



"Deepening lives through volunteer service, social justice, spiritual practice, and intentional community."

Thank you for donating to our Blossom Abundantly Fundraiser!



A big big thank you!

Hello and welcome to your first of three newsletters from the 2020-2021 Seattle Service Corps! We are so very thankful for your generous donation and we are so excited to keep you updated about what we've been up to! In this newsletter, you will find stories, musings, and lessons gained from our experiences in Seattle,

introductions to a few of our corps member's service placements, as well as one of our favorite recipes we've made for our community meals. We hope you enjoy it!

*Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions you might have by emailing
servicecorps@saintmarks.org*

www.saintmarks.org/ssc



Reflections on Lent

Grace

As a person who has worked with children a lot throughout the years, I can confidently say that Lent is not a season that many kids look forward to. That was certainly true for me. It marked the end of my favorite season, Epiphany. All of my favorite hymns that I'd been listening to for weeks were replaced with solemn chants that made me count how many pages were left in the service leaflet, and the only things grounding me were the coffee hour snacks I knew were waiting for me down the hall. Despite the negative feelings I had toward Lent, I saw that it was a time to take things more seriously. I tried giving things up with varying degrees of success (One year, I gave up meat only to catch myself eating a salad with chicken and bacon the day after Ash Wednesday) but never really understood why I was doing it. Then, right before the Lent of my fourth-grade year, I decided that rather than give something up, I would take something on. Nine-year-old Grace determined that she had grown out of spending Sunday church services coloring or zoning out; it was time to pay attention. So for my Lenten discipline that year, I committed to doing just that. I actively participated in the service, listening to the psalms and lessons, paying attention to the sermon, and even volunteering as a reader. Doing that gave me a whole new outlook on spirituality. I didn't realize it then but putting thought and intention behind the words I was reading aloud in unison with the congregation made me feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Even though I took on that Lenten discipline over a decade ago, it still impacts me to this day. I'll admit, the pandemic has made it very difficult for me to connect with the liturgy. I don't feel the Holy Spirit on Zoom or watching a Livestream. But once again, Lent has allowed me to take time and focus on spirituality. Our intentional community has decided to take on the spiritual practice of doing Compline every weeknight. Even early on in this season, I have already started to feel closer to God. The daily rhythm of praying together right before we go to bed is such a grounding practice. It reminds me of how it felt to be a fourth-grader feeling deeply connected to her faith for the first time in her life. Now, as an adult, feeling that connection once again has assured me that Lent will be a season I look forward to for years to come.



The Road to Seattle

Amanda

Last year at the end of August when it came time to travel to Seattle to begin my Service year, I decided to drive myself. Now, this was not a whim but was something that I'd been planning from before COVID was even a blip on my radar. Prior to March 2020, this was going to be a fun road trip that I got to share with a friend; what it turned into instead was my own personal odyssey. Traveling just over 2,000 miles in 4 days by myself during a pandemic was absolutely life-altering. The stops, planned and not, the car troubles, the hotels...I've never felt like more of an adult in my life! If ever there were a time for growing pains, this was it. It wasn't all bad though. Driving through so many states (about 6 1/2, if you count Texas), I saw such a huge variety of landscapes. Once I got into the northwestern part of Colorado I saw parts of the country I'd never seen before! Even though it was a fairly harrowing experience at the time, it's an important memory that has helped me grow as a person and shape my Service year. I wouldn't consider doing something like it again, but I'm grateful for the trip and its season in my life.

Tomato Soup

Caroline

During our time together there has been an abundance of community meals, but none have been repeated as much as tomato soup. We have paired it with many things: grilled cheese, salad, bread bowls, etc ... but we seem to always gravitate towards the warm and homey dish that is tomato soup.

- 1 medium white or yellow onion
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter
- Two 14.5-ounce cans of crushed tomatoes
- One 46-ounce bottle or can of tomato juice
- 3 to 6 tablespoons sugar
- 1 or 2 tablespoons vegetable stock or mushroom bouillon cube
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream (or nutpods alternative)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley



To prepare: dice onion and then cook until translucent with melted butter. Add in tomatoes and juice. Then add the sugar, and then the stock or cube. Finish off with pepper to taste and the heavy cream or dairy alternative. We sometimes blend it for a different texture, but it is entirely up to you! **Happy eating!**

Job Introductions

Taylor- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

Before embarking on this service year I had a pretty good idea of what I was looking for in terms of a service placement. In college, I explored various classes in the law field, which sparked my interest in social justice. The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, a legal aid nonprofit that provides pro bono representation to immigrants in Seattle, is exactly where I saw myself working and where I landed just a few months after graduation. My tasks range from helping our clients with work permit applications, translating legal documents from Spanish to English, and researching country conditions. Most recently I started doing intakes with our clients to screen for any forms of relief. This is the first step in the process of receiving legal aid at NWIRP but oftentimes also very traumatic for the potential clients as they have to retell the stories of why they fled their home country. Although listening to their stories doesn't get any easier, I am grateful that I get to help them on their way to creating a new life in this country. I am in constant awe of their immense bravery and sense of hope - it has truly changed my perspective of how I experience the world.

April- Church Council of Greater Seattle

I'm a community organizer at the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The bulk of my work is for CCGS' Faith Land Initiative, a network of congregations and faith leaders building collective power around faithful land use and equitable development. I convene stakeholders and cultivate relationships with and between impacted people, social service providers, faith communities, and city officials/other decision-makers around issues of affordable housing, and combatting homelessness and displacement.

Kylee- Immanuel Community Services

Kylee is the Assistant Program Coordinator and an essential worker at Immanuel Community Services (ICS), located in South Lake Union. ICS has four major components: a food bank, hygiene center, recovery shelter, and community lunch. Kylee interacts most closely with the recovery shelter and the hygiene center. On any given day, there are roughly forty people who walk through the hygiene center doors. For those folks that come into the hygiene center, Kylee helps them meet their basic needs with conversation and connection, as well as clean clothes. When possible, she also assists on a deeper level with applications for state benefits, housing, employment, and follow-through to other resources. When it comes to the fifteen-men recovery shelter, she helps supply them with their basic hygiene needs and a laugh here and there. Her favorite part of serving at ICS is the connections she has been able to make, which lead to laughing and lightening the day!

Featured Photos:

Stephanie

This month I've had the opportunity to work on some new video projects with my service sites. For one of these projects, Amanda and I had the opportunity to visit St. Paul's in Mount Vernon to highlight one of their ministries, La Resurreccion. Afterward, we decided to take the scenic route back for some socially distant shopping. As someone who works from home, I was very excited to have the opportunity to see a new area of Washington.



We hope you enjoyed our first newsletter! Before you leave, we would like to share the bible verse that inspired this fundraising campaign-

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

— Isaiah 35:1–2a

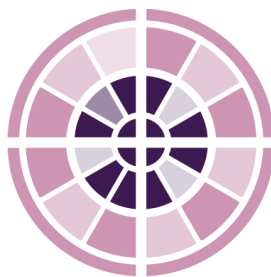
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