



# Vincentsian Service Corps-Central

*A Year of Service Makes a Lifetime of Difference*

Summer/Fall 2010

VSC-Central

## We say Goodbye and Hello!



**The 2009-2010 VSC Members Say Goodbye**

**In this newsletter they share their reflections on their year of service. Please keep them in your prayers as they move on to the next phase of their lives.**

*from left to right:*  
**Aisa, Beth, Deanna, Maggie, Mary & Janean**

### VSC MISSION STATEMENT

Responding to the call of the Gospel in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, lay women and men of the Vincentsian Service Corps serve those who are poor, while growing in prayer and living in community.

### *Maggie's Reflection*

Through the year I met some amazing children who could have easily been overlooked. I had 8th graders that were the men of their households and honor roll students, 7th grade girls that struggled with relationship issues both at home and at school and improved academically, 4th and 5th grade girls that fist fought to "protect" their family and ended summer school friends and kindergarteners watching their back in a constant struggle for personal space while learning the basic foundations for education. All of these kids not only saw and experienced things before they were 10 that I have only experienced through them but they grew as people and students.

One child was one that, for the most part flew under the radar of every teacher and staff member for the entire year. It wasn't that he was unintelligent or quiet but rather that he was obedient and kind, his name was Thomas (changed to protect his privacy). I was struggling to get through the first day of school and I was asked to watch the kindergartens while their teacher stepped out of the hallway into a classroom to discuss an issue with another teacher. Although I tried to say no because I didn't know the kids yet, I stood there and watched as the children tried to multi-task. The tasks before them would have been simple even on day two of the school year but to get a drink from the water fountain and get back in line seemed quite a challenge.

Not knowing any of their names I became a statue of authority hoping that nothing crazy would happen. As one young man wiped the excess water from his face Thomas accidentally stepped on the first boy's foot. As I went to ask him if he was alright, he pulled back his fist and hit Thomas right in the face. My instincts kicked in as Thomas stood in shock. I instantly made sure they were separated and called for their teacher. As she came back into the hallway I escorted the assailant to the office.

While in the office he continued to spread his knowledge of how the world works. He threatened me, the office staff and the gym teacher. This little boy flashed hand

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### VSC Advisory

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Continued from page 1—*Maggie's Reflection*

gestures that I have only seen on cable television and he used words that I still haven't heard adults use, even when angry. From that point on I never underestimated where these kids come from and where their options lie if they are not protected from the world they call home. I knew I was responsible to show them kindness and justice. The aggressive kindergartner that I took to the office that day was sent home with his aunt and returned to his mother and the people that helped him become so angry and that still bothers me and I hope it always does. He taught me that we are not our actions alone but a combination of our past and our reactions.

My reaction to that young man came full circle on the last day of school. I witnessed Thomas punch another child in the arm. I gave him my "you know you did something wrong, now come here" look and he came right to me and sat down. I asked him, "Thomas, do you remember when someone hit you on the first day?" He answered with a nod of his head, which surprised me. I didn't think this quiet and sometimes unresponsive little boy would remember that, so I continued.

"Do you remember what happened to him?", at first he nodded "yes" but then he asked what happened to him. I told him that we wanted to keep all the children safe and that no one deserved to be hit for an accident. I told Thomas that I knew he hadn't meant to step on the other boy's foot. I told him that the other boy was sent to a different school because he was even mean and disrespectful to the teachers. I asked Thomas if he thought it was true that no one deserved to be hit over an accident and this time he took a moment before he responded. Thomas got up from his seat next to me and apologized to the other child for hitting him. He came back to his seat, ready to be scolded for leaving our "little talk". Of course I didn't scold him. We talked for a bit more before he was allowed to play with his classmates.

Thomas learned through the actions of that kindergartner and the reactions of myself and the other staff. For the entire year I wondered why that poor child had to return from where he came from and now I know it was to protect and teach Thomas any myself. Serving these kids has opened my eyes to the injustice in this world. I will never forget the many moments that changed me into the woman I have always wanted to be. I hope that I have shown them that love and respect are not something you have to earn but rather they are something you deserve.

