



Franciscan Community Volunteers

June 2013

A new relationship with FCV for Sister Clara Stang

Sister Beatrice Eichten, Community Minister of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota

It is with great admiration and gratitude that we say farewell to Sister Clara Stang who is stepping aside as founder and director of the Franciscan Community Volunteers program.

At the request of the Franciscan Sisters' Leadership team, Sister Clara began exploring how to develop effective outreach with young adults in the St. Cloud area. The request came out of the realization that the congregation had fewer opportunities for interaction with young adults because of not having sisters serving in area high schools, colleges or hospitals. Also, they were aware that, once out of college, young adults had minimal avenues for building relationships with other young adults and with persons involved in service and religious ministries. How could we strengthen young adults in their spirituality, their relational skills and their awareness of service with persons who are poor and in need?

To that end, in 2009, Sister Clara founded Franciscan Community Volunteers. It would be housed in the former Holy Spirit convent in St. Cloud along with the Welcoming House, which provided outreach to college students.

Since 2009, 21 young adults have participated in the 11-month, live-in program built on three pillars: Franciscan spirituality, intentional community living and service with organizations serving persons who are poor. Sister Clara mentored these young adults while building the FCV program into a strong and effective ministry.



Sister Clara Stang

She lived in community with the volunteers and four other Franciscan Sisters, built relationships with area service providers, and developed a network of friends and supporters for the volunteers and the program. In 2011, she was successful in having the FCV program qualify for participation in Americorps. Contacts with young adults who have completed a live-in volunteer program give strong evidence of the positive effect it has on their faith, their commitment to social justice and service to their communities.

Taste of St. Cloud, an annual fundraising event featuring area restaurants and a silent auction, was developed. The fourth annual event was held in May with over

600 people supporting the event. With the help of her associate director Kaitlin, the Franciscan Sisters, the FCV volunteers, and a host of other volunteers, the Taste provides a tasty and fun way to help fund the FCV program. It also connects people with the Franciscan Sisters, the FCV program and other persons in the area.

Sister Clara is passionate about the benefits of Franciscan Community Volunteers in the lives of young adults. She will continue serving as a consultant to the new director and for other religious congregations seeking to develop long-term volunteer programs.

We wish her well and send her on her way with our love and gratitude, knowing God will continue to bless her and lead her in her future endeavors.

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Finding beauty in brokenness

Lisa Yanzer, Franciscan Community Volunteer

The feelings of transition to come, good byes to be said, and the unknown future ahead is a strangely familiar feeling as my third year of living in community comes to an end. I am both excited to know what is next in life and scared to move forward. I have found much joy living here and in this community.

When I think about all that I could reflect on, what stands out to me this year is the encounter we have all made with each other in our humanity. We have grown with each other in our brokenness and in our joys. We have celebrated accomplishments and excitement, and we have worked through tough stuff, heartbreak and hurt.

I have been reading a lot of Jean Vanier recently. He is the founder of L'Arche a beautiful community for people with and without disabilities. He often reflects on community and brokenness. He speaks about how in sharing our weaknesses and our pains it is more nourishing and filling to others than sharing our qualities and successes. He shares that we love each other by showing someone that they are beautiful, important and of worth:

A community is only being created when its members accept that they are not going to achieve great things, that they are not going to be heroes, but simply live each day with new hope, like children, in wonderment as the sun rises and in thanksgiving as it sets. Community is only being created when they have recognized that the greatness of man is to accept his insignificance, his human condition and his earth, and to thank God for having put in a finite body the seeds of eternity which are visible in small and daily

gestures of love and forgiveness. The beauty of man is in this fidelity to the wonder of each day.

I am still learning from past experiences of community, what I am taking away, what will stick with me and how I have grown. I can't make a clear statement of what exactly I am taking with me from this year, but I do know that I have grown to love more deeply. I have learned how to be more present to the needs of others and my own personal needs. I have learned about the cross and how there is beauty in embracing those crosses we all carry and in sharing them with those whom we love. What I will take with me will impact me for the rest of my life, and I am sure I will continue learning how the experience has impacted me as I experience new things throughout my life.

I am thankful to have been here this year, in this community, with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls. It has been an incredible, challenging and beautiful experience.



