Dear Friends,

Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary year of mercy throughout the world. In his official announcement (*Misericordiae Vultus*) he describes mercy as “the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks directly into the eyes of brothers and sisters on the path of life”. I would imagine that each of us has many opportunities to both give and receive mercy. Looking into the eyes of my brothers and sisters helps me to recognize that I am much more like each person than I am different.

In this issue of our St. Francis Community Magazine we appreciate special connections between residents and employees here on our St. Francis Campus. Those family relationships extend mercy beyond the bonds of the biological family to the family of humankind. We are so pleased that one of the children from the Cuernavaca Children’s Mission recently got to meet and spend time with her sponsor. That relationship has been growing for many years and only in February of this year did they connect in person.

Through the ministry of Sister Mary Kuhlman and Sisters in Shelter we have learned about the plight of women caught in human trafficking. Having a safe house for victims is indeed an experience of mercy.

We have been blessed with the presence of many coming to our St. Francis Spirituality Center to reflect on living a peaceful life. How important this is, especially in our everyday world that can become so hectic.

Students who participate in programs at our Franciscan Earth Literacy Center learn teambuilding skills, a necessary ingredient for practicing mercy. Those students also experience the wonders of nature by hiking in our woods. Following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, these students have composed their own Canticles of Creation.

I hope this issue of our magazine helps you look directly into the eyes of our brothers and sisters served by St. Francis Community. Your support of our ministries creates a ripple effect of mercy and touches the lives of the people we serve. I pray that as we each grow in mercy-full relationships with the earth and with each other, we will know true peace and joy.

Peace and all good things to you,

Sister Sara Aldridge
Community Minister
The Sisters of St. Francis are so grateful to benefactors who, over the years, have selflessly given their time, talent and assets to support the Tiffin Franciscans’ mission. Every gift — large or small — is important.

One such faithful supporter is Fr. Frank Murd. Fr. Murd is chaplain on St. Francis Campus, presiding at Masses and prayer services, and sharing a healing ministry especially with retired Sisters and St. Francis Senior Ministries’ residents. He is also very involved with the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center’s mission, promoting active learning and healthy relationships with our natural environment.

Fr. Murd recently decided to leave a personal legacy by making a future gift to the Sisters of St. Francis. He has found that one does not have to be wealthy to make a significant gift. So he has named the Sisters of St. Francis as one of the beneficiaries of his life insurance policy. When asked what prompted this planned gift, Fr. Murd said, “I believe in the Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin. I’m impressed how the Sisters live out the Gospel values of St. Francis and St. Clare, reaching out to the down and out, to those on the margins in the Tiffin area and throughout their missions as far as Appalachia and Mexico.” Fr. Murd went on to say that a planned gift is his way of being part of the sisters’ continuing future mission and saying thanks to the sisters for reaching out to him.

Thoughtful gift planning offers many types of charitable gift arrangements that can benefit you, your family, and at the same time, the Sisters of St. Francis’ ministries. Virtually all assets can be given, including cash, real estate and securities. You can also designate a specific dollar amount or percentage of your overall estate. Regardless of the method you choose, you can rest assured that your generosity will be felt for years to come.

To learn more about ways to meet personal and financial goals while leaving a legacy of Franciscan service, see our website, plannedgiving.tiffinfranciscans.org or call Sister Joanne Lammers, Director of Mission Advancement at 419.447.0435. Every gift — large or small — is important.
“Laysia” arrived at the Safe House in early 2016 because she wanted to be in a safe place. The Safe House, which houses up to 5 women, was donated by Mercy Tiffin Hospital in January of 2015. The Safe House became a reality for Sister Mary Kuhlman, Executive Director and founder of Sisters in Shelter, after partnering with others in the area whose mission was also to provide safe emergency housing for adult female survivors of both labor and human trafficking. The house, staffed at all times, gives survivors the opportunity to heal from their past and find wholistic ways to balance their lives.