### *Deanna's Reflection*

At the end of my year of service, I can recall both positive and negative experiences. However, it's the positive experiences that stay with me. I would like to share a particularly uplifting experience that I had about half way through my year of service with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The lobby of our office building was packed as soon as our doors opened. Not a seat was empty and there was no wall space left on which one could lean. I was in charge of Intake today and this full lobby was my responsibility. As a Vincentian Volunteer I have the opportunity to wear many hats. Today, I needed to meet with each walk-in and assess his or her needs and provide whatever resources we had available that day.

The fifth or so gentleman that I met with, let's call him Vince, looked just as tired and worn out as the previous four. Vince was exhausted from sleeping outdoors, he had been hungry since dinner of yesterday and he was losing hope fast. He had come in today simply to inquire about bus tickets. I don't pass out bus

tickets like candy, so I talked to him and tried to invite him into a conversation so that I could gain more information about his situation. Among other details, I learned that this man had been homeless for more than a year, he had no surviving family and he was a veteran. It was this last piece of information that really caught my attention. I recalled that a local VA office was offering a housing program for homeless vets and I believed that this vet would be accepted into it. I gave Vince the VA office's address (just down the block from us) as well as a flyer that listed the program's details. Lastly, I assisted him with the resources from our office to help with his immediate needs before directing him on his way.

At the end of the day, I was proud of the fact that I had successfully met with all of the walk-ins from the lobby and I was glad to have a moment at my desk to catch up on paperwork. My time was cut short though when I received a summons to the lobby. I went to the front knowing only that a client was asking for me. As I walked into the lobby, I was met by Vince again. His smile was contagious and I knew something good had happened. It turns out that he had gotten

an appointment at the VA office that afternoon, had met with a caseworker and was told he was eligible for their services. He thanked me for the referral and the time spent listening to his story. I wished him luck and he went on his way again, but this time with his chin up and a smile in his eyes.

This type of experience didn't happen every day. In fact, I hardly ever heard about the final outcome of a situation after I offered assistance. However, that never, and will never, deter me from continuing my service to others. The assistance that I offered was a stepping stone to those in need. I couldn't solve every issue that I was faced with, but inner and inter-agency collaboration allowed for the best assistance possible for the walk-ins with whom I met. I don't know exactly how everything worked out for Vince, but I do know that I gave him the support and resources he needed in order to advocate successfully on his own behalf. It's moments like these that kept my spirits uplifted, but it's the faces of those who were waiting in our lobby everyday that kept me motivated to continue to serve those in need.

*Mary's Reflection*

For 29 years, St. Elizabeth Adult Day Care Center has provided a place for the elderly and adults with disabilities to socialize and spend their day. They give care to all of the participants, attempting to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. They provide door-to-door transportation, nutritious meals, social activities and personal care. St. Elizabeth's recognizes each individual as someone to be respected and cared for and works to promote that value among participants and staff.

My roles on the staff were that of activities aide and wheelchair van driver. Some responsibilities had me assisting the participants from their house to the center and back to their house. I helped in the smallest of things such as providing an extra glass of water, to assistance with visiting the restroom, to transporting the participants on their field trips. Though each of the staff has a specific role in the center, we were a team and would shoulder some of each other's jobs. As much as we are there to serve the participants, we are sometimes called to serve one another on the staff.

Over the year I realized how much a necessity a center like St. Elizabeth's is for families. It gives families an option for the participants to be independent enough to remain in their homes but have a home away from home for when their caregivers are at work or taking care of their other business. It gives the participants a refuge from the world that tells them they do not have a place in society and nothing to contribute. At the center we recognize their identity and find activities and discussions that highlight who they are and what they have to contribute to our little community. The simplest thing that I have found that gives them pleasure is simply acknowledging them each day. The part of the day I most enjoy is when I finish transporting all of my participants to the center and then going around the room greeting each person, letting them know, "I see you." We may only exchange a few words, but simply looking them in the eyes and saying hello with a smile is enough for both of us. We all just want to receive respect and know that we matter.

