



Vincenzian Service Corps-Central

A Year of Service Makes a Lifetime of Difference

Summer 2009

Word of the Day

by Jessica Amspoker

VSC-Central

Friday, July 17, 2009. Word of the Day: Covenant—A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being involving mutual commitments or guarantees; a usually formal, solemn and binding agreement.

One year ago I entered into a covenant, a covenant with my VSC community, that house full of total strangers that would soon become like family to me, and with some of the most amazing kids I have had the honor of meeting (although they would be quick to correct me that they're not kids, "I'm grown, Miss"). In August 2008 I stepped through the looking glass from my suburban home near Dallas, Texas into Covenant House Missouri in North St. Louis to work with homeless, run-away and "at-risk" youth ages 16-21. I had no idea what to expect of the coming year. I knew only two things: 1) that I was completely unqualified for the work I was about to do and 2) that God had called me here to do this work. What I quickly discovered was that those two statements can't both be true at the same time. God gives us what we need when we need it to do His work on Earth. That is not to say that I was immediately adept at my job or even that I ever became more than slightly competent, but God uses broken vessels.

It is so hard to describe *why* this year has meant so much to me, *why* I love the youth and staff at Covenant House so much; I guess because I'm trying to give a logical answer to an illogical question. Why do you love someone? It's not because of what they can do for you, and it's not because of what you can do for them. I love my kids because each and every one of them is created in the image and likeness of God. I love

them because they're here and because God created each of us to love. Throughout our formation with the Vincenzian Service Corps, we learned a lot about seeing the face of Christ in those we serve and in those who surround us each day and I know that He has been present with me every day in those kids. Sure, some days they tried their hardest to hide Him behind anger, profanity, pride and even full-blown tantrums, but He also gives us the grace to see past all of that to the beautiful, sometimes broken, child of God that is really no different than you or me.

We've all been stepped on before, we have our bumps, bruises and breaks, but those of us who have been lucky enough have always had someone there to help us back up, someone to bandage us back up and tell us it's okay. It is an honor now to be in the position to "kiss" a skinned knee and say "You're going to be okay" and an even greater honor to be able to forgive those pains inflicted out of hurt or anger.

Sure, I've had my days where I swear off ever having children of my own for fear that they will one day turn into teenagers, but more often than not, if you asked me about "my kids" (or even if you didn't) I'd talk you to death about how awesome they are. I've been like one of those new moms who thinks eve-



Jessica

VSC MISSION STATEMENT

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

ryone wants to hear every last insignificant detail about their babies. I don't even know how many people I have bored to tears with stories about how cute and amazing my kids are! I know if you knew these guys, you'd love them, too.

I first encountered Covenant House several years ago through a book, Are You Out There, God? By Sister Mary Rose McGeady, DC, that simply told the stories of her kids at Covenant House in New York and I immediately fell in love. I could tell you countless more stories now about my own kids in St. Louis, but they're not my stories to tell and besides, the youth at Covenant House are so much more than just a series of events leading them up to the present day. They are fantastic young men and women striving to live out their own callings amidst impossible circumstances.

When I first started at Covenant House I was told that every day was different there. What I soon realized is that not only is every day different from any other day, but every day is different from anything else you've ever experienced.

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I came to Covenant House with so little—I have no background in social work, education, counseling or even with teenagers other than having been one myself—yet I soon found myself teaching, tutoring, working on the streets and sometimes just generally trying to calm and corral them. I don't know what all I have accomplished in my time there, but I am a firm believer in planting seeds and letting them grow in God's timing.

Yes, I've put forth my best effort to teach resume writing, appropriate workplace behavior, interviewing skills and even the occasional algebra or grammar lesson, but, as cliché as it sounds, my students have taught me so much more.

