

# St. Joseph Worker Program

Winter 2018

## WHAT IS THE SJWP?

The St. Joseph Worker Program (SJWP) is a full-time volunteer program from August-June. The program was started by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and reflects their mission of the CSJ. We respond to the needs of society and offer a compassionate presence to the people we serve. The purpose of the program is three-fold: 1) empower young, lay women to extend the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph 2) support non-profit organizations in their service to people in great need 3) strengthen St. Joseph Workers in the areas of leadership, social justice, community and spirituality (4 core values of the program). The SJWP started over 15 years ago in St. Paul, MN. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange are starting the fourth year of the St. Joseph Worker Program in Orange County and are currently in halfway of the third year. Other SJWP locations include Brentwood NY, Philadelphia, PA, and Los Angeles, CA.



## WHO CAN BE A ST. JOSEPH WORKER IN ORANGE?

We invite women ages 21-35 who have a passion for service and a willingness to honestly explore the deep questions of life, justice and faith. We look for candidates who have a sense of self-awareness, courage, flexibility and openness. The ability to listen, reflect, empathize and communicate are also essential. Many St. Joseph Workers (SJWs) have recently graduated from college and are looking to expand their professional skills, while developing a stronger foundation of who they are. Some SJWs simply want to serve while discerning their next step in life. Other St. Joseph Workers have had a career for several years and are searching for a new direction. A college degree is not a requirement.



## WHAT DO ST. JOSEPH WORKERS DO?

The SJWs serve full time (36 hours) throughout the week in placements related to social services, education, health care, and advocacy and systemic change. In addition to working 36 hours a week at a placement site, SJWs spend additional time in weekly and monthly activities to build upon the four core values of the program including social justice events, prayer, reflection, sharing, and retreats.

# St. Joseph Workers 2017- 2018



YADIRA ENCISO | LONG BEACH, CA

Yadira is an Education Assistant at St. Joseph's School for K-8 in Santa Ana where she assists in reading assessments, one-on-one instruction, and small group centers. "After years of volunteer work in schools and various educational settings, I felt the call to serve full time in Catholic Education," Yadira reflects. "I see this program as not a year-long commitment, but as a guide for how I will live out the rest of my life."



SARAH CORNWELL | ANCHORVILLE, MI

Sarah is a Physician Assistant at Hurtt Family Clinic on the Mobile Out reach Team and serving at clinics in Tustin, Santa Ana, and Anaheim. Sarah chose the SJWP "because of the hospitality in which they welcomed me and the respect in which they honored my individual gifts and talents... My hope is to humbly serve and accompany the vulnerable and do small things with great love."



CATHERINE NGUYEN | ANNANDALE, VA

Catherine is an Education Assistant at St. Catherine's School for K-8 in Santa Ana where she assists in adapting the curriculum to the needs of her students. After her first week, Catherine said, "I found that slowing down and pausing in the midst of our fast paced world is critical if I want to be of service to God and others... It is in this that I am more able to discern God's will, to find Him in all things, and be present to His Presence."



KATIE CHRISTY | CANTON, NY

Katie is serving people experiencing homelessness at Isaiah House in Santa Ana and Mary's Kitchen in Orange. Katie has many roles including sorting food donations and prep work in the kitchen. She also visits with the people at the Civic Center and the riverbed. "What breaks my heart the most is when the humanity of people is forgotten and they become another statistic or 'issue' the government feels it has to deal with."

# Past, Present, and Future



## 1st Year SJWs (2015-2016)

### Monica Patti<sup>1</sup>

After completing the 2015-2016 SJW year, Monica moved to Washington DC to begin her Masters in Social Work at The Catholic University of America. This past summer she was blessed to enjoy a 10 week international social work internship in Danang, Vietnam, through the university. Monica will graduate this May 2018.

### Celina Roybal<sup>2</sup>

Celina is in the middle of her 15th year of teaching. She is currently the K-6 Physical Education teacher between 2 elementary schools in New Mexico. Her highlight for the upcoming semester is the school's Jump Rope for Heart event where she will be teaching students the importance of healthy lifestyles while raising money for the American Heart Association.

### Gena Gadiant<sup>3</sup>

Gena is now the St. Joseph Worker Program Manager, assisting the team with program development and expansion, recruiting, event planning and SJW formation. She is also in her first year of the Art of Spiritual Direction Program (3 year program).

