



Franciscan Connection

Celebrating 15 years of Service to South St. Louis

Fall 2005 Edition

It Is In Giving That We Receive

On Sunday, October 2nd, the friars at the Franciscan Connection honored some of their long-time friends, volunteers and benefactors with the agency's first Franciscan Spirit Awards. It was standing room only in the friars' choir at St. Anthony of Padua Friary where everyone gathered for a celebration of the Eucharist. Fr. Nathan McNally, OFM, a member of the Stone-by-Stone Project Board, presided, reflecting on how the awardees live out the Peace Prayer's call: "it is in giving that we receive."

After communion, Bro. Leo Geurts, OFM, executive director, and Bro. Donald Lachowicz, OFM, home maintenance coordinator, called each honoree up to receive a token of appreciation. The following is the list of honorees and how they helped the Franciscan Connection.



Mary Jane Kubik almost 15 years ago. She comes out every Tuesday morning to answer the phones and



Nelda Devine

welcome clients. Utilizing her accounting training from her days at Famous Barr, Mary Jane also helps balance the checkbook and monthly bank statements.

Nelda Devine follows up on Tuesday afternoons. As a former member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Oakville, she and her husband were some of the first volunteers recruited by Fr. Tom Shaughnessy and Fr. Gratian Nosal when they first started the Franciscan Connection in 1991. Currently, Nelda handles a great deal of our weekly data entry, updating client histories and utility assistance records on the computer.

Marie Mergel has been volunteering on Thursdays almost as long as the Franciscan Connection has been open. She can be greeted with a smile, in-calls, answering with filing, setting up appointments, and completing the initial intake (as well as hassling the friars!)



Marie Mergel

Wally Feld recently retired from the Corps of Civil Engineers. Wanting to keep busy and lend a hand, he began coming out once a week

to help Bro. Donald tackle a variety of home repair projects – from sidewalks to roofs. Though he is currently a parishioner from St. Francis of Assisi in Oakville, Wally grew up right here in the neighborhood and is still active at St. Francis deSales Parish



Marty Grade & Wally Feld

Marty Grade has been pitching in on our handyman projects for several years now. Retired from Emerson Electronics & Space and from Accent Manufacturing, he enjoys helping our senior citizens and other families in need of basic home maintenance and emergency repairs. He can be found crawling through dusty attics or under kitchen sinks to remedy problems.

Mickey Hughes & the Anderson Family have made community service a family event. A graduate from our own Franciscan institution, Quincy University, Mickey

Franciscan Spirit Awards cont.

first brought husband Rex and children Jake and Maggie out on one of our annual QU Alumni Days of



Mickey Hughes & Anderson Family

Service. Together, they've tackled everything from washing windows and painting kitchens to installing locks and tiling floors. Since then, the teens have begun inviting their classmates to come out and lend a hand as well.

College Container & Hauling has been providing the Franciscan Connection with dumpsters for its bigger demolition and clean up projects. Owner **Robert Douglas** has been an enthusiastic supporter of our efforts over the years. He is hoping



Robert Douglas

to become active on our newly formed Contractors' Committee.

For the past five years, master plumber, **Ron Oberkrom** and his son, **Will**, have been leading a group of students from Forest Park Community College's Monday night plumbing class in a unique hands-on learning experience. Adopting one of our homes each year, the classes have gutted out old supply and waste lines, replaced water heaters, and installed new faucets, toilets and vanities for low-income families often trapped

in substandard conditions.

Sr. Patricia Paczosa, OSF, spearheaded a program that encouraged students to pinch their pennies to help the poor. Over the past decade, she and the kids at the former St. Blaise School helped raise over \$8,500. What a boost for our families needing help with a high gas or electric bill!



Sr. Patricia

Bro. Jack Hardesty, OFM has served as the volunteer webmaster for the Province of the Sacred Heart for many years now. He utilized his computer talents to create a special webpage just for the Franciscan Connection, highlighting volunteers, benefactors, our annual calendar, and even several photo albums. Check us out at www.theFriars.org!



Bro. Jack

The **Secular Franciscans of St. Anthony Fraternity** have been especially helpful to our ministries here at the Franciscan Connection. Whether adopting a needy family for Christmas, sponsoring a lunch for our spring break home repair teams, or sending bimonthly fi-



Louis Axeman & Tony Dresner

nancial donations, the fraternity has been most generous. In addition,

many members have gotten personally involved, stuffing envelopes for agency bulk mailings or cooking up a spaghetti dinner for the Transitus fundraiser. What a great way to share their Franciscan spirit!

Assumption Church on Mattis Road in South County has been a generous benefactor for over a decade. The Tithing Committee has adopted our emergency aid program, contributing \$1,500 a year to help us restore heat for a needy family or electric services for a number of frail, elderly or homebound residents here in our neighborhood.

Quincy University Alumni Association has become a terrific supporter of our efforts here at the Franciscan Connection. Several individual QU alumni serve on the Friend-Raising Committee which organized this event and our Open House last year. Each spring, local graduates are invited to take part in the QU Alumni Day of Service. Last year, even



the Alumni Board joined us as we painted a living room, scrubbed a kitchen, stripped old siding from a back porch, and created a backyard playground for a grandmother raising several grandchildren.

