Graduation Night 2013 at Hope is a very special event that honors HCC students and their families. Over 168 people attended and proudly watched students get scholarships and special recognition from staff, board and peers. Sr. Ann Kendrick spoke to the graduates likening their life journey to the mariposa (butterfly) that travels miraculously two thousand miles from Mexico to the US. The Sin Fronteras Youth Group dedicated the evening to Maria DeSangles, Director of Service Learning. The community with the help of a gracious donor provided a wonderful dinner for everyone. Entertainment included special music and a dance performed by Sin Fronteras youth and Sherline Rodriguez. Youth recognized for “Overcoming Borders” were Liliana Alvarez and Mateo Valencia. Alfredo Castillo received the Outstanding Service Award from his peers.
Hope CommUnity Center is a service learning community dedicated to the empowerment of immigrant and working poor communities of Central Florida through education, advocacy and spiritual growth.

MESSAGE FROM HCC’S DIRECTOR OF SERVICE LEARNING

For nearly 20 years Hope CommUnity through the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur have hosted first, Trinity University students, then Gonzaga College High School students. Juniors accompanied by Sr. Seton Cuneen and Sr. Ann Gormly came to live with Farmworker/Immigrant families, work in the fields and learn about what life was like for the working poor, farmworker community in Central Florida. The desire to educate is a natural extension of the deep relationship that this organization has with the community. When I became a Notre Dame Americorps (NDA) member at HCC I learned that service without context or orientation can be difficult and even, sometimes, harmful. About halfway through my first year, HCC received a grant from the Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhorst Foundation to explore sustainable/entrepreneurial strategies that could impact social change, and HCC thought the Gonzaga trip could be expanded to other colleges and universities. What no one anticipated was the revolution in our vision and the way we saw our work that occurred. We realized that Service-Learning is really the container under which all of our programs operate and everyone comes to the table with something to offer, and together we can build bridges between communities and restore right relationships. Sometimes, service means bearing witness to marginalized communities, and, together, restoring the broken relationships. Three years, 15 Colleges & Universities, and over 250 participants later, I continue to be in awe of this community and organization. One of the largest themes that emerged throughout the oral and written evaluations of the immersions was the feeling of hospitality within HCC. When people walk into HCC they are seen and embraced for exactly who they are. In the last four years, I have learned and continue to learn how to foster spaces for conversation, and opportunities for connection which is really the bread and butter of the work done at HCC throughout all of our programs. I am a product of the benevolence, kindness and wisdom of this community and organization. The values I have learned here, those that we present and model, I will take with me and continue to live throughout my life. HCC, in the face of challenges in the highly competitive world of non profits, continues to operate in a shared leadership model, because at the heart of HCC are the values of justice, human dignity, education and everyone having a place at the table. It is with great sadness, and deep joy that I leave this program, a vibrant and incredible product of this community’s generosity. ---Maria Desangles

*Maria is moving to the Baltimore area in July. HCC is truly blessed to have worked with Maria these past years. She leaves with our blessings, tears and best wishes.
As the fiscal year for 2012-2013 comes to an end, the Board of Directors would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all our supporters. Your contributions of time, talent and treasure have made it possible for us to empower Central Florida's immigrant and working poor through education, advocacy, and spiritual growth. As always, please know we are careful stewards of your generosity.

The board is very fortunate to have two new members. Susan Stacy and Elizabeth Swart; both bring great talents and leadership skills to our board. Susan is a licensed attorney practicing law in Seminole County. She is involved in the legal community and has served in both legal and community boards. Susan is looking forward to sharing her legal expertise with our board to assist the young people and families we serve.

