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Intentional Learning: The Faith-Justice Institute Newsletter, Spring 2015

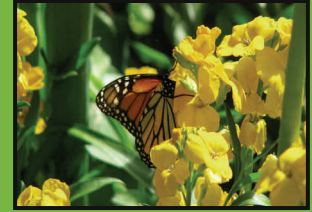
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The Director's Report

Springtime greetings from the Faith-Justice Institute! Since the beginning of the year we have experienced some exciting changes. With last fall's work by faculty and staff our Institute has a new, revised mission statement. The statement reads:

The Faith-Justice Institute, animated by the Jesuit mission of Saint Joseph's University, serves faith and promotes justice by engaging in social analysis, critical thought, and faith-filled reflective action. Through service-learning and faith-justice courses, immersion experiences, community-engaged scholarship and other academic initiatives, the Institute offers transformational educational experiences that can contribute to the creation of more just communities.

In addition to the new mission statement we have a new home! With last July's reporting move to the Office of Mission there was also the opportunity to join the Office of Mission and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity in a new space in Saint Thomas Hall. When in the area of Lapsley Lane and City Ave feel free to stop in and see us.

And while some things like location have changed others have remained the same. The Service-Learning Program continues to provide caring students with the experience of a lifetime. Almost 50 individuals from many different majors have signed on as Faith-Justice Studies minors; 20 of them will graduate this coming May. Already we are planning for new Institute initiatives in the areas of civic engagement, urban teaching, college access and faith-based forums and events.

The Faith-Justice institute, in its 38th year of existence, continues to grow and change in order to meet its mission of being the voice and the action of Catholic Social Teaching here on the SJU campus. Enjoy this edition of the newsletter! Let us know what you like about it! And keep thinking SPRING!

-Virginia Goulding Johnson PhD



**An authentic
faith always
implies a deep
desire to change
the world.**

-Pope Francis



**So you say you
love the poor?
Name them.**

Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez

An Introduction to Compassion



Every Wednesday afternoon I go to *Our Brothers Place*. *Our Brothers Place* is a shelter for men suffering from homelessness. Each week I go in to fold sheets, serve dinner, and have amazing conversations with the men that live there. Every week I am extremely excited to go to service because it is the one time I can laugh and have fun without worrying about my work. Whether it is a simple conversation or a rousing game of Jenga.

Our Brothers Place never fails to put a smile on my face. I am extremely grateful for the experiences I have had during service. I have some amazing stories and have learned a lot from the men each week. They have taught me more about

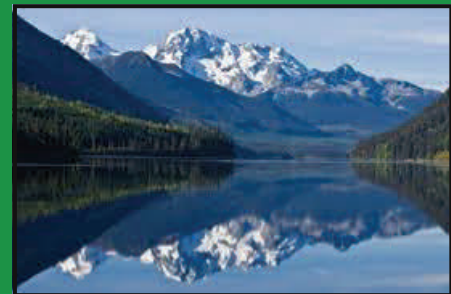
myself then they could ever imagine. The lessons I have learned from the men at *Our Brothers Place* I will always carry in my heart, and try to embrace those teachings everyday. The thing I like the most about *Our Brothers Place* is how much the workers care for the men. The first day I walked in I immediately got a sense of a family. The workers know all the men and constantly ask them how they are doing and help them with anything they need. Also, the men care for one another and constantly help and look out for each other. *Our Brothers Place* has changed my life forever and I will keep the lessons I have learned forever.

-Jacob Diehl '18

**WE DO NOT
INHERIT THE
EARTH FROM
OUR
ANCESTORS.**

**WE BORROW IT
FROM OUR
CHILDREN.**

-NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB



DIGITAL DUMPING



Technology is undeniably a positive and influential tool in our society. That's a fact. It is also a fact that something has to happen to the millions of discarded electronic devices every year. This was the subject of the *Sister Francis Joseph Outreach Lecture* this spring. Our speaker, Joseph Wolyniak educated the audience about how quickly this problem is growing and the health crisis it is creating in other parts of the world.

