Greetings
From the Community Minister

Dear Friends,

Memorial Day seems to open the gate of summer for us Americans. For children, school is over for a number of weeks and families celebrate relaxed times together. Our St. Francis Community campus in Tiffin is full of outdoor activity, too. Young voices with lots of energy fill the air at our Franciscan Earth Literacy Center’s summer camps. Retreat opportunities at St. Francis Spirituality Center allow many to breathe in the peace and stillness of our grotto, flower gardens and walking paths through our farm’s woods. People of all ages at St. Francis Senior Ministries are enjoying each other at picnics and outdoor activities.

In many places where we serve, whether it be in the inner city, Appalachia or Mexico, summer brings its own challenges. Our sisters work to provide tutoring, recreational activities and nutritious meals for children whose families cannot afford to pay for childcare or for meals their children would normally receive at school during the school year. Every day we thank God for your partnership with us that helps people survive and thrive physically and spiritually all year through.

In this summer magazine issue we share a variety of stories about our ministries on St. Francis campus and beyond. We are grateful for your support that makes such a difference in the lives of those we serve. St. Francis Home residents enjoy renovations that are enhancing the chapel’s sacred space. Through new programs at the St. Francis Spirituality Center, God’s healing can be shared with cancer patients and first responders. Through various programs, children learn and practice behavioral and communication skills that build healthy and life-giving relationships.

Thank you for all the ways you support our ministries. By relying on the wisdom and guidance of our God, we together can bring joy and healing to each other and to our earth. We pray that you, our friends and partners, may enjoy the utter fullness of God each and every day this summer.

In gratitude for you and all of God’s creation,

Sister Sara Aldridge
Community Minister

The Gift That Keeps Giving

Your support for the St. Francis Community is of great value to us, and it is our goal to make it rewarding for you as well. That’s why we want you to know about the financial tools you can use to plan your gift to us so that it can return benefits to you:

• You can make a gift as a cash donation that can be designated for special needs.
• You can make a gift that insures your family and the St. Francis Community are remembered through a bequest.
• You can give a gift of real estate, which can be more beneficial than giving cash.
• You can turn surplus life insurance coverage into a gift.
• You can make a gift through company sponsored pension and profit sharing plans.

Please contact Sister Joanne Lammers at 419.447.0435 and she will be glad to answer any questions you have.
Save the Date
Benefactor Appreciation Mass & Reception, Sunday, October 4

Over 40 people from St. Francis participated in the 16th Annual Tiffin Walk to End Alzheimer’s and were recognized as the #1 Corporate Team for their fundraising efforts.

Helping Hands Reach Out Beyond St. Francis Campus

St. Francis supports the Tiffin community through fundraising events and other worthy causes. Recently, staff from St. Francis Home met with State Representative Bill Reineke in Columbus to advocate for Alzheimer’s Disease during the Alzheimer’s Association Memory Day. Residents and staff have also participated in local parades and set up displays at area fairs. Several employees are members of local service clubs, while others serve as ambassadors for the Seneca Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Angie Good and her daughter Abigail joined over 40 other employees and Sisters to walk during the Tiffin Relay for Life event in May. The team’s Disney themed spirit stick was carved by Becky Richards.

This spring, the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center partnered with various agencies at the Community Wide Earth Day Celebration at Hedges-Boyer Park where they made candles from recycled crayons and soy. They also participated in Family Fest at Tiffin University where area children had an opportunity to meet “Soupy” one of the Center’s rabbits at FELC.
A Commitment to Learning

How much do students and teachers like to visit FELC?

Bishop Hoffman Schools (BHS), located on the Sacred Heart Campus in Fremont Ohio, has been faithfully coming to the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center (FELC) for environmental programs since 1997. Approximately 100 first, second and third grade students from BHS made a trip to FELC this school year.

Second grade teacher Cindy Benson has been bringing her students annually to the center. “I have been coming for 18 years to the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center for our science classes. The program offers a wide variety of instruction that fits into our curriculum. Most activities are hands-on, and the children really get involved with the program," she explained. “The demonstrations are very interesting and the students love them. We talk about what we have seen and heard at the Center, and I am always amazed at how much they retain. We keep coming back because it is educational and the children are really engaged in learning," she added.

