



A Family When You Need It Most

SPRING 2021

# NEWS

FROM OUR HOUSE

## 1991 30th Anniversary 2021

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

### Resident Spotlight:

# MIKE MANCUSO

### *Celebrating the Gift of Receiving*

“Let’s do this well,” were the words Mike said to his wife Laura when he received his terminal diagnosis. He explains, “Our love and happiness has been a blessing. We are grateful for the time we’ve had together – it’s been a gift for both of us.” Then Mike adds with a smile, “I want to go out leading the band.”

Mike has the ability to make the person visiting him feel better. His focus has always been on their comfort, not his. He says, “I am grateful for the Lord’s presence in my life,” and he shares that with others who visit and those who care for him. Born and raised in Oswego, Mike’s family moved to Camillus when he was young. His father was first generation Italian-American and his mother was Irish. Faith and family were their first priorities.

At age 17, Mike answered God’s calling and entered the seminary. He was ordained in 1972. Even with the responsibility as a parish priest, Mike took the time to be on the front lines to help people in need. While serving at Our Lady of Sorrows in Vestal he worked with their police department as a ride along staff support. Mike says “Police officers generally are very quiet about what is going on in their lives. Accompanying an officer patrolling his beat can help build trust and open doors.” Mike recalled one evening when they were called to a disturbance at a local bar. As they got out of the police car, someone yelled, “Hey, it’s Father Mike!” and the fight was over before it started. When he was assigned to St.



Mike says one of his biggest blessings has been Laura by his side. “She has been so much strength to me. How lucky we are to have gone through life together.”

Michael’s Church on Onondaga Hill, he volunteered for the Onondaga Hill Fire Department.

Mike made the decision to leave the priesthood in 1988 and chose another career where he never slowed down – a FedEx delivery person. He briefly lived in Florida then returned to Syracuse, where he continued to work for FedEx for 16 years.

Life changed when he met Laura. Both admit it wasn’t love at first sight when they met through a mutual friend. However 16 years later after meeting again at a gathering, they spent hours talking and were married 6 months later. Laura admits it hasn’t always been easy with both of their strong personalities, “we have always worked it out and I am grateful for the time we have spent together.” Laura says that when she first received the news of Mike’s diagnosis she was terrified, but as she prayed for strength she heard God say “I got this” and she gave her fears to him. From that moment on she has trusted in the Lord and he has not let her down.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Board of Directors

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Mary Anne Hankins

## News From Our House

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As we commemorate our 30th anniversary year, we celebrate every person who has made Francis House possible. We embrace the blessings of life, love and friendship formed with those in our family and our community. We are thankful for all those who have made a difference in our lives and our ministry.

Memories swirl through our minds. We recall heartfelt moments of joy and laughter. Residents who now live in our hearts create a smile when we think of them. They have touched us and left a lasting impression in our lives and on our ministry. We joyfully recount the gifts each person has shared with us, all the wonderful relationships we have formed and how those relationships continue to grow. Whatever your connection to Francis House – family member, staff, volunteer or benefactor – you are a part of our family.

Each day as we care for our residents, something more is added to our lives. Perhaps it is a few words, the touch of a hand or the privilege of being present to a resident, that can inspire us. To quote a volunteer, "I receive more than I give. It is such a rewarding experiencing."

Even during difficult times we receive blessings. Our experiences at Francis House help us gather strength and energy. We are blessed every day. The sparkle in the eyes we see above the masks is a reflection of the love in the hearts of everyone who provides care and support for our residents. We have so much for which to be thankful.

*Lord, teach me to offer you a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all my daily experiences of life. Teach me to be joyful always, to pray continually and to give thanks in all my circumstances. I accept them as Your will for my life (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

Through this newsletter we share the many, precious moments which have been blessings for us. We thank you for helping to create those moments and for being a part of our Francis House family.

### Prayer for 30th Anniversary of Francis House

*We praise you, Gracious God, for your presence in Francis House during these thirty years. Thank you for sustaining, guiding, protecting and directing our care for those who are dying.*

*We offer grateful praise for all those who have been a part of the Francis House Family.*

*May we be carried through the next thirty years by your love, peace, and blessing.*

*~ Written by Sister Kathleen Osbelt and Sister Colette Walter*

Blessings,

Mary Anne

## Francis House Mission Statement

Francis House provides a home and extended family to persons with terminal illnesses so they can die with dignity surrounded by the unconditional love of God. We will use our lived experience as a resource for others.

