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# the Warming House

COMMUNITY • DIGNITY • NOURISHMENT

Fall 2021



By Alice Miller Nation

## Good Community. Good Dignity. Good Nourishment.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the team of Warming House coordinators met each Monday evening. The gatherings were simple in format: check in and welcome all on the call (yes, we met via Zoom for the entire year!), topics to be discussed/ shared, followed with a conversation integrating our Franciscan heritage with daily experiences at the Warming House.

Often, this last piece would include stories about encounters with our guests. Sometimes the stories would make us laugh and other times a tear or sigh could be seen or heard. Our guests challenge and inspire us and they truly make us better people.

At one of our spring meetings I posed two questions. The first was How can we pass on the Warming House to the summer team of Farm to Table students?

I was inspired and awed at the responses! I choked back tears as I listened to the thoughtfulness and passion of our coordinators. It was decided to host a tour of the Warming House and dinner for the students who would participate in the Farm to Table program. Dinner conversation would include sharing things the coordinators wished they knew when they started working at the Warming House.

The night of the dinner, Lindsey Lytle, a seasoned coordinator, jumped into the conversation midway through the discussion.

*"I want to tell you a little about our guests. Sometimes it is easy to get frustrated with them. But once you learn about how complicated and difficult their lives are on a daily basis, it is easier to be patient and see them much more like ourselves."*

Lindsey, '22, an environmental sciences major, went on to talk about the challenging life one of our guests lives each day.

*"This person has no control or choices in so many areas of their life. What appears as being picky about food is really just the ability to make choices about the food they consume each day. We all want to have input and the ability to choose. Many of our guests don't get many choices about many things that affect their lives. Being patient is one way we can offer dignity and respect to the men and women who come to the Warming House each day."*

The second question I placed on the table was finding a way to show appreciation to all those who helped care for our guests during the



pandemic. Once again, the team came through. It was decided to give T-shirts (pictured above) to all our volunteers who saw us through one of the most challenging times in recent history. Jack Steger, '22, a marketing and management dual major, developed a fresh logo for the T-shirts and we were on our way! (We are still distributing T-shirts to volunteers. Please reach out to me if you have not gotten yours yet.)

This year, all our coordinators are returning to the Warming House with the exception of the graduate assistant who completed his MBA. We are now preparing to hire a few new coordinators to join the team. For all who have supported the Warming House in the past – thank you. For all who will support the Warming House in the days ahead – thank you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for supporting the great care SBU students offer the residents of Olean. Thank you also for supporting the wonderful leadership formation the Warming House offers our students.

Peace and All Good.

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



# Celebrating Farm to Table 2021

Creating Franciscan hearts through community, work and reflection

By Alice Miller Nation

It was a small but mighty team of students participating in the Farm to Table program this summer.

Walter Kinder, just having completed his first year at Bona's, and Adam Burlingham, a rising senior environmental studies major, teamed up with the summer manager Hiryu "Mike" Waseda, '21, '22.

Mornings were spent at Canticle Farm, a ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, and afternoons at the Warming House, preparing meals and getting to know the guests who come each day.

But the day isn't over once the lock is turned at the Warming House each afternoon. Farm to Table is a program that is intended to create Franciscan hearts through community, work and reflection.

Each Monday is Community Night, an evening of food and conversation. Several SBU community members were invited to join us for community night dinners, including San Damiano Center Director Amanda Naujoks, Fr. Dominic



▲ Pictured (front, from left) are Adam Burlingham and Walter Kinder and (back, from left) Hiryu (Mike) Waseda, Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., and Br. Kevin Kriso, O.F.M.

Monti, O.F.M., former SBU President Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., former HEOP Director Margaret Bryner, faculty member Tara Walker, Br. Kevin Kriso, O.F.M., and Br. Angel Vazquez, O.F.M.

Community night conversations brought together our experiences at Canticle Farm and the Warming House with Franciscan literature and tradition. We were able to learn from the past, continuing to develop and grow Franciscan hearts. Friday mornings were spent on professional development.

"If every SBU student went to the Warming House for one week, they would understand life differently," said Adam. "Much like many things in life, we don't often know what we are getting into when we begin something new, but every once in a while we experience something that changes us forever."

These young men truly learned the meaning of the Warming House mission: Good Community, Good Dignity, and Good Nutrition.

## In Their Own Words

**The first time I met Tom\* at the Warming House, he was having a bad day. A really bad day. I was a little nervous and now that I think back, I can honestly say that I was a little afraid of our guests. Throughout the summer, I was able to form relationships with many guests. We really did build relationships by serving food and talking about the day.**

Walter Kinder, '24



Adam, Walter and Mike

**When our guests come into the Warming House, their problems don't go away. I think some of our guests come for the community, to gather with others and find support that better helps them deal with the things they need to deal with each day. For some of our guests, the Warming House is the one place where they don't have to be tough to survive.**

Adam Burlingham, '22

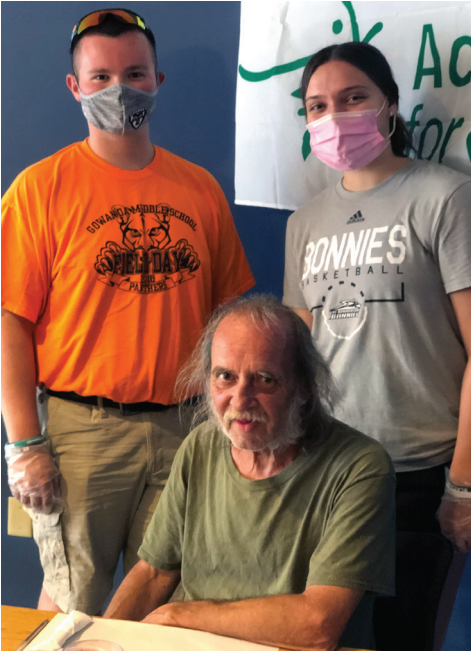
\* Name has been changed

## Welcome back!

On Tuesday, July 13, the Warming House opened the dining room after 16 months of serving takeout meals because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Farm to Table students working at the Warming House were so happy to welcome guests into the dining room once more. Interestingly, none of the students working at the Warming House this past year had experienced guests inside the Warming House, only takeout meals.

As we prepared for the re-opening of the dining room, Warming House staff worked with the university COVID Response Team following CDC and university guidelines.



▲ SBU students welcome our first guests at the Warming House. In the left photo, a guest is pictured with graduate assistant Hiryu "Mike" Waseda, '21, '22. In the right photo are students Kurt Stitzel, '22, and Morgan Gentile, '24, with a guest.

## Thank you . Thank you . Thank you

The Warming House exists because of the generosity of many, many donors. We are grateful for the generosity of so many that allow us to offer Good Community, Good Dignity and Good Nourishment every week of the year.

In addition to the generosity of so many faithful friends, the Warming House receives funding from the following organizations:

Anonymous Organizations (Several organizations prefer to remain anonymous. We thank you for your quiet and generous contributions.)

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Allegany American Legion Post 892, Allegany

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Park Centre Development, Olean

Sisters of St. Francis of the Newmann Community, Pittsburgh

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