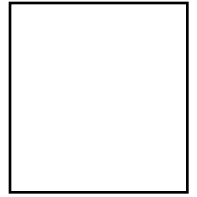




Franciscan Community Volunteers

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St. Cloud, MN 56301



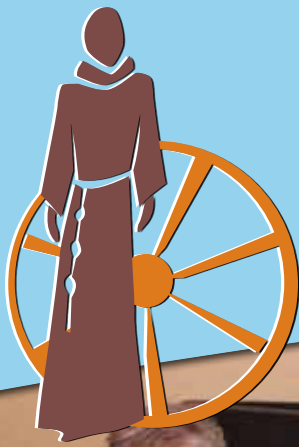
We're on the web!
www.fcvonline.org

A Big Thank You for supporting the Franciscan Community Volunteers!

Thank you so much to those of you who joined us for the third annual Taste of St. Cloud on May 7, 2012. Each and every one of you who sold tickets, donated to the silent auction, provided a business sponsorship, and/or were in attendance showed your support for the work of young adults in the Central Minnesota community and the service they provide to those experiencing poverty and marginalization in our area.

This year we had 16 restaurants and over 600 attendees! We doubled our silent auction baskets, and with that doubled our bidding! Paul Imholte graced us upstairs and down with his beautiful music on various string instruments. As many commented: the food was great, the atmosphere was beautiful, but the people were the best. So many friends, new and old, had fun and fellowship the whole night through. Can't wait for next year? Then mark your calendars for the fourth annual Taste of St. Cloud on May 6, 2013, at Coyote Moon Grille and Territory Golf Course!



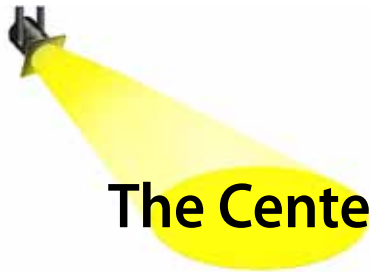


Franciscan Community Volunteers

June 2012



Franciscan Community Volunteers and Franciscan Sisters from the Welcoming House: front row from left: Sister Cordy Korkowski, Julia Sias, Sara Pennebecker, Sister Clara Stang, Sister Ange Mayers; back row from left: Sister Rose Mae Rausch, Anna Konopacky, Anna Zaros, Brandon Montgomery, Michael Servis



Spotlight on... The Center for Service Learning and Social Change

The Center for Service Learning and Social Change empowers and inspires people of diverse backgrounds, primarily youth, to be proactive agents of change in their communities and in the world. The Center's vision is a dynamic force that motivates people to create a community where everyone thrives. Kevin LaNave, executive director of the Center describes: the Center does this work by fostering a process of doing service that "is about 'bridging social distance' between those of us who are relatively advantaged by the way things are and those of us who are relatively marginalized and excluded. It's about becoming connected/in relationship, and about becoming allies who

collaborate in the creation of a thriving community....we view people who experience poverty and other forms of marginalization in the St Cloud area as human beings whose gifts and dreams are potential assets in the development of a community in which everyone thrives." Concretely, the Center does this work through various mediums, including one-day experiences such as youth leadership conferences, service-related trips, overnight retreat experiences, and supporting the development of learning and action programming for schools, organizations, and faith communities.

At the Center for Service Learning and Social Change, the Franciscan Community Volunteer is responsible

for implementing the Center's programming and increasing the organizational capacity of the Center. This year, Julia, our current volunteer at the Center, has provided valuable support in the design and implementation of the Center's Civic Engagement Day with Youth for 6th-8th graders. She has also provided assistance in editing the Center's newsletter, updating the website on occasion, and participating in community meetings.

To learn more about the Center for Service Learning and Social Change and the relationship building and justice oriented work they do in the community, visit <http://www.centerslsc.org>.

The End of a Chapter:

Closing reflections from the Franciscan Community Volunteers of 2011-2012

Julia Sias

The ten months that I have spent in the Franciscan Community Volunteers Program have marked an important transition in my life. The transition from college to the “real-world” is a time to discover who you are and what you want to do with your life. People start to contemplate these questions during college, but the true discovery of the answers does not happen until after college. Your original beliefs are either affirmed or proven to be incorrect.

As a Franciscan Community Volunteer, I worked at Cathedral High School and while working there I had the opportunity to teach on my own periodically throughout the year. This was a very valuable experience for me because it affirmed my desire to teach

and it also affirmed how much I love being in the classroom. I am looking forward to having a classroom of my own someday.

