



Franciscan Community Volunteers

November 2011



Julia Sias, Brandon Montgomery and Anna Konopacky decorate pumpkins for Halloween.

Introducing the 2011-2012 Franciscan Community Volunteers

This year we have three new volunteers joining us!

Anna Konopacky— Anna is working at Lutheran Social Services in their refugee resettlement department. She hails from Lake Tomahawk, Wis., and recently graduated from Winona State University.

Julia Sias— Julia is working part time as Service Learning Coordinator at Cathedral High School. Her other part time position is working with Kevin LaNave at the Center for Service Learning and Social Change. Julia comes to us from Bloomington, Minn. She recently graduated from Creighton University.

Brandon Montgomery— Brandon is working at Habitat for Humanity's Restore, largely doing community outreach and volunteer management. Brandon is from North Fairfield, Ohio, and graduated from Ashland University.

"Repay to Caesar"

by Sister Clara Stang

In a recent Sunday's Gospel we heard wise words of wisdom from Jesus, "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." These words reminded us that we have just a little over a month left to give donations that will count toward tax deductions next April!

In this FCV Newsletter we invite you to partner with us through financial donations to support the ministry of Franciscan Community Volunteers. And your donations will be tax-exempt!

Why give? I believe that this faith-based program gives volunteers many

opportunities to form Gospel values for a life-time of service. On the insert you can learn more about how you can become a financial companion, and the difference your gifts will make.

Whether your financial companionship to the program is giving to God or Caesar (or both!)...is for you to decide.

Be Kind Anyway

by Julia Sias, volunteer

I want to start with one of my favorite quotes. Mother Teresa said these profound words:

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.

Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

For you see in the end, it is between you and God. It never was between you and people anyway.”

There are many things Mother Teresa said that apply to my journey in this program. Everything in life has both rewarding and challenging parts to it. The same can be said about this program. There have no doubt been some challenges, but it has also been very rewarding at the same time. The biggest lesson that Mother Teresa’s quote teaches me is to continue to be the best person possible no matter what obstacles I face in life. Sometimes one has to go through things in life that are challenging and hard, but what matters is that the person remains loving, warm and kind despite the challenges they face. This is something I try to remind myself of when I face challenges in this program or in any other part of my life.

With that said though, I am very happy to be here and to be part of this community. I have already learned a lot this year and will continue to learn more as the year progresses. Both of my job sites will allow me to gain experience in teaching by both observing classroom dynamics and getting to teach myself sometimes. This is very helpful to me since after I am done with this program I would love to start my career as a teacher. Also, the relationships I have made during my time here have been both meaningful and life-giving. I have faith that I am exactly where I am supposed to be right now. Overall, this program has provided me great opportunities, loving relationships, and valuable life lessons.

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 enjoy an end-of-summer picnic at Munsinger Gardens in St. Cloud.

Front: Julia Sias, Brandon Montgomery.
Back: Sister Clara Stang, Anna Zaros.

The Franciscan Sisters from Kenya visit with the Franciscan Community Volunteers for community night and a shared meal on October 24, 2011.

Seated from L to R: Sister Clara Stang, Sister Mary Idah, Sister Rose Mae Rausch. Standing from L to R: Sister Cordy Korkowski, FCVer Brandon Montgomery, FCVer Julia Sias, Liz Rydeen, FCVer Anna Konopacky, Sister Ange Mayers, Anna Zaros, and Sister Claudia.

A New Journey

by Brandon Montgomery, volunteer

It was in the early spring of this year that I found myself at the mysterious crossroads of life. Just like the Knight in Victor Vasnetsov's painting, *A Knight at the Crossroads*, I had a decision to make, but with it came a few questions. Who am I? Where am I going? Where will I be at 40? What is the meaning of life? What kind of journey was I about to embark upon? I knew that ahead was a mysterious new world filled with challenges and wonder. I chose that path and took the leap of faith. I'm now glad to say I chose wisely and I'm sure the Knight chose wisely as well.

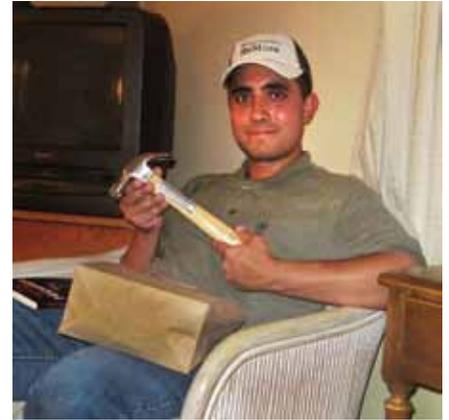
I now work as a Franciscan Community Volunteer assigned to Habitat for Humanity's Restore. I feel blessed by God to be part of a mission that has a sense of purpose and a group of people to serve. I encounter different people each day and I work with various individuals who work alongside me as fellow volunteers.

When I first learned of the program, I was cautious. I calculated and analyzed where it would take me. At the time, I was following a path that was leading nowhere. The days were long and as each day passed the uncertainty grew stronger. Just like Vasnetsov's Knight, I was exhausted from following the

same road for two straight years. I was watching the seventh season of NBC's "The Office" where lead character Michael Scott was on his way out to a new life. I now find it interesting that I was concurrently on the same path. So I applied for the program and when I was accepted I felt relieved a new path was on the horizon.