During their last visit, second graders had the opportunity to learn about the water cycle and make thermometers. Sister Shirley also discussed weather concepts, such as air pressure and condensation and how to properly use weather instruments.

Sister Shirley and Jacob Clolinger presented the “Awesome Animals” program to 34 first graders in which they learned about and identified different animal skulls, played a game of “Squirrel” and got to learn about and touch a rabbit, guinea pig, snake and two different types of turtles that live at the center. Parent chaperone Cindy Connell had previously visited the center for a school field trip with her older son and returned this past fall with her son William, a first grader. “William really enjoyed looking at the guinea pig and other animals at the center. We do not have any pets, so this was his first ‘up close’ encounter with these other animals," she explained.

“The Franciscan Earth Literacy Center is a wonderful place for the children to expand their knowledge on things they are learning about in the classroom,” added Cindy.

“We feel so blessed to have such an AMAZING Educational Center so close to our community. The staff is knowledgeable and very child friendly. They provide an awesome academic and faith-based learning experience for our students. You can tell they have a true passion for what they do,” said Terri Giebel, first grade teacher. “They are welcoming throughout the entire visit, and have a clean well cared-for facility. We continue to return each year because they constantly update their programs, being sure to meet the changing learning standards for each grade.”

Parent chaperone Cindy Connell and son William examine animal skulls at FELC.

Mrs. Terri Giebel and her class participate in a predator/prey activity called “Squirrel” led by Jacob Clolinger, FELC administrator. The kids are squirrels and have to collect food for the winter and keep away from fox and hunters and winter.

Catie Woolf learns how to read the thermometer she made.
The Franciscan Earth Literacy Center’s 8th Annual Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala has been scheduled for the evening of Friday, August 14, from 6:00 - 9:00 pm. Located on the beautiful grounds of the St. Francis campus in Tiffin, Ohio this annual fundraiser will be an event you won’t want to miss. Attendees will again be delighted with this year’s event as they are wined, dined and entertained under the large tent. The evening will begin with gourmet hors d’oeuvres and the serving of local wines and micro brew beers. While enjoying the musical entertainment, guests will be served a gourmet meal followed by an array of delicious desserts. There will be an opportunity to participate in a raffle, wine grab, and live auction conducted by local Auctioneer Clayton Neal. What a delightful way to spend an evening as the summer sun fades away and you are surrounded by friends, family, delicious foods and music. Funds raised at the Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala directly support the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center’s environmental programs for children.

Tickets: $75.00 per ticket or $520.00 for a reserved table of 8. Deadline for all reservations: Friday, August 7. Reservations are required. For more information or to reserve tickets, call the Mission Advancement Office at 419-447-0435 or email mission@tiffinfranciscans.org.

Bellevue Students Explore Woods and More

There were approximately 175 first-graders that visited FELC from Bellevue City Schools during the first week in May. The children were split up into four groups which did three different activities.

Each group went on a hike in the woods where they got to learn about native habitat and different species of flowers and other plants seen in the spring. They learned about nuts and seeds, edible plants, moss, poison ivy and fungus. They also looked for signs of animals that live in the woods and then they were able to explore to find small creatures including several kinds of insects and salamanders.

The second part of the program was looking at the box turtle and painted turtle and comparing their different adaptations to live on land or in water. This part also allowed them to look at our fox snake and talk about what we should do if we find a snake in the wild.

Finally, students got to learn about our center’s rabbits and guinea pig and look at the features they have to help protect them from predators.
A Journey of Hope

When Giezi was ten years old his father, mother, a younger sister and brother, and Giezi packed one small suitcase, leaving all other possessions and acquaintances behind, and drove from Linares, Nuevo Leon, Mexico to the border of the United States. At the border they were told by the agents that they did not have enough money to get visas to enter the United States, so they were sold a three-day pass. The family drove into the U.S. and never returned to Mexico.

