

Augustinian Volunteers

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Volume One—Fall 2009

INSIGHTS



Augustinian Volunteers, 2009-2010

donated to the program! We would not be able to continue this great ministry without your support.

Peace,
April
April L. Gagne
Director of the Augustinian Volunteers

Dear Alumni and Friends of the Augustinian Volunteers,

It has been a busy few months. Our domestic Volunteers completed their year of service on July 5th. Listening to them share their stories at End of the Year Retreat showed us how much of an impact their AV experiences had on them as well as those they encountered throughout the year. We want to thank these men and women for their dedication and hard work throughout the year and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors!

At the end of July, the Volunteer office moved back to St. Augustine Friary in Villanova, PA. The purpose of the move was to save money as well as to be able to work more closely with those in the Provincial offices. It is great to be back at the Friary and to be able to feel more connected to all that is going on in the Provincial offices.

By mid-August we were welcoming our 10th group of Volunteers to orientation! We have a great group of 25 young adults joining us both domestically and internationally this year, who you can read more about in the following pages. The domestic Volunteers have been living in community and serving at their sites for almost two months and are doing well.

As for our international Volunteers, the current ones are finishing up their term of service and the new ones will be replacing them in January in both Peru and South Africa. As you will read in the enclosed reflections, the Volunteers' experiences have taught them a lot about themselves and the world around them.

We recently had an AV alumni reunion weekend in Philly, which was a great success. It provided an opportunity for alumni to gather together, to reflect upon and share stories of their AV experiences and do service work. We look forward to our next AV Alumni Reunion Weekend in October 2010!

In the midst of all that, we have been busy fundraising. We need to raise \$40,000 this year and are almost halfway there. We have received more support from our alumni, which has been a huge help. In addition, we have some special people to thank for their fundraising efforts, which can be found below. Thank you to all those who have

Special Thanks...

We would like to extend a special thanks to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Staten Island, NY, Student Development at Villanova University and St. Thomas of Villanova Parish in Rosemont, PA.

A group of parishioners approached Fr. John Dello Russo, OSA, pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish about the potential of doing a fundraiser for the parish and the Augustinian Volunteers. Two generous parishioners donated Jets and Giants tickets and a committee of parishioners, including a parent of an Augustinian Volunteer alumni, held a limited raffle. In just two weeks they were able to raise \$1,400 for the Augustinian Volunteers!

During Parents' Weekend at Villanova University over \$11,000 was raised through a silent auction benefitting the program. Thanks to current and past AV Advisory Council members Tom Mogan, Nancy Lee and Fr. Joe Mostardi who coordinated this effort. We are hopeful that it will become an annual event!

We also received a Stewardship Grant of \$7,500 from St. Thomas of Villanova Parish in Rosemont. For the past few years the parish has supported the program through this grant and we are thankful for their continued support.

Thank you to all those involved in our fundraising efforts. Your generosity is very much appreciated and we are blessed to have people like you who are dedicated to continuing the mission of the Augustinian Volunteers!

Augustinian Volunteers
214 Ashwood Road
Villanova, PA 19085

Phone: 610.527.3330 ext. 291
E-mail: av@osavol.org
Website: www.osavol.org



Huancabamba is one of the most fun words to say that I have ever encountered. It's actually a Quechua word (the language of the Incas) which means "moving earth" on account of its propensity for mudslides. Pronounced something like Juan-ca-BOMB-a, it's a village in the Peruvian sierra with about 20,000 people. It's mostly an agricultural area, but lately a lot of mineral concessions have been granted to large foreign mining companies. I made the trip last Thursday along with one of my comrades from the Office of Justice and Peace. The ride was phenomenal. You wind through mountain roads and go as high as 3000 meters, then descend to about 1800 and Huancabamba sits in the valley.