This year of service has also been an affirmation in my career. I have always had a passion for service, but the past year has made it very clear that I love to serve and advocate for people with disabilities. It has been a joy working with the elderly, but my real drive comes from working with participants that have disabilities whether physical, mental or developmental. They are the ones that I strive to help communicate with and help them communicate with others. When they are happy and enjoying the day, it brings joy to my own heart to know they are loved and respected. They are who I strive and fight for, they are who I serve and they are who brings me life.

*Aisa's Reflection*

A year of service at my ministry site, an emergency shelter for homeless pregnant woman and their children, has truly made a lifetime of difference as initially promised by Vincentian Service Corps (VSC). In a way, my placement, mostly decided by divine providence, served almost as an internship. I greatly appreciated it because my ministry site served as an appropriate transition from university life to the working world and I learned so much.

The people I was surrounded by at my ministry site and within my VSC community taught me more than vulnerability, humility and compassion. Overall, they taught me two very important lessons: how to see the face of Christ in all people, especially the poor we serve, and that I should live by the sanctity of life philosophy as opposed to the quality of life philosophy. By embracing this, I became more fully Catholic and pro-life.

Girded by a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and gender studies and having experienced multiple claustrophobic, condemning attempts from pro-life groups to convince me that they were right, I leaned more towards being pro-choice in my intellectual world of gray. However, my friends this year showed me that there was another way, and so, I lived out my pro-life philosophy in a very important way at my ministry site: when asked by a mother, I humbly accepted her request to be her main support person during her labor and delivery.

In this way I was able to serve the women of the shelter, women who the world deemed as invaluable; to me, they became Christ because they gave their "yes" to life and to God. Consciously or unconsciously they gave the same "yes" that Mary gave to God, an important "yes" that brought the human race salvation. In the labor and delivery room I was most able to speak for the voiceless,

the ones that the world refused to stand up for; I was able to hold the hurt in an embrace that healed. I was able to recognize the dignity of each person and to do my best to live up to their example. I was able to attain solidarity with the poor and an understanding of the importance of subsidiarity.

All in all, I came into my service year needing to reach down and "help" the poor, but what I didn't realize was that I really needed the poor to show me how to reach up and serve them. In the end, the poor all around me have helped me to discern that nursing is how I am being called to a lifetime of service. I can no longer go back to ignoring the person on the side of the road or to forgetting about the non-profit that needs volunteers to survive, at least not without thinking critically about the person or situation at hand. Justice and charity, I have learned, go hand in hand. I now offer my "yes" to live by faith, hope, and, most of all, love.

## Many Thanks to Our Generous Donors

We give special thanks to those who have so generously supported the VSC Program through their donations.

Your donation helps the VSC Members in their service to persons who are poor and marginalized.

If you would like to help support the volunteers in their service, please send your donation in the enclosed envelope.

Deborah Bean  
Bonnie Brindisi  
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Annie Godwin  
David Goodman  
John Gryskiewicz  
Joseph & Nancy Hendricks  
Stan & Beth McKay  
Amado & Carmen Rocha  
Stella Spoon  
Rosemary Uland

### *Janean's Reflection*

This past year I have been privileged to work at Guardian Angel Settlement Association (GASA) Day Care in St. Louis. Working here has allowed me to be a part of a program so much bigger than I thought was actually in existence. I worked in the daycare section of the program but that was just one piece. Guardian Angel takes care of the whole family—child care, food, clothing, access to health care, a social work program, help with bills... they do it all. Being a part of this program as a volunteer meant that the money GASA would have spent on a staff member now could be used to help the families they serve. The center's prices are on a sliding scale, which means that families who would have to choose between daycare and work, or daycare and food, can send their children to daycare and go to work in order to start climbing out of whatever dip in the road they've come across.

There is quite a variety of families at the center. Being a classroom teacher, I worked with one-year olds, and then two-year olds, and stayed in the classroom long-term with the children. I worked with children who are Hispanic, Arabic, African American, American and Bosnian. Not only did the families represent these larger cultures, but they also brought their own culture and heritage with them, which made some interactions with the parents a little more interesting. In addition to the cultures, the chil-

dren also had different needs: special diets, two children on seizure medicine, one on oxygen when sleeping and one child with William's Syndrome. Talk about diversity!

