



# Community Connections

## End of an era

By FCV Director Pat Flicker

As most of you know, it is not often that I am at a loss for words. There has been a note to write this article on my desk for three weeks now, and each time I sit down words just do not come to me.

Where do I begin? The past seven years have been a gift, a blessing, and at times...a bit of a challenge. I have been blessed with learning so much about the Franciscan way of life, to the point where it has seeped into my being and become a way of life.

I remember starting this position unsure of how I would relate to young adults...was I too old? Would I understand their desires and be able to mentor them appropriately? Over the years, I have had the privilege to work with 29 different volunteers from all around the world. I have watched them grow and change, and in that process, have grown and changed myself.

With the protesting and Black Lives Matter happening right now, I think back to listening to Ann Anosike, a 2016 volunteer. I learned so much about white privilege and stretched into a deeper understanding of how much is yet to do in the broader community to end racism. When George Floyd died I immediately thought of the many conversations we had around race, and it became evident to me that I need to stay in the arena and be a catalyst for systemic change.

The sisters that have lived in the house with the volunteers have not only impacted the volunteers, but myself on a deep level. Their listening presence and gentle urging to look at life through the Franciscan lens has impacted my life at every level. I have felt nothing but love and acceptance from all of the Franciscan Sisters. Truly, they are my family and I really look forward to continuing the relationships that I have as a Franciscan Associate and friend!

I also want to say thank you to Sister Clara Stang, who built this program on a firm foundation that allowed it to grow and prosper for 11 years...over 67,000 hours and 53 young adults. Countless lives touched by the Franciscan heart of love. It is hard to believe the program is ending. I know that God has amazing opportunities in mind for the sisters to continue to share their way of life. I can't wait to see what is next for them and the Welcoming House. Peace to you all. Thank you for all your support over the years!



Celebrating Pat's birthday: Sister Jan Kilian, Anna Taylor, Pat Flicker, Sister Michelle L'Allier and Katherine Giorgio



## Life beyond Clare's Well...

By Sister Jan Kilian

When I'm retired I won't have to set my alarm: therefore, I am not yet retired! I am regularly at our FCV community morning prayer at 7:30 a.m.

I was at Sister Matthias Gangl's wake on September 14, 2017, when Sister Bea Eichten called me aside and asked me to help with FCV at the Welcoming House. We were finished with Clare's Well. I thought I would be retiring to the Motherhouse that fall. I was 80 years old. I went to work with FCV.

My ministry at FCV is an intergenerational ministry. I came here nervous about living with young adults. That nervousness was soon gone when the 20-some-year-olds laughed and helped me with my faux pas in the kitchen. Young adults are like new books in the library—bursting with new information and fresh views of life. Their hearts are full of love and generosity. This is a wonderful community for “an old lady.” If possible, I'd like to work here until whenever I do get to retire—maybe at 90?

# You want me to do what?

By Sister Karen Niedzielski

When I said yes to coming to the Welcoming House, I was only thinking of the sisters I would live in community with. I was happy about that.

When I thought about living with young adults, I had some reservations. I thought this would be a challenge. One has to be very careful what one says around them. My thought was that they would be easily offended by words. And because I do not have good filters on my words all the time, this could be a problem. I would have to change me.

I soon discovered that I was wrong. I tried to proceed cautiously at first, but I had been who I was for too long a time. I would say what came into my head most of the time. I was wrong because young people, I was told by one of them, like this about me.

During my years with the volunteers I changed a lot. I found out that they are wonderful people who value many of the things that I do. They amazed me with their generosity and care for the people they worked with. Their commitment to community was another truth that surprised me. They accepted elderly nuns and appreciated the gifts we had to bring, AND as the saying goes, I received in return more than I gave. They are almost as wonderful as kindergarteners. I wish I would have had more years to come living with volunteers. They are such a blessing for me.



## Miracle on 11<sup>th</sup> Ave.

By Sister Michelle L'Allier

Gratitude fills my heart as I remember the journey from shared dreaming to start a young adult volunteer program, to its coming into form and currently to its completion, a natural life cycle that has many blessings and challenges along the way. As a religious community, we

Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls have had a long history of accompaniment of youth and young adults. Now that we sisters are less involved in schools and parish ministry, there are less built-in forums for the intergenerational exchange of wisdom and experience. Thus, the importance of creating new venues for bridging relationships and opportunities for serving and learning together.

