

In the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, the mission of the Colorado Vincentian Volunteers is to invite young adults into a process of transformation through companionship with those who are poor and marginalized.

Witnessing a cerulean-blue miracle

A stranger bearing gifts finds a CVV volunteer needing a winter coat

By Nolan Goubeaux
CVV Year 22 Volunteer

This story begins a few weeks ago when I walked into a clothing store on the 16th Street Mall in downtown Denver. I came in to look for a new coat because mine was beginning to rip in the sleeves. There couldn't have been a worse time, because we were starting to see low temperatures and heavy snow.

There, in the store, I saw the perfect coat – cerulean blue and ideal for winter.

Then I saw the price tag of \$100. I made up my mind that I didn't need it and would make do without it.

During the following weeks, I was thinking about the Gospel of Mark and how Jesus fed more than 5,000 people. Not only that, there were 12 baskets full of leftovers!

And I was thinking about how when God wants to bless something, there will be no shortage from heaven.

A couple of weeks passed. On January 3, I was at work at The St. Francis Center, the homeless shelter where I serve. A man walked in and spoke to my co-worker Tommy, who was wearing a red sweater.

After conversing with the gentleman, Tommy pointed at me and said, "There is a man earnestly seeking the Lord."

Unsure of what this meant, I went up to the man and he started a conversation with me about faith. We had a conversation about how awesome God is in all things.

The man then explained to me that he was a local pastor and that he recently had a vision from God where he would walk into the St. Francis Center and talk to a man in a red sweater with some facial hair.

That man (Tommy) would direct him to a man with a beard who was "earnestly seeking the Lord" -- and that he was to give him a coat.



▲ Nolan Goubeaux, at work at the St. Francis Center, wearing his cerulean-blue coat. Above right, Nolan with a St. Francis Center client; above right bottom, delivering mail.

Cerulean is a range of colors from deep blue, sky-blue, bright blue or azure to deep cyan. The word comes from the Latin *caeruleum*, which means sky or heavens.

-- Wikipedia

Then the pastor handed me a bag from a department store, prayed over me and then left the shelter.

I went to the back office and opened up the bag to find a down-filled, cerulean-blue coat with a \$200 price tag!

I fell to my knees and started to cry. Not only that, but there was an additional grey coat in the bag and both coats fit!

I am overwhelmed by Philippians 4:19, which says

But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. †

Nolan Goubeaux works at the St. Francis Center.

Save this Date!

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Becoming Family benefits all of us

Familiarity of living together builds strong bonds fast

By Kristina DeMeis
CVV Year 22 Volunteer

Belonging to the CVV community

is something that I will forever hold sacred. It is not common to place 20 strangers in two houses and expect them to form a community.

What makes CVV different is the underlying factor that unites our community—our passion for social justice and serving people who fall between the margins.

It has been beautiful to get to know one another over the past five months. Entering the CVV community, there is an overall tone of acceptance, the ability to come as you are. This requires each of us to be vulnerable and to give of ourselves whole-heartedly.

Naturally, this was a challenge but over time it was inevitable. I can't say exactly when it happened but suddenly things just got real.

We have grown to love each other like a family.

You may not like it if someone delays doing their weekly chore or leaves dirty dishes in the sink, but you still love them anyway (after you call them out, of course).

The best part of it all is knowing that you have someone to depend on and someone who cares about you, and wants to hear about your day when you come home.

Speaking of coming home, my favorite part of the day is sharing dinner with my commu-



▲ Kristina DeMeis, front row second from left, with some of the CVV Year 22 Volunteers.

nity. I always look forward to get to unwind, share and laugh about each others' stories and experiences that day as we go around the table and do highs and lows. It has been fun and interesting trying to figure out how exactly to make enough food to feed 10 people, but now we have mastered it and get to bring the leftovers for lunch the next day! (By the way, if Nolan is cooking, you can expect a gourmet meal -- from the fancy folded napkins all the way down to the dessert!)

One meal that was special to all of us was before the holidays. Kayln was kind enough to share her generous grandparents, who invited us all over for a delicious dinner. We truly appreciated their hospitality and enjoyed hearing stories of their past.

Much of our downtime is spent with each other in the TV room, either doing puzzles, sharing stories, or our favorite, watching movies. We have eclectic taste -- we have watched every Disney movie and all seven movies of the *Fast and Furious* series!

We can thank Smalls for the popcorn that we enjoy during the movie and Mac, Miranda and River for the hilarious commentary during the film.

Usually, Katherine, Abby, Emily and I are knitting hats or scarfs. (This is a skill I learned at my work site and got to share with some of my community members who were well versed in knitting, or decided to give it a try for the first time. We are all grateful for Katherine sharing her endless supply of yarn so we were able to make hats and gifts for our families this Christmas!)