## Core Values of Francis House

Compassion, Unconditional Acceptance, Respect and Dignity.



Caregiver Sally Whaley (right) shares a loving smile with resident Marlene K.

## SALLY, THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR SUNSHINE



It is with profound gratitude that we honor Sally Whaley for her 12 years of service as a caregiver at Francis House. We wish her joy and happiness as she starts her retirement. Sally has impacted our ministry in a significant way over the years and we will miss her greatly.

As a mentor for other caregivers, Sally has never needed to preach our Francis House mission because her actions clearly reveal her love and unconditional acceptance of every person. She has journeyed with each resident celebrating the joys; recognizing the extraordinary in the ordinary and being a compassionate presence. Her thirst to learn all that she can about our residents and paying attention to every detail of their families' histories, truly make them feel part of our extended family.

Saint Francis is quoted as saying, "While proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart." Sally has a huge, peaceful heart. Many who come to Francis House experience a peace, a peace that penetrates all in the house.

Sally was a role model for other caregivers, fully assisting them to transition into our Franciscan community. Saint Francis also said, "a single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows." I know I speak for many when I say Sally Whaley has been a huge sunbeam here at Francis House.

### **Have a blessed retirement Sally!**

*Written by Sally Manahan, director of resident care, on behalf of the entire Francis House family.*

### ***(Mike Mancuso Resident Spotlight: continued from page 1)***

Every visitor feels better after visiting Mike and Laura. Mike is a master storyteller, from explaining how to make the perfect sauce, to recalling the memories from trips he and Laura often made to Florida. On April 12th they celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary with a special lunch in his room. Staff delivered flowers singing "L-O-V-E."

Mike admits living with this disease has changed his role from the person who gives help and support to the person who receives such help. "I was always the helper," says Mike. "The people I have encountered here are the most amazing people. The first time two caregivers

assisted me with getting cleaned up and ready for the day, I felt their honesty of wanting to be here for me...that is true love."

Mike says he continues to be grateful for the blessings he receives every day: the blessings of friends, the blessings of a wonderful life, the blessings of being at Francis House and the blessings of having Laura by his side. "She has been so much strength to me. How lucky we are to have gone through life together."



## Volunteer Spotlight:

# DEBBIE SIMON

Four years ago, Debbie Simon saw an ad in the church bulletin for volunteers needed at Francis House. With her medical background and her love of cooking and baking she thought it would be a good fit for her. From her very first day Debbie said, “Francis House is so warm and loving and being able share in the joy that fills the air is amazing. Many people don’t believe how happy of a place Francis House is.”

Debbie was born in Kearney, NJ and moved to Syracuse when she was 9 years old. Debbie grew up in a large, loving family with 5 siblings in Fairmount. After graduating from Bishop Ludden she attended the Mandel Medical and Dental School, where she received her associates degree as a medical secretarial assistant.

Debbie married her husband Stan in 1982. She was a stay at home mom for 13 years with their two sons Matt and Kevin. She also has two stepsons, Mike and Neil. She went back to work in 1982 and retired in 2016 as an operations manager for medical transcription company, Continuum Professional Services.

Debbie reflected on her first-year volunteering and remembered resident Joan who always referred to her as “The Lemon Lady.” Debbie would often wear her apron with lemons all over it and Joan absolutely loved it. Debbie said, “It’s those little things that you never know what someone will remember about you. Joan was always so happy to see “The Lemon Lady” walk into her room.”

Debbie has always felt at home in the Francis House kitchen. Over the past 4 years she has worked with Liz Haar, menu coordinator, to try out new recipes. She is not afraid to try new things and believes she has perfected her techniques by working with so many volunteers who have shared their skills with her. Says Debbie, “Many of the volunteers have become great friends of mine, and I have Francis House to thank for that.”

