



# Catholic Volunteers in Florida

*Transforming Lives Through Faith and Service*

## Message from the Director



**These days of Lent** are filled with prayer for our volunteers and our entire CVIF family. During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, in the [Message](#) for Lent 2016, Pope Francis invites us to "celebrate and experience God's mercy", which "transforms human hearts". *"In an ever new miracle, divine mercy shines forth in our lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbor and to devote ourselves to what the Church's tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy."* As we pray for God's grace to respond generously to Lazarus, the poor man, begging at our doorstep, and to know him by name, we renew our hearts for service and open our hearts ever wider to Christ's infinite love.

With gratitude for CVIF and all who answer the call to humbly serve; past, present, and future,

Liz

## Winter Retreat

**Applications  
Now Being Accepted  
for 2016-17 Volunteer Year**

**APPLY TODAY!**



If you've ever considered a year of service but aren't sure how to get started, give us a call! We'd love to help you discover the endless opportunities involved in a service year.

### **BENEFITS**

Free Furnished Housing  
Health Insurance  
Monthly Stipend  
Quarterly Retreats to promote personal & professional growth

We are looking for people with a heart for serving our community in a variety of ways. Our



**This January's volunteer retreat** was filled with amazing opportunities to reflect on and act upon issues of social justice in our Florida community. We spent four beautiful days on the grounds of Campo San Jose in Lake Placid enjoying the home-cooked meals of church volunteers Gloria and Nanci and spending time in fellowship with many special guests who joined us for meals, mass, and storytelling.

On Friday, we had the opportunity to visit Immokalee Housing and Family Services, Guadalupe Social Services, Legal Aid, RCMA's Immokalee Community School, and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to learn more about the reality of farmworker and immigrant families. Special thanks to Sister Maureen, Sister Ines, and the volunteers with the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary for joining our retreat and sharing their experiences and insights about the needs of the community they serve. Some of our CVs even had the pleasure of working on a service project with Guadalupe Social Services. Taylor Cembalisty, current CV serving the Diocese of Orlando Mission Office in Dominican Republic, voiced how much she enjoyed the experience saying she "loved the day in Immokalee and seeing first-hand the organizations and people dedicated to helping the plight of the migrant farm worker."

Despite the tornado warning, we were able to have a fulfilling day and even enjoyed some tasty tacos before making our way back to the retreat center!



Saturday began with a spiritual reflection led by current CV, Christina Jindra, followed by a powerful discussion on community issues and justice ministry.

We learned how to take action on what we've learned

volunteers are placed in positions that allow them to use their talents and skills to serve our diverse community while growing personally and professionally through our unique retreat program.

Some of our community impact positions include:

*Community Outreach*

*Advocacy & Public Policy*

*Rural & Farmworker Health*

*Legal Aid*

*Teaching and Mentoring*

The 2016 - 17 service year begins with orientation retreat this August.

Learn more by visiting our website:

[www.cvif.org](http://www.cvif.org)

## Our Mission

Catholic Volunteers in Florida is dedicated to providing people of all faiths the opportunity to volunteer for a year and live out their faith by serving the diverse needs of the people of Florida and the Dominican Republic.

Catholic Volunteers work towards justice and peace, transforming the community they serve as well as themselves.

We live out our mission statement through our five core values:

- Doing Justice
- Active Spirituality
- Creating Community
- Living Simply
- Personal Growth

## Birthday Wishes

We learned how to take action on what we learned.

Current CV Laura Layou shared that this exercise was one of the highlights of her retreat experience. The conversations led her to want to advocate for adults with developmental disabilities and she gained a better understanding of the steps and processes to take to make changes happen. We ended our day with a mass led by Father Isirio at Campo San Jose.



Our final retreat day was full of worship and praise. Our volunteers spent time enjoying each other's company, reflecting on the discussions of the weekend, and preparing for the last few months of their service year with CVIF.

We are so proud of how far our current volunteers have come and are truly looking forward to continuing to witness the transformative power a year of service can have

in the hearts of the volunteers and in the communities they serve.

