

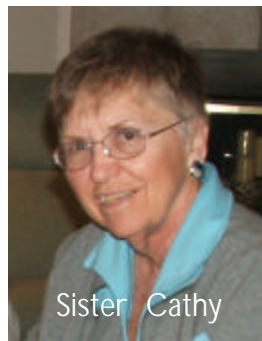
The CommUnity Newsletter

VOLUME 5

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Farmworkers have one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S. earning poverty wages with no benefits. They harvest 85% of the fruits and vegetables that we consume here in the U.S.



Sister Cathy

“I want to live life to the fullest”

I thought I'd share with you some reflections on my four and a half month experience struggling with serious illness due to the near fatal automobile accident I had in September. It has been a long, painful, and complicated process.

In late January, I was finally able to come home and begin the healing process.

Coming home brought me back to a loved community, a place of mission—my home! Healing increased in both body and spirit. I am thankful for all the support and prayers that have brought me to where I am today.

When asked what kept me going, I would tell people, “God is always with you even in the darkest

moments and the good God always has you in the palm of His hand. I hold dearly to Cesar Chavez's words, “Si, Se Puede,” which means, “Yes, it can be done.” These words were my mantra as I faced each new challenge and will be as I learn to walk again with my new prosthesis.

What also helped me was knowing I had three strong advocates, my friends and sisters: Ann, Gail, and Teresa, who made sure my medical concerns were met. My support system included my family, youth who sent me their art and best wishes, ministry coworkers, friends, and, most assuredly, the farmworker and immigrant community whose prayers and calls were always appreciated. Through all of these times during the last year, I've learned to say as Joan Baez sings, “Gracias a la vida que me ha dado tanto,” (thanks for life that has given me so much). I want to live life to the fullest engaging in mission with the community I love.

Ashley Salzmann and Jacy Mensch '50s style at the Dinner Dance



Fundraising Committee reports \$25,000 profit on dinner dance. Money raised will go to The Hope CommUnity Center.

2007 dinner dance is a hit!

Co-chairs Mary Carroll and Lynn Devanie announce that OFFM's annual January dinner dance this year entitled: “Something Old is New Again,” was a great success. This year's theme touched on the Rock and Roll music of the 1950's with The Dukes of Harmony entertaining guests with their semi-acappella sound.

Nancy Miller provided life size cut-outs of celebrities such as: Marilyn Monroe, The Duke, James Dean, and, of course, The King (Elvis.) The Collins family of Longwood sent over a Beach Blanket Bingo display with life size figures. Guests had fun getting their pictures taken as a souvenir. OFFM was blessed this year with a heifer (yes, an actual cow) donated by Jim Barker for the silent auction. Since St. Mary Magdalene Church would not permit the ministry to display the cow live in their banquet hall, Sister Ann Kendrick donned a cow costume and pranced her way throughout the crowd. By 8:30 that evening she was SOLD to the highest bidder.

The children of the community painted beautiful art work under the direction of Lynn Ashworth which was

also sold in the silent auction.

Muchas gracias to Diane Holm and Mike Cross of Golden Corral for the attractive presentation and wonderful tasting food. The appetizer spread was unbelievable and the chocolate cake was to die for. If you weren't able to attend this year, make sure you do next year just to sample this magnificent display.

Because of you and your kindness, attendance and enthusiasm was unbelievable this year, which also means we had an increase in donations. The fundraising committee is happy to report a profit of nearly \$25,000.



An Unexpected Surprise



Sister Ann Kendrick and Wisner Jolimer

Forty seven years ago, Frank Hubbard, of Hubbard Construction Company, formed a foundation to handle charitable gifts. Today, at 87, Frank is still a giver of funds, of ideas, and of great vision. After reading about Sister Cathy Gorman's near fatal accident, Mr. Hubbard called the ministry and said he would like to offer his help.

This February, Sister Ann Kendrick and Board members, Jean Bauman and Mary Carroll, happily accepted an invitation to meet with Mr. Hubbard at his lovely lake-

front home. Also attending the meeting was his assistant, Nancy Hargadon.

Even though Mr. Hubbard was celebrating his own birthday, he had arranged a surprise for Sister Ann. Nearly twenty five years ago, Sister Ann helped the Hubbards get PEP LABOR CREWS, a worker-owned cooperative, to prune his citrus trees after back-to-back freezes. One of those workers was Wisner Jolimer who still works for the Hubbard family. Through the graciousness of Hubbard, Ann was able to spend some time reuniting with Wisner before meeting with Mr. Hubbard.

After receiving that surprise gift, Mr. Hubbard, Ann and Board members shared ideas and dreams. As promised, Mr. Hubbard offered the ministry his financial support and asked Nancy Hargadon to authorize the foundation to write a check for The Hope CommUnity Center.