Now, for just a second, I'd like to focus on one child in particular. Before I do, though, I think you should know what being a classroom teacher in daycare entails. As a teacher you feed the kids, change them, potty-train them, play with them, teach them, encourage them, soothe them and sing to them. You demonstrate the right way to do things, you provide new experiences, and you are there for them physically, mentally, and emotionally the entire time you are there, for whatever else might come up in their lives. I worked with one-year olds for nine months and then with the two-year olds for the last two months. That meant that I saw some of the same kids twice. This meant that I got to see their growth.

The child I saw the most change in was the one with William's Syndrome. When I started he had just learned to walk a few months before, although he was two. He tripped over everything, was unsteady on his feet while standing, and was quite aggressive. While playing with him I would have him exercise. For example, I would tip him backwards and laugh with him as he pulled himself upright again. Almost all kids love this, and for him it helped strengthen him. I gave him balls to carry and throw, and at

some points got all the kids playing basketball. Then he transitioned to the two-year olds and I didn't see him for months. I just began working with him again two months ago and I cannot believe how much he has grown. He is so much stronger and more balanced. He talks more and he is much less aggressive. He has been working with a speech and a physical therapist all along, and the work they have done truly shows.

I still work with him—make him exercise; I ask for responses and he gives them. He's getting there. Now that I've gotten to work with him again, I realize how much I've grown, too. I gained more patience for starters! I've also learned more about how to be full-time in a classroom of little people. I graduated with Early Childhood Education and Special Education but you can only learn so much within the classroom. Most of the practical knowledge comes when you're out there working. So this year I truly have learned and grown. No, it hasn't all been good. I have run out of patience and I have not always been enthused to be at work. However, seeing the kids, the changes they go through and making connections with them and their families kept me going back. It's especially easy to want to go back at times like the other day, when a child looked me right in the eyes and said, "I love you." Well, I love you, too, kids and I'm so proud of everything we've learned this year. I think we've both changed a lot.

### Beth's Reflection

Every now and then, as I bend down to help a sixth grader with a math assignment, I am extremely conscious of my blonde ponytail swinging down my back or of the color of my skin next to my students'. I become suddenly aware that I look like a poster-child for charity. You know, the kind you see on a website, the white teacher smilingly instructing minority students, patiently explaining to them how to read, how to add, how to find Europe on a globe.

Mostly, I am aware of this appearance when someone new comes into the school: a parent, a visitor, a new teacher. At other times, I forget. No matter what color your skin, fractions work the same way and the patterns of the solar system are the same. When I came into the school, the lack of knowledge surprised me. I knew I was coming into material poverty; the educational poverty and lack of cultural literacy astounded me. However, I quickly learned that my children had many lessons for me that sprang from who they were. Our society often attempts to disguise differences. I learned from the places where who we were, as separate from each other, shone.

To lose our differences is to claim a loss. Although the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders hesitate to say the word "white" in front of me, let alone notice our differences, I have learned this year that our differences make us whole. My students' perceptions of our difference range: from the kindergartener who created my portrait with dark skin and brown hair to the sixth grader who told me he had thought I would be mean because I was white, to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who complained about "ignorant black people" and apologized to me for saying it.

Racially, the difference that fascinates me is hair. With their weaves and extensions, the braids, curls, and straightenings, my girls did beautiful things with their hair. In turn, they couldn't believe that I had to wash mine every day or that it was all mine and all its natural color (especially because I have bright highlights in my hair). They flipped out when I donated it to Pantene, because it would take them much longer than 18 months to grow enough hair for that. I think they are all beautiful; they love my hair. It was an easy way for my girls to notice that we are not the same without making a value judgment. It is an easy way to show how diversity adds to beauty.

**First Realization: Our differences are beautiful.** The hair is for the girls. With the boys, the difference I noticed was the way they jumped. I'm sure if I found another community of boys as intent upon basketball playing, they also would jump. But I had never seen anything like this before,

the way my boys flew into the air with or behind the basketball, aiming at the falling-apart hoop. In my neighborhood, we never had to jump that high.

