“In addition to being an incredible learning experience, service-learning has transformed me in so many ways. The phenomenal faculty combined with what is essentially a cultural experience in the Philadelphia community has allowed me to start to grasp what is important for me when defining success and achievement in my own life. I have seen so many new walks of life that I have never been exposed to, all while being forced to look critically at my own life. Everyone at SJU, especially freshman, should participate in service-learning simply because it will define your journey here at Saint Joe’s and for the entirety of your life. The lessons, people and connections in the classroom and on site are nothing less than priceless.”
– Dan S., 2018

“Incoming first year students should enroll in the service-learning program to become a more, well rounded individual. Sure, you have volunteered before, but, relationship-based service is so much more than that. Being able to find things in common with a variety of people, is something that really changes your outlook on everything around you.” – K.S., 2018

“My experience with Service-Learning has been truly amazing! Service never felt like a burden to me; it became something that I loved to do every week and looked forward to. Prior to signing up for service, I knew I was going to love whatever service I was placed in. However, I never expected to form the bonds and relationships I did while I was there. The two second grade girls that I work with were not only my students but I considered them to be like little sisters. Each week they came running up to me with huge smiles on their faces eager to work and learn! Their desire to learn and positive attitudes made the environment so special and helped all three of us grow!

As the semester progressed, I can honestly say I learned not only a lot about myself but I learned so much about my girls as well. Each day we would start off with what they liked about school and I loved being able to connect with them and hearing about their families. After attending service I saw a change in myself. I was more patient, open to new experiences and recognized the importance of solidarity. Service became like an extra text for the class and something that I loved to do.

As a first year student it exposed me to so many opportunities and opened my eyes to so many educational inequalities in our local city. I would recommend all freshmen sign up because you become friends with other SJU students at your service site and you also learn about the local community that you will be living in for the next four years!” – Jackie F., 2018
“What I have learned from service-learning cannot be fully explained. To fully understand service you must participate. Service was not always easy nor was it always fun but it was an experience I would not give up. I learned that my view on the world was a small one and by entering a new part of the world it opened my eyes...” – J.H., 2018

“This year at service, I learned an incredible amount that I couldn't have learned in the classroom alone. Most importantly, I learned that even though some people are in a tough time of their life, they are still just as important in our society as anyone else. We referenced our service experience in class like we would any other text. I would say that students should engage in service-learning because it's an experience they won't be able to find in many other places. It's a completely unique thing that really changed the way I thought about social justice and systemic issues.” - A.S., 2018

“The most influential lesson I learned in service-learning was the definition of words such as justice, solidarity, etc. and how I can use those ideas in my own life to help others. Instead of just discussing about the books or the essays we write in class day to day, we also discussed our time at service and how what we are doing is important to the big picture and how we can apply it to our everyday lives.” – E.T., 2018

“The most influential lesson I learned during my service-learning volunteer work this year has been to make the most out of every opportunity that I am presented with. The men at my site explained how they did not do this and missed out on things that they now regret. Incoming freshmen should enroll in the service-learning course because it allows them to get involved right away and make an impact on the surrounding community.” – M.K., 2018

“The most influential lesson I learned this year in service-learning is to treat everyone with human dignity. It is so important to look at people as human beings and not defined by their situation (i.e. poor, homeless, etc.). I think that first year students should enroll in a Freshman Service-Learning course, because it teaches you about life, yourself, and so many prevalent issues in the world that our generation will have to deal with. I have truly learned so much about myself and have grown more during this year than any other year. Do it! You will not regret it!” - Jess, 2018

