Inside

• Answering the Call
• Ready, Willing and Able
• Continuing the Legacy
Greetings
From the Community Minister

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Fall 2018 issue of our magazine on mission and service. As we strive to live as brothers and sisters in the world, we realize that we are all part of God’s family, a world community. If you have ever received an email from me, you will notice this quote at the bottom of my email. “Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another.” (Bread for the Journey – Fr. Henri Nouwen)

As you read about those in volunteer service at St. Francis Senior Ministries, St. Francis Spirituality Center, and the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center, I invite you to reflect on your personal mission in light of St. Francis Peace prayer: “For it is in giving that we receive.”

In the Gospels we see how Jesus lived and passed on his ministry to the disciples so God’s mission of love could continue throughout history. In this issue, the Sisters of St. Francis share how we, too, are being called to pass on the mission of St. Francis Senior Ministries so our founding ministry of care for the elderly can continue serving seniors into the future.

Wherever and however we share our gifts and talents, we receive God’s blessing from those to whom we minister. “What is this blessing? It is a glimpse of the face of God.” (Fr. Henri Nouwen)

May you glimpse God’s face as you generously share your gifts.

Sister Sara Aldridge
Community Minister

We continue the mission of Jesus wherever we serve, Adhering to the words which inspired Mother Francis and Father Bihn: “...whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did to me.” (Mt. 25:40)

(Sisters of St. Francis’ Mission statement)
Kathy Corthell has become a familiar face on the St. Francis Campus. She began volunteering about 5 years ago for Sisters in Shelter, assisting Sister Mary Kuhlman with office work. She learned about Project Peace by working in the same room near Sister Paulette’s desk and found that the convent was “a comfortable place to be.” Kathy witnessed first-hand the passion Sisters have for helping people through their ministries. “At first I was just doing it to help Sister Mary, but now I help because their causes are ones that I really care about,” explained Kathy.

For the last four years, Kathy has become more involved with Sisters in Shelter, having served two terms as a board member and has been the office of secretary for three years. She has also served as Vice President this past year.

Kathy has also volunteered with Sister Shirley Shafranek at the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center while her granddaughters attended Science Camps at the FELC Center. “They were young and shy, so when I dropped them off, I decided to stay until they felt comfortable and asked Sister Shirley how I could help,” explained Kathy.

“If you have the opportunity to volunteer, just do it and do it with a smile. Volunteering is a good opportunity, a real good thing,” said Kathy. She hopes her grandchildren know the importance of volunteering and can see that she is leading by example. “It’s also an opportunity to show them how important it is to serve others,” Kathy explained.

This past year, Kathy was invited to help with the Mardi Gras Fundraiser and Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala. She gladly accepted the invitation, helping to create the environment for both events. She also used her time and talents to assist with table centerpieces and took on the tasks of making bows and decorating raffle and silent auction baskets.

Outside of the St. Francis Campus, Kathy has also volunteered at Mercy Health, at the Jewelry Sale at St. Joseph’s Parish, and has served as a 4-H Leader for 25 years.

“For me, it’s about personal growth. And I have this natural desire to help. It makes me feel good to volunteer and I am pretty willing and able to help whoever or whenever the need arises,” added Kathy.

**ANNIVERSARY MASS**

St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Tiffin
Friday, June 28, 2019 at 10am
~ Open to the Public ~

**Cemetery Devotion**

“Standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us”
Saturday, August 17, 2019 at 2pm
Over the last ten years, the Sisters of St. Francis have been studying how to keep the 1869 founding ministry, St. Francis Senior Ministries, providing excellent senior care into the future.

CSJ Initiatives was created by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph to assist in the development of independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities to address the health care needs of seniors. Focusing on providing holistic care, CSJ Initiatives has grown to own or manage eleven facilities located in six states. In addition to the ownership/management of these Centers, CSJ Initiatives provides consultative services to those that are strategically planning for their future. The nearest Center of the Sisters of St. Joseph is in Cleveland, Ohio.

