



Community Connections

2016 Taste of St. Cloud tremendous success!

Pat Flicker, FCV Director

It was a gorgeous evening on Monday, May 2, 2016. It was also the 7th annual Taste of St. Cloud fundraiser for our program.

Each year I fret and worry about getting everything done on time, arranging volunteer schedules, selling tickets, etc. and each year I am amazed at how this fundraiser is so much more than a fundraiser.

It is about rekindling friendships. It is about seeing people that you don't see nearly often enough. It is about taking time to visit with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls and honor all that they have done for people all over the world. And mostly, it is about laughter, love and solidarity with people whose passion in life is to make a difference wherever they can.

Over 550 people gathered that Monday evening at the Coyote Moon Grille to enjoy food, fellowship and fun while supporting Franciscan Community Volunteers. The money raised is critical for FCV. As I looked around the room that night, I had the urge to stop and tell each person that they are a part of something so big - they are helping our volunteers touch lives and be changed in the process. It overwhelms me to think that this program has volunteered over 45,000 hours to the community.

Each person that attends the Taste of St. Cloud helps make this happen and continue to happen.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Taste of St. Cloud a success!



Highlights of the 2016 Taste of St. Cloud

- 14 participating restaurants
- 600 tickets sold
- 15 corporate sponsors.
- 73 baskets for our silent auction
- \$1000 in gift cards sold at "Grab-N-Go" area
- 56 volunteers helped at the Taste of St. Cloud

QUILT RAFFLE WINNER:

The gorgeous handmade butterfly raffle quilt made by Sister Mary Obowa and her sister Theresa was won by Laurel Miller.



Honoring the journey

Kyle Lamb , FCV



Community is a strange and wonderful thing. People bring their varied pasts to a physical space in the present time to create a combined future. Because of this, community is messy. Community is hard work. More importantly, community is beautiful. Through my year as a Franciscan Community

Volunteer, though I am not perfect at it, I have grown in my capacity to live in community and I am so very grateful for this opportunity to grow amidst a wonderful space and beloved people.

In addition to growing in community at the Franciscan Welcoming House, I have learned many things in working at the St. Cloud Children's Home. Even so, there is one idea that I have embraced to a degree which I can never unlearn. Through this concept, known as Trauma Informed Care, I see more clearly that a person's negative actions are directly influenced by past traumatic events, and thus must be responded to with love and compassion.

For example, if a student is throwing plates and silverware at her peers and me, rather than shouting and yelling at her because I am mad at her behaviors, I can acknowledge that past events have made her current circumstances feel unsafe. Throwing plates is how she defends herself. So, though I will still dodge anything thrown, confiscate potential projectile objects, and move the other students out of the area, my primary response should be to repeatedly assure the student that she is safe and that I will do everything in my power to ensure that she remains safe. Once the situation is finished, we can then make a plan to move forward.

It is only by acknowledging that the past sufferings of the students affect the present day situation that we can strive to move forward to a better future. Trauma Informed Care isn't just a one-time event, but rather a long-term commitment to compassion, trust, and caring. Additionally, though my illustration of plates and silverware being thrown may seem extreme and limited to a mental health treatment facility, the principles of Trauma Informed Care can be applied to our everyday lives as well.



When one is part of any type of community, whether it be a family, set of co-workers, group of classmates, or an intentional living community such as the Franciscan Community Volunteers, it is important to recognize that all the people in the community have different pasts. For example, though our current FCV community is entirely Catholic (a first for the program), we all have different faith backgrounds and thus different understandings of the Catholic faith. Similarly, we all have different sufferings and joys that may cause us to react to the same situation in vastly different ways.

These differences, though sometimes just quirky, may occasionally cause us to fight with members of our community. These fights may be over topics such as the proper way to do one's laundry, or perhaps more abstract, such as the true nature of the concept "church." As I started this year, these types of things stirred up negative responses within me. Throughout the year, I learned to apply the Trauma Informed lens that I learned at the Children's Home to *community* issues. This lens shifted my perspective, and reminded me that others see situations through the lens of their own pasts and react accordingly.

