The Warming House provides a place where all are welcome and we try to learn the names and stories of our guests. It’s a safe place, where all are valued and treated respectfully. It is my hope that the student leadership team at the Warming House practice and embody these skills while serving our guests so that they can not only better serve them, but better serve our world upon receiving their diplomas. As you can imagine, the Warming House runs on a shoestring budget. The Franciscan Center for Social Concern is responsible for raising the funds needed to provide this service to our brothers and sisters in the Greater Olean community.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your generosity and prayers for the Warming House. Whether you might have worked at the Warming House many years ago as a student or simply want to support the good works of St. Bonaventure students today, please know how grateful we are for your continued support. Thanks to your kind generosity, we are able to continue serving those in need while teaching and practicing Franciscan values with our current students.

Blessings! If you find yourself in Olean, please stop by the Warming House. One of our student coordinators would love to share our stories of recent experiences with our guests and offer support to one another as these students undertake quite possibly one of the most unique and challenging jobs they will ever have during their college career. At our most recent meeting, one of the things I emphasized was this: The difference between a GOOD organization and a GREAT organization is attention to detail.

When we pay attention to taking care of the smallest of everyday tasks, things get easier and the mission suddenly transforms into a passion. I encouraged the student leadership team to give attention to the details that come with running the Warming House. When these details are cared for, the Warming House not only looks neater and cleaner, it looks like a home – a place where guests and volunteers alike are happy to gather. Together.

Unfortunately, many of the individuals and families that come to the Warming House are invisible to much of society. Either people don’t notice them or ignore them in many day-to-day encounters. But, they’re not “invisible” to us.

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By Alice Miller Nation

MISSION INTO PASSION

Each time I park my car at the entrance of the Warming House I try to remember to take a deep breath. It’s my way of reflecting and remembering my small place in the lineage of those who have mentored students and cared for 40 years’ worth of Warming House guests who long for community, nutrition and dignity.

The Warming House student leadership team meets every three weeks. During these meetings, we try to thoughtfully plan for what lies ahead, share our stories of recent experiences with our guests and offer support to one another as these students undertake quite possibly one of the most unique and challenging jobs they will ever have during their college career. At our most recent meeting, one of the things I emphasized was this: The difference between a GOOD organization and a GREAT organization is attention to detail.

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Blessings! If you find yourself in Olean, please stop by the Warming House. One of our student coordinators would love to give you a tour and share a cup of coffee with you.

Peace and all good,
Alice Miller Nation
**Farm To Table Students Reflect On Their Summer**

Four St. Bonaventure University students – Jayda Muniz, Katie Heitzman, Devin Natera and Jairo Del Cid Godoy – spent their summer months working and growing – literally and spiritually.

As employees of the Farm-To-Table program, the four students spent mornings working at Canticle Farm in Allegany and evenings at the Warming House.

After noticing the listing on the university notice board, Muniz, a sophomore sociology major from Hornell, New York, was invited to meet with Social Concern Director Alice Miller Nation and farm co-owner Cory Westbrook, a close family friend, began over the summer. "Alice was up to my folks' house and we were all sitting around and talking about her job with the Warming House and how it relates to St. Bonaventure University," said Cory. "We didn't say much at that point in time, but when we got home, my wife, Amanda, brought up maybe doing something in regard to providing food so as to help the Warming House." As fate would have it, not only is Amanda a double-major of St. Bonaventure, but also a former student of lecturer of business John Stevens. She experienced the Warming House as part of Stevens' Management 305 course.

"She really enjoyed her experience and she was excited about this connection to the Warming House through my family through Alice Miller Nation," said Cory, who talked about how fondly Amanda had remembered her time at the Warming House.

The Westbrooks felt the time had come to give back to the community, and approached Miller Nation with the idea of allocating 70 chickens for the Warming House.

"I called Alice and told her about the idea and told her what we wanted to do, and she thought it was a great idea and was happy to be on the receiving end of some of these pastured, non-GMO birds," said Cory, referring to the group of chickens as the "Bona Batch."

The Westbrooks began the farm in 2016 with just laying hens. "Amanda wanted just a small batch of laying hens so that we could have eggs for breakfast," Cory said, laughing. "Honest to God, that was the goal there.

But, then we had enough chickens and they laid enough eggs that we started giving them out to family and friends. We started getting heavy into egg production and started doing pretty decent numbers of eggs.

They started to expand, and admit they are still learning every day. They use a unique mobile-coup method so that the chickens are able to roam grassy area to grassy area. "We are really committed to this, for all our animals," Cory said. "No animals have a barn. A lot of animals, if raised on hard-packed ground, start to have illnesses. We avoid that with this method."

Moving forward, Amanda and Cory have said that Chosen Grove Farm will continue to work with the Warming House to supply food based on the need at the time.

"We're committed to working with Alice based on whatever the Warming House needs," Cory said.

And, at the end of the day, both Cory and Amanda feel blessed for the opportunity to give back more directly to the Greater Olean region rather than through a financial donation.

"It was just a different process, being able to grow something," Cory said. "I had gone to the Warming House to volunteer for HEOP a few times in order to complete my required volunteer hours," added Del Cid Godoy, a senior finance major from Brooklyn. "A friend walked me through a day at the Warming House and told me that working there is fun because you grow a real relationship with the guests.

Natera, like Del Cid Godoy, had also volunteered at the Warming House through HEOP, but had an additional experience through lecturer John Stevens' Management 305 class.

"Even then, my experience at the Warming House was magical in the sense of being able to provide for those who needed help and needed a friend," she said.

The students also enjoyed having the opportunity to work at Canticle Farm, a longtime partner of the Warming House. "They were really nice," Natera noted. "I got to learn more about people's stories," she said. "I also got to see firsthand how people don't always want to help others when they need it, and it was a really good feeling to be able to do that."

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And, at the end of the day, both Cory and Amanda feel blessed for the opportunity to give back more directly to the Greater Olean region rather than through a financial donation.

"It was just a different process, being able to grow something," Cory said.

"I went on, I got more jobs with more responsibility," Natera said.

"The guests were nice and made me realize that I should be helping them because my worst day could probably be their best day," Del Cid Godoy said.

And all said they learned a lot about themselves over the course of the summer.

"I learned a lot about myself and personal growth," Heitzman said. "Growing through challenges can be beneficial, but when you do, you walk away having learned so much more about yourself than you thought you would come in.

"The biggest lesson that I learned was that no matter if you’ve never done something before, give it a try because you never know what it will teach you," said Natera.

"The farm was great, the people were really nice and they always recognized when you were doing good work," Heitzman said.

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