Nine years ago, the Sisters responded to a need that arrived on their doorstep. Sister Mary said, “It was our introduction to the horror of human trafficking. A month later we were asked to give housing to another woman and her baby boy. Hearing their stories propelled us forward to join with other religious communities in Northwest Ohio and immerse ourselves in learning about and addressing this issue in our own backyard.”

While offering housing we began to educate the civic community, looking for partners to support this work. In 2014 a Board of Trustees formed a 501c3 corporation with three major partners: The Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin along with their Associates, Mercy Tiffin Hospital, and Seneca Medical Inc. Sisters in Shelter received a federal grant to educate junior and senior high school students to alert students to the dangers of involvement in trafficking. Volunteers are also available to speak throughout Northwest, Ohio upon request, as well.

The Safe House is open to sex and labor trafficking victims. The survivors may come through referrals from the court system, religious communities, social services or the FBI. They may be referred from anywhere in the United States, but are mostly from Ohio.

The daily activities for the women begin with breakfast and a shower, followed by some devotion time. Afterwards, volunteers assist them with school lessons, which include basic writing and reading, math and art. Twenty-two year old Laysia especially likes math and enjoys art time when she can make homemade birthday cards for family members. Following the morning routine, she likes to work on puzzles, listen to music and dance. On occasion, the women go to the YMCA to exercise, swim and play basketball where Laysia impresses everyone with her 3-point shots. Laysia also loves working with animals and shares that her favorite animals are dogs and horses.

In her free time, Laysia loves to play UNO, go bowling and shopping, take trips to the park, and enjoy ice cream. “Sister Mary and Jami help keep me safe and make me feel special,” said Laysia.

Medical care and counseling are available for all residents, as well as classes for budgeting, fitness, nutrition, cooking and other topics. “This is a place where women can get their lives back together, start to make good choices and get back on their feet,” said Sister Mary.

Since it began, Sisters in Shelter has housed several women from Northwest Ohio. The women are able to stay for up to one year if they complete the program. When the program is completed they move into transitional housing where they are more independent and try to get a job. If a woman has been trafficked for a long time, the case manager, Jami Opp, works with them on skill building to prepare them for employment.

Sisters in Shelter also provides education to the general public about issues of human trafficking. Courses are offered throughout the year for those wishing to volunteer and learn more about trafficking. The next volunteer training session will be held in September/October of 2016 and runs for eight consecutive Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00 PM. The series includes an overview of Human Trafficking, a personal story of being a victim, sexual abuse, addictions, trauma and effects, safety strategies and volunteer service.

Over 90 individuals have completed the volunteer training. In addition to the required courses, volunteers are
A Dream Come True for Two

In mid-February 2016, Jenifer Smith, an employee on the St. Francis Campus, traveled to Cuernavaca, Mexico for a long awaited meeting. She had waited several years to meet her sponsored child, and now the wait was finally over.

Their first encounter was an emotional one. It was a meeting seven years in the making. When Jenifer and her husband Curt decided to become sponsors in 2008, “Little Jennifer,” age 10, was almost 3. They were finally united on February 19 for the long awaited, joyous occasion.

Jenifer described meeting “Little Jennifer” for the first time: “I was in the courtyard where the older children study – helping sweep the leaves to prepare for the class of the day. Sister Margaret called up to me with excitement in her voice, ‘Jenifer, Little Jennifer is here.’ I looked over the edge of the wall and saw Jennifer and her big brown eyes looking up at me with the biggest smile. My heart completely melted!”

Watch Jenifer meeting “Little Jennifer” for the first time at www.tiffinfranciscans.org/firstembracevideo

She continued, “I rushed to embrace the little girl that I had never met but had held in my heart for so long – a rush of emotions that had been seven years in the making - so precious to me – my sponsored child, Jennifer. There are few times in a person’s life when they can say they were so happy that they were brought to tears – this was one of those times for me!”

The financial contribution is as little as $25 a month. Jenifer and Curt continue to send their monthly donation, as well as a Christmas and birthday present.