Elizabeth currently teaches at the University of Southern California. She has a MSW and doctorate in Sociology. She taught five years in the graduate program of the UCF School of Social Work. She brings extensive experience in the areas of development and fundraising for nonprofit organizations. Elizabeth is interested in serving the immigrant families and helping community leaders understand their needs and diversity. A warm welcome to Susan Stacy and Elizabeth (Betsy) Swart!
Sr. Maureen White, Director of Educational Services

Sr. Maureen White, SND de Namur, directs the Education Programs of Hope CommUnity Center with several committed staff. She has a very special presence that helps us all to be mindful of what we are doing. She brings a tranquility with her to greet people that come here for help. She quietly reviews the situation and thoughtfully responds. This has a calming affect on everyone around her. In meetings with staff, parents and students, she listens carefully, and often identifies something that has been overlooked which helps move the situation along.

Sister Maureen’s heart is big, and she really serves the community – our HCC community, and the community at large. She often says, “yes” to the call to be a leader and she really makes the effort to involve others in achieving our goals.

Often she brings a different perspective to a situation or discussion. Her capacity to work with individuals and/or groups and to respect and honor each participant’s unique abilities is admirable.

Everything she does reflects her thoughtful, disciplined, compassionate, and methodical approach to a task. We are all honored to participate with her in the work at Hope CommUnity Center.

‘Heart of Gold’ Volunteer, Marge Buxbaum

Marge Buxbaum, Volunteer GED Tutor, is responsible for the learning and laughter while she leads a group of students through English lessons as they study to take their GED exam to receive their high school equivalency diplomas.

Parents often bring their children to class because child care is at a premium. However, that doesn’t deter Marge who embraces them as if they were her own. While advancing her students, she always provides a nurturing smile and affection to the little ones.

Marge’s dedication is wonderful to witness. Always armed with a smile, cheerful attitude and an arm load of snacks, her students receive the value of her knowledge and life experiences. She has also taken on celebrating the birthdays at Hope CommUnity Center with a special cake, a birthday card and song.

Marge hails from New York. Born with a Heart of Gold she believes in giving back. She has 3 children, 8 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She is very proud of her family and especially her grandchildren who have just recently garnered some academic accolades.

When asked why she volunteers? She says, “I volunteer to give thanks for the blessings I have received in my life. Working with these girls, I receive so much love from my students and their children. It overwhelms me.” Marge is investing in the community’s future. We are so grateful to Marge for all she does for her students, the Hope CommUnity Center and our community.

So if on some Tuesday, Thursday or Friday you happen to walk by the HCC library, stop in and say hello to Marge and “her girls” and witness the warmth and joy that only Marge can provide.

Check out our new website at hcc-offm.org.
Sign Up on home page to get news from HCC.
See out new videos on You Tube which are also on our website.
Click on Facebook through our website to see Hope’s Facebook.
Tell others about HCC!
Youth Raise Money

The Sin Fronteras Youth Group held a weekend Spring Yard Sale in late April. HCC’s community sent in plenty of wonderful items including this beautiful wedding dress. By Saturday night the youth had raised nearly $2100 which will be used to help pay for youth counselors at Kids Camp since Workforce is not providing funding this summer for the program.

Peace Camp

On Friday, June 1, 2013, 39 very excited youth, counselors, and a few staff members piled into one truck and four rented vans to travel to North Florida (Hampton, FL) for Peace Camp. The theme this year was Peace. Youth experienced five amazing days of learnings, fun and relationship building. The camp ended Tuesday night with a reflection and a talent show.

Kids Camp Starts

June 24 - July 12 Hope CmmUnity Center opened its doors to more than 100 children ages 5-10. Families pay $30.00 for one child, $40.00 for two children and $45.00 for three children for the three weeks. If it were not for our donors we could not offer such reasonable fees and be able to pay for our counselors. Thanks to our youth and the many donors for financially making this happen.