Giezi, now 28 years old and a naturalized citizen of the U.S., speaking fondly of his parents, says, “They brought us here because we were struggling economically in Mexico.” He recalls, “My mother worked for an American car factory and my father drove a school bus and played in a Christian band. But we couldn’t get ahead.” And he adds with admiration, “They sacrificed their lives for us.”

After arriving in the U.S. Giezi remembers, “It was difficult for all of us. My sister and I were in school where everyone spoke English, and we did not know English. I watched my parents struggle here in the U.S. to make a living, as they did when we were back in Mexico.” The family persevered. Giezi learned English and speaks it well, received an education, and has a good job. His wife, Jessica, and their two small children were born in the U.S.

Of the five who left Mexico Giezi is the first to become a U.S. citizen, through the help of Sister Ellen Lamberjack at Project Hope-Proyecto Esperanza in Archbold, Ohio. He says proudly, “Since I entered the U.S. when I was young I have always felt like I was an American.” He hopes that there will be a day when his parents and brother and sister can also become naturalized citizens and really be American.

There are many ways that a person can help others who are eligible but cannot afford the legal immigration process. A donation of $25.00 can provide postage for one expedited mailing from Project Hope to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); $50.00 can provide individualized tutoring for someone preparing for their naturalization interview and test at a USCIS local district office; $100.00 can provide transportation for an immigrant to appear before the Department of Homeland Security where a determination will be made concerning his/her case; $500.00 can help an immigrant woman who has been the victim of domestic violence by a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, and is willing to cooperate with law enforcement to apply for a visa and in three years get a green card.

To learn more about Project Hope, visit www.tiffinfranciscans.org.

Annual Beans and Rice Dinner

A dinner featuring beans and rice was held followed by a prayer service and presentation as part of the 26th Annual Beans & Rice Dinner in March. Sister Ellen Lamberjack led the presentation which included special memories of Oscar Romero on the 35th anniversary of his death, current immigration issues and guest speakers Andrea De La Roca and Tamara Al-Sammarraie. The dinner is intended to raise awareness of refugees of civil wars around the world who have come to the U.S. seeking better lives.

Sr. Ellen Lamberjack (center) with guest speakers Tamara Al-Summarrie and Andrea De La Roca.
Building Peace Among Peers

For the last two years, Sister Paulette Schroeder has been teaching a weekly non-violence course as part of a required mentoring class to 6th graders at the Tiffin Middle School (TMS). As a result of the mentoring class, the Peace Club originated in late 2014. The small, but very productive group began meeting on Saturday mornings on the St. Francis Campus. This spring, 6th and 7th graders began meeting bi-weekly after school with co-advisors Sister Paulette and teacher Breena Lofquist. Lofquist said, “The kids have brainstormed several peacemaking/conflict resolution ideas that are tailored to middle school life. They have the inside scoop about peers that Sister Paulette and I don’t see on a daily basis. They have passed on messages to help support causes like Earth Day and to combat bullying.”

Since then, the club has met with Tiffin Mayor Aaron Montz, to gather ideas of what their club can do to make positive changes and promote peace throughout Tiffin. “You can show younger people how they can communicate in non-violent and peaceful ways. Too often, in this day and age, we like to just attack each other and call each other names…you see it on TV all the time…and that’s not the way to handle things,” said Mayor Montz. He continued, “Instead, have good discussions based on facts. Keep doing what you’re doing and work night and day at it.” Mayor Montz suggested the group participate in parades or perhaps have a booth at one of the festivals with signs or cards to pass out with positive messages of peace. “It may change someone’s day,” he added. As a result, the group marched in the local Memorial Day parade. They attached quotes with messages of peace on all of the 6th grade lockers and held a “Mix-It-Up-Lunch-Day” during the 7th grade lunch in which students were assigned different seats and encouraged to meet other people, have good discussions and learn more about their peers. They hope in the future to have a “Pay It Forward” campaign. “I have had fun working on our projects, meeting the mayor and making some new friends,” said member Addy Lofton.