## Service Site Spotlight



**New Hope for Kids** has spent the last 20 years serving children and families who are suffering from grief, loss, or life-threatening illnesses. Through two programs, NHFK has done so much for the Central Florida community. The Center for Grieving Children helps children and families cope with the feelings of grief and loss after the death of a loved one, and the Wishes for Kids program grants wishes to children and teens diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

Our volunteers will have the opportunity to serve in a variety of ways including working directly with children in need to assist in therapeutic play activities, volunteer coordination and program management.

This is CVIF's first year partnering with NHFK and we are looking forward to many more years of service with this amazing nonprofit organization.

## Alumni News

A Reflection on the passing of CVIF Alum Fred Zawilinski

By John Geiger, former CVIF Executive Director 1983-2000

Help us send birthday wishes to a few special people!

### February 5

Bishop Esteves

### February 8

Chelsea Wahman

### February 15

Michael Sheedy

### February 26

Bishop Noonan

### March 1

Edward Allen

### March 6

Walter Rollo

### March 9

Bishop Dewane

### March 28

Patrick Andonie

## In The Community

We are looking forward to visiting a campus near you!

Maybe you know of an upcoming career fair or volunteer event at your alma mater...let us know if we can participate. We'd love every chance to spread the word about all the great opportunities we have planned for our 2016 - 2017 volunteer class.

Contact Ms. Valarie with details or inquiries at [vamica@cvif.org](mailto:vamica@cvif.org).

## Tell us your story!

How did your service year impact you? Where has your service experience taken you? Tell us about

I share this news with a pain in my heart and a prayer that lacks words. CVIF alumnus, Fred Zawilinski, recently of Painesville, Ohio, passed away unexpectedly on January 13. He had a heart attack caused by complications of undetected cancer. I was blessed to have known Fred during his full-time volunteer service at the Anthony House in Zellwood, Florida as a homeless shelter assistant, August 30, 1989 - August 29, 1990. Fred recently worked as the Executive Director of the Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority having dedicated his life to serving the needy and homeless since his CVIF experience. Fred was 51 years old and is survived by his wife, Anna O'Keefe Spencer Zawilinski and three daughters (two in college and one in 9th grade). Fred was a native of Michigan but was recruited from Florida State University. He was well known by the CVIF staff and volunteer friends as enjoying retreat discussions, sharing the competition of board games, maintaining a sense of humor and approaching all challenges with a can-do spirit.

During Fred's service year, he met CVIF alumna, Anna Spencer and love took hold. Anna served March 30 1986 - March 13, 1987 being shared between Catholic Charities of St. Petersburg and St. Anthony Parish of Brooksville, Florida. As a social worker, Anna offered aid to senior citizens, assisted in adoptions and ran a parish youth group. My wife, Ellen, and I were especially blessed to host Anna and one daughter during a recent three-day visit to Orlando. Alumni Cynthia Minot and Bill Demshok joined us to assist in the painful journey of this life transition for Anna and her family. Amid laughter and tears, we shared old stories as we looked at the CVIF historic photo albums. We paid a visit to the San Pedro Retreat Center where the former CVIF office was located, and absorbed the healing of the natural space that surrounded us. Finally, we united in the chapel for a prayer in thanksgiving of the blessing of Fred's time among us and for his continuing inspiration and spiritual presence with the family and the CVIF community.

*CVIF asks that you keep Fred and his family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. We remember his kind, loving spirit and are thankful for the time we have had to share with him as he served our community.*

## TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

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your service experience thank you for us about it. We'd love to share your memorable moments with the CVIF family.

## Share your news!

We want to celebrate your new job, promotion, engagement, or anniversary!

Share your news and memories with us by emailing Vanessa at [vhornedo@cvif.org](mailto:vhornedo@cvif.org) and look out for your announcement in next month's newsletter.

## Follow us on Facebook



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**Some give by serving,  
while others serve by giving.**

Click here to make a donation today or donate by check made payable to:

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