Lisa Yanzer

Hometown: Holmen, Wis.

Service Placement:
St. Cloud School District #742,
Autism Resource Program



Seasons of service and fun: Shannon (left) uses her artistic skill to add to a community picnic gathering by face-painting. The Franciscan Community Volunteers try out some skiing (right) on a sunny winter day.



Learning to respond: hearing God's call and affirming my gifts

Philip Lomneth, Franciscan Community Volunteer

Whenever God calls on people to be prophets, one of the most common responses is, "I'm not ready! I'm not good enough!" Jeremiah told God he was too young, Moses wanted his brother to speak for him, and a fish swallowed Jonah when he tried to run away from God's call. Nevertheless, God kept calling these people, drawing them to His work. As I reflect on my year, I can't remember how many times I've acted the same way, telling myself that I'm not ready, I'm not good enough, or just simply cannot do this any longer. And yet, every time, God keeps calling me back to community, to ministry, to bringing about God's kingdom on earth.

I began my year running phone banks to defeat a divisive photo ID amendment that had the potential to restrict the voting rights of tens of thousands of Minnesota voters. If you ever spoke to me as I began to make thousands of those calls that fall, you might have heard the reluctance in my voice, my unwillingness to engage or press people too much on the issue. I knew people who stood firmly on both sides of the issue, people who I respected and loved. Thus when I made calls, I heard not just the voices of the people I spoke with, but the voices of the people I trusted. Try calling 100 people every night and having 75 of those people be your dad, who disagrees with you every time.

In the midst of this, I wanted to give up, that is, until I came to realize this was not so much about the issue itself as it was a refusal to be siloed and silent on an issue of great importance. The issue had become a partisan blade, slicing people up into categories of right and wrong, but

our work was to give people their dignity back, faith to faith. Our duty was to tell people why this issue mattered so much to us and to share our stories of how our faith influenced our decisions. Often, people were interested in listening, and occasionally event grateful (even when they disagreed) that we were making these calls. God had called me back to recognize my prophetic work in fostering civil dialogue in a toxic political climate.

Again and again, I felt called to take more leadership or take a stand on an issue I had mixed feelings about. I always doubted myself and wanted to throw up my hands in defeat, but again and again, I felt called to claim the gifts God has given me and share them with all the people around me. In work and in community, people called on me to see my gifts, to work past my discomfort with power and be bold enough to declare what I see. Through the people around me, I have taken several steps forward into the person I hope to be.



Philip Lomneth

Hometown: Omaha, Neb.
Service Placement:
Isaiah/GRIP (the Great River Interfaith Partnership),
Community Organizing and Youth Leadership Organizing



In September, the FCV group volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for an AmeriCorps National Day of service. This day was one of the times during the year that the FCVs were able to do direct service together.

For a variety of reasons

Shannon Hagerty, Franciscan Community Volunteer

As I reflect on my year, many things come to mind from within the pillars of spirituality, community and service. However the one pillar that I can't help but talk more on would be the pillar of service. Committing a year to service has confused many people in my life, and I often got questions of, "why would you do that?" The simplest but perhaps the cheesiest way of answering would simply be, for the children. To go in more depth about my experiences at the St. Cloud Children's Home I would like to reflect on the prayer of Saint Francis.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Providing and upholding peace is a longing so many of us strive to discover and to keep hold of. This year I have seen such peace through the giving of smiles, the comfort of finding trust and care and the knowledge of "I'm not alone in my struggles."

Where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon. Anger and apprehension often fills us when life's crosses caused by the pressures and pain of abuse, neglect, dependency or other stressors get too heavy to carry. The program at the Children's Home offers such love and support, providing children with tools to help ease the heaviness of such burdens along with the

knowledge that their cross does not need to be carried alone.

Where there is doubt, faith, where there is despair, hope. Every human being's life is worthy of learning lessons from. I've seen youth transform from doubtful students into confident teachers.

Where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy. The biggest lesson I have learned through the children this year is that no matter how dark it may seem to be, there is always potential for the light to outshine that darkness.



Shannon Hagerty
Hometown: St. Francis, Minn.
Service Placement:
St. Cloud Children's Home,
Youth Ministry & Chemical
Education Support

You have made the 4th annual Taste of St. Cloud the most successful event yet!