At their past September Sisters’ Assembly, Sr. Patricia Ann Froning reviewed the beginnings of the Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, Ohio: “Today we pause to affectionately ponder St. Francis Home and its 150 years of providing a ‘home’ for elders. In doing so we are simultaneously humbled and overcome with gratitude. A quick review of the years provides us with the story of an ever-changing, ever-unfolding ministry of providing ‘home’ according to needs of the times.”

Aware of the growing numbers of poor children and elders left with little or no family support following the U.S. Civil War and hearing Christ’s words reverberate in his heart, “As long as you did it to one of the least of these you did it to me (cf. Mt.25:40),” Reverend Joseph L. Bihn, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Tiffin purchased 58 acres of land on November 9, 1867. He stated that his purpose was to provide a home for indigent citizens and destitute orphan children. He was soon joined by Elizabeth Schaefer who later became the first Sister of St. Francis of Tiffin, Ohio and the co-foundress of the new religious community of Sisters who cared for the children and the elderly as one big happy family.

The primary ministry of these early pioneers was simply that of “home-making.” That particular expression of the mission of Christ has subtly undergirded and continues to be a graced and challenging foundation of all Tiffin Franciscan daily living.

The Sisters of St. Francis now humbly and gratefully take a new step, celebrating the fruits of soon-to-be 150 years of prayer and hard work of Sisters, faithful and dedicated St. Francis Senior Ministries’ employees, and the new sponsor, CSJ Initiatives. We move into the future, like Fr. Bihn and Elizabeth Schaefer, trusting that “God is our refuge and our strength (Ps 45:6).”

Continuing a Legacy – Partnering with the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Snapshot History of St. Francis Senior Ministries

1867  Father Joseph L. Bihn purchased 58 acres of land with several buildings that became St. Francis Home at (the currently named) St. Francis Avenue to house indigent citizens and destitute orphan children.

1868  Elizabeth Schaefer and family from New Riegel joined Fr. Bihn to care for orphans and elderly.

1869  Elizabeth Schaefer, the first Sister of St. Francis of Tiffin, known as Mother Francis, became co-foundress of the new religious community that provided care for orphans and elderly.

1931  St. Joseph Hall was built for men.

1936  The orphanage closed, thus focusing the ministry of the Home to the care of elders.

1961  St. Francis Home was built and the elderly were moved into the new facility.

1980  Elizabeth Schaefer Hall was renovated into 28 apartments (plus 5 more apartments in 1985), adding independent living to the services of St. Francis Home.

1984  St. Francis Home, Inc. was separately incorporated.

1986  St. Francis Villas were built for independent living.

1996  Chiara Center, a memory care unit, opened

2004  A corporate restructuring united all services into St. Francis Senior Ministries, Inc.

2009  Friedman Village at St. Francis was acquired for assisted and independent living.

2018  Effective January 2019, the Sisters of St. Francis will transfer sponsorship of St. Francis Senior Ministries to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph through its senior care ministry, CSJ Initiatives.

We, the Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, Ohio

ever grateful for the privilege
of providing quality care
for one hundred fifty years
for thousands of seniors
who have called
St. Francis ‘home,’
do now,
lovingly and confidently,
entrust this
precious inheritance
into the capable and trustworthy
hands
of CSJ Initiatives
so that the treasure
passed down to us from
Father Joseph Bihn
and Mother Francis Schaefer
may continue to flourish
long into the future.

SAVE THE DATE
150th Anniversary of the Sisters of St. Francis
Mass at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church – Friday, June 28, 2019
On February 17, 2018, Norma Jean Kimmet returned to St. Francis Home where she now resides and volunteers at the front desk on weekends and holidays. Norma Jean originally worked at St. Francis Home for 19 years from 1989-2008. During that time, she was a nurse aide on all of the floors, served as a sacristan and worked at the receptionist desk. Her parents also had lived at St. Francis Home, so she is very familiar with the facility.

