



Franciscan Community  
Volunteers

# Community Connections

## Taste of St. Cloud: a terrific success!

*Kaitlin Depuydt*

“The Taste of St. Cloud is gaining a following of its own!”

“We look forward to supporting FCV at the Taste.”

“We plan to attend this event together as a group of friends every year.”

The comments for this year’s Taste of St. Cloud continue to arrive. The annual May event was held at Coyote Moon Grille and, once again, we experienced record attendance and ticket sales. After each Taste, FCV has been able to say, “Thank you, this was the most successful fundraiser we’ve had!” That tradition was repeated again this year. The support for the FCV program and the Taste of St. Cloud continues to grow with new sponsors, new restaurants, new silent auction and raffle donors and new attendees.

Congratulations to our three raffle winners: Mary Gebeke, winner of the quilt made by Sue Poser; Jon Vollen, winner of the quilt made by Leona Wieland; and Teresa Depuydt, winner of the chapel bench.

**Thank you to all who helped make this year’s Taste of St. Cloud a success!**

### Numerical highlights of this year’s event:

12 participating restaurants

10 tables on the lower level  
to provide added  
seating

618 tickets sold

10 corporate sponsors  
(some have sponsored  
all 5 years of the Taste!)

3 handmade quilts for the  
raffle or silent auction

63 items or baskets on our  
silent auction

57 volunteers helped  
during the event



The FCV community at the Taste of St. Cloud, front: Kristen Wall, Nneka Arinze, middle: Kaitlin Depuydt, Pat Schlauderaff, Sister Ange Mayers, Sister Michelle L’Allier, back: Nick Anderson, Augie Lindmark, Ian Peoples. Not pictured are Alison Swoboda and Sister Rose Mae Rausch



This bee quilt was made for the Taste of St. Cloud silent auction by Sister Mary Obowa. Right: Sister Clara Stang (center) with friends of FCV, Cathy Rudolph and Jan Jaskowiak



**FRANCISCAN SISTERS**  
OF LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

# Walking with immigrants

*Kristen Wall, FCV*



**Kristen**

It is all too easy when speaking generally about the “immigration issue,” to forget the millions of faces, names, and personal stories of immigrants. It has been a privilege in my time at Casa Guadalupe to listen, support and get to know some of our neighbors who are Latino immigrants. I

have listened to undocumented mothers who fear being discovered and taken from their children because they must enroll their children in health insurance programs through the state of Minnesota. I have supported dozens of families each week by assisting them with scheduling appointments, filling out forms and obtaining furniture when language barriers might otherwise prevent them from doing so. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know the Latina teenagers who participate in our youth group each week.

This year I have been challenged to think more personally about loving my neighbor who is an immigrant but also to think more broadly about improving our immigration policies. A particularly striking example occurred one day when a young man from Guatemala stopped by Casa Guadalupe for help understanding some bills that he had received in the mail. At one point our conversation turned to the city where he grew up near the Mexico-Guatemala border, and I learned that not only are migrants dying in the desert on the US-Mexico border, but also well before that in the river at the Mexico-Guatemala border. Reflecting on this at the end of the day, something caught my eye as I hung my dress pants back in the closet: “Made in Guatemala.” I realized that at once I was part of the problem and part of the solution, buying cheap clothing made by low-wage workers who feel forced to migrate to feed their families and then trying to help them function upon arrival in a new land. Moving forward I will always carry this lesson to think bigger about the impact of one policy on another and to remember the faces and names of all those impacted by these policies.

# An ordinary experience

*Nneka Arinze, FCV*

As you may know, I committed myself to 11 months of volunteer service. While this would be a seemingly extraordinary experience and therefore seemingly extraordinary things should result, it has all actually been quite ordinary.

- I had a lofty goal of coming in and making a great impact and changing someone’s life How foolish to be so full of myself. Apparently children are people, which means they are complicated and not so easily changed and also not things to be fixed.
- I’ve learned that status and titles don’t mean that you are without flaws and lessons to be learned. It mostly means fewer people are willing to try and teach you out of fear.