Debbie remembers the day when a new resident was being welcomed into Francis House. “I saw the resident’s daughter walking behind him. Then I realized it was a former co-worker that I hadn’t seen in years. I felt so honored to be part of Francis House and knew her dad was going to be so loved and cared for. It was a special moment for me.”



(Left to right) Emily Alberts, Linda Streeter, Marianne Lanza and Debbie Simon celebrate Halloween in 2019 as peanut butter and jelly and bacon and eggs.

When Debbie isn’t volunteering at Francis House, she spends her time with her 4 grand-daughters (21, 18, 18 and 11 months old). She loves to read, knit, go for walks and she and Stan visit the Caribbean every other year.

During the pandemic Debbie really missed being able to volunteer at Francis House. “I missed being able to help the residents, so I did what I could from home and cooked two meals every month and dropped them off. I couldn’t just sit around the house. It helped me to be useful,” she said.

We are blessed by the gifts Debbie offers to our residents and their families. Thank you for being part of our Francis House family.

### Make a Difference In Someone’s Life Become A Volunteer

If you have thought about sharing your time and talents as a volunteer, please consider Francis House. We are in need of people who are available from 4pm-7pm weekdays or for morning and afternoon weekend shifts. There are many other volunteer opportunities as well. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Rea Carver at 315-475-5422 to discuss how you might become part of our invaluable volunteer family.

# AUXILIARY NEWS

## Welcome New Board Members

Several Board members of the Auxiliary of Francis House made special deliveries to welcome the incredible women who have committed their time and energy as new Board members.

Pat Leet

Julie Matheson

Anne Palermo

Vickie Company (*not shown*)



Pat Leet



Julie Matheson



Anne Palermo



Kathleen Conway

## Thank you!

We are grateful for the many years of loving support we have received from the following women rotating off the Auxiliary Board this year. You will always be part of our Francis House family.

Caroline Calimlim

Barbara Doyle

Patte DeStaffan

Betty Hatem

***Kathleen – Thank you for serving as our Auxiliary President. You have given so much energy, time and compassionate support to successfully lead us through an unpredictable year!***



## Auxiliary Virtual Spring Luncheon

As a highlight of Spring, the Francis House Auxiliary Board is excited to announce our 2nd annual virtual Spring Luncheon! (We look forward to seeing you in person next year!)

During this special anniversary year, we are focusing on praise and thanksgiving. We invite you to make a phone call or to send a note to someone who has inspired you in some large or small way as a token of appreciation that they have been noticed, thought about, and have made someone's day.

### You can make a difference.

You may make a donation via <https://francishouseny.org/auxiliary/> In honor of the 30th Anniversary, we ask you to please take a moment and say our Francis House prayer.

***For it's in giving that we receive.***

***~ St. Francis***

# YOUTH AUXILIARY NEWS



## YOUTH AUXILIARY REFLECTS ON A UNIQUE YEAR

### Thoughts from Youth Auxiliary Board Members:

*We can't do as many physical things this year, but we have had a lot of very impactful discussions. One thing our discussions have made me realize is that we're all connected, and when you lift someone up or show love to them, especially the most vulnerable or at the end of life, even if you can only do something small, it lifts us all up as a whole.*

*St. Francis led a life of service to others. His life inspires me to be a servant leader to my fellow peers in the classroom, on the sports fields, throughout my faith journey and in my everyday life.*

*I feel it's nice that we can make the end of our residents' lives on earth even slightly better. Just putting a smile on their face means the world to me.*

*St. Francis learned to treat other people with respect and kindness. His care for creation is a value I try to incorporate into my daily life.*



In November, Youth Auxiliary members made pies at home and delivered them to Francis House.

*Our Francis House Family,*

*On behalf of all the members of our Francis House Youth Auxiliary Board, we want to express our most sincere gratitude and love for allowing us to be a part of the Francis House ministry. The opportunity to support the residents and family members has been a distinct privilege during a year of crisis and uncertainty. We came together in community, not physically, to put intention and action to our values. We provided meals, desserts, cards and gifts to residents and their families in effort to demonstrate our respect and share our unconditional love for them. We shared meaningful dialogue through Zoom about important issues such as the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Clare, Franciscan values, social justice and racism. We grew in our critical thinking skills and in our understanding of compassion. Francis House will always be an important part of our foundation of faith and our experience of the gift of service. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of something bigger and better than we could have imagined.*

*Sincerely,*

*Emma Mulherin & Delaney Manahan  
Francis House Youth Auxiliary co-presidents*



We are grateful for our Francis House Youth Auxiliary Board Members who recently spent an afternoon making our grounds beautiful for our residents and visitors to enjoy.



