

# INTENTIONAL LEARNING

THE FAITH-JUSTICE INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2012

VOLUME IV ISSUE I

## *From Then To Now*

The 35 year history of the Faith-Justice Institute at Saint Joseph's University has many, many highlights; perhaps none so "impactful" as its Service-Learning Program, now two decades old. An unpublished history of the Faith-Justice Institute indicates that in the early 90's there emerged an idea to "coordinate social analysis study with the already strong community outreach and service at SJU". Under the direction of Jim Stormes SJ the Faith-Justice Institute examined the possibility of using the discussions of social concerns already available in courses related to the role of the University in the community and city. This led administrators and faculty to explore the Service-

Learning option. Subsequently they designed a unique model of integrating academic study and student services experiences that would be faithful to the ideals of Jesuit Education and the liberal arts tradition.

The innovative Saint Joseph's University Service-Learning Pilot model earned a 3 year federal grant (Corporation of National Service) and rolled out a 3 tiered sequence of courses around Philosophy, the Social Sciences, Theology, and Field Work. The Service-Learning Program grew and grew. In the beginning there were 6 courses and 94 students. By 1997 there were 10 courses. Today there are 40 courses and 614 students with new

courses being developed by faculty from both the College of Arts and Sciences and the Haub School of Business. The Faith-Justice staff has dedicated this entire newsletter to illustrate the numerous contributors to the Service-Learning Program's success. The constituencies they represent— students-faculty-community partners-staff—together have led the Service-Learning Program to make the incredible impact it has made on the lives of so many. Come, read our story....

-Director V.G. Johnson, Ph.D, F-JI

## *Service-Learning At the Beginning...*

...that is, of the formal Service-Learning Program. At least one course that fit the model was already being offered in the Fine Arts Department. Here, I describe the inspiration for the pilot courses in the program and the early challenges.

In 1989 – 90 I had a sabbatical, and spent the year at Boston College as a Visiting Scholar. There I learned of their PULSE Program (which I still consider the gold standard for service-learning). Students took specially designed courses in philosophy and theology, integrated with significant service at sites in Boston whose clientele were disadvantaged. One might expect that specially designed courses would focus on ethical issues such as social obligations to impoverished people, but that wasn't the model. Instead, students studied classic writers like Aristotle and Augustine as the framework for reflecting on their experience. This both inspired and excited me.

When I returned to Saint Joseph's, the Associate Director of the Faith-Justice Institute Michelle

James-Deramo, supported by Director Jim Stormes, SJ, was enthusiastic about developing a pilot course. From my side, the course had to satisfy GER requirements in philosophy (a sequence of Human Person in the fall and Moral Philosophy in the spring, to incoming freshmen). I had to assure my department that in addition to the required three hours of service each week, the work of the course would fulfill departmental expectations for those two courses. Offering four credits for the course(s) was a way of communicating that service did not *replace* some of the philosophical work, but was over and above that. A more difficult challenge was integrating the readings and questions of the Human Person and Moral Philosophy courses with the students' service experiences. To the dialogue between instructor, students, and course readings – such as Augustine's *Confessions* – we added the voices of the persons the students met at their volunteer sites.

Like the PULSE Program, the SJU Service-Learning Program has been "relational" from its inception. I was in many ways "playing it by ear" that first year, in the company of Kathy McCauley who handled the logistics of sites and transportation. Together we visited prospective sites and selected among them. I ran ideas past her about paper assignments and classroom discussions that would help integrate the course. She was a real partner.

In the end I think the courses worked, and perhaps the most important reason they did was the terrific group of freshmen who signed up. I find that this is still true, twenty years later.