**Sister Michelle L’Allier and Nneka**

- I came here looking for answers and discovered that they are not so easily found. This world is so complicated and the paths we need to take so tortuous that even if a map were drawn, we wouldn’t be able to read it.
- I am not the chosen one tasked with changing the world on an epic scale. We are all tasked with doing small things with love. It is those small things that will spark the transformation.

It was all so very ordinary, but maybe that’s how it ought to be. Giving your time for service and community shouldn’t be bizarre and life altering. It should be normal and mundane. It should be what we simply do as human beings.

# Connecting the now and the next

*Augie Lindmark, FCV*



**Augie**

There are days when I'm ready to leave; there are days when I cannot fathom leaving. The paradox of any transition (for the FCVs, leaving community) is one of excitement for what's next and a reverent reflection of what was.

I often wonder where life will take the elementary and middle school students I met while at programming this year. I had but a glimpse into their lives, yet I feel fortunate to have spent with them the months that I did.

We bounce off each other like Ping-Pong balls as we hurdle through the years, affecting each person we meet in one way, shape or form. This holds true with everyone in my work site at Catholic Charities and the eight people with whom I currently live in community. We will keep in touch, but if connections fade, we take solace in the fact we are continually affected by, and affecting, those around us.

As much as our outward relationships take the limelight, I feel this year was a mirror of sorts that allowed me to check my posture—a reflection on my vocation, faith and future. As I transition into medical school next fall, I'm confident the lessons I learned while in St. Cloud and with the Franciscan Community Volunteers will translate into my calling as a physician. A future where God's creation and plans are continually revealed through each person we meet along the way.

# The work in progress

*Nick Anderson, FCV*

In my experience I feel like I have grown in my ability to take responsibility for my actions. I have learned how to do many new activities as diverse as leading a wheelchair yoga group and brushing the teeth of another. I am now able to say that I have worked for overtime without being paid and know that it is for the good of others. I am able to use my musical abilities at one of my work sites which allowed me to show off my creativity while being helpful to others. I learned many fresh perspectives and all about motorcycles from one client in particular. I have overcome my intense dislike of poor smells and made it slightly less of a deal.

I was surprised by all of the parts of my work from how one takes care of an adult with a disability to the

validation method that sees individuals where they are and doesn't judge. When I see people light up as I come near or that person who can see faults in everyone gives you a compliment, I feel that I made a difference in their lives however slight. I will always take with me a sense of community in faith and many wonderful experiences such as the bishop saying mass at the Welcoming House. I will see all of the people that I served and have served me and be grateful for all that I have been given.



**Nick**



# It must begin with gratitude

Ian Peoples, FCV



Ian

As my 11 months of service come to an end, I am forced to think of what comes next. As I ready my mind and heart to go forth from here, strengthened by relationships that have been built and experiences that have been had, I have to begin the process of packing my things in preparation to depart.

How do you pack so much into a few hundred words though? I will do as best I can.

It must begin with gratitude. Saint Francis of Assisi saw God at work in all of creation. In the sun and the moon, the plants and the weather and even death, God was at work in it all. Francis saw the vital relationship that we exist in with all of creation, and he praised God for it. What wonderful examples of the love Saint Francis had for life in his sisters, Sisters Ange, Rose Mae and Michelle. I have been wonderfully blessed by their presence and their example. The joy of the Spirit is alive and well in

these children of Christ who have so graciously shared their faith, their freedom and (much to my delight) their food. My gratitude extends not only to these three little sisters of Francis though, but all who call the Franciscan Motherhouse in Little Falls, Minn., home.

My heart is full of the love for the volunteers I have lived with and have come to refer to as family. By these kind, gentle and intelligent people, I have come to understand a little better the body I am a member of in Christ:

Nneka, thank you for your discerning spirit. Augie, my sincerest gratitude for your informed and compassionate care for the marginalized. Nick, my friend, you have taught me something new almost every day, thank you, sir. Kristen, I recognize so much wisdom in your words, thank you for your steadfast personality. Alison, your beautiful voice has filled our house with joy. Thank you.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to the two who have provided guidance and assistance in a large number of ways, our directors, Pat and Kaitlin. You both have worked so hard to give us a blessed year of service learning.