In fact, the playground is the best place to take this story next. The teachers own the classrooms, but the students own the playground. We don't really have a "playground" – recess is held in a bumpy, pothole-riddled courtyard, with basketball hoops facing each other at fifty feet across the yard and one hundred feet of asphalt stretching around them. On this courtyard, two games of basketball back up to each other. A football match barrels through them and around the four square and jump rope at the far end of the yard. Two or three children playing tag weave in and out of the other games. And a teacher can walk the hypotenuse of the yard without looking and not a single child will collide with her.

**Second Realization: We learn from what we have.** Just like the "playground" offers less than what my children ought to have, the computer lab hosts a legion of dinosaurs on which the students learn to operate Microsoft Word. Another volunteer and I hold newspaper class in that room. At the end of the year, the class shrank. When it consisted of two teachers and two students, we spent more time chatting than writing the newspaper. I tried to explain to one of the girls why she had to be in school from eight in the morning until five in the evening. She, in turn, tried to explain to me that her neighborhood was not dangerous. She told me that they didn't even hear gunshots very often.

I offered her my own story – that in some places, you don't hear gunshots at all. "Not even on New Year's?" she asked, not believing. Not having any idea that gunshots were as foreign to me as their lack was to her.

**Third Realization: We don't always know what we deserve.** That same girl had gotten in trouble recently for an altercation with some of her classmates. Then, it turned out, they got in trouble too, because they had been talking about her brother. And try as she might to keep her temper (although, like most 13 year olds, she didn't always try hard), her classmates had done the one unacceptable thing: they messed with her family. Whatever and whomever family may or may not be, it means something very clear. It means being there. Even when Mama leaves marks on your arms, family trumps self.

One of my sixth graders proved it clearly. I was substituting for the kindergarten teacher and had fourteen little people running havoc across the courtyard. Then one of the littlest tripped and fell. As

the tears started to fall and I started to move, her sixth grade sister was there. I almost hadn't seen her step out of the door of the school, and here she was, halfway across the yard, comforting her sister, the errand that had taken her out of class forgotten.

**Fourth Realization: Being there matters.** Not only did the school have a high concentration of families – siblings, cousins, half-siblings – but many of the families had been there for years, generations. So friends became like family, with the same sort of love-hate dynamics that some families have. Stories grew, like family traditions, of the day a new student came to school, the time that the loud girl used to be quiet, the teachers they chased away. Because teachers didn't stay, principals didn't stay, people didn't stay.

I could impart all the classroom knowledge in my own repertoire and that wouldn't mean as much as my simply coming to school every day. My simple acknowledgement of each child's beauty, talents, humanity. An acknowledgement of humanity is an acknowledgement of human dignity. For all the pride my children had, they had very little dignity.

Take, for example, one seventh grader. She believed that she was going to go into high school, get pregnant, and drop out. In seventh grade, someone broke up with her because she wouldn't go far enough with him. Her hurt and bitterness spilled into the way she treated other people and herself. Throughout the year, with the constant attention and affirmation from a few positive women in her life (one of whom was myself), she began to blossom, gaining confidence, self-love, and maybe even a bit of book-learning.

**Fifth Realization: We cannot change each other, but we can leave God's fingerprints on each other.** If I left His fingerprints on my students, they left theirs on me. They showed me beauty and taught me why people jump. They reminded me who was my family and how not to run away. Even on the days I came home raging against God and His world, even on the days I felt like an unbalanced trapeze artist onto my community because I couldn't take it anymore, even on the days I had to remind myself to breath, they pushed and molded me into the person I am now.

So even those days when I know I look like a poster child for charity, I know it's just an illusion. I'm not reaching down to give a generous educational gift. My students and I are in a reciprocal relationship, sharing our lives and our differences.

## Sr. Teresa Daly says Goodbye

Dear Friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this letter to you. I will be leaving the ministry with Vincentian Service Corps Central. The woman who will continue this ministry is Kellie Willis. She began her work with VSC on July 1, 2010.



many site supervisors and dedicated people in the agencies where the volunteers have worked, our Advisory Board members, past and present, who have given time and energy to the direction of this program, strategic planning, etc., the many former VSC Volunteers who continue to be an important presence for the VSC, family members and friends of the VSC Volunteers whom I have had the privilege of knowing over the years.