-Elizabeth Linehan, RSM



*Why Do Service-Learning? What Do We Get From It?*

Service-learning provides students with opportunities to integrate service experiences with what they learn in the classroom. Students often report that service-learning is one of the most meaningful experiences of their college years. But why do students do service-learning, and why are faculty eager to teach service-learning courses? What do we “get” from it all? More than you might think. Studies have documented the benefits of service-learning not only for the organizations served, but for service-learning students and faculty as well. These studies tell us that service experiences raise awareness of social issues and increase a sense of social responsibility, motivating

students to bring resources to the solution of social problems and to act for social justice. Students report increased perceptions of personal growth, leadership skills, and an increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy. Faculty report that service-learning students are more “engaged” (which refreshes a faculty member’s enthusiasm for a course), demonstrating a better understanding of social problems, better problem-solving skills, a stronger sense of social responsibility, a greater sensitivity toward and appreciation of diversity, and stronger leadership skills than their nonservice-learning peers. Both students and faculty assert that service-learning provides students with a richer educational

experience than a traditional classroom provides. Collectively, studies have indicated the positive impact that service-learning experiences have on personal, social, collective, and educational levels. That’s why we do service-learning.

- Dr. Judith Chapman  
Psychology Dept.  
Editor, *Educating Students to Make a Difference, Community-Based Service-Learning* (1999) NY: The Haworth Press, Inc.



“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. INDEED, THAT’S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.”

-MARGARET MEAD



*Faith In Action*

Bethesda Project LOVES volunteers – every kind and shape. To paraphrase Will Rogers, we’ve never met a volunteer we didn’t like. But there’s something *really special* when we are able to work with student volunteers who not only work *alongside* us in our mission to be family with the homeless poor, but who are also guided in reflecting on how their volunteer experience *changes them as well*. I am convinced that God is most readily found at the edges of our lives and at the margins of our society – places where our weakness and frailty are most obvious. SJU’s Service-Learning Program

helps the student volunteers to appreciate the richness that can be found in the ‘least of these’ brothers and sisters, and indirectly, in some very unexpected places in their own lives as well. Bethesda is grateful to be a partner with SJU’s Service-Learning Program, helping to integrate the students’ experience, reflection and personal growth in such a creative way.

-Tony Medwid , Director of Community Life, Bethesda Project: Our Brother’s Place

“LET US NOT BE SATISFIED WITH JUST GIVING MONEY. MONEY IS NOT ENOUGH. MONEY CAN BE GOT, BUT OTHERS NEED YOUR HEART TO LOVE THEM. SO, SPREAD LOVE EVERYWHERE YOU GO,”

-MOTHER THERESA



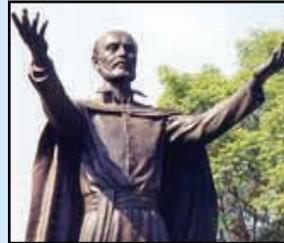
## *Service-Learning in the Ignatian Tradition*

Jesuit education has a long history of forming men and women who are competent professionals with hearts of compassion that influence the world around them. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, the current Superior General of the Society of Jesus, notes “Jesuit education should change us and our students... There is no real, deep encounter that doesn’t alter us...the meaning of change for our institutions is ‘who our students become,’ what they value, and what they do later in life and work.” The Service-Learning Program offers transformative education opportunities for students to academically and personally develop in this Tradition. Students engage course material and intentionally designed relationship-based service opportunities through academic assignments, reflection and class discussions. The SJU campus and local community form the students’ intellect and shape their values and beliefs.

Fr. Nicolas further notes, “To put it another way, in Jesuit education, the depth of learning and imagination encompasses and integrates intellectual rigor with reflection on the experience of reality together with the creative imagination to work toward constructing a more humane, just, sustainable, and faith-filled world. The experience of reality includes the broken world, especially the world of the poor, waiting for healing. With this depth, we are also able to recognize God as already at work in our world.” Service-Learning students’ witness the world’s brokenness and hope through individual’s stories and community placements working for change. Students are challenged to enter into personal stories of suffering, contribute to their

placement’s work, identify the structures perpetuating inequality and to discern their own responsibility to shaping a more just world. Service-Learning in the Ignatian Tradition is a deeply human pedagogy that seeks to educate students through academic excellence and to form their beliefs and values so that they are compelled to action.

