

Franciscan Action Network

2019 Annual Report



Dear Friends, Greetings of Peace and all good!

In January, I was honored to become part of Franciscan Action Network. This Annual Report coincides with the start of my tenure as Executive Director – and I am proud and excited to be part of this extraordinary community. Since my childhood education by the Sisters of St. Francis, I have been inspired by the charism of Sts. Francis and Clare.

At Franciscan Action Network we engage in public life with prophetic witness to that charism. Supported by religious communities representing all the orders of Franciscan life, we work to advance laws and policies that provide for those in poverty, that welcome migrants and refugees, that care for Creation, that accompany the marginalized and those on the periphery, that oppose racism and injustice, and that promote solidarity and seek to overcome polarization. In all of this – in the work of our extraordinary staff, our board, our member communities of sisters, friars, and secular Franciscans, and in all our Franciscan-hearted supporters – that special charism is everywhere present.

And, with that charism, our mission is clear. Because today's political, economic, and social environments pose extraordinary challenges for those inspired by the spirit of Clare and Francis.

Those in poverty, migrants, refugees, the discriminated, and all who live on the margins of America's economy and society are much ignored by policymakers. High infant mortality rates, new forms of racial discrimination, rising suicide rates and gun violence, federal reinstatement of the death penalty, addiction, homelessness, and high abortion rates are all evidence of the neglect of the vulnerable among us, neglect of those whom Pope Francis has called the “thrown away.” Creation itself – water, earth, and air – is poisoned, corrupted, and abused as more communities suffer the effects of droughts, floods, fires, and storms devastating the landscape. All while Washington politicians and policymakers seem unresponsive to the desperate cries of God's Creation.

Looking to the future, I promise that Franciscan Action Network will continue and build upon the wonderful legacy of my predecessor and dear friend, Patrick Carolan, in responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, ever mindful of the words of Saint Clare, “Love that cannot suffer with, is not worthy of that name.”

Thank you, friends, for your prayers and support.

From the Executive Director, Stephen Schneck, PhD

Dear Friends:

At the end of 2019, the staff and board of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) said farewell to Patrick Carolan, who served as executive director for 9 years. It was a bittersweet time and we continue to wish him well in his new endeavors.

In January, we welcomed Stephen Schenck, PhD who has stepped in to the role with enthusiasm and humility befitting a true Franciscan. The entire Board of Directors looks forward to assisting him in further growing our organization.

The challenges we continue to face as a society make it clear that our work is more important than ever before. With political polarization at an all-time high, our Franciscan spirituality and intellectual tradition are sought and embraced by more and more people who yearn for deeper values to guide and connect them with others. FAN's foundation, rooted in our Franciscan spirit and life, is built on relationships and we are greatly encouraged by the new faces we meet.

In this challenging time, we hold tightly to our Franciscan spirituality and intellectual tradition which emphasizes the dignity of every person, the beauty and reflection of God in all creation, and the gospel transformation necessary to ensure justice and peace for all people. We look for guidance in Francis' Canticle of the Creatures where he addresses nature as an example for us to better consider our relationships with God and his creation. We remember Pope Francis' use of the figure of Moses as patriarch and lawgiver, in his address to the Congress of the United States of America, reminding legislators, to keep alive unity of the people through passing just laws.

Following the examples of those who have gone before us, remembering our clarion call to conversion, we are committed to promote the work of justice, peace and the integrity of creation in a spirit of humble service, giving "testimony in word and work", being the change that is needed today. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and prayers as together we work to be the agents of change and the instruments of God's presence in and for our world.

From the President, Friar Michael Lasky, OFM Conv.

2019 Accomplishments

We continue increasing our presence on Capitol Hill and in the streets of Washington D.C., and met with legislators, prayed, protested, and risked arrest advocating for justice and civil discourse on issues related to our priorities of Poverty, Human Rights, Peacebuilding, and Care for Creation. As the year came to a close, with bittersweet emotions, we said goodbye to our retiring executive director, Patrick Carolan.

Immigration/Human Dignity

In June of 2019, members of the DC Catholic Coalition experienced a call to respond to the immediate crisis of children at the US Border separated from their families and detained in unacceptable conditions. Representing religious congregations and Catholic justice organizations, we recognized a call to mobilize the collective power of our various constituencies for the sake of the children.

FAN, as part of the DC Catholic Coalition made a three-month commitment to participate and invite others to join actions in three cities to educate, create a community of commitment, and to act on behalf of immigrant children and families.

(Washington, DC: top left; Newark, NJ: top right; El Paso, TX: bottom)

More than 1,000 individuals and groups were a part of this collective witness. We give thanks for each one.



Peacebuilding

The Franciscan Friars Conventual invited Unity Production Foundation and the Franciscan Action Network to a day of discussion in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the encounter between St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan Malik Al-Kamil.

The days' conversation surrounded “**Uniting & Living Together: On Human Fraternity**”, the joint declaration of Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed At-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al Azhar.

People of faith were brought together to follow the path of a culture of dialogue, enhance our understanding of various initiatives and efforts to address issues and challenges identified in the declaration, and finally to identify possible opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration.



Care for Creation

- Each year, we participate in the [Polar Bear Plunge](#) to Keep Winter Cold!
- We promoted Green New Deal at a [local IPL event](#) and in the [Franciscan Cord](#) publication.
- Participated in the US [Climate Strike on Sept 20th](#) (*Pictured*)
- Continued our partnership with [Living the Change](#)
- [Participated](#) with Jane Fonda in Fire Drill Friday on Dec. 6th which tied the theme of climate to migration and human rights. Here are some [photos](#).