“This year I've learned to adjust. Adjusting is needed at service because every week that we go, there's something different to do or something new that's happening. Whether it's a helping a new resident get adjusted or adjusting dinner plans when we need to. Now that service is over, I now know that service-learning is one of the best ways to learn. Doing service is already great within itself, but when you can talk about what you did and what you feel during class, it gives you a new perspective. Freshmen year students should 100% do Service-Learning because you not only get experience in the community...but knowledge of how other people struggle in daily life.” – Taryn, 2018
“Some of the service-learning experiences that have influenced me the most were the interactions with the kid at my service site. It was great building relationships with them and them learning about my life too. Some of the experiences I've had I will never forget...We talk about service in class and use our experiences to learn in that given class. First year students should enroll because it is a great experience.” – Joe M., 2018

“I came into service-learning with no idea or expectations for what I was getting myself into. I was a bundle of nerves, and with that I tried to go in with an open-mind to my service site. What I feared was being judged by others at my site; others who grew up so differently than I had. But, after just a few hours of being exposed to the site and meeting dozens of new people, I learned that no one was judging. In fact from service I got to take away that despite the stereotypes placed on the homeless, you cannot judge anyone until you get to know them. I met people from all different backgrounds, with different beliefs, different goals and big dreams for the future; despite their circumstances. From service I can now take away stories and experiences that I can hold with me for the rest of my life.” – L.D., 2018

“Service-Learning might be one of my favorite parts of my Freshman year academics. While my service partners have become some of my best friends, the Program has also allowed me to get to know Philadelphia and the people that comprise it on a much deeper basis. My site, as well as all the others for my course, fit perfectly into what we're discussing in class, which makes service-learning a beautiful way to learn about the class material and then being able to use real examples that we've witnessed at service to enrich my learning experience. I think that it perfectly embodies a balanced learning method between academics and experience.

Incoming first year students should enroll in a Freshman Service-Learning course because it is an incredible way to start off the college experience. Experience should be a key part of college, indeed, and I can't think of a better way than by serving the community at the same time. It's a great way to learn about Philadelphia, meet wonderful new people, and most importantly, enhance what would otherwise be a normal classroom setting. With Freshman Service-Learning, your year-long class won't be limited to the walls of the classroom, but will extend into the service sites you go to and the people you meet.”

- Julian Z., 2018

“My Freshman Service-Learning Experience helped me to understand the difference between helping or fixing and serving. I have learned more about myself and my interests, and how by using both, I can make a difference. After taking a service-learning course, I have come to the conclusion that there is no better way to learn.”

– Jessica C., 2018

“I would recommend the Service-Learning Program whole heartedly. I enjoyed working in the community, while forming relationships with those who we were serving. This experience really helped teach me how much poverty and struggle is right around us and I gained so much insight into what we can do to help. The course really treated service as another text to the class by using examples and our stories to help support what we were learning about.” – Allison G., 2018
“I looked forward to going to service every Thursday morning because I loved the school I worked at (Pantoja) and with the teacher I was put with. This year, I learned that every student is unique and different in their own way, and that everyone deserves a chance to learn and succeed in school no matter who they are. I learned about equity, respect, and how important it is to serve others in need. Incoming first year students should enroll in Service-Learning because it is a great experience and it teaches you how to become a better person and how to be thankful and grateful for everything you have.”

– Madison S., 2018

“I very much enjoyed the service-learning experience because the service was linked with a class, which made both the service and the material we studied very relevant and relatable.”

– Tracy R., 2018

“As an education major, I went to an elementary charter school for my service. While I was there, I learned and experienced so much about children in urban school districts and the daily struggles they face. I grew as a person so much my freshman year from service learning simply by being in the classroom and helping in any way I could. The children's faces would light up when I walked in the classroom and would bombard me with questions like "Ms. Maggie, can you teach a lesson this week?" "Can you come back tomorrow?" "When's the next time you're coming back?" These questions made me so happy to see that my presence was making a difference in their lives.

Future freshmen should all experience service-learning to see what a difference they can make just by doing a few hours of service a week. You not only make amazing friends, but you meet people you never would have if you didn't sign up. There is not better reward than someone looking at you and genuinely saying "thank you", and that's all the payment I need from my service.”