“Stormin’ Norma” was a nickname given to Norma Jean by her supervisor, Barb Ragle, after she worked the night the tornado hit Tiffin in November 2002. Afterwards, Barb gave Norma Jean a wooden tornado for her room in remembrance of that scary night when the phones were ringing non-stop and papers were flying off Norma's desk as maintenance staff went outside to check the weather.

“Norma was a joy, so I was happy to hear that she wanted to volunteer at St. Francis Home’s reception desk. Her laughter, love of people and willingness to help are all key to her success not only in her home life but also as a volunteer. The other receptionists are very grateful for Norma’s help on weekends and holidays,” said Barb. “She is top-notch. She is good at giving directions to people who visit our facility and at being cashier at the gift shop. She loves to laugh.”

“I enjoy volunteering because I like greeting people, meeting new people and creating new friendships,” said Norma Jean. Before coming to St. Francis, Norma Jean had served as a greeter at Mercy Health, and values that additional experience today.

In addition to volunteering at the receptionist desk, Norma Jean serves as a lector for Communion Services at St. Francis Home on Tuesdays, and she substitutes as Communion distributor throughout the Home when needed.

“I can’t stand to sit in my room. I like to be around people, and this allows me to see more guests and employees, some of whom were co-workers. When former employees see me behind the desk and ask, ‘What are you doing back there?’ I tell them that I am looking good!” laughed Norma Jean.

Norma Jean encourages everyone to volunteer whenever they can. “It’s a very rewarding experience,” she said.

Mary Smith began volunteering about 18 years ago after her first cousin, Sister Mary Charles encouraged her. “She asked if I would come out and help at St. Francis Home. Then after my husband passed away, I decided that I had the time, so I took her up on the offer,” explained Mary.

In past years, Mary has accompanied residents on day trips. She and current St. Francis Home resident, Sally Harvan would polish the nails of residents. However, for at least 7 years now, Mary has been the main voice behind the microphone, calling out BINGO numbers. When first asked if she would call BINGO, she responded, “Sure, I’ll try. And now they depend on me,” laughed Mary. Mary volunteers on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week and enjoys cheering people up. It brings smiles to their faces, even though the prize is only a quarter.

“I just feel like I am actually helping people when I volunteer,” said Mary, “You help out where needed.”
Glamour Gals is a national organization that works to eliminate elderly isolation by providing companionship to nursing home residents through manicures, parties and crafts. There are more than 100 chapters in 16 states.

Last July Audrey Whitman, a senior at Old Fort High School was contacted by former Glamour Gals President, Gretta Kissell, who invited her to join the local chapter that volunteers at an area nursing home. Without any hesitation, Audrey joined the group and since has not missed the opportunity to volunteer on a single Sunday afternoon. The group currently volunteers at St. Francis Home on the 2nd Sunday of each month from 2-4pm.

“The residents have truly opened up my character in so many positive ways. Spending time with the residents and seeing the pure joy on their faces has brought a new perspective into my life,” said Audrey, the 17-year-old who was recently given what she considers the privilege of serving as vice president.

According to Audrey, the residents are most happy when asked to share about their lives while growing up. “Their faces brighten as they share memories with all of us young volunteers. They not only like talking about their lives, but also enjoy when we talk about ourselves! They like hearing about the current happenings throughout the area,” explained Audrey.

“My advice to any teen about volunteering is: just do it! It has truly helped me grow as a person, and it is something I plan to continue. There is a true sense of happiness one receives from spending time that purely benefits others. There is no feeling like it,” said Audrey. “It’s amazing how much joy this program has brought into my life,” she added.