When we acknowledge that we have different pasts, only then can we have a conversation with each other to discuss how we may have arrived at a particular conclusion. Then, through both parties having an understanding of the past, we make a plan for how we can move forward into the future. Though it seems like a long and arduous process, this type of work is necessary to create a healthy community.

Truly, this year in the Welcoming House has been full of this kind of work. We have worked hard to build an effective and joyful community, and for that I am grateful.

I could write another two pages in thanksgiving for all people who made this year possible. However, I prefer to thank those people in person, so for now, I will explicitly thank the following: my family and friends who supported me even though I wasn't always able to be present; the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls for praying for us and creating the program; all staff and students

at the St. Cloud Children's Home for their support; and finally, all those who live, work and pray in the Franciscan Welcoming House for their friendship, kindness, and willingness to work together to create a vibrant community. Thank you. I hope we may meet again someday soon!

Special place in my heart always

Rebecca Ferrera, FCV

Never in my life have I thought about living or even visiting Minnesota. It did not fit with my agenda. I had my life planned—college, then a job in graphic design. When I decided to take a year off from college and look at what I wanted to do with my life, I posted on the Catholic Volunteer Site that I was interested in volunteering. I am so glad that I received the opportunity to come to Minnesota and be a part of the Franciscan Community Volunteers. Being from California, Minnesota was the last place I had in my mind for volunteering. I have been blessed in many ways over the past ten months. I got to see each of the four seasons unfold before my eyes. Each one was amazing. To see the leaves change color and fall, to see the cold and barren land during the winter, and then the awakening of spring... buds on trees, green grass, “Valentine” the squirrel out eating the bird food. Now summer is slowly peeking in and I get to see the amazing sunshine that reminds me of home!



My service site was the daycare center at Anna Marie’s Alliance. I have never worked with children before so everything there was a new experience for me. What I was amazed at is how resilient children are. They are going through really tough “stuff,” and yet, they are able to laugh and smile and see the goodness around them. Don’t get me wrong, some days the children’s behaviors, attitudes and mindsets were extremely challenging. I would have to remind myself that I haven’t walked in their shoes and just love them where they were at in their life. This experience has taught me to never judge a book by its cover. Domestic abuse can and does happen to anyone, regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation. I hope, in my future, that I can empower children that I meet to move beyond their childhood experience and create a healthy and beautiful life for themselves.

My faith over the past year has also grown. I have learned that there are many different ways to experience God. It doesn’t just happen at Mass, but out in nature, within the people you live with, and all people in the world.

By coming here, I was able to meet great people and forge new friendships. I experienced some amazing firsts and equally amazing seconds. I will admit there were times when I missed being able to go to the beach or going hiking almost any time. But I learned there will always be changes in life and it is something a person must be willing to adapt to. I am excited to head back to California, but Minnesota will always hold a special place in my heart as well as the people with whom I experienced it.

Gifts Abound!

Pat Flicker, FCV Director

FCV has a new look. The front page of the newsletter has our new logo. It represents community, the trinity and has the Franciscan Tau cross. You may also wonder about my name change from Schlauderaff to Flicker. Flicker was my maiden name and is so much easier to say—I have changed it back.

I became the FCV Program Director on July 1, 2013. I had no idea of the journey I was about to start. From day one I felt like I was a part of something bigger than I could fathom.

The past three years have flown by. I mentored and studied to become a Franciscan Associate in 2014. I am part of a two year certificate program in Franciscan Spirituality through the Franciscan Life Center. I have learned and grown so much. People that know me have commented on this. Over and over I hear how grounded I have become, how my passion for serving with the people has grown even more, and how my spiritual life has blossomed.

I am blessed to be a part of this ministry. The Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls are amazing. Each day I thank God for the gift of their presence in my life and in the community!