“I am blessed to be a part of ‘Little Jennifer’s’ life and happy that she is a part of the Cuernavaca Children’s Mission,” said Jenifer.

To learn more about the Cuernavaca Children’s Mission and how you can get involved, contact Sister Margaret Slowick by email at slowick_osf@yahoo.com or visit www.cuernavacakids.wordpress.com.

The Cuernavaca Children’s Mission was established in 2005 to help Mexican families. Its Sponsor-A-Child program gives children living in extreme poverty the opportunity to get an education. The program also responds to emergency needs by helping to pay for food and medical expenses.

interviewed and fingerprinted. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and registering for the next training, contact Sister Mary at 419.350.6786.

“I so appreciate everyone who has made it possible for Sisters in Shelter to be a 501c3 corporation to educate the public about sex trafficking and provide a safe house for victims,” said Sister Mary. She continued, “It takes a whole cohort of people to see this dream come to fruition, helping women move toward wholeness. Thanks to our corporate sponsors which most recently includes, the Precious Blood Sisters from Dayton. The worker bees are the exceptional Board of Trustees and an outstanding cadre of volunteers and numerous people who have been educated through our Sex Trafficking 101 series.”

More financial partners, volunteer staff and committee members are always needed. To learn more about becoming a partner you can email Sister Mary at mkuhlman@tiffinfranciscans.org or sistersinshelter@gmail.com.

Donations can be sent to: Sisters in Shelter, P.O. Box 384, Tiffin, OH 44883. Anyone can apply for Kroger Rewards using account #31312 and a percentage will be donated each time you shop at Kroger. To learn more, visit www.sistersinshelter.com or www.facebook.com/SistersinShelter. To report suspicious activity you can also call the National Hotline at 1.888.3737.888 or text BeFree (233733).

“You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.”

– William Wilberforce
Family Ties at St. Francis

Donna Pryor, Human Resources Manager at St. Francis Senior Ministries, has seen first-hand the benefits of family members working together. “There has been a history of family members working together at St. Francis and of employees bringing loved ones here to live because they have witnessed the love and compassionate care among employees first-hand,” said Donna. “You can also keep an eye on each other, and if a resident is a family member, you know that they are going to get quality care because you are a part of a team…part of a family. When family members are surrounding you or are near, you take more pride in your work because it’s your family’s home…There’s a personal connection.”

Bob Kramer has been a resident of the Elizabeth Schaefer Apartments for three years. Just across the parking lot, his daughter-in-law, Melissa Kramer can be found working as an accounting clerk at St. Francis Home, where she has been employed for the last 10 ½ years. Melissa loves the St. Francis Campus. She volunteered at St. Francis Home before she was hired because of the friendly atmosphere and love for senior residents. Over the years she has had several family members who have lived on the campus. According to Melissa, after her mother-in-law passed away three years ago, Bob began to “wilt away” and “stopped living”. His family decided to move him to St. Francis. “It was the best thing we ever did because he wasn’t living after ma died…he did not do anything,” said Melissa, “and St. Francis brought him back to life.” She continued, “It has been life changing for Bob. He is self sufficient again. He is even cooking. The environment makes a difference!” Bob is also able to see Melissa at various campus events and programs. “The sisters are friendly and so is everyone else,” said Bob.