Sally Harvan knows all about volunteering. She earned an award at St. Francis Home, where she now resides, for volunteering 5000 hours from 2001-2012. She also volunteered at the Ritz Theatre in downtown Tiffin for many years where she was named 2012 Volunteer of the Year. “Volunteering does more for you than for others,” she explained. “I’ve made a lot of good friends through volunteering. You could not ask for a better friend than Mary Smith. She has baked me cookies, visited me and the list goes on. She is just a wonderful all-around person. We’ve had so much fun together over the years. I looked forward to volunteering every day, not only because I enjoyed volunteering, but because of Mary,” said Sally.

“The best thing about volunteering is definitely making new friends,” said Sally. For many years, Sally worked together with her friend Mary and Jennifer Montoney, Activities Director at St. Francis Home, on what Sally described as an “assembly line” for manicures. Sally would remove the polish while Jennifer would file and Mary would add the polish. “Now that I am 97, it’s my turn to come and enjoy a manicure,” she laughed.

To learn more about volunteering with Glamour Gals, you can reach the local chapter through social media @ tiffingg or you can email Nicole Fry, President of the Tiffin Chapter Glamour Gals at nicolefry26@gmail.com or call 419-379-8653. “We would love to have more people come out and volunteer with us,” said Nicole.
Sixteen-year-old Raphael Confesor is a familiar face on the St. Francis Campus. He began volunteering at the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center (FELC) about 4 years ago as a camp counselor and for the last three years as a shepherd in the annual December St. Francis’ Live Nativity. For the first time this year, he volunteered at this FELC’s Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala along with the other members of the Tiffin Columbian’s Boys Cross Country Team. It seems to be a family affair. Raphael’s older sister, Christina, is a past camp counselor at FELC, and his father, Rem, currently serves on the FELC Board of Trustees.

“I volunteer because I can. I like helping out my community. It is fun for me, not work,” explained Raphael. “It will also help me by gaining valuable experience.” Over the last 4 years, Raphael has been photographer during FELC’s camps, prepared daily snacks, cared for the animals, and of course, helped the younger children with crafts and experiments.

When asked what advice Raphael has for today’s youth regarding volunteerism, he replied, “Whether you are working or volunteering, find a place that you enjoy. If you enjoy what you’re doing, it will never feel like work.”

“By far, going back into the woods with Sr. Shirley and the campers is what I enjoy most,” said Raphael, “It is very relaxing, and teaching kids about nature is something that is extraordinarily rewarding. I also love the animals at the center. They are soothing and sort of like a stress reliever for all of the kids and counselors, too.”

Even when he is not volunteering, Raphael can be found on the St. Francis Campus, taking piano lessons from Sr. Marietta Kill where he has been a student for over 10 years.

Sr. Shirley Shafranek and Matt Miller, educators at FELC say they could not run all the programs at FELC without the help of volunteers. “Volunteers are especially important during the summer camp season. I enjoy watching them come back year after year, observing how they grow and change. Raphael is no exception. He has grown and matured over the past summers. One of the things he seems to enjoy most is building campfires out in the woods. We can’t thank all the volunteers enough for all they do. And that is true for Raphael, who always helps in whatever tasks I ask of him, said Sr. Shirley.

“Regardless of where you volunteer, always remember to balance fun and learning to keep things fresh,” added Raphael.

We appreciate our Summer Camp Counselors! Pictured: Raphael Confesor, Maddle Longo, Saphire Coffman, Madison Klaiss, Candice Wojtowicz, and Colbi Colchagoff.

Before You Hit the Road...

Whether you’re planning a vacation or preparing for your holiday trip home, the anticipation of traveling is hard to beat. But before you head down the highway or the terminal with your carry-on luggage, don’t forget to complete all of the items on your pre-travel checklist, including planning for the future. Read more at http://plannedgiving.tiffinfranciscans.org/hit-the-road.
AmeriCorps Crew Leaves Huge Impact at FELC and Throughout the Tiffin Area

On October 17th, the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center (FELC) welcomed AmeriCorps's “Maple 9 Team” based out of Vinton, Iowa. FELC was awarded an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps federal grant, which provides a team of 7 young adults to assist with conservation education work for Seneca County for 7 weeks. The team is assisting FELC with the nature center’s new furniture install, painting, new outdoor classroom install, trail signage, trails improvements, and invasive species removals. Members were first trained to conduct K-12 programs (3rd Grade Renewable Energy) and have been working with developmental classes (Community Gardens programs).