# Through the lens of beauty and love

Alison Swoboda, FCV



Sister Cordy Korkowski and Alison

We all have the desire to live an extraordinary life, to love to the limit and then give more. Extraordinary isn't found in the comfortable, but daring to dive into the uncomfortable. Moving back to St. Cloud at this point in my life was one of the

most awkward decisions that I never intended to make. But jumping into the immense uncomfortable has helped open me in a new way to the beauty of life.

Throughout the joys and struggles I remember this

truth that Mary shared during an apparition. She said, "I am beautiful because I love. You, too, are beautiful when you love." Thankfully she didn't qualify love to be perfect, humble, selfless or even intentional. God understands and celebrates even our littlest acts of love. Those are the sparks of goodness that define, that make a whole person beautiful. Because beauty isn't an absence of sin or blemish, but the presence of love. And through my unique little community I'm continually clobbered with beauty and love, nudged ever nearer to the heart of Christ.

My prayer at the end of the day, when exhausted from decisions and excitement and hype and heartache, is to not feel dejected and overwhelmed by the day's failures, but to be hopeful and joyous from the times love won. To feel beautiful by seeing God's love flow through, feeling his adoring gaze and hearing his whisper, "Keep going, my beautiful and beloved child. Keep loving."

# FCV program facing changes

*Pat Schlauderaff, FCV Director*

The first week of May was filled with many important events for the Franciscan Community Volunteer program. The exciting and amazing success of the Taste of St. Cloud was the result of dedicated service of the FCVs, great ticket sales and many faithful volunteers. It was offset with the news that the Catholic Volunteer Network received word from the Corporation for National and Community Service that they will not be receiving an AmeriCorps grant award for the coming year. This means that FCV will not be able to offer the AmeriCorps program to the incoming volunteers; the current volunteers are still eligible for this award.

What does this mean for the incoming volunteers? For many of the volunteers, the AmeriCorps education award, given at the end of the program, is the only way that they can commit to a year of service. With the cost of higher education and the inevitability of repaying student loans, our volunteers have been able to use the dollars to offset either student loans or future education costs. This is a major issue for many of the programs like FCV that rely on AmeriCorps for their volunteers. Recognizing the importance of the education award, the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls have committed to offer this award for the volunteers that commit to the FCV program. Therefore, FSLF will be awarding a \$5,000 education award to all volunteers who complete the 2014-2015 year.

To do this, we have needed to rework our budget to reduce expenses and adjust responsibilities, resulting in a decision to move from two full-time staff persons to one full-time director. This means that Kaitlin Depuydt, who has served as FCV associate director for two years, will leave the program on June 30 and will not be replaced. She will be missed by everyone. Her passion and commitment to serving the marginalized showed in everything she did. Kaitlin had completed two long-term volunteer programs herself before coming to FCV, so the level of



**Kaitlin Depuydt, center, celebrates her birthday with the FCVs from 2012-2013, Lisa Yanzer, Philip Lomneth, Shannon Hagerty & Kristine Origone**



**The FCV community and staff celebrating Christmas with a white elephant gift exchange in December.**

understanding she had with the volunteers was a gift.

We wish Kaitlin all the best as she departs; she has left a positive mark on our volunteers and our FCV program.





## Franciscan Community Volunteers

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## You can support FCV

- Pray for our volunteers, the community and the individuals at the service sites during the final weeks of the program
- Volunteer at the FCV office with office work or cooking for our group on Monday nights and other special occasions
- Contact Pat if you can be a companion for one of the 2014-2015 FCVs, spending time during the year with one of these young adults
- 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 or follow us on Twitter: @FranCommVol

## Looking ahead

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|------------|--|
| June 23    | Final day at service sites for 2013-2014 FCVs        |
| June 25-27 | Closing Retreat at Clare's Well – keep us in prayer! |
| August 10  | Orientation for new Franciscan Community Volunteers  |
| August 18  | First day at service sites for 2014-2015 FCVs        |

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.