Franciscan fun with friends at the Late Night Catechism held at the Paramount Theatre.

Learning and growing continues

Isaac Vacheresse, FCV

Hello, my name is Isaac Vacheresse, I am from Birmingham, Ala., I graduated high school this past summer and I'm 19 years of age. Shortly after graduation, I felt a strong call to discern the priesthood. So I decided not to pursue college studies immediately.

After meeting with the Superior of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word, I was offered to have an extended discernment visit with them. They have a friary on campus of EWTN, which is the world's largest Catholic radio and television network. Their community was founded by Mother Angelica to be active members in the network and to preach the gospel to the entire world through it.

I was there for a little over two months and after this incredible experience I began searching for another way to serve but also to grow in faith and experience. I stumbled upon the Franciscan Community Volunteer's position for the Boys and Girls Club in St. Cloud. I was immediately drawn to it because of the opportunity to work with the youth. I quickly sent Pat Schlauderaff, the FVC Director, an email and the following day I gave her a call. After learning that I was nineteen I could hear her voice drop and she politely informed me that it would not be possible for me to join the program. With some persistence I asked if there was any way we could work around this. The answer was firmly negative.

After accepting defeat I began to make future plans with some hesitancy, still thinking this was where I was supposed to be. After about 10 days I received an email from Pat saying the community had reconsidered and they were willing to make an exception! About three weeks later I arrived with all of my newly acquired snow gear and we hit the ground running. Following a short and sweet orientation lasting a couple days, I was at the Boys and Girls Club.

I quickly witnessed the dynamic web of relationships that are all held together at the Club. After some time I was also able to really connect with the children at the Club and enjoyed the chance to be a part of their lives as well as to show them the love of Christ. The diversity with the children has been an experience I will treasure forever and I have learned very much from them and hope to continue learning.

While I was making this transition to a new job, we as a community were trying to find our rhythm as well. This was done quite literally when Kyle and I would occasionally get together to jam. The gifts community life has to offer are immense. All of us from very different backgrounds have found a way to communicate and to be there for one another. Much can be learned from this way of life. We must share with one another and think of others before ourselves. We are called to take this

example out of our homes and into the lives of all those we meet. I am very thankful for the Sisters of Little Falls for starting this program and bringing this opportunity of growth to so many young people. I

would also like to thank Pat and my fellow volunteers for all they have done and continue to do. The sisters living with us are a tremendous inspiration and blessing to have in here. I thank God for the gift of faith, which has opened my eyes and heart to His wonderful love.

The past six months have been so amazing that I have decided to continue as an FCV for the next year. My service site will be Saint Benedict's Senior Community, working with the therapeutic recreation department. It is a blessing to be able to work with both the young and the elderly while in my discernment process.



TASTE OF ST. CLOUD PHOTOS



FCV Group: Front: Sr. Rose Mae Rausch, Sr. Karen Niedzielski, Pat Flicker. Back: Rebecca Ferrera, Isaac Vacheresse, Kyle Lamb, Sr. Michelle L'Allier



Answering God's call to serve

Ranya Acgaoili, FCV

My home in Hawaii is 3,857 miles away from Minnesota. I traded in my flip-flops for snow boots, and shorts for pants. It seems a dream to have been led to the Franciscan Community Volunteer Program. I had to move into another way of life in order to feel the essence of another rhythm.

Out of two different age groups, youth and elders, I received two "different" wisdoms. In the Youth for Unity Program at the Boys & Girls Club-Southside service site, I created a curriculum to teach children about diversity within cultures. When trying to figure out a creative way to explain the word "diversity" to 5-year-olds, I asked them what they thought diversity meant. They all came up with a song and yelled out "One Team, One People, One Family." I took them outside to the garden to pick up three different leaves, teaching that each leaf represents a different culture. As we marched back with our new song "One Team, One People, One Family," we held hands, marching and praising our differences by singing "One Love."

