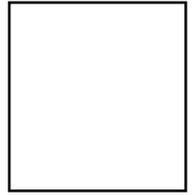




**Franciscan
Community Volunteers**

1600 11th Avenue S
St. Cloud, MN 56301



**We're on the web!
www.fcvonline.org**

Taste **OF ST. CLOUD**

Monday,
May 7, 2012
4:30–7:30PM

Territory Golf Course
Coyote Moon Grille
480 55th Ave SE, St. Cloud, MN 56304

Tickets: \$25
(\$30 at the door)

You're invited!

Join us for our huge fundraiser for the year! This is our Third Annual "Taste of St. Cloud!" If you've been with us before, welcome back! And bring your friends! If you are new, just imagine delicious cuisines from 16 distinguished local restaurants, live dinner music, an impressive silent auction, and buy your ticket now. You'll be glad you did! Come meet our five dedicated Franciscan Community Volunteers and learn how their long-term commitment to full-time service with local non-profits is a tremendous boost to the poor and marginalized in the St. Cloud area.

Purchase tickets by mail:

Send check payable to Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls
1600 11th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301
Your tickets will be at the door, the day of the event.

Purchase tickets online:

Go to www.fslf.org/pages/DonateOnline.
Specify "Taste of St. Cloud Tickets".
Your tickets will be at the door, the day of the event.



Franciscan Community Volunteers

February 2012



Caption...

Calling all creative hearts! That means you!

We are currently in the process of gathering items for the silent auction at our 3rd Annual Taste of St. Cloud, and would love for you to help us. Do you have an idea for a great basket theme and would like to organize putting one together? Do you have a special talent we can include in a basket? For example, could you donate your time to make a quilt, bake a pie for a “pie of the month basket,” or do yard work for a bidder? Lastly, maybe you have some leftover Christmas presents lying around the house you won’t use and can’t return – they could go to good use rounding out our baskets! Please call Anna Zaros at 320-240-6184 if you are interested!

FCV Program Contact:

Sister Clara Stang
(320) 229-0307
cstang@fslf.org

Anna Zaros
(320) 240-6184
azaros@fslf.org

Introducing two new volunteers!

We have welcomed two new Franciscan Community Volunteers in January. They will be living and serving with us from now until the end of this volunteer year in June.

Michael Servis is working with Catholic Charities, assisting with the development of several programs including after school activities with recent immigrants and refugees at the La Cruz and Bel Claire community centers. Michael has traveled extensively and received his Bachelor’s degree from the University of Maine. Michael told us, “I am excited to live in community with other volunteers.

I hope to grow in the formation of my faith and find ways to serve God throughout my experience.”

Sara Pennebecker is working at Hands Across the World, mainly working to develop and implement an anti-human trafficking campaign. Sara is from La Crosse, Wis., and recently graduated from Loras College. Sara shared, “I am excited to have the opportunity to engage in the three FCV pillars of service, spirituality, and community in the hopes of experiencing personal growth and the chance to engage with the world around me.”

Mid-year musings

by Brandon Montgomery, volunteer

Ah 2012. It's a time of elections, fears of global turmoil and of course leap year. My leap of Faith as a Franciscan Community Volunteer now brings me to the St. Cloud Children's Home where I work in clinical support services. It is an honor to be part of an organization that is so rich in history and committed to a cause in making a difference in the lives of others. I love the atmosphere of being a team player and feeling a renewed sense of purpose.

Concurrently, the heart of winter's wrath triggers a nostalgia attack for the lazy days of summer. Like a tree without its leaves, I find myself yearning for the next summer storm as I look upon a photo of dreamy Bhutan while outside a menacing snowfall

remains persistent. It's a time of reflection, languidness, and with high hopes of Puxatawny Phil coming through with news of an early spring. I often think of the lights of glamour of Las Vegas Nevada while I visit the majestic city in the dream world looking forward to my return. The freezing dreary days outside attempts to distract yet I block them out.

In addition, by the time you sit down to read this I'll be more than halfway through in my time as a Franciscan Community Volunteer. Like a plane flying from Chicago to Cleveland the altitude's peak has been reached with it's descend now in progress. My recent return home to Ohio for a visit confirmed how the passage of time shows no mercy



when it comes to speed. Upon coming back to St. Cloud I returned with a focus on a future that has to be determined, a future that will arrive at June's end.

In the meantime, I shall continue forward without a fear of what is to come. I can only imagine what will occur along the way both good and bad. Between now and the next edition of this newsletter the seasons shall transition into another, days will continue to get long and summer will eventually arrive.



Martin Luther King Day - A day on, not a day off

by Anna Zaros

Now that Franciscan Community Volunteers has joined the AmeriCorps network, I have been much more aware of the significance of Martin Luther King Day. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) organizes public service announcements, educational activities, and service opportunities in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. every year. CNCS and AmeriCorps seek to promote honoring the life of King through service and volunteerism in our communities.

I remember in college there were always MLK Day Service activities to participate in and maybe once out of my four years in college I participated. Today, I often view the three day weekend as a chance to travel to visit friends and family, rather than

commit myself to a service project. Indeed, this past MLK Day I found myself on a plane heading back from a family visit to sunny Florida. Even those of us involved in volunteer programs can get complacent, viewing what we do as just another job or activity for the day. But what would our country look like if the highest priority for everyone on Martin Luther King Day would be to spend a day in service? Would our hearts be moved and our minds changed? Would we carry this compassion into our daily lives, seeking to build up justice in our world every day?

