



# Franciscan Community Volunteers

June 2011



Katie Cassady,  
Audrey Breeden,  
Greg Morris,  
Ellis McCulloh,  
Will Estrellanes and  
Sister Clara Stang at  
the Taste of St. Cloud

## Green tip

### Sister Ange's oven cleaner

Is your spring cleaning creeping into summer? Use this green tip for getting rid of tough stains in your oven:

Combine one part baking soda and one part washing soda. Add about one tablespoon of water per each cup of combined soda powder to create a paste. Smear the paste on your oven stains and let sit for several hours or overnight. If the paste begins to dry, you can spray it with water from a spray bottle or cover it with plastic bags. When you are ready, use an old credit card or plastic spatula to scrape up the paste and all the grime will come with it! Just remember, don't turn your oven on until you've cleaned up all the paste!

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

by Sister Clara Stang

Like our first Taste, the 2nd annual Taste of St. Cloud, held on May 2 at Coyote Moon Grille in St. Cloud in support of Franciscan Community Volunteers, was a smashing success. Well, almost. There were many kudos about the delicious food from the 16 participating restaurants, the enlarged space for seating and camaraderie, the live entertainment from St. Francis Music Center (Sobania Family and Ramona Trio) and from Paul Imholte, the "Stringman," the silent auction, etc. Why the "well almost" rating? We had hoped for a warm, sunny day instead of the windy coolness of that evening. We think we have that covered for next year. Manager Mike Dols and I agreed that we'd put his aunt, Sister Gabriel Metzger, and the Poor Clare's in charge of the weather next year. So mark your calendar for Monday, May 7, our 3rd annual Taste of St. Cloud.

Special thanks to the St. Francis High School grads, and the Franciscan Sisters and Associates who were part of the evening. Saint Francis used to say, don't let people eat or drink alone. On the contrary, together we numbered about 700 guests who heartily enjoyed the evening.

We are so grateful for the tremendous support we received through this big fundraiser. Franciscan Community Volunteers touch the lives of many poor and disadvantaged people here in the St. Cloud area. This year our volunteers served at the St. Cloud Children's Home, the Boys and Girls Club, Lutheran Social Services Refugee Resettlement Program, and Place of Hope. Each of these non-profit agencies provides vital services. Our ability to partner with them is largely possible because of your generous support. Thanks to each of you for your continued support.



## Farewell from Volunteer Manager, Katie Cassady

It has been a pleasure working with the Franciscan Sisters these past two and a half years! What a gift to have been mentored by women and men so talented and called into the life of ministry. I am excited by the work that has begun in St. Cloud and I look forward to learning about the ways that it continues to grow and expand with the gifts and talents that come in new each year. Thank you for the experience and your great support and encouragement on our next adventure!

## Reflections on the Taste of St. Cloud

by Will Estrellanes, volunteer

At the Taste of St. Cloud, it was wonderful to meet old and new faces and to find out more about everyone's ties to the Franciscan community. I saw Franciscan Sisters that I have not seen in a while and associates that would visit regularly at the Welcoming House. I was happy to see my sponsor as well. The event was a miniature reunion for me and gave me a quick glimpse of how many people one can touch in a year.

People from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota also came to show their support. I happily hosted my coworkers and supervisors to the various booths. Weeks prior to the event, I had tirelessly promoted the Taste at the office and in any and all places of opportunity. I was happy to see that it had all paid off.

In the flurry of guests and errands, I

had little chance to eat. Of what I tried, I especially liked the Somali food and the curry plate. The mini cupcakes from Cold Spring Bakery were also delicious. There were a handful of places I would have loved to try but unfortunately the lines betrayed their popular demand!

I ended the night thanking people for coming and went home happy and fulfilled. It was a good night!



Will Estrellanes

## We're on a roll!

FCV is continuing fundraising efforts! We are planning to participate in the Lake Wobegon Ride for the Kids on September 10, 2011! The bike ride will allow us to raise funds for both the St. Cloud Children's Home (where one of our volunteers works) and the FCV program.

Please e-mail [azaros@fslf.org](mailto:azaros@fslf.org) or call 320-240-6184 if you are interested in participating in the ride or supporting



a rider. Also see the information posted on the "Support Us" section of our website: [fcvonline.org](http://fcvonline.org).

## Welcome Associate Director Anna Zaros!



Anna is coming to us from South Bend, Ind. Here is a short introduction to her and her previous experience. "I graduated with a B.A. degree in theology and religious studies from the Catholic University of America, where I focused my studies on social justice and nonviolence. After undergraduate studies, I participated in a long-term volunteer program, the St. Joseph Workers. During this program I worked as a case manager with victims of human trafficking. This experience was pivotal to my personal and spiritual growth. I just finished a master's degree in Peace Studies at Notre Dame, where I spent six months working abroad in the conflict zone of Mindanao, in the Philippines, on issues such as gender justice and interreligious dialogue. I am incredibly excited to start this position, connect with and learn from the community in St. Cloud, and I hope to bring my experiences and skills to promote the important work of the FCV program!"

