stranger to the St. Cloud area after spending time at St. Cloud State University earning degrees in music and chemistry. Before joining FCV, Alison did mission work in Mexico for several years, serving in medical clinics. She has also been employed in the St. Cloud and Fargo areas in music ministry positions, sharing her musical gifts. Alison will be serving as a Franciscan Community Volunteer at two placements: Project HEAL through CentraCare and Project Care through Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. Together these two organizations work to provide health care screenings and access to care for the uninsured in the St. Cloud area.

## A message from Kelli Wilbert:

It saddens me to unexpectedly end my ministry of service and leave the community, but in the spirit of Saint Francis, I must be authentic to myself and my existence. I cannot ignore the calling to return abroad and once again assume the identity of a global citizen. My time spent with the sisters and learning of their foreign missions, along with resettling recent Somali refugees, has been inspiring and reinforces that, while there is much to do in this country, I feel best served tackling issues outside the United States. I will take the three pillars of the program with me as I have experienced the value of living in community, renewed my relationship with God, and become immersed in the Somali culture and interfaith dialogue. Lastly, the holistic Franciscan way of life has now left a footprint on my worldview and the next chapters of my life's story. As Saint Francis said, "Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received—only what you have given."

Love,  
Kelli



**Kelli at her service site, Lutheran Social Services, where she worked with the resettlement program for refugees from Somalia.**

# Long-term volunteering is not a year off!

*Kaitlin Depuydt*

In the volunteer program world, the fall season brings about lots of recruitment opportunities. Many college campuses host a post-grad service fair through their campus ministry or career offices, encouraging students to consider long-term volunteer options after they graduate.

Pat and I were able to attend fairs on 19 different campuses this fall! Luckily many of the fairs are coordinated together to maximize opportunities. At some of these events, the students attending are all ages and are exploring options after graduation, even if that is years away. These conversations focus on planting seeds of service. Other fairs focus on seniors knowing they will likely do service and want to talk to staff representatives at each of the booths to learn the specifics of the various programs attending the fair. To be able to share about long-term service and the FCV program specifically is a gift; a positive conversation with an interested student makes for a great fair!

In late October, I attended a fair in the Cleveland area and was able to meet up with FCV alum Eilis McCulloh. Eilis was a Franciscan Community Volunteer from 2010-2011 and served at Lutheran Social Service doing refugee resettlement. She continues service in the Cleveland area still doing resettlement for refugees from Burma. We're thrilled that Eilis has continued this ministry for refugee families after first experiencing it as a Franciscan Community Volunteer. It's not uncommon in the world of long-term volunteering for a volunteer year to be instrumental in forming the next steps for a young adult. Many volunteers continue on in the field they volunteered in, either because they chose a volunteer position that will help them gain field experience, or because the year changes their worldview. They see the importance of mentors in the lives of youth who have experienced trauma, what can happen when community organizations collaborate around an issue affecting the underserved, or how a hospitable presence for a refugee family can help facilitate their transition to a new life in the United States.

I have a pet peeve at these recruiting fairs . . . sometimes when I'm talking to a student about volunteering, the student will say something like, "I'm



**FCV alum Eilis McCulloh (left) was able to join FCV associate director Kaitlin Depuydt at a post-grad service fair in Cleveland.**

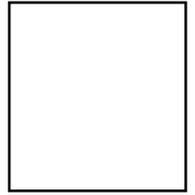
thinking about taking a year off to volunteer.” While this isn't the fault of the student, this misconception implies that long-term volunteering isn't making an important contribution to the community and social service agency or a substantial movement forward in their career preparation. By thinking of a future volunteer year as a “year off,” these students undermine the powerful experience they'll have. Our volunteers are serving full time—40-hours per week—plus attending community meetings and engaging in intentional community living to build interpersonal skills . . . no small things!

As you may know, I had the experience of participating in a volunteer program, the Lasallian Volunteers, after college. I lived in two different cities (Kansas City and the Bronx) over the two years and experienced various service sites and intentional communities. I recognize that a lot of the reflection of a service year happens after the year has ended; I still process my time as a long-term volunteer. Now as a staff member of FCV, I'm privileged to see how the experiences are transforming the lives of our volunteers, but I also know a lot of the reflection of the service experience will happen later in the lives of our long-term volunteers. For now, we're happy to be part of the groundwork as this transformation happens.



## Franciscan Community Volunteers

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## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We at Franciscan Community Volunteers wish you a peace-filled, reflective end of the Advent season, as we prepare to let Christ into our hearts this Christmas season!



### Looking ahead

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| 1/15     | Advisory Council meeting                              |
| 1/20     | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – National Day of Service |
| 1/31—2/2 | Winter Retreat for FCV                                |

### You can support FCV

- Pray for our volunteers, the community and the individuals at the service sites
- Share winter items with our volunteers—hats, mittens and scarves are needed for our volunteers who normally walk to their service site!
- Send an encouraging note to our volunteers
- Partner with us financially—your dollars go a long way in supporting the needs of social service agencies in the St. Cloud area
- Like, comment and share our posts on Facebook