– Maggie, 2018

“Incoming first year students should enroll in a Freshman Service-Learning course because it opens your eyes to things that go on in the nearby communities. It makes you appreciate your opportunities at Saint Joseph's University so much more. It also gives you an advantage over freshman who do not enroll because you meet so many amazing people and come to SJU already being involved.”

– Kathryn M., 2018

“Going to service each week made me see the world around me in a different light every time. I learned so much about the people I worked with and about myself through the year. It was an amazing experience and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I definitely gained more than I gave.”

– Anjini Patel, 2017

“Service-Learning here at Saint Joe’s has been one of the most important and unforgettable experiences of my life. Having the opportunity to be part of the community at E3 has taught me many things that not only help me learn how to help others, but have also taught me how to become a better person. It is amazing to see the progress and change both students and tutors go through by working together, and it is inspiring to know that you are a small part of the reason why they were able to succeed. I am thankful for being able to have this opportunity, and being able to see how my tutees are moving on and achieving great things in such a short period of time. It is an experience that I wouldn't change for anything.”

– Karen Medina, 2017
"I was trepidations to begin service because I was originally unsure of what I was getting into; but going to service proved to be the highlight of my week--every single week. Through this, I found compassion in the people, brilliance in my professors, and something inside of me that decided not to turn a blind eye to social issues of the world. Participating in Service-Learning is the Saint Joseph's University experience that I signed up for."  

-Marlena Brazill, 2017

"Working with the men at Our Brother's Place since September has played an integral part in my growth and in my enjoyment of freshman year. My service partners and I have created beautiful relationships with each of the men we have encountered, able to call many of them by name. Service-Learning has given me the chance to connect with people who I ordinarily never would have met, and to form friendships with men who come from very different backgrounds than me. I have been given the chance to put faces and names to the people affected by societal issues discussed in my classes. Any good we have put into the lives of the men, I know that we have received twofold. Service learning is an excellent program that has allowed me to learn outside of the classroom environment, but still relate it to what we are studying in class."

-Becky McIntyre, 2017

"Service-Learning played a key role in my growth as a servant leader and individual. Going to Hopeworks in Camden, NJ, provided me a new perspective of my hometown. I went to Camden every Wednesday not as a citizen but as a service volunteer, and my eyes were truly opened to the injustice that exists in the world. Service-Learning presented me the opportunity to give back to both the human and my home communities."

-Luigi Nuñez, 2017

“Service-Learning has helped me to grow as person in order to truly see and respect the dignity in every person. No matter what forms of poverty someone lives under, they also are filled with their own privileges. None of us have it all and each person has something to offer both to other individuals and to the greater community. Instead of looking upon the ‘less fortunate’ with pity, I now see them as someone with whom there is a possibility of mutual helping and sharing of experiences.”

-Krista Bourgey, 2017

"The service-learning program provides students with first-hand experience of the social issues studied in the classroom. Students have the unique opportunity to build valuable relationships in which they not only help, but also learn about the lives of others and their struggles. This opportunity to reach out to the community exposes students to needs, both local and worldwide, and the positive differences that they can make through social justice."

-Maggie Stillman, 2017

"Service isn't about changing the lives of the people that you serve. It's about opening yourself up and letting them completely change yours for the better."

-Abbie Loffredo, 2017
“Service-Learning defined my freshman year. It gave me an opportunity to work inside a classroom with students who do not have as many resources as I did. It opened my eyes to a whole new world of social problems. I had no idea that education in America was a social, political, and economic issue and not only did I learn about it but I experienced it with service-learning. I was able to be in solidarity with students who are facing the effects of educational inequality. The experience brought me so much joy, laughter, and love for the students I was working with. Because I was able to see the same students every week, I really got to know them, which is a service experience I've never experienced elsewhere. Watching the students grow and develop was so inspiring and part of why I looked forward to my Tuesday trip to service. I made close bonds with the students and teacher I was working with at my placement, but I also made the best friendships with my peers in my service-learning class. Service-Learning is an amazing opportunity to immerse yourself in someone else's life and truly live out the Jesuit ideal of being ‘men and women with and for others.’”