FELC invited Seneca County Park District, City of Tiffin Parks and Recreation Department, and Campfire USA Camp Glen to get involved. At all sites, more invasive species removals will be completed as well as trails improvements. For county parks, the crew will also help complete a GIS-based habitat design. They also assisted with the Sandusky River Clean Sweep.

The team ranges from 18-24 year olds from around the U.S., and of varying backgrounds. Some are just out of high school, while others are degree holders or college students interested in the fields of English, Behavioral Neuroscience, Trade School Skills, Nonprofit Management, Marketing, Environmental Science, and Media Relations. Ronamina Davis, a recruit working on the team commented, “I’m looking forward to serving with FELC and the other partnering organizations such as Camp Fire USA-Camp Glen, Seneca County Park District, and City of Tiffin Parks and Recreation Department. I know this will be a worthwhile experience for me and my team. During this project, I know I will further strengthen my professional skills and learn more about environmental conservation/stewardship. This will give me necessary skills for future endeavors.”

Thank You Tiffin Columbian High School Cross Country Team

The boys team volunteered again this year during the 11th Annual Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala, a fundraiser for the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center.

SAVE THE DATE
“Cookies with Santa & Mrs. Claus”
Holiday Open House at FELC ~ Sunday, December 9, 2018
The Spirit Moves Volunteers To SpiritSpace

SpiritSpace Gift Shop & Gallery, located inside the St. Francis Spirituality Center, opened in 2008, and volunteers have continued to be an important part of its operation over the years. According to Sister Jane Omlor, SpiritSpace Manager, the gift shop has always promoted gifts that enhance the spiritual dimension of life. There are many unique gifts from local and U.S. artists, Fairtrade items and much more. Since 2014, volunteers have contributed 2,160 hours. Most volunteers work for 3-hour shifts.

If you are interested in volunteering at SpiritSpace, contact Sister Jane Omlor at 567.207.5393 or Jenifer Smith at 419.443.1485 to set up an orientation. SpiritSpace is always looking for new volunteers who enjoy meeting new people and assisting them to find the perfect gift.

SpiritSpace hours: Tuesday and Thursdays 1:00 - 4:00 pm and Saturdays 10:00am - 4:00pm.

“When I first began volunteering at SpiritSpace, it gave me something to do when I was overcome with grief after my daughter’s sudden death. Volunteering was an opportunity to use some of the gifts and talents God has given me,” explained Greg Bishop, a volunteer since 2014. “My advice to others about volunteering is that it is one of God’s ministries by which a person can use the gifts and talents God has given you to help others. And the rewards one reaps far exceed the time and effort given.”

“It is a pleasure to volunteer on the St. Francis Campus,” said 93-year-old Al Ubri. “If you look for a place to volunteer and make a difference, you will find that there is always someone who needs you, no matter your age. I have been a volunteer at SpiritSpace for about 10 years, and it is a spiritual, loving place to help,” said Al. Over the years, Al has also volunteered by delivering mail at Mercy Health and has visited people and sat with them at Heartland Hospice. He added, “There is always a need for more volunteers!”

“Volunteering brings me life,” explained Sister Stella Magers, a volunteer at SpiritSpace. “I would encourage others to look for something that brings them joy and contentment, that’s life-giving,” she added. Sister Stella enjoys helping out wherever she is needed, whether it’s proofreading articles in the office or helping out at the local food pantry in Tiffin.

Al Ubri and Sister Stella Magers volunteer in the gift shop.

