



Franciscan Community Volunteers

Community Connections

Franciscan Community Volunteers spent a Saturday transforming this garden from “before” to “after.”



FCV serves the Southside neighborhood!

The FCV community has grown! Over Labor Day weekend, we happily welcomed three additional Franciscan Community Volunteers and had a second round of orientation. Our volunteer community of five young adults has developed together well.

Both orientations included a day focused on each of the FCV pillars: Franciscan Spirituality, Community and Service. Our service day during Labor Day weekend had a group service component—we transformed a garden space! The Southside Boys & Girls Club in St. Cloud is just blocks away from the Welcoming House. There is a community garden at the Club that is used for kids to learn about caring for the Earth and growing food. The garden has raised beds, but the area between the beds was overgrown with weeds. We spent the day pulling weeds, hauling them away, laying new landscaping fabric and mulching the area. What a hot day, but what a difference the labor made!

The Southside Boys & Girls Club is one of the 2013-2014 service sites for the FCV program. Nneka Arinze serves at the Club as an AmeriCorps member with the Healthy Lifestyles program. Now that the school year is in full swing, Nneka’s afternoons and evenings are spent with the youth that drop in at the Southside Club; on a

given day, about 150 kids from the neighborhood will be at the Club. Nneka is facilitating the “Go Girl Go” program, which focuses on healthy eating, fitness, body image, and self-esteem issues. Having a young woman serving as an AmeriCorps member in this mentoring role is a significant addition to the Boys & Girls Club.

On our service day, it was fun to see neighborhood kids stop by to see what our group was doing; even just a couple weeks into her service, Nneka knew all of the kids by name. Nneka’s reaction to the work her community did that day: “It felt good to improve this area, especially knowing that the kids take food from the garden home for their families.” Christine Kustelski, the unit director of the Southside Boys & Girls Club, serves as Nneka’s site supervisor. Christine’s response to our work was that “it’s fun to be able to go out into the garden with the kids and not lose them in the weeds that were taller than they were!” More seriously though, Christine says, “Nneka’s calming presence has drawn a consistent group of kids that want to participate in any of Nneka’s programs, simply because she is facilitating them.” What a gift for all.

Thank you, Boys and Girls Club, for partnering with FCV!

FCV is a sponsored ministry of:



FCV introduces three more volunteers!



Augie Lindmark joined the FCV program from his home in Red Wing, Minn. Augie attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and pursued a degree in biology and also played baseball. Augie spent the summer in Haiti using his interest and education in clinical health care initiatives to serve the communities. Augie is working with Catholic Charities' Immigrant & Refugee Resources program doing after school programming and developing resources for Bel Clare and La Cruz, two multicultural communities. He is looking forward to brushing up on his Spanish skills by interacting with the Bel Clare and La Cruz residents.



Nick Anderson, from Dubuque, Iowa, has a background in psychology from Iowa State University. He recently served with the Franciscan Common Venture program in Mississippi where he tutored and taught computer classes. One of Nick's gifts is music; there have been lots of songs floating from the Welcoming House's piano. Nick is working with Opportunity Matters, Inc., which serves adults with developmental disabilities through Pathways, a day program for people living in group homes around St. Cloud. Nick's lively spirit will help him in spending time with these adults.



Kelli Wilbert is from Chicago. Kelli has an educational background in international relations with an MA from the University of Manchester in England. After living in England, Germany and Romania, Kelli spent time this past year as a community organizer and state coordinator for the presidential inaugural committee in the Chicago region. Kelli is serving at Lutheran Social Service with the refugee resettlement program, which assists immigrant families arriving primarily from Somalia to St. Cloud. Kelli's interest in multicultural issues and cultural awareness makes this placement a great fit.

The 2013-2014 Franciscan
Community Volunteers
(l-r): Nneka Arinze, Augie
Lindmark, Kelli Wilbert, Nick
Anderson and Ian Peoples



Companions offer support to our volunteers

As you may know, many Franciscan Community Volunteers come from great distances. We are happy to connect each volunteer with a set of companions who form their immediate community and become their family away from home.

Just as the Franciscan Community Volunteers have three pillars to the program, Service, Spirituality and Community, the companion program has three components as well:

- Community Companions
- Sister Companions
- Sister Praying Companions

FCV is successful in large part because of the community support that the companions provide. The partnership between the volunteers and their companions is a powerful witness to our pillar of community as well as a mutually beneficial connection in the lives of those living the Gospel message. Similarly, Sister Praying Companions have the wonderful and unique opportunity to connect with one of our volunteers throughout the year, keeping them in prayer.

Companions might have the FCV over for dinner,



Franciscan Community Volunteer Ian Peoples with one of his companions, Roger Linz. Ian and Roger spent the day hiking and exploring central Minnesota.

play games with them, take them to events happening in the area, or just come for a visit as a way to offer local hospitality. Many FCVs have no connections to St. Cloud before joining the program, so connecting with a support system in the St. Cloud area helps the volunteer feel more at home.

An example of this friendship: Roger & Sue Linz of Sauk Rapids have offered the gift of companionship to Franciscan Community Volunteers for three years. Sue & Roger have been Community Companions for alums Sara Pennebecker and Maureen Reynolds and now current FCV volunteer Ian Peoples.

Sue Linz shares, "Being a part of the Franciscan Community Volunteer program has been such a joy for us. What a wonderful program it is. The Taste of St. Cloud, as well, is a great

way for so many people to get together, enjoy good food and meet all the volunteers. They are such an inspiration to us."

Thank you to all to our companions for creating a supportive environment here in St. Cloud. We appreciate you!

You can support FCV

- Donate winter items with our volunteers. Hats, mittens, scarves are needed for our volunteers who normally walk to their service site!
- Ask your parish council to sponsor the FCV program as a "Mission of the Month," in support of our volunteers doing mission work locally.
- Come meet the volunteers at a Monday Community Night or at the Open House on December 1.
- 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.
- Tell people about our program, especially young adults!
- Like, comment, and share our posts on Facebook.



A Prayer of Saint Francis:

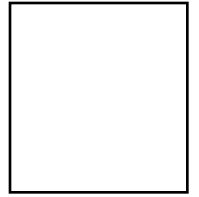
O God, you gave Francis of Assisi a heart of

compassion toward the outcasts of his society. Give us, too, such hearts that we may be for our times what Francis was for his. Amen!



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Looking ahead

- 10/25-27 Fall Retreat in Little Falls
- 11/6-9 FCV staff at Catholic Volunteer Network conference
- 12/1 FCV Open House – Save the Date!

**Would you like to
receive this newsletter
electronically?**

Join our electronic newsletter list
by contacting the FCV office.

Join us for the 5th annual Christmas Open House

Celebrate with the Franciscan Community Volunteers
on **Sunday December 1st from 2-4pm**

At their home at 1600 11th Ave South in St. Cloud.



This year's theme is the Nativity – please share your special statues, art, or displays of Nativity scenes or the Crèche with us for the annual open house!