I have learned so much from them, from

song lyrics that I probably could have gone my whole life without ever needing to hear, to greater things like humility and patience. Teenagers can be really good for helping us grow in certain virtues! I have learned how to just love and embrace who I am and be real ("keepin' it 100") and how much more valuable that can be than any sort of tangible expertise. The answer "I don't know but I'll find out" sometimes elicits a much more grateful response than any sort of technical explanation. I have learned how to be more thankful for all the things we take for granted. When giving someone a ride to an appointment after they've missed the bus can turn someone's whole day around, who am I to complain that I don't have a CD player in my car? I've even learned that I can be better at

math than I ever thought I was—if there's no one else around to explain how to divide fractions, the only thing you can do is learn it yourself!

The point I'm trying to make here is not what I've accomplished in the past twelve months, or how I did my best in a new situation and thus kept my covenant with all those I've been working with, but that God always keeps His end of the deal and that my kids, who had no say in whether or not some little girl from Texas would come into their lives and meddle around kept their covenant with me.

I will be forever changed because of my time with those amazing young men and women at Covenant House and I envy those who get to keep working with them every day.

I was able to do things I've never done before...

by Caryn Murray



Caryn

It's hard for me to really measure the impact I've made by doing a year of service with VSC at St. Elizabeth's Adult Day Care. Now, the only way I was able to write about

some of the effects of my volunteering, was because of the feedback I received from others and from how the people I've encountered through this wonderful opportunity have impacted me.

At St. Elizabeth's the population of people I served ranged in age and abilities. Just a handful of the participants, even after knowing me a year, remember my name and can verbally appreciate me. But, from the meaningful smiles I get from the participants when I greet them at the door or help them to or from the table, the hugs that sometimes come unexpectedly that I receive throughout the day, and from the nice little chats

I've had with some of the more independent participants whose words are inspiring and make me appreciate my own life and make me want to live life to the fullest because the young, healthy, flexible body I have now won't last forever; because of these little immeasurable joys, I know my presence, patience, kindness and care I've given has impacted the lives of those I have served in ways I can never fully measure.

Besides the effects I've had on the lives of the participants at St. Elizabeth's, I believe I have positively affected their caregivers and possibly affected other people who I didn't directly serve but who I came across during my service year. To the caregivers, I was someone who cared and provided a break for them during the day. I believe this from the looks of satisfaction (and sometimes relief) on the caregiver's faces as they would arrive at the center to drop off or pick up their loved one for the day. To the people, whether they were a passerby or an acquaintance who either gleamed at my youthful presence as I helped participants around the center or who found out that I was a full-time volunteer and was moved by my willing-

ness to help others, I have somewhat impacted even them by my service.

This service year has opened a window of opportunity for me to explore further, even into other areas of service where I can continue to learn. I was able to do things I've never done before, where experiencing those things helped me grow as a person—an individual, increasing my self-confidence to improve myself so I can in turn, better serve the people I've learned from. Seeing the joy that I have given and imaging the impact my service has done makes me feel good and motivates me to continue to serve. It's become more of a part of who I am and not just what I do. This year I have taken a step out of my comfort zone which has broadened and inspired me to not just dream but do.

I want to thank the people at St. Elizabeth's, the people I have served, those people who I've encountered throughout my life, the people who love and support me, and of course, "the Man Above" (as Ms Lillian, our 90 year old recycled teenager would say) for being a part of my experience of service, making this opportunity possible and changing me for the better.

...I will always be connected...

by Sarah LaVigne

Serving babies and their families at the Nurses for Newborns Foundation this year has been a profound experience of human connections. It is amazing how many different lives touch each other through the work of this one organization.

NFNF nurses visit moms and babies in their homes, which connects NFNF to clients' lives on a deeper level than the average doctor visit. Doing "ride alongs" with our hardworking nurses opened my eyes to the complexity of poverty our clients faced. Families don't just need medical care; they often need transportation, food, safe housing or counseling. In my office work I was able to help nurses connect families to resources for relationship classes, shelters and utility assistance. I was even able to provide some much-needed space heaters in the dead of winter and window air conditioners during the recent heat wave.