On a fall crisp day Youth Auxiliary members enjoyed picking apples for our residents.

# HOME

*There's  
like <sup>no</sup> place  
home*

## SAVE THE DATE: THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

**Join us for a virtual celebration,  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021**

We are moving forward with our plans for our signature event ***There's No Place Like Home***. Look for us on Facebook! Starting in July you will have the opportunity to win fabulous prizes as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Francis House. Leading up to our virtual event on October 13th, we will be sharing stories and honoring those who have made our event a success over the years.

We ask for your support as a sponsor, advertiser or prize donor. For more information please go to our website [www.franchishouseny.org](http://www.franchishouseny.org). We will continue to update you on our plans and progress. For questions, contact Adrienne Kelley, assistant director of development at 315-475-5422 or email [akelley@franchishouseny.org](mailto:akelley@franchishouseny.org)



Ed and Emily Alberts, 2021 Event Co-Chairs



Lynda and Joe Convertino, 2021 Event Vice-Chairs

*"We were humbled, grateful and honored to be asked to be part of the leadership event planning team in the role of Vice-Chair's for the: **There's No Place Like Home** event last year. Through guidance, support, creativity, ongoing communication and a team that is exceptional, we are now excited and ready to plan and prepare in the role as Co-Chairs for this year's event. The Francis House mission is strong, the community is incredibly supportive and generous and the volunteers, caregivers and staff are incredibly dedicated and driven. With humble and grateful hearts; we begin."*

*~ Ed and Emily Alberts*

*"We have supported the mission of the Francis House for many years. It is touching to see the compassion and unconditional love that the dedicated staff members and volunteers give to each resident in their final days. Francis House provides a truly blessed experience and we share in their commitment to serve our community. We are honored and excited to be Vice co-chairs of the annual event **There's No Place Like Home**."*

*~ Lynda and Joe Convertino*

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY RAFFLE WINNERS!

Thank you to everyone who participated and supported our St. Patrick's Day Giveaway... all 600 tickets were sold before March 1st!! We are grateful to many who gave us additional gifts. Due to the generosity of so many, we raised over \$64,000.

**Congratulations to our 2021 St. Patrick's Day Raffle Winners  
Sandy Kinsella, Sharon Marhewka and Vincent Barbaglia.**

1991

# 30th Anniversary

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

2021

2001

Dear Francis House,

I was and still am so very impressed with your organization. You took care of my Aunt, my godmother, for the last week of her life. I spent days and overnights there with her, and was with her when she died. I still consider it one of the most moving and beautiful experiences of my life. What I remember most though was the love and kindness shown to me and my extended family during that time. I don't know if I was ever able to show or express my gratitude then, but the memory of how wonderful the entire staff was has stayed with me.

Letter from family member



Volunteers at Immaculate Conception Church in Fayetteville take a break from selling Krispy Kremes and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

## 2003 Krazy for Krispy Kremes

Auxiliary volunteers drove to Henrietta, near Rochester, early in the morning of November 23, 2003 to pick-up the doughnuts and deliver them fresh to Nichol's Supermarket in Liverpool and Immaculate Conception Church in Fayetteville. Although all publicity said the doughnuts would be on sale at 9:00 am, eager Krispy Kreme lovers stood in line at Nichol's Supermarket and waited in their cars at Immaculate Conception Church almost an hour before the doughnuts were to arrive! \$3,000 was raised for Francis House.



Craig Forth, member of the SU basketball team, visited with Betty, a long-time SU fan, and signed her cheerleader doll.

## 2004 A Tall Surprise

If you ever needed to know a statistic or fact about the SU basketball team, all you had to do was ask our former resident Betty Reynolds... On Friday, April 23rd Betty entered the great room with a look of surprise when she saw 11 of her friends... Her surprise turned to shock when she saw a special 7'1" surprise guest—Craig Forth, center for the SU basketball team with Juli Boenheim. Betty sat with Craig and her friends for an hour talking about basketball and life.