The birth of the Franciscan Community Volunteers (FCV) in 2009 under the able leadership of founding Director, Sister Clara Stang, transitioned to Associate Pat Flicker in 2013. They, together with amazing Assistant Directors, support staff, FCV volunteers, companions, service site personnel, sisters, donors and Taste and Advisory Council volunteers, gave of themselves and their skills over the years in service to the dream of FCV.

In the process, lives were transformed through challenges



and blessings in mutuality of relationship, beginning with those who committed themselves to a time of intentional community, meaningful service and spiritual growth as a Franciscan Community Volunteer. Volunteers, together with those in need who were served at the service sites, community companions, praying sisters and companion sisters, resident sisters at Welcoming House, staff and office/Taste volunteers and others, the circles of relationships extended to family and friends of each person involved. This is amazing grace, revealing the inter-connectedness of all of us!

Intermingled with the joy of celebrating relationships established and being touched by one another's lives, there is the sadness of FCV coming to completion. As we grieve its closure, it creates an opening for something new to come to life. That life comes in the form of young adults being strengthened for their journeys of discovering their vocations to marriage and religious life, of bringing children into the world, of living lives of intentional service, of continuing to nurture friendships. It is also manifest in the blessing of relationships that will continue even as the form may change. For us at Welcoming House, we look forward to how we might continue to connect with and be of service to and relationship with young adults. Come, Holy Spirit!

## FCV SERVICE SITES AT A GLANCE

Boys & Girls Club	10,600
Catholic Charities-Children's Home	7,900
Anna Marie's Alliance	5,600
Place of Hope	5,200
St. Benedict's Senior Community	4,400
LSS Immigration Services	4,400
Catholic Charities-La Cruz/Bel Clare	4,100
Mid-MN Legal Aid	4,000
Catholic Charities Youth House	3,000
Casa Guadalupe	2,900
Hands Across the World	2,400
CentraCare Recovery Plus	1,800
Habitat for Humanity-RESTORE	1,700
St. Cloud School District	1,700
ISAIAH/GRIP	1,600
Center for Service Learning/Cathedral HS	1,600
SC Diocese Multi-Cultural Ministry	600
Other: Catholic Charities Social Justice Office, FSLF Justice & Peace Dept., Opportunity Matters, Central MN Girl Scouts, St. Cloud Diocese Mission Office, Caring Hands Dental Clinic, Companion Animal Hospital	4,100
<b>TOTAL HOURS VOLUNTEERED</b>	<b>67,600</b>

## WELCOMING HOUSE SISTERS

Sister Clara Stang	Sister Loretta Denfeld
Sister Bernice Rieland	Sister Ange Mayers
Sister Cordy Korkowski	Sister Rose Mae Rausch
Sister Michelle L'Allier	Sister Jan Kilian
Sister Karen Niedzielski	

## FCV DIRECTORS

2009-2013 Sister Clara Stang    2013-2020 Pat Flicker

## FCV STAFF

2009-2010 Katie Cassady    2010-2012 Anna Zarros  
2012-2014 Kaitlyn Depuydt    2016-2017 Laura Shrode