Over the past seven year my life has been abundantly graced with the many wonderful people I have met and who are an integral part of this program. I want to thank you for your continued presence to the VSC program and for your active support. My litany of thanksgiving embraces the

As I move on I want to express a very special thanks to our Provincial Council of the West Central Province of the Daughters of Charity who believe in and continue to support VSC. I also extend a grateful heart to Cathy Witzofsky, the VSC Administrative

Assistant. Cathy does much of the work that makes the program and its mission a success.

In September I will be moving on to Chicago where I will be studying the Vincentian Spirit. I am hoping to grow in a deeper understanding and love for Vincent, Louise and all they taught and lived.

Yes, it is with mixed emotion that I write this letter. Let us continue to pray for each other and to share the Vincentian Spirit in the many ways that we are able.

God bless each of you.

Gratefully,

Sister Teresa Daly, DC

## Kellie Willis says Hello



Peace to you!

Hello, My name is Kellie Willis and I am the new Director of the Vincentian Service Corps-Central! I give Glory to God for this call to ministry-to walk with young adults

as they commit to community living, growing in faith, and service to persons who are poor in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.

I am a St. Louis native, and graduate of Crossroads College Prep School, Marquette University with a B.A. in Anthropology, and DePaul University with a M.A in Liberal Studies. I fell in love with the Vincentian charism during my time as a Gateway Vincentian Volunteer in 2002-2003. I served at Guardian Angel Settlement as a GVV, and worked there for several years before I moved to Chicago to pursue my education. I was missioned to Bahir Dar, Ethiopia in the summer of 2008 to teach English through the Vincentian Lay Missionaries. In February of 2008, I participated in the International Assembly of MISEVI, an international lay Vincentian missionary organization, in Bogota, Colombia. My favorite thing about being a lay Vincentian is the

internationality of our spirit!

During the our first four weeks, it has been a joy and a blessing to be able to witness and facilitate the formation of Josh, Barbara, Sarah, Rosalie, Kristen, Natasha, and Pat. Today, the volunteers are adjusting well to their ministries and to community living. During orientation week we had an opportunity to begin to build relationships with one another, to visit each service site as a group, and to enjoy some Ted Drewes! Concluding our orientation week was the Spirit-filled VSC Commissioning Mass at the Provincial House Chapel. I am so grateful to the Daughters of Charity, especially Sr. Mary Walz, Sr. Julie Cutter and Sr. Teresa Daly, Cathy Witzofsky, Fr. Jeff Harvey, family members of the VSC, VSC alums, site supervisors, and Peacemeals, who all made that day truly a community celebration.

In late August, the VSC participated in the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac with other members of the St. Louis Vincentian Family at the Cathedral Basilica. This was a wonderful opportunity for them to be introduced to each of the groups within the family and they were inspired by the diversity of the Vincentian charism that was represented.

Thank you to each of the VSC for your

joyful hearts and for saying "yes!" to God's call in your lives. I am looking forward to our journey to come. Thank you Sr. Teresa for your boundless spirit, your mentorship and friendship. Peace and joy to you in your new adventures! Thanks to YOU for your support of VSC. Please continue to keep all of us in your prayers.

Many Blessings,

Kellie Willis

Director

Vincentian Service Corps—Central

*"God has raised up this Little Company . . . for his love and good pleasure . . . [and] we are bound to show it [love] by leading people to love God and their neighbor; to love the neighbor for the sake of God and God for the sake of the neighbor. We have been chosen by God as instruments of his boundless and fatherly love which desires to be established in and to replenish souls. [lū]"*

*- St. Vincent de Paul*



Say "Hello" to the 2010-2011 Vincentian Service Corps Members

Please keep them in your prayers throughout their year of service.

clockwise from bottom:  
Joshua, Kristen, Natasha,  
Barbara, Rosalie, Patrick & Sarah

Meet Joshua

I chose a year of service not as a contrast to, but as a springboard into, the rest of my life. Above all else, I want to show the love of Christ to others, and spending time in full-time service seemed to me the best way.

Location played a large part in my attraction to VSC; I have many friends in the St. Louis area and I am excited about the prospect of staying in touch with them. I was glad to find a Christ-focused service group of which to be a part.