## 2005 Youth Auxiliary Created

Created in 2005, the Youth Auxiliary of Francis House is a volunteer-run membership organization led by youth. With adult members of the Auxiliary of Francis House and staff members of Francis House as advisors, the Youth Auxiliary Board manages activities and projects for the entire membership that support the ministry of Francis House. Members have been busy in the past few months participating in the Memorial Mass, Annual Auxiliary Luncheon, Anniversary Mass as well as taken volunteer shifts at the house.



2006



GE Elfuns volunteered to be a construction crew in 2006, shown here with Household Coordinator Sister Colette Walter. The group helped to construct a new shed for Francis House.



## 2008 St. Patrick's Day



Sister Kathleen Osbelt was named the Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Syracuse.



## 2010 A Special Place for our Smallest Visitors

Thank you Sister Jane Bourne for creating a special Children's Corner in our great room at Francis House. This special space has a children's table and chairs, puzzles and books including children's books on how to deal with loss. Sister Jane also made special folders for each small visitor that include paper, crayons and chocolate from NunBetter. Every folder includes a note welcoming them into our Francis House family.



Michael and Janice say their vows.

## 2011 A Special Ceremony

October 20th marked a special day for resident Michael Shotack and his girlfriend Janice Haynes. Their friends from Enable organized a commitment ceremony for the two who had been friends for 30 years before becoming engaged this year. Michael and Janice were dressed in yellow-the couple's favorite color that represented their many years of friendship. After a beautiful ceremony that included vows and exchanging of rings, guests blew bubbles and joined in for a verse of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." All enjoyed sparkling grape juice in champagne flutes and a beautiful cake topped with yellow flowers.



Sister Jane puzzles with a young Francis House visitor.

# THANK YOU...

*We express our thanks to the following for helping us through this time with various gifts and efforts:*



*~ Thank you to the Syracuse Fire Department officials and to staff at the County Executive's office recently for their assistance during the past few months to ensure safety of our residents and staff. Some of our gracious volunteers baked several trays of delicious and beautifully decorated cookies that were delivered to Chief Eltion Davis of the Syracuse Fire Dept Fire Prevention Bureau and Inspector Timothy Nelson in City Hall Commons downtown.*



*~ Thank you TeNesha Murphy, Research and Communication Officer in the County Executive's Office for her untiring assistance, quick response and making us smile while arranging vaccinations for our staff.*



*~ Thank you, Bernice Buck for hosting your annual Super Bowl party and raising \$1,665 in memory of Helen Day for The Caring Fund, Francis House's Endowment.*



*~ Thank you Meg Castellini for recording interviews with our staff, volunteers and family members to celebrate our 30th Anniversary.*



*~ Thank you Mary Currell (third from right) for coordinating a garden clean-up with some of the North Area YMCA Board of Directors and their spouses.*



*~ Thank you to Nunn's Home Medical Equipment for donating proceeds of \$275 from their dress down days and donated beds for our resident rooms.*



*~ Thank you to Linda Boyle, owner of Metro Home Style and her customers for donating wish list items for our pantry and various gift cards on behalf of Francis House.*



*~ Thank you Patrick Murphy and Steve Block for your service on the Francis House Board of Directors.*

# The Caring Fund

## YOUR LEGACY OF LOVE Through The Caring Fund

We have received tremendous support from our benefactors who have named Francis House in their wills and other planned gifts.

By naming Francis House's Endowment *The Caring Fund* in your will or planned giving vehicles, you will be impacting the lives of our residents and family members for many years to come.

We are humbled and filled with gratitude from the recent gifts received by:

Estate of Eileen B. Kennedy

Estate of Marlene A. Molella

Estate of Ann L. Slocum

As with any financial decision, you should contact your accountant or financial advisor to discover what type of gift is best for you.

For more information on *The Caring Fund*, go to:  
[www.franchishouseny.org](http://www.franchishouseny.org) or contact Beth Lynn Hoey, CFRE,  
director of development at 315-475-5422.