To illustrate the global impact of E-waste, Wolyniak showed clips documenting the problems in China, the Republic of Congo and Ghana.

The environmental impact on Ghana was especially telling, as it demonstrated the human cost of long-term violations of environmental policy. E-waste is a terrible environmental and health disaster in Ghana, which has become a digital dumping ground. It is illegal to ship hazardous E-waste to developing countries without a permit. E-waste is smuggled into these countries as "working" second hand goods. Millions of tons of E-waste is processed every year. There are 500 containers dumped in Ghana every month. Ghana and other developing countries do not have the resources or security to stop the E-waste from being dumped there.

The E-waste is burned in pits to melt the plastic around wires whose metal can then be resold.

This burning creates toxic smoke which affects people who live within a large radius of the burning. Small amounts of copper are collected from the wire, and a miniscule amount of minerals are scavenged from the electronic devices themselves.

These materials are sold for a minimal profit. The workers who hunt through the burn pits and dismantle the devices are exposed to toxicity levels that are dramatically above regulated norms, and incidences of cancer are off the charts. The life span of these workers is under thirty years. Most of them are children. The noxious fumes and chemicals affect the health and development of these children, and permeates the natural environment, poisoning the soil, the water, and the air and affecting millions of people for generations to come.

Often, huge social and global problems seem insurmountable and unfixable. The first step in addressing any problem is always education. Information about how technology is disposed of is not commonly known.

If you are reading this article, you have read about only the tip of the iceberg....learn more....do research....ask questions....tell others.

One way we can do this is to be mindful when we are around friends, family, colleagues and everyone is texting, tweeting or checking email.

Start a conversation about what happens to all the discarded electronic devices. Encourage them to pass on the information to as many people as they can. Perhaps we could also stop and think the next time we qualify for an upgrade. Ask yourself if you really need it or maybe you could reduce electronic waste. If everyone made an effort to reduce or responsibly recycle their electronic devices imagine the impact we could make.

If we all benefit from the gifts of technology, isn't it our responsibility to the people of Ghana and other dumping grounds, the planet and to future generations to be careful and conscious of how we dispose of them?

The IT dept. and Sustainability Committee are hosting an E-Recycling event on campus on Tuesday, May 5th from 11am-1:00pm in the Sourin parking lot.

-Elizabeth Norberg



A Future Not our Own

It helps, now and then, to step back
and take the long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete

Which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything

and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,

ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

-Kenneth Edward Untener

The Voice of the Voiceless

March 24, 2015 marked the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. A Salvadoran priest, leader, and voice for the poor, Romero took a stand for the marginalized people of El Salvador during a time of great unrest and fear in a war filled country. Romero lived out a faith that does justice, as he saw the injustices many marginalized people in El Salvador were facing, and took a stand to make change.

This year, on the 35th anniversary, the country of El Salvador, along with many people, colleges and universities in the United States, are honoring Romero's life and legacy, while continuing to fight for justice and peace.

Romero will be beatified on May 23rd in San Salvador, El Salvador.

-Ella Guimond



A Senior Perspective

There isn't anything more cliché than a graduating senior reflecting on how their time as an undergraduate has positively shaped them as a human being. But let me grab your attention by saying that my time here at St. Joseph's University was torturous and I have the Faith-Justice Institute to thank for it.

Coming from Charlottesville, VA, which was only then beginning to endure the now constant scrutiny of the national media's microscope after a college student murdered his girlfriend, I thought I was escaping suffering by going to Philadelphia. It's only as a senior that I am able to reflect how naive I was to think that I could keep the world of suffering outside my front door.

Getting involved with the Philadelphia Service Immersion Program prior to my freshman year can be attributed as the "gateway service" in which I found myself inextricably drawn to the relational aspect of community service. Service-Learning only increased my curiosity as I heard from other students who found themselves in similar situations. Everyone seemed to be questioning the status quo. And to me, one of the greater challenges that I still face as I end my time with ALMAs, a group working with youth who are homeless, is the consequence of separation within the relational context of community service.