Franciscan Solidarity Tables

The Franciscan Action Network continues our work connecting Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted individuals from all branches of the Franciscan family tree through Franciscan Solidarity Tables, a grassroots advocacy initiative that is taking shape in cities throughout the country.

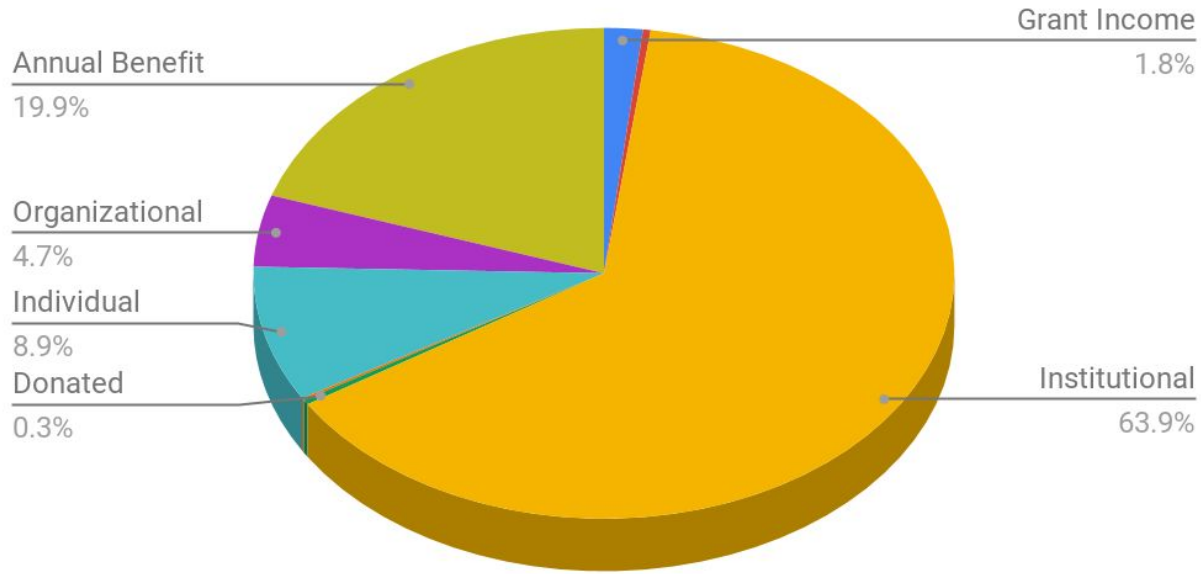
Each year at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days national gathering, we gather as one Franciscan family to recommit to bringing the Franciscan voice to the public sphere. *(Pictured)*



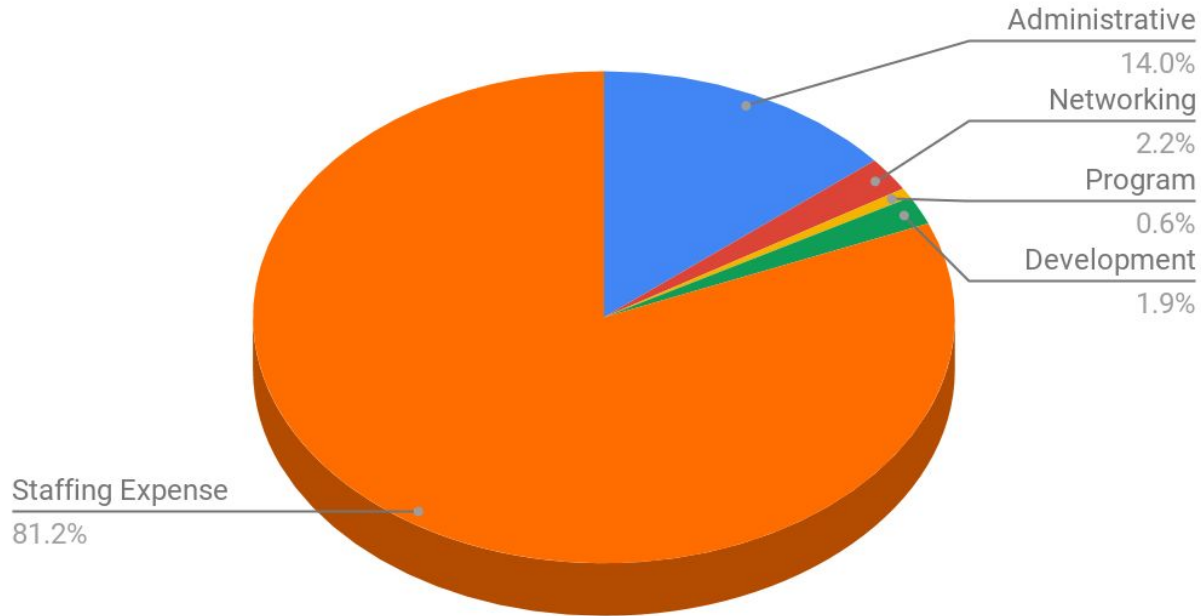
FAN Financials

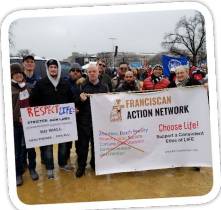
FAN's primary source of ongoing funding is from our institutional members. Their financial support is essential as together we engage the issues so important to Franciscans and all people of faith.

2019 Income



2019 Expenses





Franciscan Action Network at work in Washington, D.C.

FAN Staff



Sr. Maria Orlandini, OSF



Stephen Schneck, PhD



Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF



Jason Miller



Nora Pfeiffer



Janine Walsh