“What I have enjoyed most about Peace Club is coming up with ideas and activities to do for our school and community. I also enjoyed the conversations we had at our meetings,” said member Patrick Marquis. “I hope we can put an end to bullying and spread peace and kindness,” he added. “We hope this club is contagious,” said Sister Paulette. “I am extremely proud of the Peace Club members. They have put in a lot of extra hours outside of school. They have generated ideas and made actions that maybe haven’t been the “popular” thing to do but have taken a risk for a greater change,” said Lofquist. She added, “It has been an incredible year working alongside these students and Sr. Paulette. I look forward to the future of Peace Club.”

Sister Paulette has also offered this program to 6th and 8th grade classes at Calvert Catholic Schools and hopes to expand the non-violence course in other area schools. “The future is in the hands of the kids. We need to give them the extra energy and support to make this happen,” said Sister Paulette. Peace Club offers time to explore these skills and an opportunity to put them into action. Students are trying to recognize problems amongst peers and support them by letting them know they have an understanding friend. “It’s all about empowerment and Mrs. Lofquist encourages the kids to get totally invested in what they are doing,” Sister Paulette explained. “I hope Peace Club can accomplish its goals and make TMS a happier place to be,” said member Liam Almekinder.

(Back) Addy Lofton, Mayor Aaron Montz, Jena Harrison, Breena Lofquist and Sister Paulette Schroeder. Not pictured: Katarina Houtz.

“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”

– St. Francis
Chapel Renovations Underway

“It is wonderful to bring to fruition some updates to our chapel that we have dreamt about for several years. Our benefactors have been generous and are starting to see the changes. It is an exciting time in our Chapel and we appreciate our residents’ patience as we work our services around the contractors’ efforts,” said Dow Campbell, Director of Mission and Spiritual Services at St. Francis Home.

Renovations began in March when the old chapel windows were replaced with storm windows and renovated stained glass windows were installed. Next, the pews were removed for refinishing and the old floor was replaced with new vinyl wood plank flooring. In May, the sound system was replaced with a wireless system. During the summer months the carpeting in the sanctuary will be replaced, the existing altar will be refurbished, a new altar and ambo, as well as a new permanent ramp to the sanctuary. Other updates include a new ambry (holy oil), credence table, tapestries of St. Francis and St. Clare and additional sanctuary lighting /hidden track lighting. The last part of the project includes reinstalling the pews and kneelers, plus installing various new pieces, such as a reliquary and in the balcony and a bookshelf by the organ and wingback chairs. Finally, during August, a fresh coat of paint will be added to the entire ceiling and walls of the sacristies, nave and balcony.

“The stained glass windows and flooring is completed in addition to a new sound system,” said Jessica Short, Executive Director at St. Francis Home. “The project is projected to be completed in mid-August 2015. We are truly thankful for those that have made this project a reality.”

“The windows, new altar and ambo are beautiful and the special San Damiano Crucifix marks it as a Franciscan Chapel,” said Father Frank Murd. “I believe the surroundings can enhance the liturgy and make it more prayerful and peaceful.” He added, “It can call a person to be more in touch with God.” Tony Kessler, a resident at St. Francis Home agreed by saying, “The windows have a lot of spiritual aspects in them and the life of the religion comes alive.”

Rozanne Phillips, a St. Francis Home resident, receives the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick from Father Murd. “The windows are beautiful...really attractive and the new floor is nice, too!” said Phillips.

St. Francis Home employees Diane Weisenauer, Barb Ragle and Donna Pryor show their team spirit during National Nursing Home Week, held May 10-16, by dressing up as TWINKIES on “Twinkie Day.” The theme this year was FIESTA: Life, Love, Family. Resident activities included a Mother’s Day Celebration, Fiesta music and crafts, tacos for lunch, a cactus ring toss and special guests.
St. Francis Home has a history of serving Tiffin and the surrounding areas for almost 150 years. A new service available in the Tiffin area is now being offered to meet the needs of patients in the community. Mary Traxler joined St. Francis Senior Ministries in the capacity of RN Clinical Liaison on March 18 and is a personal point of contact for medical professionals. Mary is open to serve anyone within a 2 hour drive of Tiffin. This service, designed to guide the client through the confusing continuum of healthcare, includes:

• Meeting prior to admission to St. Francis Home to discuss the plan of care.
• Assisting with navigating the financial processes which include insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.
• Meeting with patients following admission to SFH to coordinate care.
• Supporting patients during their stay to facilitate effective communication among all disciplines of care in order to provide a positive patient experience.
• Following up with patients after discharge from St. Francis to assist with any additional needs once back at home.