-Cheryl Rozinski, 2016

“After meeting only a few times, my service-learning class quickly became one of my favorite parts of the week. Nothing was more exciting than the relevant, crucial issues we talked about in class and the people I saw at service every Wednesday. Everyone has an opinion on the issues we were dealing with, and I not only got to express my thoughts, but I also took an active role in understanding and solving some of the concerns. Service-Learning, both inside and outside the classroom, has challenged me to do more in every aspect of my life and has opened my eyes to parts of society that people are often hesitant to take part in changing.”

-Sarah Ferguson, 2016

“When I was sent an information packet about service-learning over the summer before my freshman year, I signed up, figuring, "why not?" I wasn't involved in anything yet at Saint Joe's since I hadn't even moved in yet, and I thought this would be a good place to start. I had no idea then what a major impact it would have on my life. Teaching ESL to adults at IHM Center for Literacy was, without a doubt, the best experience of my entire life. It inspired me to declare as an English major so that I can continue this work after graduation, and the people I worked with changed my entire worldview. Service-Learning was the best part of my freshman year experience, and has impacted my life forever.”

-Sarah Scott, 2016

"My Service-Learning class has allowed me to look deeper and understand the injustices that certain populations experience on a daily basis. I have learned how to be fully present and form deep relationships with members in the community that I would have never met before. The class truly has had the biggest impact on my freshman year at Saint Joe’s."

-Katie Rodgers, 2016
"Walking into a service-learning class on your first day of school at Saint Joe’s is walking into a new community of friendship. Class discussions relate our experiences at service to the themes of English literature, and they have provided me with the opportunity to reflect upon the recurring themes, challenges, and success I have faced at my service site. Not only are we given the blessing of forming new relationships within our classroom environment, but we are also challenged to form relationships at our service sites. Each week at Hopeworks N’ Camden, my service partner and I work on literacy with young adults in Camden. Working to achieve social justice through this relationship-based service, I have taken from service-learning an understanding of similarity. It is meaningful to me when I am able to walk into my service site without holding judgment, and therefore learn from the youth of Camden, from our casual conversation, and from our personal stories."

-Lindsey Stamer, 2016

“Coming to SJU, I had no idea what awaited me. I knew I would be exposed to “the real world” more than ever have before, but I never imagined I would learn and grow so much from the exposure. My service-learning experience, both in and outside of the classroom, has brought my understanding the community, and world around me to an unexpected height. Reading about the social problems and solutions in class is one thing, but physically seeing the problems and then creating positive change is an experience in itself. This experience will stay with me forever because service-learning has truly changed my life.”

-Rosanna DeFilippo 2015

“Going into St Martin’s I would have never imagined that I would have been impacted the way I have. It is beyond a school. It is an opportunity for kids that may have never had an opportunity to reach where they deserve and take hold of a better life. Education of intellect, spirit, and heart take place here. This is not just a service site for me. I sometimes don’t want to wake up in the morning but I do because I want to see their faces more then I want sleep. The kids in Ms. Brown’s 4th grade class have impacted me. I now understand how lucky I am. They made me through action and simple conversation examine my life style and realize what hard work is. Many have a hard background and many also have loving support systems at home. The thing about every single kid in my class is that they greet me with a warm hello Ms. Kate every Tuesday morning and it makes my heart glow. They love unconditionally and give trust to those who treat them well. Most try hard in the classroom and although some days you love them and some days you don’t it is all centers around one thing… your desire for them to succeed.

At St. Martin’s every single staff member and teacher that I have met or seen desire this success for their kids more than anyone. The love and courage of this amazing team is why this school runs the way it does. I could not have been luckier to work with this tremendous group of people. These kids that I will always hold dearly to my heart are given this success and opportunity through the hard work of the staff and teachers. No one cares about these kids more than they do. They should be everyone’s role models of compassionate loving hard workers.”