As I take a second to look around the room, I am grateful that each of us brought a piece of our own home to make this the home it has become. We have become so close in such a short period of time, and I am beyond blessed to be a part of this loving and accepting community. †

Kristina DeMeis works with Archdiocesan Housing at St. Martin's Plaza



▲ Theresa Marten, center, with some of her clients from Urban Peak Youth Shelter.

One year with CVV is

By Theresa Marten
CVV Year 22 Volunteer

Why would I do a second year service?! A question not only on my mind, but one others ask as well.

What was I looking for? I wanted to be in a larger community, I wanted to work in the midst of the intensity of people and I wanted to mature in my faith. So far, I have been challenged in all of these areas.

This larger community has allowed and forced me to be more honest than ever before. I am constantly learning how to have different levels of relationships with each member and how to maintain those relationships in large group settings.

As a person who loves to dialogue and argue opposing views, it's great to talk about prominent issues, especially with my housemates who are smart and engaged young adults.

However, I have had to learn to dial back and be confrontational in more loving and constructive ways. My community has also challenged me to continue being present to everyone in the house even after a difficult or long day at work. It can be easy to just leave the house or go to my room, but when I choose to stay and talk longer in the kitchen as we clean, or visit while others finish a puzzle, I am reminded of the gift to have the opportunity to hear about



Learning to say yes when the only answer is no can bring great joy

By Molly Seifert
CVV Year 22 Volunteer

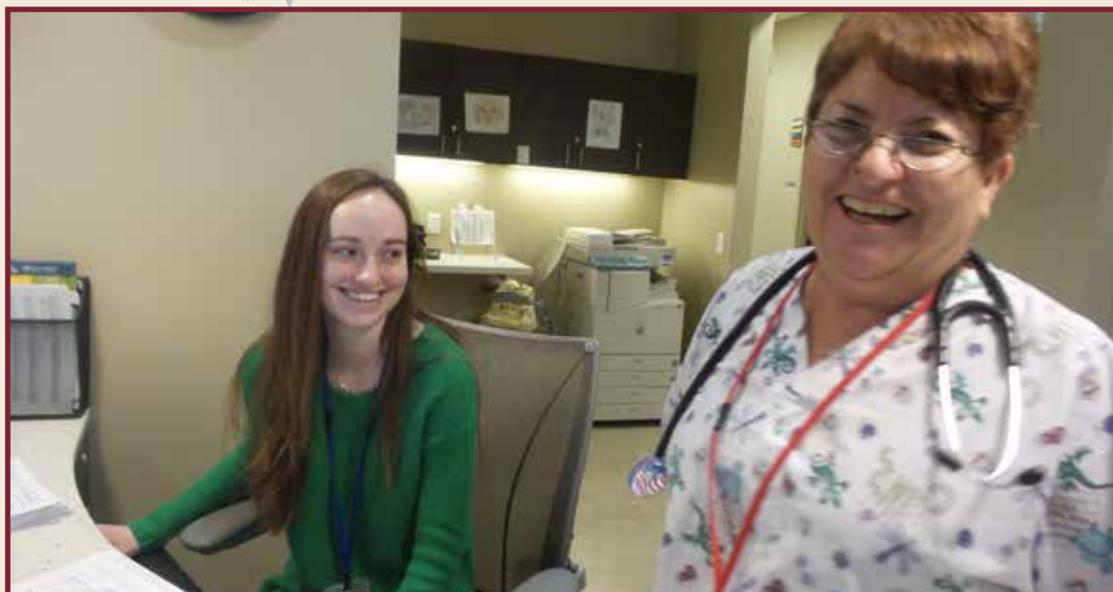
In many ways, the waiting room at Stout Street Health Center sets the tone for the rest of the visit. Many days, working the front desk, I feel like my most commonly used word is “no” -- not setting the right tone.

No you cannot have a pre-book, no you cannot be seen today, no I do not know how far behind the doctor is.

On days like these it seems that I am doing very little to help the patients who come into my waiting room. Saying no over and over to people who desperately need help is exhausting and discouraging.

The patients who come into Stout Street are people who frequently hear the word no, and I hated to be just another person who was telling them they could not do something. So I began to search for things I could say yes to.

There was a patient who came to the clinic directly after being discharged from the hospital. She was in a lot of pain and needed to be seen quickly but



▲ Molly Seifert, left, with one of the nurses who works with her at the Stout Street Health Center.

People recognize and appreciate when an honest effort is put into helping them.

the provider was running behind.

I could not give her a clear answer as to when she would be seen but I could give her a Gatorade and a snack.