Another valuable thing that I was able to gain from my experience as a Franciscan Community Volunteer was a greater sense of independence than I’ve ever had before. When I left college, it was a time for me to let go of the many things that had become my “security blanket” and to truly venture out into the world on my own. I have grown so much this year, and have learned many new things about myself. I am very proud of the life I have here in St. Cloud. I will never forget this experience or the many life lessons I’ve learned while being here. As this chapter of my life closes, another



chapter will open, bringing its own new set of challenging and rewarding aspects.

Anna Konopacky

My ten months of volunteering have been filled with all varieties of emotions and experiences that would be difficult to fit into one article. When I first entered the program, it was a spur of the moment decision and happened so quickly I had no time to develop expectations. I really had no idea what being an FCV might be like. I think this helped me as I adjusted to a new lifestyle, new people, and the new challenges of my work site.

My work with refugees has presented several unique challenges that I had to navigate and overcome. One is the often-significant language barrier between the caseworkers and

clients. We work around this by using our very limited Somali vocabulary and volunteer interpreters and, sometimes, clients’ English-speaking neighbors. Another difficulty for me initially was the unpredictability of the job. As a serious planner, it was at first challenging for me to adjust to plans consistently going awry. After several months, I discovered I am more adaptable than I believed.

Overall, through my work and the life in our intentional community, I feel that I have gained skills and stories that will carry me through whatever entails the next stage of my life.



Brandon Montgomery

The elaborate mystery of time's connection to a journey may forever remain one of life's greatest unanswered questions. I have finished my most recent endeavor, now awaiting what will lay ahead in an upcoming future. As if riding a now worn out horse, I dismount and walk forward to what appears to be the gateway to a new journey of multiple possibilities. Exhausted and triumphant I embrace the new challenge that I will soon encounter. Around me the sun is starting to set as the red sky overcomes its blue predecessor. Although I am tired, stamina now running low, I must walk forward to see where the future will take me. However, I realize that in order for this future to be conceivable there was past that made it all possible as the past leads to all possible futures. For me it was a year of challenges, new people in a different world taking me far from my comfort zone for the longest period of time. While a challenge at first, I discovered I had the ability to adapt and blend in with places that I never envisioned myself ever trekking to. It all unfolded in a journey, one that forever shaped me to endure a future that I have the utmost confidence in not only for myself, but for the world I inhabit.

American novelist and poet Don Williams Jr. once said, "The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our

lessons come from the journey, not the destination." With the nightfall hour of my FCV tenure now imminent, I've come to view the past 10 months as a unique chapter in my journey through mystère. I shall admire the year as a lesson not only on the value of service, but myself. I'll soon be embarking on yet another unfamiliar path found at life's mysterious crossroads. Concurrently time will pass, most memories slowly fading away like a morning fog. Interesting enough, this journey's chapter could serve as its own stand-alone novel. There was the cast of characters and plotline that unfolded through time. While most of the characters served mainly as the everyday confrère, there are the few that'll be remembered. It's their lessons about life's beautiful mystery that grant them immortality. Guided by the passage of time, I was allowed to experience that process and with it rejuvenation emerged from the ashes of a recent past. It's mystifying how we take the passage of time for granted not realizing its supremacy. Instead, it's more than an hour glass flowing out its limited supply of sand. We try to overturn it only to realize the effort is feckless. If we're fortunate we recognize it as a power truly far greater than ourselves. At times I wondered why events unfolded the way they did, the enigma of human nature, yet I now deliberate why I engaged in such



contemplation. Looking back at the year that was, I concede that although the past is unchangeable, it provides the lessons for a future of an unknown fate. Adrift in a sea of stars, I endured the siege of life's unpredictable predicaments the year brought, all delivered by the perfect storm. The challenges arrayed against me, though formidable, were unable to drive me away from this journey. I swam through their treacherous oceans, climbed and navigated their perilous mountains. In the end, despite it all, I'm still standing enclosed in a beam of light, forever stronger now rising upwards to the stars with an earnest self-reliance towards discoveries in a new world.

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 the poor and marginalized while accepting the challenge of living simply and in accordance with Gospel values.



Sara Pennebecker

There are days in your lives that you will never forget for any number of reasons. I have experienced many of those days over the last five months. I remember the day I arrived in St. Cloud, nervous from not knowing what to expect, tired from jet leg after returning from Germany only four days earlier, and the head cold I had managed to pick up on the flight home. I also remember the first day of work at Hands Across the World where I helped some of the women with a sewing project, feeling quite overwhelmed and unsure of what I had gotten myself into.