# My year as an advocate

by *Ellis McCulloh, volunteer*

I have spent this year working with the Refugee Resettlement Program at Lutheran Social Services. I often find it hard to describe exactly what I do. No day is the same. Sometimes, I'm in the office catching up on paperwork and phone calls and recruiting volunteers. Other days, I'm meeting with individuals who would like to file paperwork for people to resettle family members in St. Cloud. More often than not, I am on the road, driving around St. Cloud, visiting people at their homes, taking them to doctor appointments or various meetings for Social Security, public assistance and school enrollment, and teaching them how to ride public transportation.

When I arrived in St. Cloud, I didn't know what to expect from my work with the refugee community. In August 2010, I had an initial phone conversation with my supervisor about the work I would be doing and how busy I would be. Busy would be an understatement in describing my first months in Minnesota. I hit the ground running my first day at the office and learned as I went along. I

quickly realized that I needed to know the ins and outs of refugee resettlement, as well as St. Cloud social services, if I wanted to be able to effectively advocate for the newly arrived refugees.

I have realized that my work here is more than paperwork, doctor appointments and public assistance interviews. At the heart of it all is my role as an advocate. My clients fled their home countries nearly 20 years ago and have lived in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Egypt since then. They were resettled in a country that does not speak their language. I feel that it is my duty to advocate for their rights as human beings. They deserve to have access to the same things that we have access to. They deserve to have a future filled with hope.

This year, I have been able to become friends with some of the people I have worked with. Our friendship grew out of the numerous times we sat together in waiting rooms, visited each other's homes, and talked about St. Cloud and the impending winter. I learned about



**Greg Morris and Ellis McCulloh reflect on being a volunteer.**

their families left behind and their dreams for the future. I'm continually amazed by their strength, tenacity, and love. These women are attending English classes, working and raising families. One is even preparing for college. These are the people to whom I have a hard time explaining why my time in Minnesota is nearing its end. These are the people I will miss when I return to Ohio. I have, without a doubt, learned more from them this year than they have from me. And it is because of these experiences that I plan to continue working with immigrant and refugee communities.

# Finding meaning in service and community

by *Greg Morris, volunteer*

When I say that my year as a Franciscan Community Volunteer is almost over, I can feel that it really hasn't sunk in yet. With a little over two weeks remaining in our time of service, it seems as good a time as any to reflect on all that's gone on this year in St. Cloud for us. The volunteers came here from all over the country really; I was in Florida, enjoying trips to the beach and sweating in the hot sun. Six months later, I had experienced -30 degree weather. While this was quite shocking to me on a surface level of understanding, the real meat of the year was the inner workings that I had to experience to integrate into the spirit of community and service to others.

While my individual experience at my service site was beset with challenges, the spiritual health of our community lies more with the journeys we experienced along the way as a group. This larger view of community allowed me insight into the nature of self and Self; time and Now. Service work at our sites may be the frame work for what we are "doing" here; however, it is the revelation of "being" that allows the doing. Not only are we one individual acting in compassion toward others, we are compassion itself. Then "compassion" disappears and what is left "is." God is a verb, not a noun. God is an experience! We are living together, interacting in a cosmic dance of "this" and "that."

How profound!

The other day, I was visualizing what comes to me in reflection of this year of service. The image most sticking with me from this is a table with a round magnet on top of it. Paper clips surround the magnet and as it moves, the paper clips get sucked into the magnet's energy and cling to the sphere. I'm not sure why I thought of this or what it "means"... it is a meaning unto itself.

What is real is that this year has truly landed me on my two feet with a firmer dedication to helping the planet mature and come together. I can feel it and it is with great enthusiasm that I am ready to play my part. Namaste!



# Franciscan Community Volunteers

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**[www.fcvonline.org](http://www.fcvonline.org)**

## FCV thanked at World Refugee Day celebration

On June 20, 2011, the Franciscan Community Volunteers celebrated World Refugee Day at an event hosted by Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and CentraCare Health System. While savoring delicious Somali food, we heard the refugee stories of local residents originally from South Sudan, Uganda, and Somalia. They shared their experiences of fleeing war in their countries, the difficulty of living in refugee camps, their journey to America, and ultimately the struggles and joys of resettling in St. Cloud. At

the end of the event LSS presented various community members with certificates of appreciation for their hard work in supporting refugee resettlement efforts in St. Cloud. LSS recognized volunteer Eilis McCulloh and the Franciscan Community Volunteer program as key partners in working with refugees. We are honored to be appreciated by LSS and the refugee community in St. Cloud. We are so delighted to see the incredible impact our volunteers have on the community each year!

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Sr. Cordy Korkowski, Sr. Ange Mayers, Katie Cassidy



Sr. Karen Niedielski and Will Estrellanes