



# Community Connections

## FCV 9.2

By Pat Flicker, Director

In January, FCV welcomed Joseph Oborski and Anthony Scheip. Read more on page 2.

*Pictured to the right: Seated: Sister Jan Kilian and Sister Rose Mae Rausch. Standing: Sister Michelle L'Allier, Catherine (CJ) Pettinger, Anthony Scheip, Joe Oborski, Pat Flicker, Anna Taylor and Stephanie (Luna) Luna.*



## Homeless perspective

By CJ Pettinger



*"I accompany them not because they are all good, or because I am all good, but because God is good." – Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez<sup>1</sup>*

The Catholic Charities Youth House has challenged me in more ways than I ever imagined. An avid reader, I have heard many tales about the protagonist who goes from "rags to riches." It's a fairly common story. However one doesn't realize the depth of hardships an individual can have until the entirety of the story is unveiled.

That aspect of my job is one of the hardest, most intensive experiences yet. In talking with those who are homeless at a young age, the stories vary, each one vastly unique. I have been asked many times by my own family and friends how the youth ended up in the position they are currently in. It is hard to grasp the circumstances that are necessary to be homeless. It is not until having a conversation with an individual that one realizes how much many of them have persevered to just be standing and talking to the listener.

Each one of these stories and experiences felt by those couch-hopping, living under bridges, finding warmth in the shelters, living in a transitional home, etc., gives a glimpse into the many lives of the homeless. These are people who have been dealt with some of the roughest lives, and the fact that they are still working toward finding a better future and believing that they can have a different life is admirable.

I am honored to have a conversation with many of them and that they have trusted me with their stories. A lot in my own life has been put into perspective, and I have learned a lot about programs in the St. Cloud area and throughout Minnesota that are available to help those who are homeless. Many youth, adults and families continue to be homeless however, and the shelters overflow.

I have yet to find or see an end to the homeless issues in Minnesota, and I know it will be a continuing struggle. However, I can see an alternative ending for many of those I work with. That ending, or at least a more peaceful chapter of the story, keeps me going to work.

1. Gustavo Gutiérrez, in *In the Company of the Poor* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 32.



# Bringing beauty to the mundane

By FCV Anna Taylor



Several months ago, back in October, we Franciscan Community Volunteers had our fall retreat at the Motherhouse, led by Rosanne Fischer. Needless to say, we had a lovely weekend of reflection on how we perceive God and how we can grow in the gifts God has given us. However, one of the more random things that stuck with me from the retreat was our spontaneous calligraphy lessons. Rosanne had brought all sorts of craft supplies for us to use as part of our reflections, and I noticed that she had written some things in a very fancy font. I asked her if she could teach us volunteers, and to my delight, she did!



I think calligraphy captured my attention so much because writing is something I already do every day. Everyone writes by hand, be it letters, grocery lists, filling out forms, etc. It is still commonplace in our lives despite the abundance of digital devices. Calligraphy is writing too, just on another level—but it's not commonplace for most people. For me, that's what makes it so special. Calligraphy is bringing beauty to the mundane. It's bringing beauty to what already is, instead of trying to create something completely new.

So often I notice myself and others seeking activities, such as a vacation, a new art form, a fancy dinner, that are not a part of our everyday lives. And that is great, to be spending some time expanding our horizons and seeing what else is in life. But now I can't help but wonder if we should spend more time with the rituals, activities and things that are a part of our everyday lives. Instead of seeking beauty outside of the normal and every day, why not try bringing beauty to what already is? And not to say that I will henceforth only write in calligraphy—that's just impractical. But calligraphy is taking something common like writing and making it intentional and beautiful. Why should we not be open to other ways of making mundane things and moments intentional and beautiful?

As I reflected on why I am so fascinated with calligraphy, I've come to realize how many other

"mundane" things give me joy. I passed by the snow in our yard for weeks now, not giving it any heed. But just this past Saturday, CJ invited me to make snow angels with her. As soon as I touched the snow I didn't want to leave it—it was so peaceful to lie there and gaze up at the brilliant blue sky. I saw something I took for granted (the snow) with new eyes of appreciation.

Cleaning is another activity that doesn't get much hype. You have to do it frequently and it often gets tedious. But when I help Sister Rose Mae clean the living room, I see things so differently. When cleaning the living room I feel, instead of the drudgery of a task I know I will have to do again in a few weeks, quiet delight. I think it's because we do the cleaning together—Sister Rose Mae values a clean space, which makes me intentional and thorough with my vacuuming. And the fact that we are sharing in the task together makes it beautiful.

So, even though I appreciate going to a movie or exploring a new place, I'm often just as happy when I see—truly see—the everyday around me with new eyes. God is everywhere—why go looking for him when He's already here?



# Welcome to FCV!



**Anthony Scheip** is from Sarasota, Fla., and his biggest fear in coming to FCV is the cold weather! He has obtained his AA degree and hopes to continue his studies to become a religious education teacher.

He has previously served with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and feels very called to the Franciscan way of life. He will be serving at Anna Marie's Alliance in the childcare room and the after-school program.

**Joseph (Joe) Oborski** is from Berwyn, Ill. He has obtained his AA degree and is discerning where he is being called. Joe describes himself as a common sense, hard-working young man. He is excited to be serving at the Boys & Girls Club with a Super Bowl grant, where he will be going out to all the Boys & Girls Clubs supervising different athletic events for the youth there.



Sledding for the first time for Luna and Anthony!



FCV Rituals: Each time a volunteer arrives we bless each room at the Welcoming House with a special blessing for the space.



## Learn more about Joe

By Joe Oborski, FCV

My name is Joe Oborski and I joined the FCV program on January 3. I am from a small city called Berwyn, with a population of 56,000 people, right outside of Chicago.

After high school graduation, I contemplated the priesthood and law enforcement. I spent a year at St. Joseph College Seminary on the Loyola University Campus in Chicago and concluded that I was not called to the priesthood. I went on to attain a 2-year AA degree with an emphasis in law enforcement and I am still searching for a way to make a difference in the lives of others.

I have been working from job to job trying to figure out where God is calling me and what I want to pursue in life.

I started to search online for service/volunteer opportunities both nationally and internationally. As I was working from job to job, I was craving to find a way to live my life with meaning. The position I'm in right now as a single person with no mortgage or major obligations led me to volunteering.

As I searched online, I came across the FCV program and it jumped right out to me. A program for young people my age, a 6-month commitment and intentional community all appealed to me. It wasn't volunteer work for two weeks or two months, but rather a commitment, in my case, for half a year. The best part was the Franciscan simple lifestyle this program lives.

Now I'm here at FCV, away from my friends and family, with the opportunity to really focus on my life's purpose with no distractions. Being at FCV I expect to grow spiritually, mentally, physically and perhaps find what it is that God is calling me to do in my life. I have created new friendships already and am taking the opportunity to serve others in need and experience everyone I come across in all walks of life with love.



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# TASTE OF ST. CLOUD



Monday,  
May 7, 2018  
4:30-7:30 p.m.

**Kelly Inn**  
100 4<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
Downtown  
St. Cloud

**Tickets: \$25**  
(\$30 at the door)  
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the page.

**Franciscan Community Volunteers** is based on three pillars: service, community living and Franciscan spirituality. Volunteers make a year-long 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.