



Franciscan Center for Social Concern
P.O. Box AR
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

Furthering Francis



Transform and Be Transformed



Alice Miller Nation is the director of the Franciscan Center for Social Concern.

These summer days are to be treasured! The campus is quiet and I have had the opportunity to reflect on this past year. I find myself humbled and honored to walk into the McGinley-Carney Center for Franciscan Ministry each morning. I am energized that each week is very different from the previous week and with each student that comes in the building, we have a new opportunity to transform and be transformed. Let me share with you a few snippets from a week at the end of the semester.

The week began with the Bona Buddies End of the Year Picnic. Because rain was in the forecast, our Bona Buddies and SBU mentors gathered in Butler Gym for some fun activities - a kickball game, corn hole and balloon volleyball. Lots of food was consumed, farewells were said, and hugs were shared between sticky hot dog and hamburger hands and gift bags that contained sweet treats for the Bona Buddies. It's these traditions, along with the weekly interactions, that inspire Bonaventure students to declare, "Bona Buddies is the best two hours of my week while I'm at school!"

Bona Buddies is a long-standing tradition at SBU. This past year, we discovered a wonderful problem. More SBU students wanted to be mentors than we had space for in the program. And so, when the Cattaraugus County Youth Bureau called, inviting us to partner with the Olean City School District, Allegheny Highlands Council and the YMCA of Olean, we welcomed the opportunity. Spring semester 2019, we began Bona Scouts, a program that brings SBU students to the elementary schools of Olean to offer the scouting curriculum to youth in an after-school setting. The student coordinators and den leaders look forward to expanding the program this fall.

Wednesday was a beautiful spring evening as I drove up the dirt road to Mt. Irenaeus. Fifteen students, faculty and staff were gathering with the friars at the Mountain for a delicious home cooked

meal, reflection and conversation. Gathering were students who participated in service learning trips this past academic year. Our students travelled to Window Rock, Arizona, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They cared for others in Guatemala and Salem, West Virginia.

The passion with which our students spoke was inspiring. We heard stories of students serving hungry people in Philadelphia and children living on garbage dumps in Guatemala. The transformation that happened when students from five colleges gathered at Nazareth Farm in West Virginia, building porches and ramps on the homes of those on fixed incomes, was both fun and inspiring. We eagerly listened as stories were told about teaching at an Indian School in Arizona, where our students were learning about diversity and applying educational theories. We listened intently as story after story was told and the memories of encounters with others continue to live on in the hearts and minds of our students.

Something special happens when a student chooses to participate in a service learning experience while on fall or spring break or between semesters. The choice to not go home or visit friends, to forgo the trip south to warmer climates for spring break is often a thoughtful and intentional decision. The sacrifice and open heartedness that gets packed along with sweatshirts and jeans, work boots and gloves for each of these trips offers a moment of awe. BREAKtheBubble, an outreach of the Franciscan Center for Social Concern, is one of the programs that offer our students the chance to experience the transformation that Dr. Dennis DePerro, our president, talks about when travelling the country.

And finally, the St. Bonaventure National Alumni Board gathered at the Warming House before for their quarterly meeting. The volunteers that prepared dinner for the guests and the alumni board were from John Stevens' Management 301

class. They prepared the same food for the alumni board that was served to the guests.

Over dinner, Alyssa Levac, the graduate student Warming House program manager, and Michaela Ryan, another graduate student volunteer, spoke to the board about their experiences and passion for their work at the Warming House. The Warming House has offered them experience in management, operations and human resources in a unique setting. The conversation was rich and filled with both dreams and questions. After a tour of the Warming House, the alumni board spent 45 minutes deep cleaning the kitchen. It's a monthly chore and this group was happy to assist. We laughed about how quickly a cleaning job can get done when there are many hands, laughter and stories.

As I sit in the FCSC office on a gray Saturday morning, my office seems bright and filled with hope. I am so very grateful for the support the FCSC receives from the Dr. Lyle F. Renodin Foundation, United Way of Cattaraugus County, the Cattaraugus County Youth Bureau and the many generous donors who believe in what we do and support the FCSC in so many ways.

Each day, I meet many students who come filled with passion, creativity and good ideas. I have learned that young adults are truly interested in sharing their time and talents with others. Students want to learn from others and experience life to the fullest. The FCSC offers a venue to transform and be transformed, to teach and learn, to reflect and integrate. With each student encounter, I too am offered an opportunity for transformation. For this, I am grateful. Thank you for your support and please continue to keep the ministries of the Franciscan Center for Social Concern in your thoughts and prayers.

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Furthering Francis



Katherine Bridger with her Bona Buddy celebrating Halloween in Butler Gym.

A Place in Each of Our Hearts



Katherine Bridger, '19, graduated as a business management major with minors in legal studies and political science. She has been a Bona Buddies mentor all four years at SBU.

The transition to college was one of the hardest things I've ever had to go through. You're in an unfamiliar place, with unfamiliar people and are expected to excel in studies concentrated in classes you've never had to take before. You don't have a push from family, or familiar life-long friends. You leave your sports teams and part-time jobs you've grown to love. It's a season of change and it can hurt your spirit. In this transition you're forced to grow, change and gravitate toward different activities. This is what led me to Bona Buddies.

I'd never grown up with kids in the house, I'm the

youngest of my family, and I had no idea what I was doing when I joined Bona Buddies. I pushed myself out of my comfort zone and took a leap into something different in order to find somewhere I fit. A chance to hang out with some of the best kids on campus for two hours out of my week was amazing. Sitting on a college campus you don't see children, you're in the mundane cycle of class and studying in the library. Bona Buddies gave me simple bliss.