In April FCV will be delving into issues of race and privilege during community night. I have been mulling over my reflections on this topic especially in light of Martin Luther King Day. On

Sojourner's God's Politics blog Ruth Hawley-Lowry wrote an article entitled, "Martin Luther King Sunday is Not Just for Black People." She writes, "We live in a nation where 'racism is in the air we breathe and the water we drink,' as the Rev. Dr. Gardner Taylor (a confidant of Dr. King) observes. We who are in the majority culture must acknowledge and confess that we benefit from the privileges we receive."

Hawley-Lowry's challenge to all of us is to not only work against racism, but also whatever may be our racially-based, unearned privileges. As a member of the racial majority in our country, I ask myself, how can I live so that, at least in some small way, I counteract the generations of oppression of racial minorities,

(Continued on page 4)



A word of thanks

Thanks to each of you who have generously supported us these past months. Your support has made it possible for us to continue to expand and enrich our Franciscan Volunteer Program. As more volunteers join us, the local non-profit agencies in the St. Cloud area with whom they work are able to serve more clients. Yes, as a donor you are a valued partner in our program!

Reflections on the 2011 Homeless Memorial March

by Julia Sias, volunteer

It was a cold Thursday afternoon when I was putting on countless warm layers to get ready to leave for the Homeless Memorial March in the Twin Cities. We arrived in downtown a little before five and almost immediately started walking. As I felt the cold winter breeze on my face, I thought of all the homeless people who are forced to endure these cold temperatures through the long hours of the night and what an injustice that is.

During the hour long walk to the church where the memorial service took place, I had time to reflect on the tremendous suffering that those who are homeless must endure. My minor period of discomfort while walking in the

cold was a small way to be in solidarity with them and to share a little in their suffering.

The memorial service at the church was beautiful and very moving. The names of all those who died while homeless this past year were read out loud as somber music was playing in the background. Then family and friends of those who had died this past year while homeless had the chance to say a few words about them. Hearing the stories of these people who had died made tears fill up in my eyes.

This experience only further ignited my passion for ending homelessness. Every person has the right to safe and adequate housing. No one should ever be forced to



sleep on the streets. I hope that this annual Homeless Memorial March helps bring more awareness to the wider community about this issue and in turn, will encourage the community to get one step closer to ending homelessness.

Martin Luther King Day, continued

and the privilege given to my own race? At the very least, I try to maintain an awareness of my privilege and communicate about it with others. Part of counteracting my privilege, however, has also meant being uncomfortable. When close friends, professional contacts, or even my own family states racist remarks, whether intended or not, whether “positive stereotypes” or not, how do I react? How can I be clear, while expressing compassion, that this remark was not okay? None of this has come easy to me, and I am continually making mistakes and admitting that I too, am a “recovering racist,” socialized

into my privilege, tripping a bit as I try to find my way out.

And that is why Martin Luther King Day is so important - it is a stunning reminder that we must keep challenging our racially prejudiced systems, communities, and sometimes, even, selves. We hear the words every year -- King’s “I Have a Dream Speech,” radio excerpts of his assassination, and the voices of those who shared in his struggle. If anyone was uncomfortable, in danger, or struggled against hatred, it was King, and yet he cultivated his own courage, changing our country forever.

Martin Luther King Day often sneaks up on us, coming just after the holidays, but what if we committed today to attend a program or service activity on MLK Day 2013? Moreover, what if we each committed ourselves to live out the service and courage King wanted of all Americans in our everyday lives?

If you would like to learn more about issues of race and privilege, a good place to start is by reading Peggy McIntosh’s *“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.”* It is available online.

People first

by Anna Konopacky, volunteer

For nearly six months, I have been a volunteer at Lutheran Social Services resettling refugees. In that time, I have engaged in direct service to over fifty refugees, including both adults and children. Any period of time spent working with an extensive and varied population will result in a mixed bag of interactions and relationships, with some leaving better impressions than others. What has helped me greatly in this respect is responding to our clients as people first, rather than solely refugees.

Certainly, our clients have experienced great hardship and unusual circumstances that shape who they are, however, interacting with them only on the basis of one factor denies them the opportunity to be viewed as complete and unique

individuals. An important part of the resettlement process is teaching new arrivals to be self-sufficient. Some clients need lots of encouragement to do things on their own, and the attitude that they are incapable because they are refugees does not help them.

A lot could be gained if everyone approached the strangers in their life as people first instead of making assumptions based on a person's identifying features. Just as Americans do not want to be judged as one conformist mass, we should not assume members of other groups and cultures are cookie cutter impressions of each other. In my work at LSS, I find it important to approach each client with no prior expectations and with an open mind.



Green Tip #1

Earth Day is coming up on April 22nd! Visit EarthDay.org to find out about local events you can join, or organize and advertise your own!

Green Tip #2

Soon Spring will be here and it will be time again to start landscaping our yards. Have you considered planting native plants? Check out the EPA's website – they have a lot to say about how great it is for the local ecosystem to landscape with native plants!

www.epa.gov/greenacres/index.html

Win Tickets to the Taste of St. Cloud!

"Like" the Franciscan Community Volunteers Facebook page between February 14—April 1 and, "no fooling," you could win **free** tickets to the Taste of St. Cloud!

(Ten tickets will be given away.)



facebook.com/fcvpage