## VOLUNTEERS AT A GLANCE

2009	Caitie Tobin	Sydney, Australia
2009	Adam Smith	GA - Munree
2009	Will Braun	MN - St. Cloud
2009	Spencer Buchert	MN - Grand Rapids
2009	Alicia Landale	MD - Lusby
2010	Will Estrellanes Poligono	AZ - Bullhead City
2010	Greg Morris	GA - Norcross
2010	Audrey Breeden	TX - Cureville
2010	Ann Cook	IL - Chicago
2010	Julia Sias	MN - Bloomington
2010	Eilis McCulloh	OH - Youngstown
2011	Sara Pennebecker	WI - La Crosse
2011	Michael Servis	AK - Harrison
2011	Anna Konopacky	WI - Lake Tomahac
2011	Brandon Montgomery	OH - North Fairfield
2012	Tamara Wiley	IA - Lewis
2012	Kristine Origone	CA - Stockton
2012	Shannon Hagerty Kummrow	MN - Anoka
2012	Philip Lommeth	NE - Omaha
2012	Maureen Reynolds	MN - Brooklyn Park
2012	Corey Dossey	TX - Spring
2012	Lisa Yanzer Lommeth	WI - Holman
2013	Nneka Arinze	GA - Stonemountain
2013	Nick Anderson	IA - Dubuque
2013	Augie Lindmark	MN - Redwing
2013	Kelli Wilbert	IL - Chicago
2013/14	Kristen Wall Barnes	MN - Rochester
2013	Alison Swoboda	MN - Little Falls
2013	Ian Peoples	TX - Burkburnet
2014	Hannah Schulenberg Storz	CA - Glendale
2014	Breanna Wegner VonBank	MN - Wells
2014	Kevin Trettel	MN - Jordan
2014	Shaina Lawrence	CA - Tehachapi
2014	Karina Duran	Managua, Nicaragua
2015	Rebecca Ferrera	CA - New Berry Park
2015	Ranya Acgaoili	HI - Kahului
2015	Johnny McCracken	PA - Gap
2015	Kyle Lamb	MN - Avon
2015/16	Isaac Vacheresse	AL - Moody
2016	Ann Anosike	TX - Irving
2016/17	Anna Taylor	KY - Berea
2016	Jenny Wonsever Powers	MD - Severn
2016/18	John-Caleb Vacheresse	AL - Moody
2017	Catherine (CJ) Pettinger	ND - Fargo
2017	Stephanie Luna	CA - Norwalk
2017	Anthony Scheip	FL - Sarasota
2017	Joseph Oborski	IL - Chicago
2018	Heidi Hoslet	CA - Saugus
2018	Kiera Reynolds	NC - Durham
2018	Amanda Harrod	MT - Polson
2019	Katherine Giorgio	SD - Elk Point



# The Gifts of FCV

By FCV Katherine Giorgio

My journal entry from my first night at the Welcoming House begins, **"JOY is here."** I only wrote four lines that night, describing the strong sense of peace, joy and home I was already feeling. Now as my time here is going to end soon, those same feelings of peace, joy and home are what overwhelm me still. I love going back through my journal to remember the paths of relationship I have traveled this year. Here are some selections that tell a bit of the story.

November 6: *"Why do I feel like I want to cry right now? I just got home from seeing a movie with Tom and Cathy. When I got home, I saw the Thanksgiving present (a big, fuzzy blanket) that is sitting on my bed. I feel so loved by them!"* Just last week I went over to their house to hang out on the patio. I was missing my family, so it was comforting to spend time with my companion "family" here.

November 20: *"I tremble at the thought of where I will be in nine months. I don't have the energy to pick up and start again. Will I be at a school I like? Will I even make it into an epidemiology program?"* Guess what! I still don't know for sure where I will be in August! It depends if the University of Minnesota decides to hold classes on campus. I do, however, have the energy and desire to step forward into the unknown again. Living in community and having all of the FCV support systems has been incredible. I feel filled up again. I am ready to take on the next steps of my journey!

April 1: *"I am grateful for living in St. Cloud and being in FCV. Today it sank in that FCV as I know it is never coming back."* It has been strange to experience each little ending of FCV stretched over a longer period of time than it usually would be. I stopped going to my service site on March 30. We became more united into one single community rather than two overlapping communities of young adults and sisters during the stay-at-home period. The Taste of St. Cloud was cancelled and Pat is not here at the house as often as before. I stopped visiting the Motherhouse. These transitions have been challenging, but they have also brought forth beautiful opportunities for growth.

May 12: *"I am grateful for a community where we celebrate difficult conversations for their humanness and the growth they provide."* We have been having more emotionally intense conversations than usual, ranging from how to handle our safety in the pandemic to the best way to cut bars in a baking pan. All of these things matter in community! We talk, we share our feelings, we listen and then we occasionally celebrate with Dairy Queen.