-Ann Marie Keffer ,MSW



## *Fourth Grade All Over Again*



Enrolling in a year-long Sociology course titled *Social Problems & Social Change* and serving at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in North Philadelphia are easily two of the best decisions I have made during my college career thus far. My time serving at St. Martin de Porres tremendously impacted my classroom experience here on campus, truly giving life to my academic studies. I was

welcomed as a student of St. Martin de Porres, and my interactions with the students gave me a real-life view of the joys and struggles they face each and every day—a level of solidarity and understanding that perfectly complemented my studies of adolescent development and educational systems. I came to respect and admire the hard work and of the students as they acknowledged and worked toward

their full potential each day. Like other successful schools, St. Martin de Porres provides students with an opportunity for individual self-expression and comfortable growth and development under the guidance of their teachers. The students are the life of the school, and viewing them as individual thinkers with powerful minds reminds me how vital a healthy education is for children of their age.

-Carlo Cinaglia ‘14

“THE CARE OF HUMAN LIFE AND HAPPINESS IS THE FIRST AND ONLY LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.”

-THOMAS JEFFERSON



## *Service-Learning Defined: A Process of Transformation*

Transformational. In this word lies perhaps the most significant distinguishing trait of Service-Learning. In its intentional integration of meaningful service and academic examination of social issues through critical reflection, Service-Learning transforms the process of learning and engagement for all those who participate. In the classroom, the professor and students traditionally assume roles of provider and recipients of knowledge. In Service-Learning they are transformed into co-creators of knowledge, both co-educators with valuable experiences and perspectives to broaden and deepen their understanding of one another through class discussion. At service, the student volunteers and community members traditionally assume roles of provider

and recipient of resources, of knowledge or of time. In Service-Learning they are transformed into members of the same community, both with valuable resources of experience, of self and of relationship to share. Service-Learning transforms those who participate, as well as transforming the approach to learning and to service. Students move from memorization and comprehension of objective truth to a critical examination of topics, theories and statistics that are informed, strengthened and often challenged by the human experience they gain through service each week. Students cease doing service to “help” or to “give back” within the system as it exists and begin doing service to challenge that system and unjust social structures as they not only

create and sustain inequality and problems in society, but as they impact the individuals they meet and grow to care about through service each week. Service-Learning asks students to learn academically in the classroom, civically in the community and personally through reflection, and by doing so, asks them to become more engaged citizens in their community, socially responsible in the use of their degree, and ethically guided individuals when they end their college experience.

-Carrie Hutnick, MEd



## Anniversary

From the initial 30 students in the Fall of 1992 to the 614 students enrolled in 40 classes during academic year 2011-2012, Service-Learning continues to increase opportunities to shape students' perspectives in the Ignatian tradition of experience, reflection and action. We look forward to celebrating the transformational experience of service-learning with alumni, current students, faculty and past and present staff members on October 20, 2012. The celebratory events planned include:

**\*Day of Service, 9:30-3:30 pm.**  
Small groups will work with current Service-Learning Community Partners including opportunities such as food distribution, friendly visits with shelter residents or garden upkeep. The time will conclude with a reflection facilitated by our current Service Scholars.

**\*Reception and panel presentation, 5:30 pm, Campion Banquet Hall.**  
A time to reconnect with friends and

colleagues committed to the Service-Learning Program will be followed by a panel presentation. The presentation will include a remarks by SJU President, Rev. C. Kevin Gillespie, SJ, and remarks by Sam Deitch '97, Kristin Segro, '06, Mr. David Ross, Connection Training Services, Sr. Mary Regina, IHM Center for Literacy, Dr. Betsy Linehan, RSM, Philosophy Dept. and Dr. George Sillup, Pharmaceutical Marketing.

### FAITH-JUSTICE INSTITUTE STAFF

**Virginia Goulding Johnson PhD: Director**

**Ann Marie Jursca Keffer MSW: Institute Associate Director**

**Jill Amitrani-Welsh MSW: Assistant Director Student Development and Community Engaged Scholarship**

**Carrie Hutnick MEd: Service-Learning Placement Coordinator**

**Patricia Esnouf: Administrative Assistant**

**Elizabeth Norberg: Special Projects Assistant**