This past February, Karen Hager celebrated her 20 year anniversary as an employee at St. Francis Home. Her daughter Jenny Kidwell followed in her mother’s footsteps and began working at St. Francis only four months later. Karen encouraged Jenny to not only come to St. Francis to work, but to get her STNA at the young age of 21. According to Jenny, they worked on different floors initially, but Jenny was promoted and became her mother’s supervisor. For the last five years, Jenny and Karen have continued to work side by side. Since August of 2015, Bella Kidwell, Jenny’s 17-year old daughter has been employed at St. Francis Home as a dietary aide. “She wanted to work with her mom and grandma,” explained Jenny. “She eventually wants to go to college to become a pediatrician. At St. Francis Home, she can get a feel for health care. Bella hopes to work as a hospitality aide at St. Francis as she gets ready to apply for college.”
Admissions Coordinator Annette Krintzline joined the staff at St. Francis Senior Ministries 19 years ago. Her daughter Samantha, who recently graduated from high school in May, will mark her first anniversary at St. Francis in June of 2016. “This job is perfect for someone in high school” said Annette. “A lot of employees with kids at the high school or college level start working in the kitchen because it offers flexibility and great connections. It’s a great first job that leads to other jobs, such as an aide, especially for those going into a nursing career.” Annette’s other daughter who graduated in 2006 also worked at St. Francis as an aide. Annette continued, “There are lots of perks in working with a family member: more conversations, opportunities to eat lunch together, carpooling and, of course, attending the employee holiday parties together. At times, we do problem solving at home. I am able to understand Samantha’s day and give her advice, because I can relate to a hectic and busy job environment as well. The family connection also offers residents a conversation starter. They also can feel more secure and knowing that there is a “family” taking care of them. Two people from the same background can sometimes offer more comfort,” said Annette.

Liz Marks has worked at St. Francis Home as the business manager for the last 11 years and enjoys it so much that she suggested her sister apply for a job here, as well. At the time, Liz’s sister, Diane Weisenauer was working at the UNC Hospital in North Carolina, so she had experience working in a similar setting. Diane also had experience working in a restaurant and so she decided to apply in food service and was hired. Almost three years later, Diane is working as an STNA in the Chiara Unit. She has gone from working in the kitchen to receptionist and now feels that she has finally found her “happy place” with the residents in the memory care unit. As an added bonus, her husband Steve began working in the maintenance department about a year ago, so she has a job that allows her to see her sister and husband every day.

Ann Huth-Fretz is a familiar face on the St. Francis Campus. She has worked as a social worker for the last 16 years at St. Francis Home. Her family has also followed in her footsteps. Her husband Doug began teaching Tai Chi on Monday nights about two years ago. “One day we were just brainstorming about how easily people fall and my husband mentioned how Tai Chi helps people with their balance and that it involves meditation,” said Ann. After that conversation, Ann encouraged Doug to apply for a job at St. Francis Home. Ann’s son, Ian, started working in the kitchen at St. Francis five years ago, and his sister Stasia started about a year later. They are currently working the same shift together. “The job has brought us closer together and we can even carpool,” said Ian. “My mom encouraged my sister to get a job at St. Francis and then I showed her the ropes.” Ann’s children started volunteering at St. Francis while they were in high school and helped with the summer camps at the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center, too. “They assisted me with the annual Pet Blessing held on our campus, so they became very familiar with the campus before they were hired,” said Ann. “When we are at home, we cannot help but talk about work, but it’s nice because we can all relate to our work experiences.”
Creating Canticles of Creation

“The fifth-graders from Bellevue Immaculate Conception School came to our center in the spring for a teambuilding program and retreat,” said Sister Shirley Shafranek, educator at the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center. “We spent the first two hours doing teambuilding activities, including Don’t Lose Your Lid, River of Chocolate, Human Knot and more.” The variety of activities gave students the opportunity to try challenges in a large group setting, with only one partner and also with assigned partners versus unassigned partners. “I thought it was really fun,” said Audra Wilson. “I liked how we did the group juggle.” Students were able to understand how working with different people in different situations affects the outcome. “We learned how to work with each other,” said Avah Sanchez. Classmate Hope Alda, agreed, “I learned how to work better with my classmates.”

Afterwards, students walked to the woods, had a picnic lunch and were asked by Sister Shirley to pick something from nature and explain how it is praising God by writing a “Canticle of Creation”, following the example of St. Francis. Saint Francis of Assisi composed this original song of praise during the last two years of his life when he was blind. Francis called out to all creation as brother and sister, revealing the core of the Franciscan worldview:

That God is the source of all being; that the Creator God is the parent; that all creatures therefore are brother and sister to one another; that everything and everyone deserves love and respect.