These gifts of peace, joy and belonging will stay with me far into the future. Although FCV is ending in the sense that I will leave and there will be no new volunteers, FCV lives on in the spirits of those who came, lived it and carry it with them now to each moment of their lives.



Spring trip to the Dairy Queen!



Memorial Day social distancing party at Pat's house



# Embracing change

By FCV Alumni and live-in Associate Anna Taylor

**"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."**

**-Dan Millman**

I came to Minnesota about four years ago as a new college graduate to spend a year volunteering with FCV. Well, one year turned into two, then two turned into deciding to stay in Minnesota, which turned into moving back to the Welcoming House to be a resident associate and live in community with the sisters (where I am at now). During all of those seasons, I saw many changes happen at the Welcoming House, with volunteers and sisters coming and going, some expected, some not. Every year had its own unique tumult and change, surprises and dynamics. But this year takes the cake. As I am sure you already know, the FCV program is ending after 11 seasons. Here at the Welcoming House we grieved it in steps—first starting the year with just one volunteer, then the decision was made not to let any potential volunteers join mid-year, then we heard that the program would be ending in June, and then we couldn't even host the Taste of St. Cloud due to COVID-19.

It's been a year of slow dying of old ways. What was once normal is now fading away. This year has been a big long experiment in humility, dying to self and seeing where God is leading. And in that process, I have seen life springing forth abundantly.

Because Katherine is the only volunteer this year, it afforded her more opportunity to be integrated with the sister/associate (me) community at the Welcoming House. In years past the two communities were free to mingle, but there was still a sense of separation—we volunteers had our concepts of "fun" and did our own FCV activities with Pat, and the sisters did theirs. But with only one volunteer, it was natural for Katherine to be more integrated with the sister community to the point where I don't think anyone distinguished between the two. She was just one of us. The lack of distinction allowed for a more unified intergenerational community based in love and respect. I stand in awe of what has emerged. We have had several difficult but profound conversations related to things like dealing with the pandemic, personal preferences and how we are doing. We worked it through, gave each other a voice and let the tears flow. I have never experienced such communal trust and respect before.

Even though the FCV program is ending, the sisters hope to develop an intergenerational community for young adults as a natural next step for the Welcoming House. After this past year, I see how beautiful that reality could be. Despite the difficulty saying goodbye to FCV, I see potential for something just as beautiful on the horizon.



Anna going on a rhubarb hunt with Sister Jan



Our new normal?



## Treasures!

By FCV Alumni Amanda Harrod

The last year and a half has been a whirlwind of unexpected choices and people that entered my life. After recently making the difficult decision to accept a job back in my home state of Montana, I've reflected on the ways that I have been molded through the Franciscan Community Volunteer Program and how it created a foundation that opened my heart to so many lifelong gifts.

Upon completing the FCV program, I was offered a job through my service site with Catholic Charities. I discovered meaningful work with young adults as a case manager that has challenged and stretched me. I am thankful to have fallen in love with this work and to be able to continue it in my hometown.

The program allowed me the opportunity to get to know my family here in Minnesota. Through the grace and generosity of Denise and Gary, I connected with family I had only met a few times in my life. I have gained valuable familial relationships that have shaped me and called me to be the best version of myself.

I have had the honor to spend time with and learn from several Franciscan Sisters. These are women who have dedicated their lives to service and have touched my heart. I have integrated many ways of living simpler, for example: recycling, donating unused items, using water wisely, etc. I also ate more desserts during my time as a volunteer than I care to remember due to Sister Jan's top-notch baking. I gained one of my dearest friends, Heidi, who will be helping me get married this October. Heidi is a beautiful, thoughtful and generous woman, and I am so thankful that our paths crossed. I have no doubt that she will remain as one of my favorite people to spend time with.

My companions during the program, Tom and Cathy, have become a treasured part of my life. We have shared many moments of laughter bringing us all to tears as well as authentic conversations about family and life. They have not only opened their hearts to welcome me, but have also supported me in any way possible from helping move all my furniture into my apartment (third floor), to providing advice on trailer hitches. Tom and Cathy have become family.