- Katherine Worthington, 2015
“Participating in Service-Learning was the best decision I have made since I first decided to become a Hawk. The program allowed me to step outside of the classroom and utilize what we learned in the real world. I joined because I wanted to help people in the community but I think I got even more out of this than they did. I am only a freshman, yet I learned so much about myself through my experiences at service. I also made some of the best friends I have ever had through this program. Best choice I ever made.”

-Jessica Heymann, 2014

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” In three sentences, this proverb sums up the profound effect Service-Learning has had on me this year. Prior to participating in Service-Learning, I had heard statistics, facts, and personal stories regarding poverty, but those were only words to me. Prior to Service-Learning, I had seen videos, pictures, and even real people on the street that left only a haunting memory. By “doing” Service-Learning, I understand that poverty is a brutal reality and I am left with the conviction to change it.”

-Rachel Sellers, 2014

“Participating in a service-learning class has allowed me to fully grasp the concept of service. For me, it was more than just learning something in the classroom; I would read about a particular injustice in a textbook and then witness firsthand its effects on a larger community. Through service I have realized that there are actual individuals suffering daily from injustice in my own community. Working for justice requires working against injustice, and my service-learning class has taught me how to get involved and work to make a difference on both micro and macro levels while serving the needs of others.”

-Carlo Cinaglia, 2014

“To me, community service at DePaul was important for many reasons. One is the gratification that we all receive by helping others, seeing joy on children’s faces. The other important factor is to remember that these children are not like us in appearance yet we have much in common. The majority of the students at Saint Joseph’s, including myself, have probably not experienced the struggles encountered by the students of DePaul and the community of Germantown. It is obvious that Germantown is a “rough” area yet one with character. The drive there is eye opening to say the least.

While there, all predetermined notions of how the students would be or how they would respond to you, all of that goes out the window. In my experience at least, the students opened up by the end of the first session and were happier to see us arrive every time. This is a heartwarming feeling, being alone at a new college in a different city but having a friend who actually is excited to see you every week.

What I’ve come to find is that you can’t push them to work. The kids are happy to do their homework but at their own pace and in their own order. This strengthens my belief that they are all different, as I would work with one student who virtually needed no help compared to another student who needed more attention. It was challenging, but a challenge I certainly enjoyed. I hope to do more service through Saint Joseph’s in the future.”

-Nick Sindoni, 2014
“This past year I have volunteered at St. Francis Inn in the Kensington section of Philadelphia (as part of my service-learning class). Each week, I would perform a different job from serving food to washing dishes. One of the most impactful nights was when I was handing out frozen meat to our guests. When one woman said no thank you, I was curious and asked why. She told me that she had nowhere to cook it. I knew that many of the guests were without a home but something hit me when that woman said that. It has stuck with me the entire time along with all of the great relationships I have formed with many of the guests.”

-Trevor Wargo, 2014

“Service-Learning at Saint Joseph's University has been such a blessing for me this year. I have met such amazing people from Saint Joe's and from Philadelphia. I have been inspired by stories of courage, perseverance, love, and faith. My Service-Learning course was one class where I could actually connect the topics from class with names and faces that might be affected by the issues we were discussing. I have grown as a person through Service-Learning because I look at the world and individual people differently. We all have a story and learning other's stories and perspectives while expanding the classroom has had such a profound effect on my life.”

-Cassandra Tomkins, 2014

"Many things surprised me about the whole service-learning experience... I am glad I signed up for it and gave it a chance. I was surprised when my learner told me that she will never give up on me and that she is here to succeed for her son. This was the most touching experience ever because I never had to deal with anything she has....I have learned not to judge people by what they know or how they have done so far in their lives. I have learned that with every person there comes a story behind him or her."  

-Ben La Manna, 2012