The Franciscan Connection has new contact information:

The Franciscan Connection
2903 Cherokee Street
St. Louis, MO 63118
Phone: (314) 773-8485
Fax: (314) 773-8573

FranciscanConnection@theFriars.org
<http://www.theFriars.org/connection>



Gerry & Sharie Chappeau

New City Fellowship Church has been putting faith into action. Each year, their City Lights Program recruits young adults from colleges across the Midwest to give up their spring breaks to come to St. Louis and fix up houses for the poor. We have been privileged to host several teams of these students as they enabled us to tackle some of our biggest repair projects – restoring a fire-damaged kitchen, renovating mildewy bathrooms, and even creating extra bedrooms in a basement.

CLEANING SUPPLIES



Staff and volunteers of the Stone-by-Stone Project are always in need of cleaning supplies to use and to hand out to clients.

- 1 broom
- 1 dustpan
- 1 mop
- 1 bucket
- 2 scrub pads
- 1 pair of rubber gloves
- 1 box of trash bags
- 1 bottle of dishsoap
- 1 bottle of window washing fluid
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 1 all purpose cleaner
- A few light bulbs



Franciscan Connection Staff 2005-2006: Bro. Donald Lachowicz, Bro. Greg Bumm, Bro. Leo Guerts, & Annie McCance

The Vincentian Connection?!? **New Staff Member Joins the Stone-by-Stone Project**

Here at the Franciscan Connection, we've launched another project year. We are especially blessed with our newest staff member, Annie McCance. Annie is a member of the Gateway Vincentian Volunteers.

Annie has jumped right in on the home repairs. Over the last few weeks, she has installed a bathroom faucet, snaked a drain, reset a toilet, poured concrete, painted a porch, hung lots of miniblinds, mounted a stormdoor, removed a smoking fluorescent light fixture, attached rain gutters, replaced water-damaged ceiling tiles, and even re-sided the backroom addition on a house. Twelve houses in six weeks!

Not too bad for a "newcomer" to home rehab. Annie's a hard worker and a quick learner. Our goal this year is 75 houses. With Annie's help, I'm sure we'll get there.

Annie hails from Cuba, Illinois and is a recent gradu-



ate of Olivet Nazarene University. Her degree in graphic design has already come in handy on several office projects as well – laying out photo pages, creating flyers and invitations, and preparing to update our webpage. She even zapped out a virus that goofed up our computer recently.

Annie is one of six young men and women in the Gateway Vincentian Volunteers. Each is giving up a year of their lives to come serve the poor. It's sponsored by the Vincentian priests and brothers living here in South St. Louis.

It's been an exciting opportunity to learn more about the charism of their founder, St. Vincent DePaul. It has also been interesting to share the spirit of our own St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis and St.

Vincent – or as Annie likes to call them, "Frank" & "Vinnie" – are the two great defenders of the poor. It will be a fun year blending the two charisms.



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Memorials

Please pray for our deceased friends,
clients, volunteers and benefactors:

Brother Loyola Freightman, OFM
Fr. Gratian Nosal, OFM
Gus Schaefer
John G. Kahrhoff
Henry Crecelius
Margaret Schodroski, SFO
Earl John Bené
Aleta Wick
Harold Schumacher
Linda Drapp, RN
George Karnia
Delores Lachowicz
Theodore & Sophie Lachowicz
Cecelia Mundwiller

Flo J. Heiman
Concepción Ballesteros
Charles & Jolia Maher Kosta
Jayne Perlberg
Ben Gregory
Don Gibson
Niari
Phoebe Middendorf
Shelli Ford
Richard A. Steger
Lawrence Steger
Wilma Ziegler
Dr. Edmond Phillips
Daisy Lenoir

All deceased of Poniewaz Family

Tributes

Newborn daughters of former
Franciscan Volunteers:
Tim & Rachel (Jones) Kessler
Alicia Marie
Mark & Jenny (Johnson) Gripka
Grace Louise

Golden Jubilarians:
Sr. Marilyn Jean Davis, FSM
Sr. Jacinta Marie Elemndorf, FSM

Schools Supplies Collected for Children of St. Louis



Our very first BACK TO SCHOOL PROJECT was a great success. With the generous help and enthusiasm of local donors, we were able to equip over 120 needy kids -- from HeadStart to a freshman in college -- with pens, paper, pencils, notebooks and all kinds of other supplies to help them get the new school year off to a great start. Thanks, too, for all the backpacks! What an added delight for both our parents and their children!

All the parents (and grandparents

who are raising their grandkids) expressed their deep appreciation. "It couldn't have come at a better time," said one mom who is working as an in-home caretaker to raise a little extra money for her children. "What a blessing!"

May God, in turn, bless each of you and your families for the true kindness you have shown! Special thanks to Fr. Gary Gebelein, pastor, and the folks at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Oakville, MO for collecting the supplies.