I remember the day I was working in one of the classrooms, seeking it out for a quiet space with no interruptions, only to find a bat was also hanging out in the room. I quickly left there and am still paranoid that when I open the building in the morning its brother or sister will be waiting to greet me upon my arrival. I clearly remember three days before my “big event,” as I liked to call it, I had to call the fire department and was in charge of evacuating the building because there was a lingering smell of natural gas. These are the types of things that are definitely not funny at the time, but when you look back you cannot

help but laugh.

I fondly reminisce on the “big event” that I had the wonderful opportunity to plan and organize. The event was on human trafficking and was quite successful. I am passionate about social justice related issues, community organizing, and community development. As I was putting this event together, it was very important to me to include an action related component as this was something that I saw needed to continue on after the event. My dream was to see a task force develop, and I am delighted to say that it happened. There is nothing like knowing that your efforts have made an impact on the lives of others. I am inspired by the people who will continue the work on this issue and am excited to see where this group of people will go with it.

During my time here as a Franciscan Community Volunteer, I have learned so much about myself, had the opportunity to form new friendships and relationships with others, learned about community organizing, and so much more. I feel very fortunate and blessed with the experiences I have gleaned and the opportunities I have been granted. This fall, I will begin my master’s in social



work with an emphasis in community practice at the University of Minnesota and will take with me the knowledge, skills and memories that will last a lifetime.

One of my favorite quotes is from Apple Computers which says, “People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.” I have worked with many people who do this on a daily basis. Just as importantly, each and every Franciscan Community Volunteer was crazy enough to think they could change the world, and in some way, they have.



Brandon, Anna Z., Sister Clara, and Julia participate in the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition’s Day on the Hill



Michael and Sister Rose Mae enjoy a slice of delectable chocolate cake baked by Brandon

Anna K., Julia, and Sara in the Franciscan Volunteer House

Michael Servis

When I made the decision to join the Franciscan Community Volunteers, I honestly did not know what to expect, with one notable exception: a ton of snow. And yes, we got some snow when I arrived in late January, but the one thing I was expecting did not last. In fact, when I mention the winter to Minnesotans, they respond, “Winter? What winter?”

There was no planning for me and it was a good thing I didn’t make any plans because the plans would have been a big waste of time. I have learned that we cannot know what life will be like in the future, especially without knowing the people we will be working with, living with, and interacting with on a regular basis. To spend time creating expectations and master plans for a future that we cannot know does a disservice to the present as well as the future for which

we are perfectly ignorant of.

Living in community has helped me understand this fact. Each and every person in community is made unique by their Creator, and by sharing life with each individual, our lives are made unique by way of their uniqueness. In this way, community helps define our lives in the present. We can choose to cherish the gifts God has given the community through the wonderful people we live our lives with, or we can disregard these gifts, disregard God, and obsess about a day that may never come.

While some days can be difficult, it always helps me to remind myself that God is present. He is present in the community. He is present in the simple things that can so easily be overlooked or taken for granted.

I believe this is the heart of Franciscan spirituality. Saint Francis



communicated his love for God by giving glory to Him. Saint Francis truly knew God, and therefore, he recognized Him everywhere He was present. And like a true servant, he couldn’t help but give glory to Him wherever the good saint saw Him.

Keeping St. Cloud safe

An excerpt from Sara Pennebecker’s article for Our Journey on her experience of planning a human trafficking prevention campaign

On Thursday April 26, 2012, 120 people gathered at Hands Across the World for Free At Last: Human Trafficking Prevention Campaign. Free At Last was a half-day event aimed at creating awareness in the St. Cloud area on the issue of human trafficking.

After countless phone calls, meetings and emails, and hundreds of hours of planning and organizing, it was time whether I was ready for it or not. I arrived at work around 6:45 that morning excited and ready for the day to begin.

A panel consisting of Linda Miller,

Michele Garnett McKenzie, Peggy Roy and Richard Wilson answered questions about human trafficking, what it is, myths surrounding human trafficking, what they have been able to accomplish, and what we can do to combat human trafficking.

Participants had an opportunity to partake in breakout sessions. In the breakout sessions, people were asked to reflect and discuss the question, what should St. Cloud do to prevent human trafficking?

To conclude the morning, a keynote address was delivered by Joy Friedman of Breaking Free. Joy is a

survivor and eloquently combined her experiences with passion, motivation and encouragement to the audience to take a stand to prevent human trafficking. She reminded the audience that we are all children of God and being a victim of human trafficking or prostitution does not change that. Victims can be of all ages and backgrounds which is something people often forget. Her address was moving and motivating, leaving audience members charged and ready to continue to work on this issue.