Kaitlin Depuydt, Associate Director

Thanks to all those who helped make our 4th annual Taste of St. Cloud our best fundraiser so far! This year's event was on Monday, May 6, at Territory Golf Course & Coyote Moon Grille. We finally had a beautiful spring day for the event. Whoever was responsible for ordering the weather that day can certainly help us out each year!

A new feature at the Taste of St. Cloud was a raffle of three items including a beautiful handmade quilt, a 4' oak bench, and tickets for next year's event on May 5, 2014 – Cinco de Mayo! Another new feature was having two outdoor tents to support the outdoor atmosphere. Overall it was a wonderful event, thanks to the ongoing support we received. We want to thank those in attendance, as well

as our financial sponsors and participating restaurants. We had many silent auction donors and supporters, including an increased number of original art paintings, carvings and wall-hangings.

The Taste of St. Cloud has been the primary fundraising effort for the Franciscan Community Volunteers program. Your support makes it possible for this unique program to flourish in central Minnesota. Franciscan Community Volunteers have collectively given over 28,000 hours of direct service to the St. Cloud area with the placement sites at social service organizations.

Thank you again for your support, We hope to see you at the 5th annual Taste of St. Cloud—May 5, 2014!

Being led on a journey

Kristine Origone, Franciscan Community Volunteer

When I came to Minnesota, after a brief period of discernment, I KNEW, it was God who brought me here. First, too much happened to resist my coming; second and more important, too much happened that caused that resistance to melt, focused me on the goal and cleared the path. I didn't know why I came, and I didn't know what I was to do here, though I had no question who brought me here. This awareness early on is what kept me coming back, when it was so tempting to just stay home at each visit back to California. I knew I was called, and this journey that I would travel would bring me closer to the person that I was made to be.

At the beginning of the year, I wrote about my desire to know self, to identify who I am, what I believe and why I believe it. This hope returned with discomfort, both internally and externally, as it seems to be the idea of giving, simply for the reinforcement and reception of a greater gift. While such desires do seem to put self at the center of motivation, I have come to recognize that without such fundamental basics, I am **unable** to give of self to God, others or to myself. After much dialogue, journaling, prayer and reflection, I have found that while I still struggle with the amount of outreach I have completed this year, my purpose in being here, with **these** "partners on the journey," **these** supports, **these** sisters at **this** time in my life, may just have been the most crucial means of answering God's call for me. After years of wondering, "What does it mean to live out the gospels?" or "How do I tangibly 'let go'?" or even "If He would just tell me, I would go all out, but I need to hear what it is He wants

from me! Where do I go?!" I believe this year God showed me the significance of taking action. If God wants it, it will happen; if not, He will redirect me.

I have learned a means of facilitation called Art of Hosting. One of the greatest suggestions they offer is whenever there is a group gathered for ANY reason, there should ALWAYS be a check in and a check out. This suggestion

seems fitting to incorporate into my prayer life also. When I feel I am called...check in (ask)...take action (try it)...check out (take it to prayer for evaluation). I have become acutely aware of the debilitation I have undergone due to a fear of failure, motivation and the desire to do God's will, from which I have just been set free! Is it scary? Yes, but is it worth it? Yes! Sometimes, I will fail, but sometimes a world of opportunities and courage will be opened because in that new experience I learn to endure, trust and love. Praise be to God!



Kristine Origone

Hometown: Lodi, Cal.

Service Placement:
Catholic Charities Immigrant
and Refugee services, La Cruz
and Bel Clare Estates
communities

Thank you for a successful Taste of St. Cloud!





Franciscan Community Volunteers

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Welcome to Patricia Flicker Schlauderaff, our new Director of Franciscan Community Volunteers!

Sister Clara Stang, Director

We are happy to introduce you to Pat who will become the new Franciscan Community Volunteer Director on July 1, 2013. Pat lives in St. Joseph, MN with her husband Paul and comes to this new position with a variety of ministry experiences and a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from St. John's School Theology in Collegeville, MN. She comes excited to serve in a Franciscan ministry sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters and looks forward to sharing in the lives of young adults. The 5th group of young adults will begin their 11 month program as Franciscan Community Volunteers on August 4th, and Pat is eager to journey with them.

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

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