Greg Bishop, Business Manager at SpiritSpace Gift Shop
St. Francis Spirituality Center’s "Christmas 365" 2019 Raffle

$5,000 in prizes!
Tickets: $10 each or 6 for $50

Recently St. Francis Spirituality Center offered an Oasis Day, a 3-hour mini retreat on a Saturday morning in September. Two of the participants had been attending quarterly since the Oasis Days began in 2014. “It’s the perfect length of time, and I so need this shot in the arm!” said one. “Sign both of us up for the next one!” the other called over her shoulder as they headed out the door.

“It’s supporters like these who keep the center offering quality programs, said Sister Edna Michel, Director of St. Francis Spirituality Center, “and the Center’s fundraising efforts help make them affordable.”

St. Francis Spirituality Center kicked off its annual fundraiser——Christmas 365!——on October 1st. There will be raffle drawings for cash prizes on the 25th day of every month in 2019, and then because the Sisters of St. Francis are celebrating their Sesquicentennial in 2019, there will be 11 bonus drawings in December 2019. St. Francis Spirituality Center will be giving away $5000 in cash prizes with each contestant having the possibility of up to 23 chances to win since each winning ticket goes back into the drum for a chance to win on the next drawing.

Tickets are $10 each or 6 for $50. Tickets can be purchased online by clicking the following link: http://franciscanretreats.org/christmas-365-raffle/. Tickets are also on sale at St. Francis Spirituality Center, SpiritSpace Gallery & Gifts, St. Francis Mission Advancement Office and at area church services, businesses, and civic events. Tickets are on sale through December 20, 2019; however, you will want to get yours early for every possible chance to win.

Winners will be notified by phone, and names will be posted on our website, www.franciscanretreat.org.

Ways to Volunteer on St. Francis Campus

The Sisters of St. Francis always welcome committed volunteers who wish to be part of their mission of “cherishing all peoples and all creation.” The ministries of the Sisters are enhanced and strengthened by the dedication of those who choose to share their time and talent. Volunteer opportunities are available at St. Francis Spirituality Center, the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center, and St. Francis Convent in the following areas:

• Hospitality
• Gardening
• SpiritSpace Gift Shop
• Housekeeping
• Program Support

St. Francis Community invites volunteers to share their gifts through the ministries of the Sisters of St. Francis. St. Francis Community welcomes you and is grateful for your time and support.

To explore the possibility of joining the St. Francis team of volunteers, please contact: Jeanine Alvarado, 419-447-0435, Ext.151, email: jalvarado@tiffinfranciscans.org.

What it Takes to Volunteer at St. Francis Senior Ministries

• An understanding of and commitment to the vision and values of St. Francis Senior Ministries and its mission of creating a community where each individual can live life fully.
• A desire to serve others
• Compassion, understanding and gentleness
• Willingness to give of your time and talents

Becoming a volunteer is easy. Just take a few minutes to complete our Volunteer Form at http://stfrancistiffin.org/online-volunteer-form/. A mandatory background check is also required plus a TB test, if not received in the past year. Costs for both are covered by St. Francis Home.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact Volunteer/Transportation Coordinator, Darlene Bloom at 419.447.2723, ext. 3229.

SAVE THE DATE
Live Nativity ~ Sunday, December 2, 2018
Thank you to all of the area students who volunteer on our campus throughout the year!

- Mens & Womens Tennis Team from Tiffin University who serve as guides during our Live Nativity.
- Mens & Womens Golf Teams from Heidelberg who volunteer at our annual Mardi Gras fundraiser and also prepare and serve the hot dogs and s’mores at the Hay Rides & Hot Dogs event.
- Students from Bridges Community Academy who help deliver newspapers at St. Francis Home.
- Calvert Catholic Schools High School Boys who have helped clean up the outside areas for residents to enjoy.
- Students in the medical program at Sentinel Career Center who helped at the Night of Glitz and Glamour Prom at St. Francis Home.
- The Boys Cross Country Team from Tiffin Columbian High School who serve food at the Annual Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala.