As many of you know, FCV’s annual fundraiser, Taste of St. Cloud, has grown over the years...or should I say outgrown. It has outgrown the Coyote Moon and Grille, outgrown the Kelly Inn and has finally found its home at the River’s Edge Convention Center in downtown St. Cloud.

It was a beautiful site. The restaurants, tables, silent auction and games, all set-up with lots of space between everything for walkers, wheelchairs and just visiting. No need to run and set up more tables, no need to worry about parking, just a sacred space to celebrate the Franciscan Sisters and the Franciscan Community Volunteers.

At the end of the evening someone asked me what was the best part of the day and the worst part of the day? The best part was easy...I overheard people coming up to the sisters and saying, “You were my favorite teacher ever,” and, “You taught me second grade”...the laughter and the love for the Franciscan family filled my heart and the room. And as for the second part of that question, the worst part of the day: I had to answer that there was not a worst part. It was the best day ever! Everything went so well!

FCV was blessed with beautiful weather, over 600 attendees, 17 restaurants and lots of fun! What more could I ask for? Thank you to all who came and celebrated 10 years of the Franciscan Community Volunteers with us!

THANK YOU for all your support!
The 10th annual Taste of St. Cloud was a success in all ways!
WE COULDN’T CONTINUE TO DO THIS AMAZING MINISTRY WITHOUT YOU ALL!

FCV FUN FACTS:

10
The number of years that the Franciscan Community Volunteer program has been in the community.

62,000
The number of hours that the young adults have volunteered to the people on the margins in the St. Cloud community

51
The number of young adults that have been a part of FCV

Countless
The number of lives touched by a Franciscan Community Volunteer
Measuring a year in love

By Kiera Reynolds, FCV 10

I did a lot of pondering before finally sitting down and writing this article. I thought long and hard about everything that has happened during this time with the Franciscan Community Volunteers. I read over each and every one of the prompts that Pat gave us in order to help brainstorm what we would write for our end of year newsletter. The question that caught my eye was, “Is there a quote/prayer/song lyric that sums up or resonates with your FCV experience?” I then began to research famous quotes and songs about endings, hoping to find something that would assist in summarizing my FCV experience.

Finally, I found what I was looking for. The famous, often quoted song “Seasons of Love” from the musical Rent. Cliché as it may be, this song is used over and over again in Christmas letters, at graduations, in photo captions and more, because it so eloquently captures the sentiment that we feel when asked to condense days and months into single sentences. As the opening lyrics proclaim, “Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure, measure a year?”

How would I measure my year with FCV? The song asks if we should measure a year in sunsets, coffee cups, miles, laughter, burned bridges or learned truths. I decided to put my own spin on it. Would I measure my year in hours volunteered? Miles driven? Plates of tater tot hotdish eaten? Inches of snow shoveled? Dishes washed? The amount of times someone said “uffda” or some other Minnesotan expression? None of these seemed sufficient. But it was the chorus of the song itself that answered my question with another, “How about love?” “Measure in love” the song declares as the chorus continues. Indeed, my year with FCV can best be quantified according to these “seasons” or moments of love.

Late night conversations with Sister Michelle in the Welcoming House kitchen, where she imparts all the wisdom that she has gained from years spent serving others here in the U.S. and on missions in other countries. Every time that Sister Jan offers to help me in the kitchen, because I’ve just had a long day at work and cooking is not on my list of favorite activities. Watching Sister Rose Mae’s face light up as she talks about the story behind the San Damiano Crucifix or learns we brought home Dilly Bars from Dairy Queen. When Pat listens carefully to the other volunteers and me talking about our week in front of a flickering bonfire in her backyard during Sharing from the Heart. Hearing Amanda talk about how much she cares about each and every one of the residents at the Catholic Charities Youth House and knowing how hard she works to help them in every way she can. Noticing the hours JC dedicates to creating sculptures of clay to share with the kids at the Boys and Girls Club in order to bring them a moment of happiness in their day. Memorizing every piece of wisdom that my supervisor Mayuli Bales, from the St. Cloud Multi-Cultural Ministry Office, imparts to me. The joy that I feel whenever I get to interact with a small child when I work with a family, and see their innocent smiles and laughter. The way that my heart aches as I contemplate all the obstacles that those who I work with are facing and will have to face. The motivation I feel to pursue a career where I can keep reaching out to the marginalized. Overall, all of those moments of love are how I would measure my year with FCV.

Finally, as the song also says in its chorus, I plan to “remember the love” that God has shown me through FCV and carry it with me always.

Kiera having lunch with her Sister Companion, Sister Audrey Jean Loher, and her Praying Sister, Sister Joan Tuberty.
Thankful, grateful and blessed!

By Amanda Harrod, FCV 10

As I sit in our backyard on a gorgeous spring morning listening to the birds chirp and soaking in the warmth from the sun, I can’t help but feel grateful. And let me tell you, I have good reasons to be so elated.

Looking over my time as an FCV, there are a few things that surface. One is that I cannot believe how fast time has gone. Another is that during this year, I have become aware of my shortcomings and I have a lot of work to do. Which is a great! Difficult, but great. What I will expand on is the overwhelming feeling of gratitude that has been placed on my heart.

“Why are you so thankful Amanda?” you might ask. Well let me tell you...The month of February provided us with some amazing snow and I came across a pair of cross country skis in our basement. I formed a solid friendship with a girl named Heidi. I have learned and am still learning what it means to be single after coming out of an almost five-year relationship. Being in Minnesota, I have connected with my mom’s side of the family (my mom was born and raised in Minnesota). Specifically, I have been graced with the love and support of Denise and Gary. And speaking of family, I went to my first Twins game (yay Denise and Gary). I have gotten to learn about Franciscan spirituality from some amazing Franciscan Sisters. I had the privilege to have Tom and Cathy as my companions, and man, they are good people. Through Tom and Cathy I met a woman named Connie, who gifted me with a Harrod’s coffee mug from the Harrod’s department store in London. My distant relatives started a store in case you’re confused. But the biggest gift of this year? Gaining clarity on where God wants me to go after this program is finished.

Sometime in the fall, I was on the phone with my mom. I was telling her how my ideal situation would be to continue working at Catholic Charities Youth House after finishing the program, but there wasn’t a job opening for what I wanted to do. I remember my mom saying something about God opening doors, which I disregarded because I didn’t believe the position would open up at just the right time for me to get the job. SURPRISE! The position opened up about a month ago and I just accepted a job at the Youth House. I am absolutely honored to continue working with young adults experiencing homelessness and I can’t imagine doing anything different.

Though my time here has been challenging, it has also been fruitful. I will always be thankful for the FCV program for providing me with an opportunity to receive so many graces. I wouldn’t have found a passion doing case management with young adults without committing to this year of service. Thank you to everyone who has directly or indirectly supported me during my time. And if you have time, keep me in your prayers.

Thankful, grateful and blessed!

By Amanda Harrod, FCV 10

As I sit in our backyard on a gorgeous spring morning listening to the birds chirp and soaking in the warmth from the sun, I can’t help but feel grateful. And let me tell you, I have good reasons to be so elated.

Looking over my time as an FCV, there are a few things that surface. One is that I cannot believe how fast time has gone. Another is that during this year, I have become aware of my shortcomings and I have a lot of work to do. Which is a great! Difficult, but great. What I will expand on is the overwhelming feeling of gratitude that has been placed on my heart.

“Why are you so thankful Amanda?” you might ask. Well let me tell you...The month of February provided us with some amazing snow and I came across a pair of cross country skis in our basement. I formed a solid friendship with a girl named Heidi. I have learned and am still learning what it means to be single after coming out of an almost five-year relationship. Being in Minnesota, I have connected with my mom’s side of the family (my mom was born and raised in Minnesota). Specifically, I have been graced with the love and support of Denise and Gary. And speaking of family, I went to my first Twins game (yay Denise and Gary). I have gotten to learn about Franciscan spirituality from some amazing Franciscan Sisters. I had the privilege to have Tom and Cathy as my companions, and man, they are good people. Through Tom and Cathy I met a woman named Connie, who gifted me with a Harrod’s coffee mug from the Harrod’s department store in London. My distant relatives started a store in case you’re confused. But the biggest gift of this year? Gaining clarity on where God wants me to go after this program is finished.

Sometime in the fall, I was on the phone with my mom. I was telling her how my ideal situation would be to continue working at Catholic Charities Youth House after finishing the program, but there wasn’t a job opening for what I wanted to do. I remember my mom saying something about God opening doors, which I disregarded because I didn’t believe the position would open up at just the right time for me to get the job. SURPRISE! The position opened up about a month ago and I just accepted a job at the Youth House. I am absolutely honored to continue working with young adults experiencing homelessness and I can’t imagine doing anything different.

Though my time here has been challenging, it has also been fruitful. I will always be thankful for the FCV program for providing me with an opportunity to receive so many graces. I wouldn’t have found a passion doing case management with young adults without committing to this year of service. Thank you to everyone who has directly or indirectly supported me during my time. And if you have time, keep me in your prayers.