## Become a Member of Our Monthly Giving Club

We thank the members of our Monthly Giving Club for your commitment to our residents. This group, now numbering over 100 donors, impacts our ministry in a significant way.

We invite you to become a monthly giver. You can make your gift with monthly checks in envelopes we provide. You can also schedule monthly or quarterly gifts to be made electronically from your bank account. For more information, please contact Beth Lynn Hoey, director of development at 315-475-5422 or [blhoey@franchishouseny.org](mailto:blhoey@franchishouseny.org).

★ Car Donation™  
**Wizard**

Did you know you can donate your car to benefit Francis House? Visit [www.cardonationwizard.com](http://www.cardonationwizard.com) and choose Francis House as your charity or call 877-957-2277 for more information.

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You Shop. Amazon Gives.

Choose Francis House as your charity of choice on Amazon Smile and a percentage of your qualified purchase is donated to Francis House.

# WISH LIST

## MISCELLANEOUS

- AAA and D Batteries
- 8½ x 11 white & colored copy paper
- Grocery store gift cards
- Home improvement gift cards (Lowe's, Home Depot)
- Postage stamps

## FOOD

- Applesauce snack cups with sugar
- Broth (canned): beef, chicken, vegetable
- Brownie mix: fudge, dark
- Coffee: decaf, regular
- Cookie mix
- Cooking oils: canola, olive
- Cooking spray
- Crackers: Ritz, club, oyster, saltine
- Frostings: chocolate, cream cheese, vanilla
- Fruit snack cups: cherry mixed fruit, peaches
- Gravy: beef, chicken
- Jello snack cups: strawberry & orange
- Juice: apple, cranberry juice cocktail
- Mayonnaise (30oz)
- Nuts shelled: almonds, walnuts
- Pancake syrup & mix
- Peanut butter (16oz. jar-creamy)
- Pudding snack cups
- Quick bread & muffin mix
- Soda: colas, ginger ale, orange, root beer

## PAPER GOODS

- Flexible straws
- Freezer & storage bags (all sizes)
- Paper towels
- Snack bags

## HOUSEHOLD

- Disinfecting wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Liquid hand soap
- Lysol disinfecting air spray
- Swiffer sweeper cloths (dry & wet)
- Trash bags (4, 8, 13 & 30 gallon)

## SUPPLIES

- Adult briefs: Taped briefs (not pull-ups) large, extra large
- Alcohol pads
- Aromatherapy diffusers
- Baby wipes (unscented)
- Body Wash
- Chapstick/Lip balm
- Essential Oils
- Exam gloves: latex free, powder free, large
- Masks
- Mouthwash
- Unscented lotion



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You can request a copy  
of our most recently filed  
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the Charities Bureau  
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Attorney General's website  
[www.charitiesnys.com](http://www.charitiesnys.com) or by  
contacting (212) 416-8401.

## WE PRAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY FROM DECEMBER 15, 2020 THRU MARCH 26, 2021

Klaus Baasch	Andrew Dobreski	John Kowalczyk	Jackie Rucker
George Baldwin	Tiffany Edenfield	John Leggette	Charles Sandorf
Maryanne Beachman	Lorena Faciszewski	Pasquale Leo	Shirley Schairer
Carol Becker	Paul Fleischmann	Gail Metzger	Randy Schmidt
Marie Berg	William Gallagher	Avelina Miguel	Anthony Spagnola
John Cantalupe	Patricia "Tisha" Griffin	Francis Motolo	Natalie Spreter
Dorothy Chiesa	Shirley Hermann	James Ostuni	Greg Vargo
Cynthia Cooper	Princeola Jones	Elizabeth "BJ" Preiss	Vladimer Vasyagin
James Cousineau	Robert Killenbec	Terry Quinn	Rose Wisniewski

### ***We Also Remember...***

*Our Francis House family is saddened by our long-time volunteers that have died since our last newsletter. We hold family and loved ones in our prayers as we celebrate the loving impact the following people have had on our ministry:*

Dennis DePerro	Noreen Falcone	Dawn Houppert	Pat Kenific
Nick Kleist	Charlie Liggett	Martha Lollis	