My heart aches that other young adults will no longer have the opportunity to participate in something that brought me exactly what I needed at the time. I have been touched by so many individuals and I will forever be grateful for the program, those listed above, Pat, Sister Michelle, Sister Rose Mae, JC, Heidi and Kiera.



Heidi and Amanda

## Discovering my passion

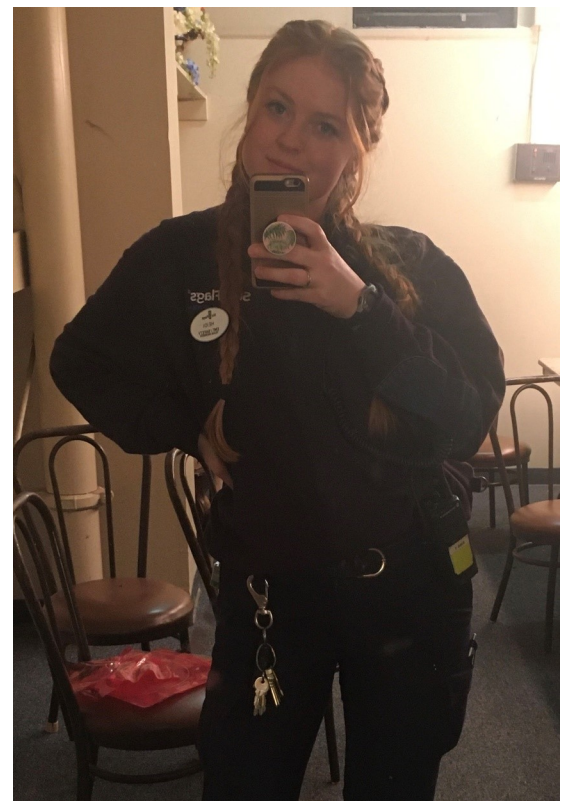
By FCV Alumni Heidi Hoslet

FCV helped me discover my passion in life: helping others in need! After my time at FCV I became an EMT and I am really enjoying taking care of people that are in dire situations. It's a beautiful thing to be that guiding hand, just like how I was as a volunteer with FCV.

I created such a lasting and amazing friendship with another volunteer there, and I am most thankful for having the time to get to know her. I have been back twice to visit because I just can't get enough! I am thankful for all the lovely people I encountered and for the time I spent learning about my faith and about different cultures.

Thank you for a great experience and I wish you all the best!

Love, Heidi



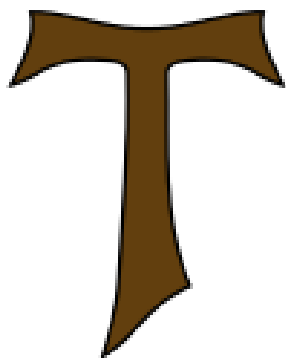
Heidi Hoslet went back to California, has trained to be an EMT and has found her passion.



# A blessing from FCV are the nine young adults that have or are in the process of becoming Franciscan Associates!



Anna Taylor with Pat Flicker



Ann Anosike and Isaac Vacheresse with Sister Karen Niedzielski, Pat Flicker, Sister Michelle L'Allier and Sister Rose Mae Rausch



Alison Swoboda and John-Caleb Vacheresse with Sister Michelle L'Allier, Associate Anna Taylor and Pat Flicker



Stephanie Luna with Sister Michelle L'Allier, Pat Flicker, CJ Pettinger, Anna Taylor, Anthony Scheip, Sister Rose Mae Rausch and Sister Jan Kilian



Karina Duran became an associate when in Ecuador.



Coming Soon...Katherine Giorgio pictured with Sister Jan Kilian



Kristen Wall Barnes pictured with Sister Therese Lenz, Wicky Barnes III, Sister Michelle L'Allier and Sister Rose Mae Rausch



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# ***THANK YOU!***

**Special thanks to all of you who have supported this amazing ministry through volunteering, prayer and donations. So many lives have been changed because of your commitment to extending the Franciscan values and spirituality to young adults and people living on the margins. You've been generous in supporting the Franciscan Community Volunteers program—and we thank you! Your continued giving will help the Franciscan Sisters further their mission and sustain their ministries into the future. Again, thank you!**