Before they found a quiet place to write their own “Canticle of Creation”, the 22 fifth graders spent some quiet time hiking and enjoying the sights and sounds of nature while they explored the woods and wetlands.

“This is the second year I have brought my class to FELC,” said teacher Joy Tokarsky. She continued, “I appreciate Sister Shirley’s way of combining exercises of team-building with experiencing God. Since Jesus is at the heart of all I do as an educator in a Catholic school, this is an excellent opportunity for kids to be reminded that all we do is through Jesus.”

“Immaculate Conception School believes that their students should have a ‘retreat experience’ during the school year. Having classes come to the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center for a retreat experience is something fairly new,” said Sister Shirley. “I look forward to scheduling more in the future.”
The Franciscan Earth Literacy Center’s 9th Annual Summer Harvest Gourmet Gala has been scheduled for the evening of Friday, August 12, from 6:00 – 9:30 pm. This annual fundraiser, held on the beautiful grounds on the St. Francis Campus 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 made by the Canticle Café and the serving of local wines and micro brew beers. While enjoying the musical entertainment by Straight from the Harp, guests will be served a gourmet meal prepared by Carolyn’s Personalized Catering, of Millbury, Ohio followed by an array of delicious desserts. There will be an opportunity to participate in a wine grab, raffle, silent auction, 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 5. Reservations are required. To reserve tickets, call Linda Bell in the Mission Advancement Office at 419-447-0435 or by emailing lbell@tiffinfranciscans.org. Tickets can also be purchased online.

When Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin and area golfers are working together to help kids learn about and appreciate the environment—it’s a win-win!

Purchase tickets for the Marathon Classic in Sylvania to be held on July 11-17, 2016 and designate “Franciscan Earth Literacy Center”, a sponsored mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, as the charity to receive 100% of your ticket price as a donation. The professional ladies tournament raises monies for many local youth charities, and we are one of the twenty 2016 designated charities.

Golfing is a wonderful way to get family and friends outside together; and this event has something for people of all ages to enjoy.

How to help FELC:
1. Use the QR code or visit www.marathonclassic.com
2. Click “ticket info” and then “purchase now”
3. Order by credit card
4. Choose Franciscan Earth Literacy Center as your charity

SAVE THE DATE
Electric Car Show, Saturday, October 15
In March, Jere and Janine Miller-Delany from Upper Sandusky Counseling and Life Coaching led a one day retreat at St. Francis Spirituality Center: “How to Live a Peaceful Life in a Hectic World”. Attendees traveled from Perrysburg, Alvada, New Riegel, Plymouth, Arcadia, Attica, Willard, Upper Sandusky, Findlay, Carey and Bellevue.

Janine, mother of four active boys, is a licensed counselor who helps her clients live a more peaceful life. She and her husband, Jere, seek balance in their lives through nature, hiking, music, and spiritual development. Her therapeutic expertise includes how to deal with grief and loss, physical symptoms resulting from stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, women's issues, and relationship issues. Janine honors and values each individual’s choice to integrate his or her own faith and spiritual journey into the counseling process. “Jere and I both feel so very blessed to get to know and connect with so many special people in each of our retreats,” said Janine.

Jere, a registered nurse and Health and Wellness Life Coach, seeks simplicity in the midst of sharing parenting, retreats and life experiences with his wife, Janine. Weight lifting, music, gardening and personal development through literature and meditation are among his passions. Jere integrates his unique combination of over 16 years in psychology, mental health, and nursing experience into the innovative field of Life Coaching. With degrees from Otterbein University and Marion Technical College, and specialized training with the Life Coaching Institute, Jere has a gift for helping people clarify and reach their own unique goals.

Together, the couple incorporates various activities into their retreats, such as guided meditation, relaxation exercises, personal growth worksheets, and more.