Our mission was to attend a meeting at city hall that included the mayor of Huancabamba, the mayor of Carmen de la Frontera (another village affected by the mining), local government officials, and several representatives from groups of Campesinos (essentially farmers, villagers) that live out in the mountains. These representatives are part of groups called Rondas Campesinas, and they're essentially autonomous law-making and law-enforcing bodies that govern their small communities. Since they live too far from any state police, someone has to keep the peace and make decisions. So in the whole mining deal you essentially have six positions: 1) The villagers who are 99% opposed to mining and are scared to death that the government is just going to give their land away to the mining companies who exploit it and then leave it contaminated (happens quite often); 2) The mining companies and big business men and women of the town who are obviously in favor; 3) Those who are out of work and welcome the mines as a job opportunity; 4) Local government officials who are either in favor or not, depending on their alliances; 5) Federal government officials and police officers who are almost always in favor of the mining, and 6) You have us. We just try to encourage dialogue and keep the peace between groups of people who quite frankly, are up to their ears in fear. The Rondas Campesinas fear the villagers who are in favor of the mining as well as the police, and the government officials on all levels fear an uprising from the Rondas Campesinas. There has been violence between the groups in the past, so often the fear is justified. Nobody trusts anybody outside their small group, really.

What ensued was a three hour meeting that was called to determine whether this group would meet the following day with Yahude Simon, the President of the Counsel of Ministers (essentially the 2nd most powerful man in the Peruvian gov). The meeting was mostly unproductive as everyone followed the general rule of "he who shouts the loudest will be heard". Finally, two hours into the meeting, my teammate was able to convince everyone that they should attend the meeting, and he presented a format that they could follow. 1) Give the general history of Huancabamba, 2) Present a plan for development based on agriculture, 3) Explain the threats posed by the mining. For a moment everyone put aside their fear and mistrust. At 9pm, they faxed a message to Simon's office in Lima saying that they'll be there tomorrow for the 9:30am meeting (a solid 12 hours notice...).

In the morning, we all gathered in the plaza to get ready to drive to the meeting site. Sadly, the whole thing fell apart. Simon's reps decided not to come because they weren't given enough notice and rejected several demands that had been made. Each side blamed the other for the failure to meet, and in the end this weekend did little to ease the tension.

Overall, the trip was a great opportunity for me to see the reality of the mining situation. Clearly, agreements and resolutions will not come easy, and like everything here, it's going to take time, but I feel comfortable with the church's approach: Encourage dialogue about peaceful solutions, educate about human rights, and most importantly, focus on building community. Our successes this year will undoubtedly seem small and will not be very measurable, which is likely to frustrate me quite a bit. However, as it notes in "Sowers of Hope", the kingdom lies far beyond us and it's important to have faith in the fact that our small successes, combined with those of others, do in fact make a world of difference.

International AVs 2009



South Africa Community



Peru Community

Home Based Caregiver

Fr. Frank Doyle, OSA
Augustinian Supervisor in South Africa

As the number of HIV positive persons increases dramatically here in South Africa, straining the availability of already meagre medical institutions, it has become increasingly more necessary for patients to be cared for in their own homes. Consequently, programs of “Home-based Caregivers” have been developed with the aim of providing medical attention in the person’s home where services can be provided in the comfort of their familial environment.

Recently, while reflecting and marvelling at the practicality and effectiveness of these programs, I began to wonder if we, as Augustinian friars and Volunteers serving here in South Africa, couldn’t also consider our lives in community as being “home-based caregivers” to one another. So often “care-givers” forget to take care of themselves and sometimes even resist being “care-receivers”. We misunderstand the scripture that says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. To give and to receive is a blessing!

As friars and Volunteers in the Augustinian tradition we are “home-based”, that is community-based, and, furthermore, “caregivers” to one another. We draw our strength and encouragement from the Augustinian tradition of caring for one another as brothers and sisters in a life lived in common, sharing all things, especially our need to be cared for by one another. Because our natural families are many miles away, we depend on one another for encouragement and support. Sharing the challenges of ministry and the growing edges of being stretched by the seemingly insurmountable societal issues that confront us each day, we mutually learn from one another’s vulnerability and the sensitivity we have for each other’s needs. Each year the membership of our extended Augustinian community in South Africa changes with the arrival of new Volunteers and the process begins all over again of growing together in harmony and charity. We are not only personally blessed by this experience but so also is this society in which we serve; a post-apartheid, yet still divided nation of peoples. Our community life witnesses to the possibility of living in harmony with a profound respect for diversity.

As Volunteers end their term of service each year to return home, they take with them a rich experience of the challenges of personal growth which they have gained from a life in common and a deepened awareness of the Augustinian spirit. What they leave behind is a portion of the Augustinian fraternity of friars that has come to love and respect them, having cared for them and having been cared for by them as extended members of a “home-based care giving” family.