It really didn't truly hit me until my plane left Chicago for Minnesota, a place I heard so much about yet had never visited. I had officially crossed the Rubicon -- the point of no return. I made my decision and going back wasn't an option. The bridge behind me collapsed leaving me with the option to go nowhere but forward. On the flight I contemplated what would happen. All I knew was that a new story was waiting to be told and a journey was waiting to begin.

I once heard that when on a journey, it is more about the people you meet rather than the exact physical location. I now see why that is true. So far my time here in Minnesota has been filled with the encounters of interesting people. It doesn't matter who they are or what path of life they hail from, they have showed me that the people matter more than the location itself. Some of them I see



Brandon is welcomed to his work at ReStore with a new hammer and a Habitat for Humanity cap.

regularly while others have already passed on, making me wonder what the purpose was for encountering them.

This being a journey, I know that challenges will come. There will be great days and dark days. There will be setbacks. Not everything will go as planned and the worst of the unexpected will occur. I know this sounds pessimistically grim, but a journey will always bring such trials by fire. However, it's how you deal with those dire circumstances that will define you not only as a human being, but also as a global citizen. For now I shall remain here in St. Cloud until June's end. Then I shall find myself at another fork in the road with multiple paths to choose from. The Knight may be there as well and it is then we will decide where God will take us next.



**Catholic Volunteer
Network**

We did it! After two years of hard work, several applications, and many words of encouragement from all of you we have now become a Catholic Volunteer Network AmeriCorps member! Our program is now part of a national AmeriCorps network dedicated to service and improving our local communities, as well as affiliated with our State Service Commission, ServeMinnesota. Our volunteers will join the ranks of other AmeriCorps members with access to trainings, resources and the opportunity to earn an AmeriCorps education award at the completion of their year. This award can be used to pay off student loans or help with future education costs. What a valuable reward for our volunteers who dedicate a year of their lives to service, community and spirituality. Thank you again for all of the support you give us in doing this important work!



Franciscan Community Volunteers

1600 11th Avenue S
St. Cloud, MN 56301

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



Open House Invitation

**Sunday, December 4
2-4 p.m.**

Join us for our Annual Open House. The theme we have chosen for this year's celebration is "Angels and Song." If you have an artistic angel you'd like to add to our collection for the day, we would love it. We chose the theme of "Angels and Song" because you are like angels to us through your friendship, support and prayers. Come visit the Franciscan Community Volunteers and the Franciscan Sisters as you enjoy some Christmas goodies and Christmas caroling.

Contact:

Sister Clara Stang Anna Zaros
(320) 229-0307 (320) 240-6184



Sisters Ange and Bernice and volunteer Anna Konopacky are geared up for the Lake Wobegon Ride.

Lake Wobegon Ride for the Kids

On September 10, 2011, FCV participated in the Lake Wobegon Ride for the Kids, a fundraiser to support the St. Cloud Children's Home. Associate Director, Anna, her husband David, Sisters Ange Mayers and Bernice Rieland and FCVer, Anna all rode in the bike. Sister Clara and the other volunteers were there to show their support. It was great fun to meet other local cyclists, support a great cause, and enjoy the beautiful beginning of autumn weather. We were even able to raise some funds for FCV in the process! We look forward to joining this great fundraiser again next year.

Partner with us as a Financial Companion

Franciscan Community Volunteers are young adults who make a ten-month commitment of intentional and prayerful community living dedicated to serving and advocating on behalf of the underserved.

Will Braun joined Franciscan Community Volunteers during its first year in 2009. During his time in St. Cloud Will worked with Hands Across the world, a local ESL education center. Recently he shared with us that his time at Hands Across the World was both challenging and deeply enriching, “Hands Across the World pushed me to work in teaching...and now I want to keep serving in education. I really enjoyed learning how to work with a lot of different people and cultures.” Other components of the program shaped him as well, “FCV trained me to learn how to live simply, something I use a lot as a current AmeriCorps member.” He continued, “People should support FCV because the program directly serves the local area.

There are huge needs in St. Cloud and it is important to support our local community — that way everyone benefits!”

Now in our third year, we have three volunteers making an impact in the St. Cloud area and numerous alumni sharing the Franciscan spirit of service around the world. As we continue to expand and grow we need people like you who can make a world of difference to young adults, like Will, and to those they serve! **As an individual and/or as a group you are invited to partner with us in this ministry by becoming a Financial Companion to the Franciscan Community Volunteers.**



Your financial donations will help the Franciscan Sisters with these costs:

- ✓ Room and Board (Franciscan Welcoming House & renting the Volunteer House)
- ✓ Health Insurance
- ✓ Transportation to and from work
- ✓ Retreats and workshops
- ✓ \$75.00 monthly stipend for each Volunteer

Prayer invites • Service extends • Community bonds
Join the circle • Give generously

“Lord, it is in giving that we receive.” —The Peace Prayer of St. Francis.

Yes, I would like to support the work of the Franciscan Community Volunteers for a year by becoming a . . .

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FCV Star: \$100 a month | <input type="checkbox"/> | FCV Sustainer: \$50 a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FCV Supporter: \$25 a month | <input type="checkbox"/> | FCV Friend: \$10 a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I would like to make a one-time donation. Enclosed is a check for \$_____. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | My employer will make a matching gift. (Please enclose company form.) | | |

For monthly donations, please attach a voided check for automatic withdrawal for the next 12 months.

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Check here if you are interested in receiving our tri-yearly newsletter.

Thank you for your gift! • All contributions are tax-deductible.

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