



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

the COMMUNITY • DIGNITY • NOURISHMENT
Warming
HOUSE

Spring 2019



By Alice Miller Nation

About a year ago, I was on the St. Bonaventure campus for a day of interviews for the position of the Director of the Franciscan Center for Social Concern. Throughout the day, I remember hearing over and over the phrase, “We believe the Warming House is the oldest student-run soup kitchen in the country.” I remember thinking, really? Is it really student run?

Almost a year has passed since that day I spent on campus and I am delighted to say, yes, the Warming House is truly a student-run operation! When I walk into the Warming House, I love to overhear conversations between our students and the guests. Just this week I happened upon an example. A student volunteer had the task of preparing a dessert for the dinner that night. He came up from the basement with a box of white cake mix. As he was talking to another volunteer from the community about making a white cake with frosting, she smiled and said, “We can dress that up a bit!” She then taught him how to make a pineapple upside down cake. He quickly learned a new baking trick and she was a patient and engaging teacher. The kitchen smelled wonderful and, best of all, the guests that night were delighted with the results.

The Warming House recently applied for funding through the United Way of

It really is student run!

Cattaraugus County. After an application is submitted to the United Way, the organization applying for grant funding does a presentation to the allocations committee at the United Way office. It was a snowy February morning when eight students, dressed in professional attire, met in the lobby of the McGinley-Carney Center for Franciscan Ministry to head to the United Way office for a 9 a.m. presentation appointment. Our students had been preparing for a month for this. Half of the students were speaking on behalf of Bona Buddies, the other half for the Warming House. Four students left immediately after the presentation to take an exam on campus.

With nervous anticipation, our SBU student Warming House team introduced themselves and began explaining their role and the importance of the Warming House in the Olean community. As they spoke about all the Warming House does for the community, nervousness suddenly dissipated as they began to talk about all they have learned and experienced during their time preparing meals and getting to know the guests of the Warming House. Their voices filled with passion as they spoke about this simple storefront on North Union Street. They talked about our guests, who come for some conversation, community and good food. I realized that cold morning that the Warming House not only brings warmth to the guests that come to us each day, but also brings warmth and meaning to young adults beginning to make their way in this world.

I am pleased to announce we recently received our United Way allocation award letter. The Warming House (and Bona Buddies youth mentoring program) is so very thankful for the generosity, support and trust the United Way of Cattaraugus County and its donors have in the outreach

we offer to the Olean community. I go to bed each night with a smile on my face, knowing that we are giving students the opportunity to participate in important and valuable experiences that make a difference in the lives of those who come to us seeking hope.

The Warming House offers a warm meal, community and hope to our guests and to our students. The many ways our students engage with one another as well as our guests offer experiences that go with them as they one day leave the Bonaventure bubble. I am both humbled and energized as I watch a student volunteer sit down and hold the hand of a guest having a hard day. I am amazed when I listen to student leaders thoughtfully plan for the weeks and months ahead at the Warming House, implementing best practices and more ways to engage our guests and students alike. And I can continue to answer the question with confidence and pride, “Yes, the Warming House is indeed a student-run soup kitchen!”

Thank you so much for your generosity as you support the continued ministry of the Warming House and the Franciscan Center for Social Concern. Thank you for your trust in the ways we reach out to others in the name of St. Bonaventure University. And please, continue to keep all that we do in your prayers as St. Bonaventure University and the Warming House continue to offer light and hope to our world.

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

Yes!

I want to share in this important outreach through St. Bonaventure University and promote the values of Community, Dignity and Nourishment by making a gift of:

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A typical day at the Warming House

Student Julia Ambrose interviewed Alyssa LeVac, the 2018-2019 graduate student program manager of the Warming House. Alyssa's passion for her 20-hour-a-week position comes through strong in her candid responses.

Q: What are the most popular meals made at the Warming House?

A: The guests really enjoy baked chicken, they love mashed potatoes and a fresh salad. Other popular meals are lasagna, pasta salad, and tuna noodle casserole.

Q: Why did you choose to pursue the position of program manager?

A: I wanted the experience of being able to work in a community where I have essentially lived for the past 5 years and interact with and help people less fortunate. It's also just being able to be friends with the guests on a personal level and being able to help the students connect with the community in a special way.

Q: What is the most challenging part of the position?

A: Trying to open people's eyes who are more fortunate and get them to really understand and be judgment free — to get rid of stereotypes.

Q: When does the Warming House have the best attendance?

A: Fridays or Sundays.

Q: Is there a story you have about a Warming House guest that has left a lasting impression on you?

A: Yes, actually. One of the guests at the Warming House immediately connected with my roommate and me. We got really close with her and would hang out while we ate and drank coffee. She opened up to us about her personal life and her past. Due to her past, she has lost contact with her daughters, but she tells us that she feels like we are her replacement angel daughters. She treats us like family.

Q: What is one thing that you would like to voice in regard to the Warming House?

A: More than anything, I wish that more people would come and interact with our guests and listen to their stories; to see them as people.