Never working with children before and being assigned a bubbly, bright and spunky buddy changed me in ways I'd never imagined. She was young and shy at first, answering my questions with soft whispers. We played endless games of Guess Who with Clue mixed in and slowly formed a trusting bond. She told me about her many siblings and confided in me the things important to a kid that age, the fastest kid in the playground at school, (continues on pg 3) ▶



Bona Buddies End of The Year Picnic.

what she hopes her mom is cooking for dinner, her favorite color that seemed to be different depending on the week. I counted down the time until it was 3:45 so I could go wait in the circle and have fun for two hours out of my busy week.

I made relationships with other buddies and mentors, participating in the many activities from the

recycling club coming and teaching us to make a pot for a plant out of newspaper to taking walks on the trail with the Conservation Club. I loved going to the Hickey Dining Hall and piling on fries and pizza and seeing how excited my buddy got to have ice cream after. Every Halloween my buddy and I would plan our outfits and she would be so excited telling everyone she picked my costume out.

Being able to have the opportunity to be in Bona

Buddies gave me more than I could ever imagine. I grew as a person, learning the patience needed to work with kids of a young age. I was pushed out of my comfort zone, helping her with crafts and activities I didn't even know how to do. I interacted with the rest of the children and mentors of my day and left every day feeling lighter and happier. I never would have imagined myself loving a club so much. I took a leap and gained so much from it. I know we may never see the direct impact we have on the children, but every tear I wiped, every encouraging word and every difficult activity we learned together, I believe will forever have a place in each of our hearts.

I thank St. Bonaventure, the mentors of the Bona Buddies program and the Franciscan Center for Social Concern for their time and dedication. This has been one of my favorite parts of my time at St. Bonaventure and the effort those take to put this together has not gone unnoticed. Thank you for everything.

Not Your Typical Spring Break



Izzy Ambrogio and Alyssa Magnuson take a moment to play with the dogs on a cold March morning before heading out to the work sites.

For most people, spring break during their senior year can be summed up by a Bonnies' flag, a sunburn and being surrounded by 50 of your closest friends. Although trips including these things make for incredible memories, I decided to try something a little less mainstream this year. Trading in my sun hat for safety goggles, I took advantage of an opportunity offered by the Franciscan Center for Social Concern to spend spring break in a wonderful establishment called

Nazareth Farm.

Prior to this experience, I had never heard of Naz; however, after an incredible week this organization became another home. Naz Farm, located in a remote part of West Virginia, is founded on four cornerstones; prayer, community, service and simplicity. These cornerstones are embedded into everyday life on the farm.

Living in community starts with equal participation in chores that keep the farm running, followed by a group prayer each morning. In addition to morning prayer, prayer is seen throughout the day and during an in-depth evening reflection. Day-to-day life is structured around providing basic construction services to the local community. A few of the projects I participated in included building decks and ramps. Not only is service seen through the community outreach but within the Farm family; each person you will interact with at Naz is dedicated to improving your quality of life.

The fourth cornerstone, simplicity, is embedded into every aspect of life on the Farm. From only being allowed one five-minute shower with running water and then two bucket showers for the week to not having access to our cell phones or any way to keep track of time. Life at Nazareth Farm is kept



A quiet afternoon walk. College Week at Nazareth Farm brings together five colleges and universities for a week of service, prayer, and learning.

beautifully simple. Overall, spending a week at Nazareth Farm helped me to realign my priorities and center myself on my faith.

Over the course of the week, I saw unconditional faith and love firsthand through the variety of other college students, who started as strangers and quickly turned into family, and within the open hearts of community members. I am extremely grateful the FCSC was able to bring this opportunity to the Bonaventure campus. I am even more grateful, however, for the new family introduced to the Bonnies who was able to take advantage of it.



Alyssa Magnuson, '19, is a senior childhood studies major and a cadet in the US Army R.O.T.C.

New FCSC Program: Friends with Sisters



Emman Bibiano is a senior Environmental Ethics major and coordinator of Friends With Sisters.

Friends with Sisters: Making Friends a Habit! New things are happening in the Franciscan Center for Social

Concern. This new pilot program was created to connect students from St. Bonaventure with Allegany Franciscans living at the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse so that both could learn from one another and grow. Students are paired with sisters and commit to a weekly meeting. The vision of the program is for students and their sister to have the freedom to talk, walk, or do any activity together, and by the end of the semester will have formed a bond of friendship and mentorship.

I'm the coordinator for the Friends with Sisters program and have been volunteering at the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse for the past two years. When I first began, I usually helped out the Activities Director with anything that needed to be done. I was later introduced to the sisters for the first time and

learned about their daily life as well as the kind of lives they've lived.

While working in the archives room one day, I came across a photo album containing many pictures of one of the sisters I met and talked with in activities, Sr. Joan-Clare. I learned a lot about Sr. Joan-Clare's life through our conversations, but actually seeing the work she did was inspiring.

Later, I had the opportunity to help Sr. Ellen MacDonnell with her iPad. We were able to talk and get to know each other. I learned that she was from Canada and lived as a Franciscan sister for over

50 years. As we made a Facebook account, I got to see pictures of Sr. Ellen's life and relatives. Experiences and moments like this are ones that I want other students to have with the sisters residing in the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse.



Newly revealed Friends with Sisters logo.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019

Friends with Sisters was a natural progression. SBU students are interested in service and engaging with others. Many of the sisters are hungry for friendship at this time in their lives. My hope for Friends with Sisters is that students and sisters will be able to learn from one another. I hope that students may gain insight from the lives of the women who live here and that the sisters may become a larger part of the St. Bonaventure community.