Building relationships with the community, including hospitals and other organizations in the area, is crucial to ensuring the best healing options for patients. Mary Traxler, Registered Nurse, does the following:

• Performs onsite assessment of patients to ensure a smooth transition to St. Francis.
• Communicate with discharge planner during patients’ stay to discuss any special needs.
• Serves as the personal point of contact for physicians, discharge planners, and other medical professionals as needed.
• Meets with patients and families to discuss the transfer process, anticipated treatment, and expected outcomes.

Mary returns to St. Francis Home where she worked in the 90’s. “Working in other area facilities provided me with many learning opportunities. It is good to bring some of what I encountered over the years back to St. Francis.” She continued, “The atmosphere within St. Francis Home is very welcoming. It is wonderful to see the interaction between the staff members and residents. The staff is fun loving, all while being respectful and kind.”

As a graduate of St. Francis High School, Mary has fond memories of her teachers including Sister Maurice. “Many of the sisters are here on the campus, serving in various capacities,” said Mary. “It’s heartwarming to be able to chat with them on a regular basis. I love it! It is a privilege to be a part of the St. Francis community once again. I value the opportunity to serve those whose care is entrusted to us.”

Mary Traxler, R.N. with former teacher and resident of St. Francis Home Sister Maurice Kleman.

“We are very happy to have Mary Traxler as our nurse liaison. Mary’s primary role is to coordinate our patients’ experience by following their journey starting with their hospital stay, transfer to St. Francis Home and their post discharge as they return to their home. Mary’s oversight improves the coordination of care between the many providers that provide care to a patient.”

– Jessica Short
Executive Director, St. Francis Home
When Sister Edna Michel became the director of St. Francis Spirituality Center in October, 2014 she had a dream: to make the Center an oasis for healing, reconciliation and renewal. “These themes are dominant in our Franciscan spirituality. Many people from the town of Assisi thronged to the door of San Damiano to seek healing through the intercession of St. Clare. St. Francis was called by Christ to ‘rebuild/renew my Church.’ Francis and his companions preached peace and reconciliation wherever they went.”

Throughout her career, which includes education, parish and retreat ministry and spiritual direction, Sister Edna has listened to countless stories which depict both the pathos of the human condition and the indomitable human spirit as it rises up to cope with tragedy and to emerge with greater wisdom and compassion. “I want us as followers of Francis and Clare to do what we can to alleviate suffering, to bring peace and reconciliation to troubled relationships, and to renew all who come, seeking a contemplative place to sort out one’s priorities and life issues.”

The first request came within days after she assumed directorship of the Center. A woman walked into the Center one day and asked, “Do you have any retreats for people living with cancer?” Sister Edna’s response: “Not yet, but we will.”

On August 1, St. Francis Spirituality Center will offer: “Embraced in Hope: Moving Beyond the Shock of a Cancer Diagnosis.” It will begin with a continental breakfast and consist of presentations by a retreat team which includes an oncology nurse, a counselor, a social worker, a pastoral care provider and a spiritual director. “Experienced professionals have a sense for what people need: the psycho-social dimensions of a cancer diagnosis, a clinical update on recent improvements in treatment, and the spiritual/God questions that naturally arise at such a time,” said Sister Edna. The retreat will be more than a seminar, however; besides valuable information to be shared, simple rituals, a guided meditation, opportunity for peer support, and a concluding blessing by the entire retreat team will round out the day. Retreat registration and more details can be found on our website: www.franciscanretreats.org.

