FCV 11 - Community
By Pat Flicker, Director

As many know, the unemployment rate is at a 40-year low. Businesses are hiring everywhere, and it has affected FCV and our ability to recruit volunteers.

This year, we have one volunteer to date. Her name is Katherine Giorgio. Katherine is from Elk Point, S. Dak., and has her undergraduate degree in Applied Biological Science and a minor in Chemistry from the South Dakota School of Mines. She is serving at the St. Benedict Senior Center in the Therapeutic Recreation area.

I was worried about what FCV would look like with just one volunteer, but God had a plan in place. Katherine was excited to come and quickly made connections and friends, and she started a faith sharing group for young adults on Tuesday evenings at the Welcoming House. She had connected with someone that knew someone before she came…and out of that connection blossomed this amazing community. It is different from our typical FCV community, yet I would say it is mutually significant.

This year also brought about another change. Anna Taylor, FCV alumni from 2014-15 and 2015-2016, stayed in the St. Cloud area and at her service site, Mid-MN Legal Aid, when she was done with the program. She lived on her own for a year and discerned the importance of living in an intentional community. Anna moved back in August to the Welcoming House and is part of the community with the sisters. This has made it easier for Katherine as well. It is life giving to have another young adult in the house! Anna and Katherine join the sisters every day for morning and evening prayer.

As I write this we have three young women that have downloaded applications for FCV to start in January… I no longer hold my breath and hope and pray for more volunteers. I understand this process is in God’s hands. We have had eight people download applications this year with only one that committed so far. So, stay tuned to see what God has planned for the second half of the FCV year.

Merry Christmas and have a Blessed New Year!

One of FCV’s favorite Advent prayers:
Emmanuel, our world waits in longing for Your light, in the midst of darkness reveal Your light.
- As we long for lasting peace in the midst of war, be with us.
- As we long for families to be reunited, be with us.
- As we long for enemies to be reconciled, be with us.
- As we long for cures and healings, be with us.
- As we long for decent jobs and economic security, be with us.
- As we long for love and community, be with us.
Fulfill the deepest longings of your people and dispel the darkness in our hearts and in our world. Let your word ignite the hope the world needs to bring to life your love and justice. Amen

Last Dairy Queen of the season!
How can it be? Franciscan Community Volunteers (FCV) alumni who never met before came home and recognized each other! That’s right. Young adults who were part of the FCV program some years ago crossed our threshold and were right at home with others from more recent years.

Young adults from all four corners of our country came back to the Welcoming House in St. Cloud and to the Motherhouse in Little Falls at the end of June to celebrate 10 years of the FCV program, founded in 2009 by Sister Clara Stang. Also present were the companions, both sisters and lay people, who supported the volunteers during their time in the program and often remain in touch. They celebrated 10 years during which 51 young adults volunteered 62,000 hours of service to people on the margins in the St. Cloud community.

Having shared and lived our three pillars (Meaningful Service, Intentional Community, and Franciscan Spirituality) the old and new quickly bonded. Stories of love and compassion experienced at service sites, memories playing Rumikub and Mexican Train, and anecdotes of the years had us all laughing.

The opportunity to connect and reconnect served as a mirror for each volunteer to recognize gifts in themselves and in each other. They revisited their Franciscan roots, reaffirming their commitment to the Franciscan way of life.

About 50 people played and prayed together for the weekend. How blessed we are to have the Franciscan Community Volunteer program. Eight FCV alumni have become Franciscan Associates. Truly, the sisters have found a way to connect with the young adults, extending the Franciscan values and spirit farther into the world.

I counted down the days until I could see my community again. It had only been a year since my FCV year ended, but I was looking forward to the FCV Alumni Reunion. I was excited to see all of the sisters, Pat, Anna Taylor, and the place I once called home. I was unsure of who the rest of the folks who RSVP’d were going, but I trusted my intuition and went to discover something new. I’ve only ever heard stories about previous FCVers, and I often wondered what it would be like to meet them in person.

We often heard stories about brothers, John-Caleb (JC) and Isaac, and all of the bizarre adventures that happened while they were in FCV. And to hear about the confusion between Ann and Anna, wow, that was already hard to type. And how wonderful it must’ve been when Kyle, Rebeca, and Isaac were living together, and their jam sessions. All those stories came to life for me during the reunion. Everyone’s personalities meshed well and it was evident that we would all become great friends. From dancing in the downtown area to playing shuffle board in the Volunteer Room, we all just got along. It’s an experience I remember frequently, especially now that my ministry is working with young adults. Pat and the Franciscans Sisters gave us the space and trust to be authentically us, which is something I try to mirror at Maryknoll (my current work/ministry). I am so grateful to have met such authentic and beautiful spirits.
**FCV Family and Community**

By FCV Katherine Giorgio

Hello FCV family, friends and alumni! I am so happy to join this community and be part of year 11. I felt the Holy Spirit’s invitation to come to St. Cloud with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls throughout my application process, and that same sense of invitation has shifted and continued in various ways since I moved in August. The main theme that sticks out to me after these first three months is relationship.

I have been blessed with many new relationships. First, of course, are Anna and Sisters Jan, Karen and Michelle. We eat, pray, laugh and share our day-to-day lives with each other. It is so refreshing to live in intentional community. I count Pat as one of the crew too! Second are my companions (Tom and Cathy), praying sisters (Sisters Rose Mae and Sylvia), and guests of the Welcoming House who have come for special presentations. They are absolutely delightful people who I can count on for meaningful conversations and fun adventures. Third are the residents and coworkers I have met at the St. Benedict’s care center. I see nearly all of the 75 total residents each week through the activities we do, such as bingo, playing cards and baking. Each one has their own unique story, and I’m starting to realize just how much I truly care for them. Last but not least are the friendships that have grown outside of the FCV family. In addition to our Tuesday night faith sharing group, I’ve been able to go hiking and swing dancing, tour a brewery, play ultimate frisbee and sit around a campfire with a bunch of very fun people.

Through these relationships, particularly at my service site, I have had the opportunity to grow in the four Franciscan values: conversion, poverty, contemplation and humility. It is difficult to be patient with every resident at all times, so then I have the choice to turn my heart back toward Christ and remain Christ-like. I see the reality of residents’ poverty—financially, physically, mentally and spiritually—and it brings attention to that reality in my own life. Other moments bring me to contemplate the purpose of life and where its value comes from. Humility can seem like a confusing virtue to me, but in the care center, the opportunity often comes as a simple act of service like wiping up a spilled drink, blowing a nose or setting up a tray table just so. I certainly do not always say “yes” to these opportunities for growth, but I appreciate the Franciscan values as a guide.

The last three months have been full—full of excitement, love, challenge, support, transition and comfort. Thank you for being part of the FCV community in whatever way you are connected. The relationships, service and Franciscan spirituality have already made an impact in my life.
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WE MAKE A LIVING
BY WHAT WE GET…
BUT WE MAKE A
LIFE BY
WHAT WE GIVE.
-Winston Churchill

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 and let other people know about our program by liking, sharing and commenting on our posts!

Looking ahead
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!

SAVE THE DATE
Taste of St. Cloud
Monday, May 4, 2020
4:30-7:30
St. Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center!
Downtown St. Cloud

Franciscan Community Volunteers is based on three pillars: meaningful service, intentional 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.