## 2nd Year SJWs (2016-2017)

### Xinh Do<sup>4</sup>

After spending the summer with family in Georgia, Xinh has returned to Orange County and is working at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange with the Vietnamese community.

### Cathy Wahl<sup>5</sup>

Cathy is serving the dear neighbor as she pursues a Masters in Social Work at the University of Michigan. Currently, she is interning in Infant Mental Health in Detroit doing integrated health care and home based therapy.

### Fernanda Velazco<sup>6</sup>

Fernanda is serving at La Amistad Family Health Center in Orange, CA as the Patient and Community Advocate, serving those who lack health care coverage. She is also leading an intentional community with Gena Gadiant in Orange.

### Adanna Adaka<sup>7</sup>

Adanna is at home spending time with family in Nigeria as she continues the application process for medical school to pursue her passion in the healing ministry of healthcare.



**You're Invited!** Join us for these upcoming events:

### March 23-24 | Young Adult Service Weekend:

A 24-hour event for young adults, focused on serving in solidarity.

### April 15 | McFarland Half Marathon and 5K:

Running to support education fundraising efforts to be used towards St. Joseph School literacy program.

### April 29 | Feast of St. Joseph the Worker: SJWs

share their service year experiences.

### June 30 | Closing Celebration: SJWs are sent forth

as the year comes to a close.

# A Shared Mission: Partnership and Community

by Monica Patti - First Year St. Joseph Worker

While studying at the Catholic University of America for her Masters of Social Work, Monica applied for the unique "Internship Abroad" program. She was accepted to work for an international NGO over the summer in Danong, Vietnam. In the excerpt below, Monica was able to share how her year as a St. Joseph Worker prepared her for her time abroad.



The 10 weeks that I spent in Vietnam were a beautiful and challenging opportunity for growth and learning. My internship was split between working with the University of Danang - Department of Psychology, and working at Cadeaux Center - a largely volunteer run therapeutic center for children with special needs, including Autism. Every morning I would co-teach a college English class to psychology students with my partner-intern, and in the afternoon, we would travel to the Cadeaux Center and play with the children. Throughout this experience, my fellow intern and I did everything together: live, work, worship, eat, commute, travel, lesson plan, and sweat! Much like the SJWP program, living in community was a big part of the experience.

Partnership and Community is one piece of a shared mission.

Partnership and community is the part where I say to myself, "I am going to willingly enter into this relationship with another person, and I'm going to trust that God has brought myself and this other person together for a reason, that we'll be a gift to each other and those we serve." The connection and belonging that relationships bring us in this life can be rewarding, and the vulnerability that they bring can be terrifying. I often say that travel can bring out the best and worst in us, and I think that deep and honest relationships do that as well. By entering into relationship, we're trusting God to use deep relationship with others to act on our soul and transform us in some of the most difficult but lasting ways possible. In the SJWP, I learned that this is how deep, mutually committed relationships work; everyone shows up with their truth as often as possible, even when it's hard, and God uses those efforts for good, they are never wasted.



## *The Life of Receiving*

by Catherine Nguyen

Serving with Sisters Ambassador  
(Catholic Volunteer Network)

Eyes open, a new day dawns.  
Praising God in communion with  
the Church,  
The Bread of Life becomes food for  
the journey ahead.  
Welcoming students as their smiles  
outshine the sun's rays.  
Reading, writing, math, and  
coloring... all part of lifelong  
learning.  
Recess is a sight with jump ropes  
and balls... even the return of the  
classic paper airplane.  
These children bring out the child  
within me, the one that longs to be  
simple and free.  
Humbling it is, to be entrusted  
with many beautiful lives rooted in  
diversity and richness.  
It is not I who am the teacher, but  
the students and their experiences  
as I see them grow.  
Each moment with them is filled  
with wonder and awe, with some  
hearty laughter and others with  
gentle tears.  
Coming home to a community of  
sisters is filled with blessings as  
we share our daily adventures, our  
triumphs, and our falls.  
Through meals, outreach, retreats,  
and sharings, the easy and the  
rough, our bonds are strengthened  
as we recall our mission.  
To love and serve, not for  
ourselves. To do all things to bring  
God's healing and reconciliation to  
our dear, dear neighbors.