“Jere and I have been leading this retreat for many years. The concepts presented and the group reflections continue to propel us both toward deeper insights and growth as we strive for more peaceful lives,” Janine explained.

Participants shared feedback on the retreat experience. “This day helped me know how far I’ve come on my path and reminded me where I started. It was great to take a ‘me-day’ and learn more about this topic I love,” said Vicki Johnson of McClure, Ohio. “I have had a stiff neck since Sunday and with the two guided meditations it feels much better.” Another participant commented, “This was a very relaxing, much needed retreat.”

Participants also completed an “Energy Flow System” exercise which helps one with inner balance. Everyone reflected on things that give them energy, such as an adequate amount of sleep, daily exercise, attending church, and healthy eating habits. Then they shared some experiences that deplete energy, like too much passive TV watching, over involvement in clubs and work, struggles with children, and more.

“I was able to put what is draining me mentally, versus what is blessing me into perspective,” said Brandon McCall of Findlay. “An added bonus is that I am able to use the information from the class as I facilitate Support Groups for those living with mental illness,” he added.

One participant noted that the exercise indicated a high degree of unbalance in her life: “There are more things that drain me than things that do not drain me.” Another participant who works as a child psychologist described her “Energy-In” as being in short spurts and “Energy-Out” was chronic.

“When we resist what is happening in the present moment, it takes our peace away and creates more suffering,” explained Janine. “Being out of balance creates
anxiety and stress. It’s ok to say “no” once in awhile. When we don’t set boundaries, we often get angry with people whom we did not set boundaries,” she added.

Jere continued, “We are a bundle of energy. When we walk into a room with negative energy we can choose to be a part of it or not and, if you can’t change it, then remove yourself from it.”

Janine used their family’s experience with a new puppy. “As humans, we share energy; if we are stressed and tense, that will rub off on others, including pets. When there is negative energy in a room, a dog can even pick up on it,” she said.

On Friday, July 29, another program will be offered by Janine and Jere called **Just Breathe!** The one-day retreat focuses on restoring peace, healing, strength and resilience. Again, it will be held from 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM at St. Francis Spirituality Center. The cost is $40 and includes the main noon meal; $30 if you prefer to bring your own bag lunch. Register by **July 22** by contacting Jenifer at **419-443-1485** or **peace@franciscanretreats.org**

Janine Johnson tries to create balance on her “Energy Flow System” chart.

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**Celebrating the 15th Annual St. Francis Spirituality Center Fall BBQ**

A fun day for family and friends to enjoy great food featuring Grandma’s Backyard BBQ! There will be Raffle Drawings, 50/50, & Mystery Box, and more!

- 1/4 chicken dinner - $8
- 1/4 chicken & 1/4 rib dinner - $13
- 1/2 chicken dinner - $10
- 1/2 rib dinner - $15
- 1 chicken leg meal - $5 (pie not included)

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

For more information, call **419-443-1485** or email **peace@franciscanretreats.org**.

We will also be honoring First Responders for the 15th Anniversary of 9-11

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Vicki Johnson tries to create balance on her “Energy Flow System” chart.

**Walking With Death Row Inmates**, Wednesday, October 12

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**SAVE THE DATE**

Walking With Death Row Inmates, Wednesday, October 12
The local Relay for Life event was held at Hedges-Boyer Park on May 14. This year’s theme was the “Wizard of Oz.” Our campus team, the Lollipop Kids which was made up of 66 sisters, employees and some family members, raised over $1,200 towards the fight against cancer!

“Herbs 101” was presented by Linda Haas, a member of the Herb Study Group at Stratford Ecological Center in Delaware, Ohio who also serves on the Board of Trustees at FELC. Participants learned how to identify, grow, process and cook with common herbs followed by an herbaceous lunch using simple recipes that were provided.

Sister Lourdes Toribio is playing a game called “Protecting the King from the Lion” with a group of children while she and Sister Linda Scheckelhoff accompanied the community of Seis de Marzo during Holy Week of 2016 in Chiapas, Mexico.