Another group of people has quietly carried the pain and trauma imposed on them by their line of duty: first responders, police, fire fighters, and EMS personnel are frequently exposed to unimaginable tragedy, witnessed firsthand as they serve the community. Such civil servants are prone to post traumatic stress disorder if they do not receive sufficient help in dealing with these crises. Often municipal departments provide debriefing for their members after particularly traumatic incidents, but limited time, revenue and attention can render these sessions insufficient. In January, 2015, Sr. Edna and two first responders, a police lieutenant and a fire captain, participated in a 3 ½ day retreat offered by St. Francis Spirituality Center in Tampa, FL. “Thinking of a Post Trauma retreat offered by St. Francis Spirituality Center can be intimidating for those questioning their own faith. I had the wonderful opportunity to complete this retreat/training and found more logical and tangible benefits to be useful for myself and my peers as I continue my career. Though this retreat was guided by spiritual members, the focus was to aid in the continued physical and emotional well-being of the individual,” said Lt. Aaron Russell, Tiffin Police Department. “I attended as an observer, came back as a participant. The retreat was able to uncover a traumatic event that I hid for years. Every first responder should attend,” added Jeffrey Orphal, a fire captain in Wapakoneta, Ohio and also a flight paramedic.

Plans are currently underway to bring such a retreat to St. Francis Spirituality Center in November, 2015 and hopefully in the future, to extend it to veterans. Sister Edna noted that St. Francis himself was very likely a victim of PTSD (although the term was not used then) because of his experience as a knight in one of Assisi’s wars.

To learn more about the first responders retreat that took place in Florida, visit our website at http://www.lawenforcementtoday.com/2014/04/07/ptsd-in-first-responders/
Other programs offered at SFSC

Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery) is a program to help married couples heal and renew their marriages. It consists of a weekend during which couples are given tools to aid communication and to rediscover the goodness in one another. It has given countless couples another option besides divorce or living in unloving relationships. St. Francis Spirituality Center is honored to host this program.

Oasis Days (mini-retreats) are offered quarterly and have been well received for the opportunity they provide for solid input, quiet reflection time, group sharing of life’s experiences, and prayer. Participants like the fact that these offerings are just three hours long, currently on a Saturday morning, so they can experience a time of renewal and still be able to attend to other demands of their schedule. Visit www.franciscanretreats.org/retreats/mini-retreat to learn more about Oasis Retreats and to register.

“That’s how the goal of healing, reconciliation and renewal is being fleshed out at this time. St. Francis Spirituality Center and the Sisters of St. Francis are here to minister to those who come seeking the serenity of God on this beautiful campus.” Sr. Edna concludes: “Please let us know how we can help.”

During the week-long guided retreat ‘Francis: So Emptied, So Filled,’ The Reverend Susan Bennett of Richmond, Indiana spent some reflection time at the creek.

Celebrate Grandparents Day by bringing grandma and grandpa to the 14th Annual St. Francis Spirituality Center Fall BBQ for a delicious meal!

A fun day for family and friends to enjoy great food featuring Grandma’s Backyard BBQ!

There will be a Chinese Raffle, 50/50 Raffle, Big Wheel & New Mystery Box, too!

1/4 chicken dinner -$8
1/4 chicken & 1/4 rib dinner -$13
1/2 chicken dinner -$10
1/2 rib dinner -$15
Kids Meal - chicken nuggets -$4

Dine in or carryout option. Proceeds benefit the St. Francis Spirituality Center.

For more information, call 419-443-1485 or email peace@franciscanretreats.org.
The St. Francis Community Magazine is published by the Mission Advancement Office for the St. Francis Community.

Correspondence may be sent to:
Mission Advancement Office
200 St. Francis Ave.
Tiffin, OH 44883

Email:
mission@tiffinfranciscans.org

Or visit us at:
www.sfctiffin.org

“True progress quietly and persistently moves along without notice.”
– St. Francis of Assisi

The Leadership Team takes a moment to celebrate National Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14.

St. Francis Spirituality Center hosted the Friday Ecumenical Luncheon which included a prayer service led by Sister Edna Michel and guest minister Rev. Ken Gillikin of First Lutheran Church in Tiffin.

Helen Miller, a resident at St. Francis Home, with aide Tara Runion during National Nursing Home Week which was held May 10-16.

Find us on Facebook
Franciscan Earth Literacy Center
St. Francis Spirituality Center
St. Francis Senior Ministries
Sisters of St. Francis