Featured Course

Just Health Care in Developing Nations

by Peter Clark, SJ and Ann Marie Jursca Keffer, MSW

Just Health Care in Developing Nations is a Theology and Interdisciplinary Health Services is a Service-Learning course which examines the issue of just health care for all peoples from both a public health perspective and an ethical perspective. In addition to regular course meeting times, all students volunteer at health care clinics throughout Philadelphia. The community based health clinics have an ethos of serving marginalized communities and thus our students work with people who are uninsured, underinsured and many whom are immigrants.

In the classroom, students grapple with case studies which include themes of allocation of medical resources, dignity and respect for human life, and autonomy versus the common good. They learn to discern the disparities between the developed world and the developing world of access to health care, clean water, appropriate sanitation and more.

The experiences students have weekly with the people coming to the clinics humanize and bring personal stories of topics covered in class. Most recently the issue of providing adequate health care to many or excellent health care to a few was debated. Student perspectives were informed by the resources and tremendous work done by the community partners they have been working with. Students were challenged to view the topic from the perspective of the poor both in the United States and in developing world. The conclusion of the course will examine the Christian response and responsibility as lived by the privileged status in the developed world. Additionally students will complete a final project to raise awareness of the issue of malaria in the developing world on campus.

Welcome to the Newsletter!

Dear Reader,

The Faith-Justice Institute focuses its work on the exploration of contemporary issues of faith and justice through academic courses, immersion trips, public forums and the offering of an interdisciplinary Faith-Justice studies minor. This first installment of our expanded newsletter is meant to inform you of our Institute’s events and partnerships. We are excited by all that we have happening and welcome you to join us.

Critical Thinking: Engaging Mind and Heart

Why Service-Learning Matters

by Marta Wilson-Barthes, 2010, Service Scholar

Love, heroism, ingenuity and self-awareness. It is the commitment to these four pillars that the Saint Joseph’s Service-Learning program, within the context of the Jesuit ideals, continues to hold an invaluable place in the classroom, as part of the University and amongst our human community at large.

The Faith-Justice Institute was founded in 1977; since then many wonderful opportunities and programs have originated from the Institute. The Service-Learning Program is one of them. The first service-learning classes were offered in 1992. Now there are over 39 course offerings, through 12 different academic departments, in conjunction with 48 non-profit community organizations. Yet these numbers mean nothing without the driving force, love and faith behind them. Through continual partner solidarity and personal and intellectual reflection, service-learning students are granted a deeper lens through which to analyze the social constructs explored in the classroom. Service-Learning provides another text for learning and for living.

As a senior Service Scholar, I have learned above all else that knowledge without action is worthless. Choosing to live in solidarity is love; inner-understanding yields self-awareness; maintaining hope creates heroism; embracing change, ingenuity. It is this shared commitment to interpersonal service and the capability for lasting transformation that has made, and continues to make, the service-learning program the epitome of the Saint Joseph’s University mission.

Reminders:

- Thanksgiving Break is November 25th-27th
- Service for Thanksgiving Break ends at 3pm on Tuesday, November 24th
- The final week of service is the week of November 30
Community Partner Spotlight
Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness: 802 North Broad
by Julian Phillips, 2011, Placement Liaison

The Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness (PCEH), located at 802 North Broad Street, has been operating since 1981 to combat one of the most serious social problems in Philadelphia: homelessness. PCEH has been working with the federal, state, and city governments to put individuals and families into homes and bring an end to an aging problem. PCEH, or more regularly referred to as “802,” has been a service-learning site for upperclassmen and freshmen for several years. The students participate in PCEH Outreach where they go out at night and talk to those staying on the streets. Through this program they get to tell those that are homeless about different resources available to them and listen to their stories. Students, after listening to the different stories of the people who are homeless, have expressed in their classes and journal entries a new understanding and perspective of this national problem. Many students have returned to 802 to continue to talk to those without homes and expressed how rewarding it has been to learn from these individuals. Besides outreach, PCEH has begun SafeHome Philadelphia in 2005 and in four years have housed 75 families. PCEH also operates a Day Center that offers: showers, telephones, peer counseling, assistance with resumes, and mailing addresses for those without one. All in all, PCEH is a great force in the community for social justice and a valued community partner.

Student Reflection on Service
Going to Service for the First Time: Gompers Elementary
by Brian DiNuzzo, 2013
Brian is a student in Dr. Patterson’s Craft of Language class.

“Going to Gompers for service is more than I could have asked to do in service-learning. I love working with kids, and before I decided to be a business major I wanted to teach at the elementary level. I cannot imagine what it is going to be like for me or for the children when we walk through the door that first day. My mind has been racing trying to figure out what to expect. Are they going to like me? Are they going to be nice? Or are they going to just ignore me completely? The crazy thing is that I won’t know this until I get there. I have to admit that I am pretty nervous going into this[...] I think service-learning is going to be an amazing experience for me and for the children I am working with. I seriously cannot wait to get started.”

The Faith-Justice Studies Minor
Presently more than 50 Saint Joseph’s University undergraduates are declared Faith-Justice Studies minors. This means they have committed to an interdisciplinary curriculum that enables them to integrate their major area of study with inquiries into social justice and faith issues. On September 21st, International Peace Day, the minors met to discuss upcoming campus events and opportunities to further the ideals of solidarity with the poor and service rooted in justice. Information on the Faith-Justice Studies minor can be obtained by contacting VG Johnson (vjohnson@sju.edu or 610-660-1574).

Calendar of Events:

- Bi-annually The Faith-Justice Institute hosts lectures centered on current justice issues. This fall’s lecture, in support of the University’s diversity initiatives and Dr. Rob Moore’s Faith-Justice Series course “Philadelphia in Black and White”, will be on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 at 7:30 pm in the Wolftington Teletorium, Mandeville Hall. Thomas J. Sugrue, PhD, Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahr Professor of History and Sociology at The University of Pennsylvania will speak on “Planning for Justice: Civil Rights and the Future of Philadelphia”.

- This November 16th commemorates the twentieth anniversary of the El Salvadorian martyrs – six Jesuits and two lay colleagues. Numerous talks and events are scheduled throughout the University. For more information log onto the Saint Joseph’s University website: http://www.sju.edu

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