Sister Annella Bieniek, Praying Sister for the FCV program turns 90

Since the beginning of the Franciscan Community Volunteer program in 2009 Sister Annella Bieniek has taken the role of the praying sister for the program. The focus of her daily prayer is for the program, the past and present volunteers, and the future volunteers. Each Fall she gets pictures and a little note about each volunteer which she puts on her prayer table as a reminder of her role in the huge success of this program.

When we attended the Fall retreat, we came early with cake and candles. For Sister Annella is turning 90 next month and we didn’t want to miss out on the celebration! She spent time with each volunteer that weekend, checking in and asking them what they needed so she could pray for their special intentions.

*She tells us that it keeps her active in ministry; we all agree she is a huge blessing!! Happy birthday and blessings to you Sister Annella!*
Community Covenant… not unlike marriage

By Pat Schlauderaff, FCV director

It is always interesting to see the new volunteers move into the Franciscan Welcoming House and start orientation for their upcoming year of service. Orientation is a week long, and on day seven, in the likeness to God, they rest. But on the sixth day, they create their community covenant. When I start to explain the life of community and as it unfolds throughout the first week, the volunteers start to realize how different this year of “community” will be than anything else they have ever experienced.

Living with Franciscan Sisters—living with each other—AND living simply and in faith-filled ways are each their own a major task, but all three together are a commitment. So, together, the FCVs sit down and create their covenant for the year. What are their promises to each other, and to God, for the year? How will they help each other and hold each other accountable?

This year, as they wrote their covenant, they looked deeply at themselves and each other, and spoke their needs and desires. After all, like a marriage and family, there WILL be moments of differences and challenges. They all have had different lived experiences.

Covenant is a sacred promise involving God and a community. I love that the FCVs write their own covenant. It can be revised throughout the year as needed, but the basic foundation is that God is present within the community and therefore it is a sacred relationship—between them, the sisters and myself.

Many alumni of the FCV program have said that living in a covenantal community made them better prepared for marriage. How can it not? They learn, they grow, they stand for what is important and let go of what is not.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if everyone could experience this in their life prior to marriage or a committed long-term life in a community? Just look at what this year’s FCVs have written. How life-giving and life-receiving . . . How open and respectful! FCV is teaching a way of living as well as a way of life.

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Taste of St. Cloud!
Monday, May 4, 2015
from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

A sponsored ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota
Fall Retreat Reflection:

Our fall retreat, led by Roseanne Fischer, was on Community. The following is a reflection from Breanna Wegner, current FCV on the retreat.

The theme of our retreat was “community.” There are so many different layers that make up the community pie of the Franciscan Community Volunteers. There’s the layer among Kevin, Shaina, Kristen and myself. Then there is the layer that includes our companions for the year. Then there is the layer that includes our director, Pat Schauderaff. Then there are Sisters Rose Mae, Michelle, and Karen, as well as all the other sisters when we are invited to the Mother House.

There are also our service sites and the greater Saint Cloud community. We are all connected spiritually and emotionally. We all care for each other. We cook, clean, laugh, cry, pray, play (and shovel snow) together. We are a community. We are one. We are together.

FEELING BLESSED: I always feel SPECIAL when I go to the Motherhouse. All of the sisters are excited to see you. Everyone always has a warm smile and welcoming words. Meals take a long time because everyone wants to know how you are doing and what you are up to. Everyone wants to say hello. It’s wonderful. It’s like a homecoming. Isn’t it, though? They say that home is where the heart is. Well, I don’t know where there’s a bigger collection of love and heart than with over a hundred sisters!

By Breanna Wegner

FCV BLESSING AND WISH FOR ALL OF YOU

That you find meaning, purpose, and vitality in what you do daily
That you treasure your loved ones and let them know how dear they are to you
That you make choices and decisions that reflect your truest self
That you look in the mirror at least once a day and smile in happy amazement
That you live in an uncluttered manner, enjoying the freedom to be content
That you keep your sense of humor when things don’t go the way you want
That you find adventure in each new day and marvel at the wonders of creation which constantly present themselves to you
That you never give up on yourself when others turn away or do not understand
That you are attentive to the health of your body, mind and spirit
That you take risks and accept the growth-full challenges that come to you
That you draw on your inner strength and resiliency when you are in need
And that you remember relationships are what count above all else - more than work or money, or all the material things we spend so much time tending.

Excerpt from Joyce Rupp
Franciscan Community Volunteers
1600 11th Avenue S
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Contact FCV:
Pat Schlauderaff
FCV Director
pschlauderaff@fslf.org
Office Phone: 320.229.0307
FCVonline.org

You can support FCV
- Send a note to one or all of our new volunteers.
- Volunteer to cook at the Welcoming House on a Monday night for the group or for other special occasions.
- Partner with us financially—your dollars go a long way in supporting the needs of social service agencies in the St. Cloud area.
- Check us out on the internet... Let other people know about our program by liking, sharing and commenting our Facebook and Blog posts!

Looking ahead
12/18: FCV will be helping at Place of Hope with their Christmas Gift Night
1/5: Hopefully welcoming two new volunteers to FCV!!
1/16-18: FCV Retreat... Going Deeper in our Faith

SAVE THE DATE:
Taste of St. Cloud
Monday, May 4, 2015
4:30-7:30 p.m.

Green tip
Did you know you can receive this newsletter electronically? If you would like to save some trees, go to www.fcvonline.org. On the right hand side of the homepage, you can enter your name and e-mail address to receive our newsletter electronically instead of through the mail.

Franciscan Community Volunteers is based on three pillars: service, community living and Franciscan spirituality. Volunteers make a yearlong commitment to work full time in local nonprofit agencies that serve the needs of those who are poor and marginalized while accepting the challenge of living simply and in accordance with Gospel values.