

The St. Joseph WORKER PROGRAM

Empowering Women to Change the World

BY ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ

Ashley Guanzon '12 attended her first of many service and justice trips when she was a student at Creighton University in Nebraska. "I actually remember Mr. Kirschbaum telling my senior Spirituality and Justice Class that we should go on at least one service trip in college because it will be life changing. He was right," she said. During her senior year of college she was on a service trip that was hosted by staff and volunteers of the St. Joseph the Worker (SJW) Program in Minnesota. It was there she learned about the policies and principles of implementing justice. Her first experience with the SJW Program was captivating and sparked her passion for social change.

The SJW Program was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and creates an opportunity for women ages 21-30 to serve in underrepresented areas of need in preparation for a life-long commitment to social change.

These women commit to a year of service where they explore the values of justice, leadership, spirituality, and living simply in an intentional community. Fostered within the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Joseph Workers live out "the love of God and the dear neighbor without distinction." The SJW Program empowers women committed to social change to respond to the needs of the times.

This national program has seven locations spanning from New York to Los Angeles. When Ashley learned there was a site in L.A., she decided to apply and was accepted to the program. "I really wanted to go back to California after graduating and I loved reconnecting with the CSJ ideals that really transformed me in high school. Everything just fell into place and I knew God was telling me to do this year of service." Ashley began the SJW Program this past August with six other young women and is part of the largest group since the program started in

L.A. She was placed at Immaculate Conception Parish School (ICS) located in downtown L.A. The school serves a Hispanic population with ninety percent of the families identified as living at or below the poverty level. She is a teacher's aide at ICS and teaches Physical Education for elementary and middle school students. She is also the pianist for the school choir.

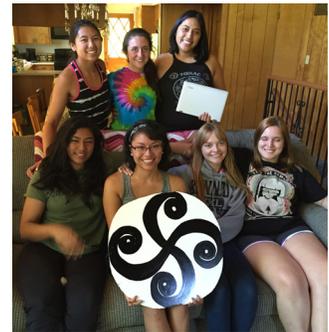
Out of all of the placement opportunities, the position at ICS was the one Ashley was most interested in. "I've always loved tutoring and had a lot of experience working with kids, so I wanted this position," she said. "I feel as if this position was made for me and that I was made for this position."

Through this program, Ashley has had the opportunity to rediscover and reconnect with concepts that she learned at OLP, including female empowerment. Since the program is founded by the same order of Sisters that founded OLP, they emphasize many of the same concepts such as 'serving the dear neighbor.'

"I truly believe that OLP was the catalyst that inspired me to become a better leader and an empowered woman," Ashley said. "One quote that always stayed with me after I graduated OLP was to do 'all of which woman is capable.'"

Ashley has been keeping up with her alma mater and loves hearing about the new STEM opportunities OLP has been offering students. "OLP is really paving the way for women in STEM industries by providing opportunities to explore traditionally male-dominated fields." She is encouraged by the role that OLP is playing in reimagining possibilities for the next generation of women.

Ashley plans to pursue graduate school or pharmacy school after she completes the SJW Program. For now, she will continue to enjoy this unique experience of changing the world through service.



American Sign Language Returns to OLP

BY SAMANTHA LEAGUE

Walking into an American Sign Language classroom is like walking into a library: everyone is silent. This doesn't mean they're not communicating, though!

OLP just brought American Sign Language (ASL) back into its curriculum, but ASL has deep roots with our CSJ Sisters. In 1836, a small group of the Sisters of St. Joseph moved to America to open a school for the deaf in St. Louis, MO. They set up their covenant in a small village named Carondelet on the outskirts of St. Louis. Their response to the need of the deaf community began the American congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and they still run one of the most prestigious schools for the deaf today.

Ms. Sabrina Vasconcelos joined us this year as our ASL I and II teacher. She was exposed to, and fell in love with, the deaf community's language and culture when a group of deaf people started attending her church in Brazil. In stark difference to Sabrina's