Embracing Change through the Example of Augustinian Volunteers

Lyla Prince, Service Supervisor
St. Vincent de Paul Village, San Diego

St. Vincent de Paul Village first had the opportunity to participate in the Augustinian Volunteers program in fall of 2004. I was asked to be a mentor and agreed because I loved working with student nurses through the PLNU mentoring program and knew a graduate nurse would benefit from working with our population of homeless and indigent patients.

Megan Mansfield, BSN came to our clinic and I was hooked! Her year was a great learning experience for both of us. I got to watch a new nurse blossom into a leader while defining her role as a Village Health Nurse. She found what worked and didn’t work in the complex health needs of the undeserved.

Ashley followed the next year, then Beth, Becky, Allie and now Allison. Each Augustinian Volunteer came with the empathy, skill and training to be successful in beginning her nursing career in San Diego. My challenge was supporting their confidence while they adsorbed new challenges in nursing.

While Megan, Ashley, Beth, Becky and Allie were learning to minister to our population, I learned about the effort involved in learning to live in community with others. Each nurse evolved into part of a new “family” that overcame the daily toil of cooking, cleaning, shopping and finding individual and shared time. Their growth was brought about by blessings of common goals and the support of the Augustinian friars. I heard through each Augustinian Volunteer nurse how the support of the community, friars and facility mentors helped their start in a new city with new peers.

Each of them has taught me to look at an individual with new eyes. Change is good and enlightened change is their gift to our clinic. I hope each finds a way to minister to the undeserved in their future. Allie showed me a new appreciation of the word “empathy”. She is quietly confident of the needs of others and perseveres in finding solutions which maintain the dignity in others.

(Each year I feel like a foster Mom giving a child back to an intact home.) Recently, I was surprised with an Augustinian Volunteer Reunion here in San Diego. Allie secretly arranged for a luncheon with Becky and Beth. It was both sweet and melancholy to see how they used their St. Vincent de Paul clinic experience and their plans for service to the undeserved population. California, Kansas, Pennsylvania and New York have benefited from their deep understanding of our indigent population.

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BRONX



My name is Natalie Jones. I am 22 and originally from Damascus, MD, but have lived in Mexico, Ecuador, and Canada. I graduated from Villanova University with a degree in Political Science, a concentration in International Relations and a minor in Peace and Justice. I am in the Bronx serving as the Activities & Education Coordinator at Siena House, a homeless shelter for pregnant women and their children. I am enjoying the opportunity to learn more about myself and the community I am serving.



My name is Brian Roe and I am 22 years old and from Montvale, NJ. I graduated with distinction in 2009 from Villanova University with a BA in English and Political Science. My passion for service was instilled in me by my beautiful late mother and proliferated by my time at Villanova. I plan to attend Fordham Law School in 2010. This year I am thrilled for the opportunity to teach ESL at St. Rita Immigration Center in the Bronx, and serve as the liaison for the Augustinian NGO at the United Nations.



My name is Alli Lua and I am from Bedford, MA. I am 22 years old and graduated from Merrimack College in May of 2009. I majored in Communication Studies and minored in Business Administration. I am living in the Bronx, NY with my fellow community members and am experiencing the biggest adventure of my life. I serve in child care program at St. Rita Immigration Center as well as teach an ESL class on Thursdays. I also tutor in an after school program. I am very excited to grow in faith and love as both a person and a member of the Augustinian community.



Coming in from the little town of Monument, CO, my name is Lauren Vetter. I am a 22 year old recent graduate from the University of Colorado with a degree in Integrative Physiology. I am living in the Bronx this year serving at the Tolentine Zeiser Community Center in the Universal Pre-K and at Siena House. Though I know I will miss my family and loved ones beyond words, I am ecstatic to form new relationships with my community members and experience the eclectic and eccentric sights, sounds, and smells of NY. Most of all I am excited to serve the Bronx community and spread the Augustinian love.

CHICAGO



My name is Kaitlin Bevins. I am 22 years old and originally from Northford, CT. I graduated from Assumption College in Worcester, MA this past May with a BA in Theology and minors in Psychology, Education, and Community Service Learning. I am living in Chicago where I serve as the computer teacher at St. Margaret of Scotland school. I have never lived in the Midwest before and am excited to be experiencing this year with my new community!



