



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

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**St. Bonaventure University, P.O. Box AR
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778**

the Warming HOUSE

COMMUNITY • DIGNITY • NOURISHMENT

Fall 2020



By Alice Miller Nation

WARMING HOUSE CONTINUES OUR CRITICAL MISSION

The second week of March, I was asked by Fr. Russel Murray, O.F.M., if I could figure out a way to offer a takeout meal service at the Warming House. The COVID-19 pandemic was breaking open and the concern for the safety of our students and guests was a deal breaker for our university administration. "Of course," I said. "If we want to figure it out, we will figure it out."

And so, that evening, the Warming House team and I sat down to begin reimagining meal service to the most vulnerable of the Olean area.

The biggest takeaway from the pandemic for me has been a new understanding. The Warming House does not belong to me, our student leadership or the Franciscan Center for Social Concern. I would even say that the Warming House does not belong to St. Bonaventure University. I have learned that the Warming House belongs to all of us, including the those of the Olean community.

Since March, I have been humbled over

and over by the generosity, kindness and thoughtfulness toward our guests and the Warming House. Often I am asked, "How can I help?" It was the few students staying on campus during the pandemic who partnered with faculty, staff and community members to feed the growing numbers of hungry people each week at the Warming House. By the end of August 2020, the Warming House served more meals than in all of 2019.

The stories are humbling. One man arrived each day five minutes before we stopped serving. He got out of his vehicle with a large Panera takeout bag. After about a week, I said to him, "I'm really glad you found the Warming House." He quietly told me he lost his job a few weeks earlier and he and his wife were just trying to keep things together.

"We have three young girls. They think I drive to Jamestown every day and bring supper home from Panera. I just want to keep them innocent for a little longer. I don't want them to worry about food." I gently responded, "You just keep letting them believe you drive to Jamestown. It's all good."

The next day, my new friend walked up to the table with a shy smile on his face. He told me his oldest got him that day. She asked to go onto the Panera website to order their meal. He quickly stopped her and told her these meals were a special COVID dinner. "They always come in this white bag and are always a surprise and delicious!" We laughed together and I reminded him that he and his wife are really good parents! A few weeks later, this man stopped coming to the Warming House. I can only hope things got better for him and his family.

The need continues to be great. The Warming House gives me, our student leadership team, the coordinators, and volunteers many opportunities to learn humility and generosity. Our students have learned how to plan, implement, stop, pivot and begin the planning process all over again. We realize the stakes are high. What we do each day helps the most

vulnerable in the Olean community stay safe and healthy. It really is an awesome responsibility.

I am so proud to share with others what a wonderful job our students are doing day in and day out at the Warming House. I often have a really big smile under my face covering. Thank you again for your continued support and care of the Warming House and our mission. It means the world to so many.

Peace and all good,
Alice Miller Nation



Jessie Farkas and Victoria Wangler made chocolate cupcakes topped with ganache and white chocolate curls for the guests at the Warming House.





For Ryan Marchiori... A Memorial

Ryan Marchiori, classes of '08 and '09 (BBA/ MBA), took his passions from St. Bonaventure to the leadership team of EnergyMark,

a local supplier of electric, natural gas and renewable energy. Known for his strength and kindness, Ryan was a loyal SBU supporter and active in Leadership Buffalo, Clean Communities of WNY and the Hydrocephalus Foundation.

Tragically, Ryan died in a car accident last year. He was only 33.

Rebecca Sienko, classes of '19 and '20, worked in the FCSC while completing her MBA.

"I knew Ryan through his participation, prior to and after graduation, in SIMM

(Students in Money Management)," Rebecca said. "Ryan would often contribute to the conversation and offer important insights when students had questions." Even after leaving SBU, Ryan influenced and supported current students.

Ryan's life and spirit reflects the essence of the Franciscan values of community and service to others. Ryan



understood and lived what we hope for each of our Bonnies who graduate and join businesses and organizations throughout the country. To be grounded and to understand their place in this world, offering light and hope to those around them – around the boardroom tables, in classrooms and on planning teams, as coaches of youth sports teams and around family dinner tables.

In Ryan's honor, a memorial gift from his friends and family has been made to the Warming House and its mission of hope. We accept this gift with grateful hearts.

Ryan's life and story inspire me to continue offering rich and challenging experiences to our students. They, too, will give back to their communities and to future students in the manner Ryan modeled for us while on his good journey.

It All Started With a Griddle



By Samantha Garrettson, '20

Let's step back to 1974, when the Warming House was simply a cozy place for lonely elderly people to gather and socialize. I spoke with Mary Trinity, a 1981 St. Bonaventure graduate from New Jersey who works for the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence. She is also a board trustee for Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity, a coalition of 18 faith-based food pantries in Essex County, N.J.

Trinity's story begins with her passion for helping the elderly; that's what attracted her to the Warming House in the first place. Eventually, she started volunteering two to three times a week, and her experience became more than just a routine. She recalls the Warming House visitors devouring donuts that she brought from the dining hall; clearly, they were hungry. Recognizing that need uncovered the fundamental purpose of the Warming House that still stands to this day: providing food to the hungry.

A relationship built on respect was established between the guests and the volunteers. They built an understanding that allowed for a real difference to be made in the lives of everyone at the

Warming House.