Visit us on the web at www.fcvonline.org

Page 3
The reason I came to FCV in the fall of 2016 was very simple. I needed a life change. By that point I had been living in Alabama for the better part of ten years. I had a decent paying job and my own place, but still craved real connection. More importantly, I needed to find out who I really was. My brother, Isaac, had come for a year beforehand and called me one evening. We talked and I could hear in his voice the change that I was longing for. So not long after, I was on the road to Minnesota myself.

I served a year and began to understand myself more towards the end, then suddenly it was over. I had to go back to normal society back in Alabama where I failed miserably to avoid the people and things that dragged me down in the first place. So I returned, and made it a primary focus to work on my ability to handle tough situations. More importantly though, I began to learn how to properly take care of myself, and in doing so have learned how to be a better version of myself for others.

The Boys and Girls Club is one of the toughest sites in the program, not to downplay any of the other sites, but this place is BUSY. On average, there are around 170 children a day, spread among about 10 staff, with approximately 60% Somali population and a range of ages from 5-18. Needless to say, some days the place feels more like a battleground than after school care, yet I’ve loved every second of my time there. The last time I left, I clung on to the good old days at “the Club.” I longed for that kind of responsibility and payoff again. I knew I wouldn’t be able to settle until I had at least another year’s worth of time there. So I came back and did it completely differently this time. I was back at it and even on the very first day, it was like I had never left. As the year went on I enjoyed myself greatly, being able to be present and caring while also firm. I was able to be the real life cartoon character the little kids need and the nonsensical but tough enough role model the teens needed too.

The second time around, I connected with kids on a whole different level. I let my art take a backseat as a more relaxed thing I could share with the kids; I let my all-around creativity find new ways to inspire them to share their own passions and hobbies. As things start to really wrap up, I feel satisfied. I feel like I’ve accomplished what I want here, and this program and my site have truly prepared me to go be the best man possible to all those I interact with in the future. I’ve accomplished the greatest thing of all this year: personal satisfaction. Having completed another year, I can firmly say I am happy with who I am as a person. My voice is clearer, my posture has improved, my health is in a better place and I no longer struggle with the self-doubt that has plagued me for what seems like an eternity. It was one of the hardest years of my life, and I wouldn’t take back any of the choices I made as they made me the man I am today.
Taste of St. Cloud team makes hard work fun!

By Pat Flicker, FCV Director

It takes a tremendous amount of work to get the Taste of St. Cloud ready each year! This was my sixth Taste planning—and with time, comes clarity! There was always a group of people willing to help, but this year we took it to a new level and started the Taste of St. Cloud TEAM! Long-term volunteers stepped forward to take a more active role in the planning, designing and setting up for the Taste event. Many hands truly make light work! Sue Linz did all the ticket deposits! Sister Jan was amazing at going out and helping get sponsors for this year. On the day of the event everyone had their jobs: Sue, Cathy and Jo were in charge of setting up the silent auction and other tables, Caroline is a rock star at getting all the outdoor signage up, and Tom, Roger and Gary hung all the restaurant and sponsor signs! All with laughter and fun! We were done early and able to take a couple-hour break before the event started. The spirit of generosity is amazing with this group, and ideas are already in the works to make it better next year.

We also have had, and continue to have, the support of an amazing woman, Andrea Tharp. Andrea is the event coordinator for Coyote Moon and Grille. She has helped coordinate and design placements of restaurants for all the Tastes of St. Cloud. When we out-grew Coyote Moon, Andrea generously continued to volunteer and help coordinate everything to ensure a successful event. She is part of the family!

There is one more amazing woman that needs a huge thank you, Sister Sharon Fitzpatrick. Each and every year Sister Sharon goes and visits each restaurant and lines up all the delicious food for the event. The restaurant owners love her and so do we!

For those that don't know… this is the Creed that all Optimist Clubs follow. It sounds very Franciscan to me!

Promise Yourself…
To be SO STRONG that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the GREATER ACHIEVEMENTS of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance AT ALL TIMES and give every living creature you meet a smile.
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have NO TIME to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

The Franciscan Community Volunteers are blessed!

Central MN Noon Optimist Club donates $3,000 to FCV!

By Pat Flicker, FCV Director

I am an optimist, by nature and officially, as a member of the Central MN Noon Optimist Club. I want to thank the club for donating $3,000 to FCV to help offset the costs of our program. The Optimists work on “bringing out the best in youth” and donate to nonprofits that work with youth. Our program definitely fits that area. Thank you to all the optimists in the world—committed to making lives better for youth in the world.

Visit us on the web at www.fcvonline.org
Garry Dahl and his wife JoAnn holding the beautiful raffle quilt made by Sister Mary Obowa that he won! Congratulations Garry!

**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.