How can we be a drop in the ocean, if we can even consider our impact on the community as such, if we are graduating to dry land? Sure, we can continue to serve our communities after we move on from St. Joseph's University. But the captivating nature of service within the collegiate setting has been a bittersweet gift. We want to help because help is needed. Here at college, my questions have been answered, my beliefs were challenged, and my soul stretched when I think back on the different experiences I had through service.

But service is tantalizing as there never seems to be a definitive understanding of why things are the way they are. We have classes to explain how things have become the way they are, but does that answer why Jalil's life experiences weigh on my mind, even after leaving my service? Or why Courtney chooses to share glimpses of her childhood filled with abuse?

Empathy demands that we enter into some relationship with those whom we serve. In humanizing one another, we cannot simply walk away without be impacted. We choose to carry those experiences on our minds in order to be in solidarity. But these weigh heavily on our mind. The more service we enter into, the more experiences we seem to bear in mind so that we are laden by empathy.

No one warned me that choosing this empathetic, relational path to service would result in me wanting to do more service to find answers. But in each instance, there is a reward from the snippets that individuals choose to share that keeps me going. These might not answer the big questions, but it fuels my sense of self as I find myself continually asking them.

Thus, I can say that the Faith-Justice Institute has caused me to be hungry for these answers. I want the unreachable feast. Having learned how to learn here at St. Joseph's University, it will be difficult to graduate and move beyond a community that caters to this quest. But I will say that I am prepared to keep asking questions, now knowing which questions are worth asking after different endeavors in service.

Hawk Hill has been such a comprehensive support system that has allowed for me to explore my own self through service, but I don't know if I will find anything else like it upon graduating.

-Jack Viere '15

GOD OF ALL PEOPLE, GRANT US VISION TO SEE YOUR PRESENCE IN OUR MIDST. ESPECIALLY IN OUR IMMIGRANT BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GIVE US COURAGE TO OPEN THE DOOR TO OUR NEIGHBORS AND GRACE TO BUILD A SOCIETY OF JUSTICE.



Solidarity With Covenant House Youth



While multiple ALMA members were able to study abroad during the Fall 2014 semester, seniors Maggie Santella and Jack Viere hosted the Dedicated Month of November in which nearly 20 additional students took on the challenges of encountering what it means to be in solidarity with youth who are homeless in the Philadelphia community.

Aiming to give an understanding to the language revolving around homelessness, the group held reflections that focused on recently published articles and YouTube videos. Later that November, these discussions were followed by two talks given by visiting youths from Covenant House, a network of community outreach centers with the nearest location in Germantown. The month culminated in the nationwide Sleep Out, which started with St. Joseph's students, alongside the youth from Covenant

House, gathering at Independence Hall to commemorate the 5,000 youth who die homeless each year in the United States.

Later that evening, in solidarity with communities in Philadelphia and across the country, the same 20 students who committed themselves to the Dedicated Month of November, along with faculty advisor Dr. Susan Clampet-Linquist (who was celebrating her birthday), braved 30 degree weather for several hours. With a starry sky above, cardboard boxes aligned the Chapel of St. Joseph's lawn until the sub-freezing temperatures moved the group inside.

This Spring 2015 semester, ALMAs is proud to announce its newest freshmen: Emma Seely and Amber Denham. Both of whom, after enduring the ritualistic Sleep Out, have eagerly begun their time at Covenant House. Along with Maggie

and Jack, seniors Jade Marie and Lauren Rollman, will be graduating and entering fields of education and healthcare, respectively. ALMAs will be anticipating junior Lindsay Hueston to fulfill the much needed leadership role next semester after more than half of the community will be graduating. Hopefully, after taking on new applicants, the group will resume a therapeutic approach to the time spent at Covenant House with the popular knitting initiative or some other activity that instills a sense of mindfulness.

Any undergraduate student who feels called to take on the unique challenges of working with college-aged youth who are homeless in the neighboring community around St. Joseph's University is encouraged to contact Elizabeth Norberg for more information.

-Jack Viere '15