Alyssa graduated in 2018 with a B.A. in finance and a minor in economics, and will complete her MBA in 2019. She is the graduate student program manager of the Warming House. Alyssa is from Newmarket, Ontario.

Where management and Franciscan values meet



By Julia Ambrose

For the last 12 years or so, every single business student at St. Bonaventure University will have gone to the Warming House in Olean, New York. This is because of the required course MGT-301, titled Management and Organizational Behavior, with John Stevens.

Stevens is a proud Bonaventure alum of '74 and has been teaching this course since the fall of 2005. The professor Stevens replaced did the spade work for the idea of students going to

the Warming House, but it was not really organized or processed to the degree that it is today.

Fr. Dan Riley, O.F.M., of Mt. Irenaeus, and an active member of the St. Bonaventure community, began the Warming House back in 1974. That was 45 years ago, and here we are in 2019, the Warming House still in Olean and still helping many in the community. It started out as a place to get a cup of coffee or a donut, but it blossomed into so much more. Soon enough, guests would get a guaranteed warm meal six days a week.

Stevens began sending students over to the Warming House as a two-part process. The first part, from a business standpoint,

is learning how to plan, organize, lead and control — which is what management is all about.

The other part is for students to get a real appreciation for the Franciscan values contemplation, love, respect, joy, peace, and compassionate service. These values are prominently displayed on the wall along the staircase in the William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center.

Stevens has heard stories from students that leave a lasting impression on him. There is one story he usually tells his classes as a powerful example. A few years back, a student who had grown up in the Olean area was volunteering and when she went out to the dining area, she recognized a girl and quickly realized they had gone to high school together. The girl was sitting at a table alone, except for a baby on her lap. The student went over to the girl to say hello and learned a lot. This girl told



By M.K. Killen

I'm a Bonnie

As my time at St. Bonaventure University comes to an end, I find myself faced with the daunting question: "What's next?"

While a definitive answer is yet unclear, I have found myself reflecting upon the opportunities and challenges presented to me over the last four years that I believe will ultimately shape my future. As business students, we often become so focused on profit margins and financial metrics that we forget about non-profits and socially minded organizations, which, on a global scale, attempt to make up for the gaps between our corporations and industries. My job with the Franciscan Center for Social Concern has given me a unique opportunity to live and practice the Franciscan values-based education St. Bonaventure prides itself on.

Working for the FCSC has given me a wealth of real-world experience that has led me to jobs and given me plenty to talk about during interviews, but it has also taught me to be discerning and to honor myself and my passions, which has led me away from offers that didn't

pique my interest and organizations that didn't align with my personal values. At the FCSC, we don't have "jobs," we have ministries, which speaks to our passion and commitment to serving something greater than ourselves. The greatest lesson the FCSC has taught me is not to settle for something less — less creative, less valuable, less beneficial — but to always seek to be more — more dedicated, more compassionate, more perceptive. We all have talents to share with the world, and I am happy to say my experience at the FCSC has led me to realize and value my own.

I may not know where I'm going to be in the next year, but I have a distinct idea of the type of work I want to be doing and the type of person I want to be. That is far more direction than I ever could have asked for end as I end my college career. Harkening back to my freshman orientation in the summer of 2015, and every candlelight ceremony I've attended since, when asked "What's a Bonnie," I can proudly respond: "I am."

M.K. Killen is the grants assistant for the Franciscan Center for Social Concern. She graduated with her B.A. in journalism and mass communication in May 2018 and will complete her MBA in May 2019.

Stevens' students that she needed to come to the Warming House as much as she could to make sure her baby got a warm meal. The father of her child left her, and she was disowned and kicked out by her parents when they found out she was pregnant.

This example is chilling but touching and speaks volumes because this is what it is all about. We are no different than each person that goes to the Warming House for a warm meal. God has showed us different paths, but they are all just like you and me. Every single guest has their own story, and Stevens urges that those who go to volunteer there should not be surprised if they meet someone that they connect with in a meaningful way.

Stevens says that, being a Franciscan university, this is an outreach to the community. One of the primary parts is that the students are being exposed to the

six values, then must integrate, reflect on and speak about them. After each group volunteers at the Warming House, they reflect on their experience in front of the class. They talk about what they think they excelled at and things that may have caused some difficulty. They talk about the planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

They also recognize the Franciscan values being represented throughout their time there. Many have touching or funny conversations to share that they had with Warming House guests. Students are tested on it, too, and because of all of this, they can roll it into the business world.

Julia is a junior strategic communications major with a marketing minor and will be graduating in December 2019. She is the Franciscan Center for Social Concern's media intern.

Say Cheese!



Top Photo: A community volunteer serves meals to the Warming House guests with smiles all around.

Center Photo: Associate Director of the Warming House Sarah Northington and a community volunteer, Sarah, serve up salad and a smile.

Bottom Photo: Sister Barbara, a loyal volunteer, helps with meal preparation.