My name is Lisa Mehalick. I am from Langhorne, PA. I am 22 years old and graduated from Kutztown University this May with a degree in Psychology. This year I am serving as a Pre-K teacher's aide at St. Margaret of Scotland school in Chicago. I have always enjoyed working with children as well as being able to give of myself to help others. I am very excited about this year of service and look forward to growing in my faith and living in community with others.



My name is Susan Dimauro and I am 22 years old. I recently graduated from Merrimack College in North Andover, MA with a degree in Psychology and with a minor in Italian. I am originally from Longmeadow, MA, but am serving this year in Chicago, IL. I am serving with Catholic Charities as a case manager for young mothers in the area. I am very grateful for an opportunity to combine both interests through my volunteer year and am enjoying living in a new environment with my amazing community!



My name is Kathleen (or Kat) O'Neill. I am from Larchmont, NY. I am 22 and graduated this past May from Villanova University with a double-major in Psychology and Theology and Religious Studies with a minor in Business. I am part of the Chicago community and am serving with student activities and campus ministry at St. Rita of Cascia High School. I am helping with retreats, service, and liturgies. I am so excited to become part of the St. Rita community, learn and grow with my roommates, and develop my faith life.

LAWRENCE



My name is Erika Esposito and I am 22 years old. I graduated with Villanova University's class of 2009, and hold a degree in Humanities. I am originally from Los Angeles, CA, but am spending the year in Lawrence, MA. I am ecstatic to be serving at Bellesini Academy as a teacher's aide and coach, and look forward to what the year will bring. I have no doubt that the children I work with will teach me a lot about myself.



My name is Alex Gallucci and I am from Gates Mills, OH. I am 22 years old and a recent graduate of Villanova University, where I completed my degree in Management and International Business, with minors in Italian and Entrepreneurship. This year I am living in Lawrence, MA and serving at Merrimack College as a Coordinator of Volunteerism and Service in campus ministry. I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve others and to strengthen my faith while living in community.



My name is Charlie Knibbs and I am 22 years old. I was born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago. I attended St. Rita of Cascia High School where I had my first experience with the AVs. They were amazing people and made me want to join the program. I graduated with honors from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2009 with a degree in Healthcare Administration. I am living in Lawrence and serving at St. Mary School as a Pre-K aide and with the after school program. I am enjoying working with the young children and listening to their stories.



I am Andrew Slike and I grew up in Bloomsburg, PA. I am 25 years old, and graduated from Bloomsburg University in May 2008 with a BS in Business Administration. I am spending the year in Lawrence, MA as a teacher's aide and coach at Bellesini Academy. I am enjoying working with the children and look forward to growing with my community throughout the coming year.

SAN DIEGO



My name is Allison Folker and I am 22 years old. I was born and raised in Fair Haven, NJ, a small town on the Jersey Shore. This past May, I graduated from Villanova University with a degree in Nursing. I am in San Diego serving at St. Vincent de Paul Village as a nurse at their medical clinic. I am extremely excited to be sharing my nursing background with the Village and to learn and grow with my community members. My dream is to become a pediatric oncology nurse and stay involved with domestic and international nursing mission trips.



My name is Kaitlyn Kupski and I am a 22 year old from Lowell, MA. I graduated in May from Merrimack College with a BS in Business Administration and a concentration in Management. This year I am in San Diego, CA serving at St. Patrick School as the physical education and computer teacher for grades K-8 and helping in the after school program. I am very excited to be living on the west coast, doing service and to grow in my faith with my community.



I am Anne Mollner, from Omaha, NE. I am 22 years old and I just graduated from Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH with a degree in Spanish. I am serving at the orphanage in Tijuana and at St. Patrick School as a computer/PE teacher. I am very excited to live in San Diego and experience community life. I look forward to growing in my faith, serving others, and learning from the people that I meet.



My name is Christopher Schettini and I am 22 years old and from Allentown, PA. I graduated from Villanova University in May with a degree in Comprehensive Science. I am serving at Hogar Infantil La Gloria orphanage, in Mexico. I have wanted to be an Augustinian Volunteer since I went to the Bronx and stayed with the AVs during spring break in my freshman year. I am excited to be in San Diego and learning about the community.