Exemplifying this newfound sense of community, Trinity remembers an elderly man bringing in the first appliance used to cook for the hungry: a griddle. That small act of giving sparked the chain reaction of helping others in need.



▲ Mary Trinity, a 1981 St. Bonaventure graduate

We experience still today this generosity through foundations such as the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation, St. Elizabeth Mission Society, The Renodin Foundation, The Burt Fund, Allegany Community Outreach of the

Allegany Franciscan Ministries and the United Way of Cattaraugus County. A year ago, the St. Elizabeth Mission Society gave us the gift of a new commercial range that will serve us well for years.

Trinity was honored in 2016 with the Gaudete Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the university. The award honors leaders who exemplify the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi through their joy, hope, positive outlook on life, sincerely compassionate spirit and desire to serve humankind.

Trinity said she "loves the idea that, as a student, you can do something and create something." It's inspiring to reflect on how far Trinity's efforts toward the Warming House four decades ago have come, and how many students today are following a similar path. Bonnies teaching Bonnies how to live our good journey. May each of us show others the way.



▲ Guests enjoying each other's company in the 1970's.

Farm to Table 2020 - Pandemic Style!

By Kaitlin Sinclair, '22



While most of the student body remained home amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, five students fearlessly returned to campus in order to participate in the Farm to Table program.

This long-standing program welcomes five SBU students each year. Farm to Table is a 10-week summer program that allows SBU students to participate in community living while working at Canticle Farm and the Warming House. Four students spend mornings at Canticle Farm in Allegany, a farm invested in growing and providing the Olean community with locally grown produce. Afternoons find the students at the Warming House, serving a warm meal to some of the most vulnerable residents of Olean. The fifth student serves as the summer manager of the Warming House.

"It was a big learning opportunity," said Lindsey Lytle, a junior environmental studies major. "Whether it was at Canticle Farm or the Warming House, we were always learning something new. It wasn't what I expected it to be at first, but I really enjoyed it. We were able to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses. If I ever want to work on a farm someday, this gives me a better understanding of what that could mean. In addition, I was able to make connections all throughout the university."

Leadership roles were given that wouldn't normally be given in a summer internship.

"One day we were told that we were going to have the opportunity to be meal coordinators. I could never imagine being given that leadership role so soon at a regular internship. It was a safe environment," Lindsey said.

Students can practice real-life skills such as management, making it a practical experience.

While getting the experience of a lifetime, students also got to know the stories of St. Francis of Assisi.

One of the many stories of St. Francis focuses on his relationship with lepers. When Francis was alive, lepers were shunned by the world for their disease,

yet Francis went to live among them. Francis was able to see God through these people and acknowledged them as they are — human.

Hiryu (Mike) Waseda, a junior history major from Japan, shared his perspective on today's world through the Franciscan lens.

"In this COVID-19 pandemic, guests who come to the Warming House may be seen as lepers to the public. People who have been infected with COVID-19 can also be seen as lepers," Mike said. "If you look at the surrounding communities of Olean and Allegany, it's a nice place. But there are people still struggling. COVID does not discriminate, it can affect anyone."

Mike discovered through the summer internship that he was able to connect with people. "Some jobs on campus," he said, "don't allow you to interact with people like you can at the Warming House."

Valentina Cossio realized an important part of her summer experience was when the guests of the Warming House began to call her by name.

"You suddenly realize you've become part of their life, just as they've become part of yours. It feels good to see that they enjoy the meal you just worked so hard to prepare and the guests appreciate the effort you put into the meal," Valentina said. "No matter how hard that day was, how much you struggled, or even how little you think of that meal in terms of how elaborate or delicious it is, our guests are so thankful for our efforts. It makes me want to work even harder the next day to be a little more deserving of their thanks."

The Farm to Table summer program at St. Bonaventure University offers students the chance to stretch themselves in ways they can't imagine. It's just one more way that students come to understand the university's values of compassion, wisdom and integrity.



Warming House Manager Interview

By Jonathan Clancy, '20, '21

Tell me what's been going on since August at the Warming House

JC: Everything has been going pretty well so far. Everything at the Warming House is now takeout. There is minimal personal communication with the guests. I still get to know their names and where they're from, and when I go outside, I get to have small talks with them. The volunteers and I have become accustomed to the heightened sanitization of different surfaces in the Warming House.

How has keeping the Warming House open during the pandemic helped the community?

JC: It means a lot to the community. You can see it with our spike in the number of meals served per day. If there are people who have been furloughed for months or have lost work, their income may not be as high as usual. They may not be able to afford certain amenities like food, for example. It is important for us to stay open because we are providing our guests with necessities needed to survive.

What does a typical day look like for you at the Warming House?

JC: My day typically starts at 1:30 p.m. I get the keys to the Warming House van and go to University Ministries to pick up any coordinators or volunteers that need a ride to the Warming House. Once we arrive, I take everyone's temperature. Any new volunteers will sign a screening waiver due to the new COVID protocols. The coordinators and volunteers prepare the meal for the day. At 3:30 p.m., the meal is ready to go into takeout containers and from 4 to 4:30 p.m. we provide takeout meal service from the back of the Warming House.

How do you implement Franciscan values into your work at the Warming House?

JC: One of our Franciscan values is compassion. There is nothing better to describe that than what we do at the Warming House.

Left to Right: Lindsey Lytle, Nate Parish, Will McDonough

Bottom: Valentina Cossio, Hiryu (Mike) Waseda