Every week I tried to teach them about diversity but in actuality, they were teaching ME to awaken my soul. Through each smile, hug and laughter, they made me realize that our soul is the very life-pulse that makes us breathe the breath of God. For this I thank the children in our Youth for Unity Program at the Boys and Girls Club.

The elder sisters at the Motherhouse and the sisters at the Welcoming House gave me another piece of wisdom. As I would listen to their stories about their serving the poor, it was as if they too were traveling with me through my desire to serve the poor. Whenever they would express their struggles for each trial, they called me to work through my own struggles. As my mistakes were recognized, they guided me back towards God through their gentle words. Throughout each prayer, kiss on the cheek and those tight arms hugging me, they helped me realize that their touch was also Christ's touch. Sister Loretta's happiness and joy helped me feel the context of each sister's story. Sister Latona helped me realize the beauty of life, everything is related.

My four "Guardian Angels" at the Welcoming House daily lived the gospel and the Franciscan values. Sister Rose Mae, always smiling with joy, taught the "old ways" with powerful hidden meanings. She taught me to remember where I came from and to never forget my ancestors. Sister Karen reminded me to keep my faith, to live in the present. Sister Michelle helped me not to dim the fire within my soul, but, to walk my given path toward the future. She saw me throughout my darkness. Pat Schlauderaff, the FCV Director, was the connection to the Franciscan Principals, giving me the opportunity to join the Franciscan Community Volunteer Program and helping me discern my call and passion.

In February I packed and left for the PeaceCorps, trusting God's plan for me in my new adventure of serving the poor. I am growing and learning every day how God calls me. I am blessed and thankful to have the time, energy and spirit to heed his call.



Ranya Update...

By Pat Flicker

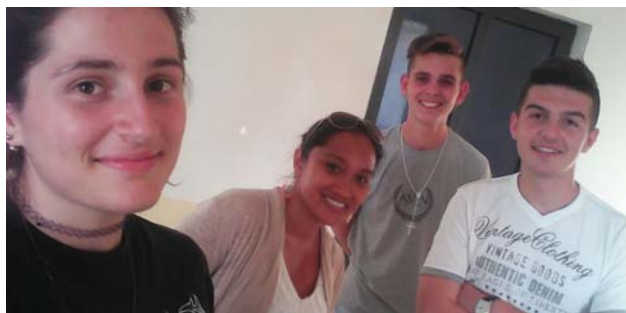
Hi Everyone! I have had many people ask if I have heard from Ranya lately. As many of you may know, Ranya is serving in the PeaceCorps in Albania.

I have spoken with her and she is doing amazing work. She spent the first six weeks learning the language and customs of the people. She has recently started serving at a school as a teacher.

Of course, Ranya is an outside of the box thinker, so she is teaching through music and being outside... as well as helping clean up the area of the school, teaching the youth to care for creation and what they have.

Ranya spent six months with us here at FCV. As I look back on that time I am amazed at how many lives she impacted, from the youth at the Boys & Girls Club to each of us here at the house and in the FCV

program. She is an amazing and strong young woman who is truly not scared to listen and serve. We have been blessed to have her here and can't wait to see what happens for her in Albania.



Ranya at her new school in Albania where she is teaching.



Ranya and students—she is teaching them the ukulele.



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We are seeking an Advisory Council member! If you are interested call Pat Flicker.

You can support FCV

- Partner with us financially—your dollars go a long way in supporting the poor and marginalized.
- Check us out on the internet . . . Let other people know about our program by liking, sharing and commenting on our Facebook and Blog posts!

Looking ahead

- June 24 Last day at service sites
- June 25 Big clean at the house
9 am to 1 pm
Anyone want to help?
- June 26-29 Closing retreat—please keep us in prayer!
- June 30 The next adventure begins for this FCV group
- Aug 14 New FCV start!!
- Aug 15-20 Orientation
- Aug 21 FCV Commissioning Mass

**SAVE THE DATE: 5-1-2017
Taste of St. Cloud**

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 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.