Three years of hard work, monthly weekend classes, retreats, papers, workshops and deep contemplative prayer brought Nilka Melendez to the great moment of her commissioning as a Lay Ecclesial Minister by Bishop John Noonan of the Catholic Diocese of Orlando at St. James Cathedral in Orlando, The Hope extended family of “La Mis” celebrated this accomplishment. A lovely reception followed the ceremony for everyone attending the ceremony.
On May 16, after 12 weeks of learning how to nurture growing children and family relationships with love and kindness, families from the Parenting Program received certificates of participation. Thank you to all the families that shared with us and finished the program. The next series of Parenting Classes will start in the fall and will be announced in late summer. Call the office or check our website for dates.

“Raise Your Hands! Raise Your Voice!”

On Monday, June 3, NETWORK’S Nuns on the Bus visited Hope CommUnity Center. Led by Sister Simone Campbell, the Nuns on the Bus place emphasis on the church’s long-standing commitment to social justice. They stand with immigrants, faith-filled activists, and Catholic Sisters who serve immigrant communities. Hope staff, volunteers, families and youth shared their stories, work and dedication to the community. Sr. Simone thanked everyone at Hope saying, “What you have done here is to create true community which is what our nation needs.” Sr. Rose Tresp, also traveling on the bus said of Hope, “Hope is a fantastic place of community, relationships, service, education, advocacy, and spiritual growth. The day spoke loudly that life is most important not for how much stuff we have but for how many relationships we have.” Sr. Ann and Sr. Maureen joined The Nuns on the Bus to travel with them as far as Tallahassee. Sr. Simone and the others will continue on their travel across the United States covering 6500 miles in 15 states. They hope to get others to join them to support immigration reform now by calling their Senators and Representatives.
El Paso Trip - Sr. Ann, Keynote Speaker

HCC Team Accompanied Sr. Ann Kendrick to ‘Voice of the Voiceless Conference’

The U.S. Mexican Border has a history and culture all its own. The Voice of the Voiceless Conference and Awards Ceremony sponsored by Annunciation House, in El Paso, offered an opportunity for Hope CommUnity Center to have a border awareness experience and to learn first hand about the danger, violence and oppression of migrants desperately crossing the border looking for safety and economic opportunity for simple survival. Clearly, the war on drugs has become a war on the poor.

Sr. Ann spoke to a group of nearly 200 attending the morning conference. Following the morning’s conference was Annunciation House’s yearly fundraiser Solidarity and Awards Dinner. The women religious on the Mexican and U.S. sides of the border were awarded the Voice of the Voiceless Honor this year for being the ones who quietly and without much recognition or support step into the situation to collect broken bodies of migrants hurt on the Trail of Death, who help the undocumented who are captured and detained and whose families are left without hope or support, who advocate for social change, immigration reform, who search for the disappeared, and demand an end to the violence.

This trip was made possible by a private donor who provided airline tickets and hotel rooms for members attending with Sr. Ann. Annunciation House covered Sr. Ann’s expenses and provided the team with a van making it possible to spend a couple of fun days in New Mexico before returning home from Albuquerque.

Before flying home the HCC team reflected on the experience. Sr. Ann summarized the truth for all of the team, “It was a powerful experience for us all, especially for the two Dreamers who accompanied us on this amazing journey.”
Hope Attends ‘Day of Advocacy 2013’

Late Sunday evening, May 19, twelve team members from Hope CommUnity Center piled into a van and drove straight through to Washington, D.C. HCC was invited by Justice for Immigrants of the United States Catholic Conference to attend and participate in Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. HCC was able to view the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings while committee members were debating legalization-related amendments to the bipartisan legislation (S.744) introduced by the Senate. HCC team members had an opportunity to go to the offices of Sen. Marco Rubio, Rep. Bill Young, and Rep. Debbie Wasserman where they were able to express their concerns, support and appreciation. Before leaving on Wednesday, the team had a chance to quickly tour the national monuments and enjoy the city. Team members included Sr. Ann Kendrick, Eli Garcia, Maria Desangles, Mary Carroll, Nilka Melendez, Karen Moran, Beth Riebel, Astrid Rodriguez, Daisy Dueñas, Geser Ambrocio, Gloria Sotello and Lucio Nieto.