Two weeks later Sister Ann, and Mary met again with Frank and Nancy. This time Mr. Hubbard presented the ministry with a check. We left remembering the words of a very giving man speaking about the joy of giving. "If you don't know it, you better learn it, because once you learn it, you won't stop." F. Hubbard

Collaboration is the Key

How does an organization with modest financial and staff resources provide so many services to so many people? The answer is simple. Collaboration is the key. For 36 years OFFM has modeled a collaborative culture, developing relationships with other organizations as a way of expanding services available to the community OFFM cares so much about.

One such collaboration has been with Notre Dame Mission Volunteers which places 20 AmeriCorps volunteers in Apopka each year and over 200 others around

the country.

Today NDA in Apopka carries on the tradition of collaboration as a way of extending the reach of its volunteers. Through a collaboration with the Sierra Club Inner City Outings, OFFM is able to provide back-to-nature trips to youth. By collaborating with Rollins College graduate counseling program, the ministry is able to bring weekly classes on mindfulness meditation and "listening partnerships" to people who can not afford counseling.

By developing relationships

with a myriad of arts organizations OFFM has created opportunities to expose others to theatre, music and the visual arts.

Crealde School of Art, another long-standing collaborator, provides photography and art classes to youth who could not otherwise participate. By collaborating with others, we further the mission of our organization and theirs; and when you make a donation to the Office For Farmworker Ministry, your contribution reaches further than you can imagine.

CATCH SOME COMMON CENTS

In January, AmeriCorps member Paul Crowley began teaching a class after school at Apopka Memorial Middle School, hoping to educate some of his students about the "ins and outs" of their own personal finance. The class, called "Common Cents," was an idea he had in the fall after talking with some of his students and realizing that some of them had no idea what their new shoes, new iPod, or even their school lunch cost them. Six sessions have been held, and each of them has been informative for the kids. A small group of potential volunteers for Pennies for Power has developed, and begun to help youth navigate the financial world around them. Sister Ann, Ashley Salzman, Josh McBride and Laura Firtel have helped with the lessons and with publicizing the class. The next step is opening a satellite branch of PFP at the school with some "graduates" as tellers.



(from left) Noel Rueda, Jameson Henrif, Elizabeth Castiano, Felix Moreno, and Jonathan Moreno

(below) Miguel Santiago Participating in art project



Hope CommUnity Center Update

As you may have noticed, 1016 Park Avenue has seen some dramatic changes since October 31. Since the groundbreaking ceremony this past June, The Hope CommUnity Center is now officially "closed in," weather-proofed and includes: heating, air conditioning, plumbing, electric, and a working fire sprinkler system. The roofing was recently installed and stucco application began February 9 by contractors Albu & Associates.

Serving as construction manager, Joe Calabrese expects the building to be a finished reality by late June.

The building's unique facilities, designed by architect Mark Whitman

of Florida Design Professionals, will allow it to be "user-friendly," says Calabrese. Plus, the excellent location—situated next to a bus stop—is expected to increase the OFFM's services by at least half.

Calabrese has been in the business a number of years, and is deeply committed to this project thanks to his strong connection with the "Sisters of Apopka." Since 1990, he has worked closely with them and other organizations especially in housing community families.

Drive by 1016 North Park Avenue and watch the progress of a long awaited dream. See back page or website on how you can help with our project or programs.



Rick Yester and Keith Creamer of Albu & Associates, Joe Calabrese (center), with architect, Mark Whitman

NDA AmeriCorps takes on D.C.

This February, Notre Dame Mission Volunteer chapters across the country headed to our nation's Capital for the national Notre Dame de Namur AmeriCorps Conference. A group of 200 took over the halls of Trinity Catholic College in Washington, D.C., for a three day retreat which set out to capture the essence of the volunteering spirit. The eager crowd was welcomed by a powerful speaker and political figure, Congressman Elijah E. Cummings of Baltimore, MD., who spoke about overcoming adversity and strength.

The following few days were filled with more encouraging speakers and presentations. Esteemed Georgetown professor and director of the Center for Peace Teaching, Colman McCarthy, gave an inspiring and poignant workshop about teaching peace in our schools. Notre Dame sisters offered workshops about justice, classroom discipline, and even Tai Chi.



The annual "Story Telling" portion of the trip proved to be the most anxiety-inducing aspect, but also the most rewarding. The Apopka team received lots of praise and positive feedback regarding their presentation about life in Apopka. Whereas many NDA chapters chose to utilize PowerPoint and video cameras as their media, the Apopka team wowed audiences with a powerful spoken word performance depicting life before AmeriCorps and after. This year's team closed the meeting on a high note with another spoken piece.



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OUR MISSION

To strengthen farmworker and low-income families through faith, advocacy, education and economic development

Upcoming Events To Remember:

HCC Board Meeting April 17

Take our Daughters to Work Day April 26

Fundraiser - La Loteria April 29

We're on the web!

Please continue to help OFFM meet its goal