My name is Mike Shanahan and I am a 22 year old from Chicago, IL. I recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign with a degree in Finance and Economics. Over the next 10 months, I am serving in San Diego as a grammar school gym teacher at Holy Family School. I am thrilled to be doing a year of service and excited for the numerous possibilities and people that I might meet. In the future, I plan to attend law school. I am confident that these experiences will help shape me as a person and my faith.



My name is Emily Trancik, from Flemington, NJ. I am 22 and this past May, graduated from Villanova University with a degree in Biology, concentrations in Ethics and Honors, and a Theology minor. I am a campus minister at St. Augustine High School in San Diego, CA, working on Christian service projects, retreats, campus ministry publications, social justice education and liturgical music. I have always wanted to spend time as a campus minister, and am excited for this opportunity with the AVs!

SOUTH AFRICA



I'm Sinéad Cloughley from Yardley, PA, where I moved from Ireland in 1996 with my parents and two younger sisters. I graduated this past May from Villanova University with degrees in Honors and English, a concentration in Irish Studies, and a minor in French. In January I will begin a year living outside Durban, South Africa and teaching English at St. Leo School. Though the year will present many

challenges, I cannot wait to experience a foreign culture and live and serve in community with the other AVs as well as the locals.



I am Mary-Kate Crane and I came of age in the small town of Rockland on the south shore of Massachusetts. I am 22 years old and I graduated from Villanova University with a BS in Biology. I enjoy cooking and doing the cha cha slide. I spent last year as a Jesuit Volunteer in Nashville, TN and I am looking forward to my upcoming move to serve the people of Durban, South Africa.



My name is Becca Little and am a 23 year old University of Delaware graduate. I studied English, History and Religious Studies at Delaware, returning to my farm in Bowers Beach during the summers to lifeguard and teach kayaking and swimming. In 2007, I studied abroad in Pretoria, South Africa and worked at an orphanage called Tumelong Haven. I am ecstatic to move

back to South Africa in 2010 to live near Durban with three other women committed to service and the social justice issues of the country.



My name is Meg McKennan. I hail from Middlebury, VT and I am looking forward to living with, learning from and loving the individuals in Durban, South Africa. I am a 23 year old graduate from Merrimack College with a BA in Communications. I served as an Augustinian Volunteer in Bronx, NY last year and worked as the Educational and Activities Coordinator at Siena House shelter. I was blessed with a

year of friendship, faith and love and I am excited to once again practice ministry of presence.

PERU



I am Katie Abajian and I grew up in the Crestline, CA. I am 24 years old, and I graduated from the University of California, Riverside in 2007 with a degree in Psychology/Law, and Society and Spanish. I have just completed a year of service in the Bronx, NY working at St. Rita Immigration Center, and I am a returning AV in Chulucanas, Peru. I look forward to

living in a community setting again and the opportunity to work with the Peruvian people, learn more about Latin America, eat delicious Peruvian food, and grow in my spirituality.



Hola! My name is Clarissa Negrete and I am 22 years old. Originally from San Antonio, TX, I attended the University of Notre Dame and majored in Finance with a minor in Peace Studies. I will be serving in Chulucanas, Peru. South America has held a special place in my heart especially after participating in a study abroad program my junior year of college. I am excited to serve the people in Peru.



My name is Laura Garza from Corpus Christi, TX. I graduated from Texas A&M Corpus Christi in May 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. I knew junior year in college I wanted to commit to service abroad, but I chose to serve a year domestically first. I joined Good Shepherd Volunteers and began my year of service August 2008 in a community of 7 as a social worker in the Bronx, at a foster care agency adolescent

department. I still had the desire to serve abroad and this brought me to a second year of service, this time with the AVs, in Peru. After living in New York City, I know it will take some adjusting to life in Chulucanas but I am eager to practice my Spanish, live in community, and serve the people of South America.

To follow along with our year, check out the Augustinian Volunteers blog at www.osavol.org/blog and go to our new Facebook page, "Augustinian Volunteers", and become a fan.

Thank You Augustinian Volunteers 2008-2009!



To read some reflections on our year as Augustinian Volunteers,
please visit the website and click on our faces!



214 Ashwood Road
Villanova, PA 19085