After two weeks and a half weeks at St. Elizabeth's Adult Day Care Center, I am still just as excited as I was at the beginning of my year! Good days, bad days, and "average" days (and there have been a few in each category) all reinforce to me that I am in the place I should be, doing work that is already helping me to grow in many ways.

More than anything, I hope that I will be able to share the love of Christ with the people with whom I am working, both as a "giver" and as a "receiver".

**Meet Barbara:** I think the only reason to do a year of service is if one is called to do it. I felt that this is what God wanted me to do. In the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that we are all called to be like the woman who gave to the temple from her need and not from her surplus. I felt that giving a year of service was the specific way in which I was called to do the same.

I specifically gravitated toward VSC for a lot of practical reasons. First, I knew Sarah, who completed the program a few years ago and I thought that if I knew someone who highly recommended VSC, that would be far better than picking one at random. Secondly, the staff was extremely organized and seemed to know what they were doing and why they were doing it. Every question I had was immediately answered.

I am serving at Central Catholic St. Nicholas School and Academy which is a K-8 school and am working primarily with the older students in grades 6-8. The administration is very hardworking and focused on getting the students to really master the essentials so that they have a strong foundation for high school and college.

My primary feeling is of being stretched far beyond my comfort zone, from helping with math (I was an English major) to speaking up about things I see going on around me. I am learning a lot and having more fun than I thought possible. I really hope that in the coming year, I can teach the students some fraction of what they will teach me.

**Meet Natasha:** I am doing a year of service because I wanted to give something meaningful back to the world and to help discern what I want to do with my life.

I was attracted to Vincentian Service Corps Central because of the variety of service sites and the community aspect of the program.

I am excited to be working with the children at Central Catholic St. Nicholas School and Academy.

I hope, in addition to giving back to the community, to be able to discern on my own faith and my future.

**Meet Kristen:** From my experiences and studies, I grew an interest in going about creating social justice. I wanted to help be a change in the lives of the needy and poor.

I liked the four components of the VSC program and the values and beliefs that are embedded in the VSC. The program had a good feeling to it.

I am serving at Marian Middle School. It is designed to create a positive learning environment for girls in 5th—8th grade. I really like the values and goals instituted within the middle school—building leadership skills and offering a great educational opportunity.

Although times may be tough, overall I'm looking forward to a fun-filled and enriching experience that I'll never forget!

*"Let us truly love each other in Him, but let us love Him in each other since we are His."*

- St. Louise de Marillac

**Meet Rosalie:** I've always wanted to do service work but I really wanted to commit to something as well. I found that doing a year of service would allow me to commit fully and complete the service work I've wanted to do.

I went to Niagara University so I am very familiar with the Vincentian Spirit of service work and I wanted to live it more fully. The mission of the VSC program and the location (in the Midwest) also attracted me to the program.

Our Lady's Inn is an exceptional place. The dedication of the staff is evident throughout any given day. The ladies, although in transition, show hope and commitment to their children both born and unborn. I think the experience I will be a part of at Our Lady's Inn will be unparalleled and an awakening.

I hope to feel fulfillment, gain wisdom and be of service while serving.

# VINCENTIAN SERVICE CORPS-CENTRAL

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**Vincentian Service  
Corps-Central**

A Year of Service Makes a Lifetime of  
Difference



[www.vincentianservicecorps.org](http://www.vincentianservicecorps.org)

**Address Correction Requested**

**Meet Patrick:** Why do a year of service?

Well, why not? I love kids and I love service.

I was attracted to Vincentian Service Corps Central because it worked well with my LaSallian values of service to the poor through education.

I am serving at De La Salle Middle School. It's a nice smaller school with a great community spirit and a fantastic staff.

I hope to grow in faith and experience.

**Meet Sarah:** I have been very blessed and doing a year of service is one way to "pay it forward" to those who need help.

I chose to do this year of service with Vincentian Service Corps Central because I was attracted to their mission of service to the poor.

I am not entirely sure what the specifics of my work at Our Lady's Inn will be, but supporting the pro-life cause is something I care about very much.

I hope that I am up to tackling the challenges that will come my way this year and that I will make a positive impact. I am also looking forward to being able to build a community with the other volunteers.