This small thing made a difference in her comfort level and made the wait slightly more bearable. I realized that I could say “yes” to giving someone a snack or helping them fill out pa-

perwork. I could make sure that I did my job as efficiently and thoroughly as possible to ensure that no one was forgotten. There are so many small things that I can say yes to on a daily basis that when I focus on those, the many times I have to say no do not feel as terrible. This searching for yes has made all the difference in the relationship I have with patients.

I think one of the most important things I have learned at Stout Street is that people recognize and appreciate when an honest effort is put into helping them.

Now, when they come in, there is more of a sense of trust. They know that I am on their side, that I am not telling them no by choice but simply

because that is the only answer I can give.

When I am showing genuine concern instead of setting a tone of no, they trust that everyone at the clinic is there to help them. All of the times I say yes, that I am there to listen, make all the difference in the waiting room environment. It creates a sense of safety and lets our patients know that we genuinely care about their health and well being.

I am still often the person telling patients no but I am also the person who is trying my best to tell them yes. And for me that has made all the difference. ✦

Molly Seifert works at Stout Street Health Center

great but two years are better!

their day. Not only do I need to show up for dinner and other requirements, but I also need to go the extra mile and pay attention to others’ feelings and needs.

Work is not that different. At Urban Peak Youth Shelter, I need to pay extra attention to the youth so I do not miss an opportunity for connection or a possible warning sign.

The strongest lesson I have learned while being a case manager is that the successes and failures of each youth are their own, not mine. I am not responsible for them.

I am responsible for being present to each youth. Each person comes with an array of things they want to work on: education, employment, legal issues, housing, family

relationships, mental and physical health, substance abuse and life skills.

Listening and helping them to navigate these concerns, I am brought deeper into the reality of how much they depend on social structures that can, at times, hold them back.

All the abstract issues are now grounded by each person I meet for breakfast or help to find resources. At times, when I come home feeling overwhelmed by all of the problems, I turn to prayer, still hoping to mature in my faith.

This winter has rocked an internal peace and sense of hope for the first time. When I think back to some of the most difficult moments I have had -- rough interactions with

passengers on the bus; counseling a young pregnant woman on the phone; chasing a youth down the street -- I feel the weight of the emotions and intense need that was present.

But I know that I was not alone; God’s presence was in another bus passenger stepping in, a comforting word for the woman and a gut reaction to follow the young boy.

While I still struggle to understand the complexity of the world’s issues, and what my and God’s roles are, I know hope.

Hope in community, hope in good work, hope in honest reflection. ✦

Theresa Marten works at Urban Peak Youth Shelter.

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You're the best ...

Thank you!

Alumni who helped with recruiting this Fall ... **Michelle Baumann, Lynn Baumann, Kelsey Simkins, Colleen Calimari, Melissa Camardo, Elizabeth Lent and Lorrette Ayers.**

Let's not forget the folks who provided housing for the recruitment season ...

Jill and Dave Trawick, DePaul House in Chicago, DePaul House in Philadelphia, Maura and Greg Carpinello

More thank yous!!!!

- ✓ 21 online plus 5 envelope monthly donors
- ✓ 90 Colorado Gives Day donors
- ✓ 135 Thanksgiving/Christmas donors both online and return envelopes
- ✓ Anonymous Donors and Foundations
- ✓ Egan Printing
- ✓ Holy Family and Most Precious Blood for hosting CVV's pancake breakfast
- ✓ The CVV volunteers' Spiritual Directors
- ✓ SC Ministry Foundation
- ✓ Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
- ✓ Donald D. Lynch Family Foundation
- ✓ The priests who preside at our liturgies

How are CVVers recruited?

- Colleges/Universities, Catholic Volunteer Network's RESPONSE Directory; Alumni; Alum Families; Friends of CVV; University Service Immersion Trips; Religious Communities (parishes, Sisters and Daughters of Charity and Vincenzian priests and brothers).

These are some of the campuses that CVV representatives visited last fall:

- 33 campuses (25 by staff/6 by alum). Ten alum helped: five with staff; five on their own; materials to four campuses,
- November, 2016 (DePaul, Lewis, Loyola, Notre Dame, Loyola Marymount, U of Southern Calif., John Carroll, Xavier, U of Dayton, Boston College, St. John's in New York, College of St. Benedict & St. John's, Catholic University of America, U of Texas, Texas A&M, Texas State, St. Mary, St. Edwards, Creighton, Marian U, Ohio Dominican, U of Cincinnati, Ohio State, Villanova, De Sales, LaSalle, U of Scranton, St. Joseph, Washington U, Regis U., Holy Cross in South Bend, Ind, Neumann U.)

Bill and Mary Frances Jaster

**"Only the Spirit of God,
dwelling in your sacred person,
could unite justice with charity."**

-- St. Vincent dePaul