My main job at NFNF was to help prepare grant applications to fund our programs. When I applied for funding, I was also connecting potential donors with the stories of our clients' lives. My writing helped reveal the often unseen realities of health disparities in Missouri. I wrote about how much babies needed connections to good prenatal care,

medical home and safe environments. I also told the stories of hope and success that could result when families connected with a nurse caregiver and mentor.

Even if these donors never met our clients, they were still connected to improving their lives. When I helped receive countless donations of diapers, formula, baby clothes and cribs, I wasn't just providing babies with things they needed. I was also helping link church groups and suburban moms to inner city parents whom they didn't know but still cared about.

During some of my "ride alongs" with nurses, I became involved with the parenting classes and mother networking meetings that are part of NFNF's Stay at Home Parent Program. In these events, clients could meet other moms and see that others were going through the same parenting challenges. I'll never forget the day a mom who had just been through a divorce spoke up to offer advice and encouragement to another client who was in an unhealthy relationship. Or the Healthy Start client who drew on lessons from her nurse to perform the emergency delivery of a friend's premature 2lb baby.

I gave two presentations to Stay at Home

Parent classes, about Christmas traditions and Black History Month.

Using pictures of the evolution of Santa Claus and of St. Louis entrepreneur Annie Malone,

I encouraged moms to connect with the

past and give their children a sense of pride in family heritage. While I may have offered my history research skills, these moms gave me the humbling, intimidating and uplifting experience of becoming part of their lives for a brief time. I may be far away from their St. Louis neighborhoods now, but I will always be connected to the stories of their struggles, the hope and promise of their beautiful infants and the hugs and smiles from their toddlers. I'll also stay a part of the amazing team at Nurses for Newborns that work so lovingly to bring these families the help they need. We are united in the love of Christ, who says, "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me."



Sarah

Many Thanks to Our Generous Donors

We give special thanks to those who have so generously donated to the VSC Program during this past quarter.

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

If you are able to help support the volunteers in their service, please return your donation in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you so much for your generosity and prayerful support.

Deborah Bean
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St. Agnes Catholic Church in
Shepherdstown, WV

I Am Making a Difference

by Elena Spear



Elena

As a teacher of below grade level, at-risk 6th graders, I sometimes wondered if they ever listened to me or learned anything from me. I definitely knew some students learned more than others. I remember one time in particular when I

was struck with astonishment that one of my students who I thought never really listened to me, presented a beautiful definition of a math topic we were covering.

I had taught my students, who barely had their times-tables memorized, how to create a prime factorization tree. Our definition was: A prime factorization tree is a diagram to decompose a composite number into the product of its prime factors. At this point in the year, I had struggles with coming up with creative projects to supplement my math lessons for the students. However, I knew with this topic I would have no problem in being creative. With the word "tree" in this topic, I knew exactly what kind of project I was going to create—a tree!

I took the time to create my own prime factorization tree so my students would

have a model to base their ideas for their trees. With construction paper and glue, I created a tree from nature but collected only one nature tree back from my students. My students took the liberty to be extremely creative and I was handed back a gum ball machine, a patriot's tree, a birthday balloon tree, a tree of hearts and a tree of fire. When I thought for sure I had created the cookie cutter model for them, my students surprised me and let their creativity shine.

While we were working on these projects, a large group of high school students who were visiting De La Salle Middle School were led on a tour and stopped by our classroom. Mr. Pusateri, the principal, introduced our class to them and then asked what we were working on. The answer to that question was simple: Prime Factorization Trees. With my students short term memories in mind, I thought the next question was going to show my weaknesses and failure to be able to teach below grade level students. "What are prime factorization trees?" The principal asked one student if he would be able to take a stab at it and he said no. To me, this reaction from my students was not a surprise. Then, one of the girls who makes it quite clear that she does not like math, stood up and gave the best definition that I could have hoped for, even using the words 'composite' and 'prime' to de-

scribe the numbers at each step of the tree. She presented it so clearly and without hesitation at any point that I was amazed. My lesson had made a difference. When we finished our projects, I hung them up and they have been up for everyone to see since then.

Now that it is the end of the year, I can assert that all six of my students are able to recall and do the steps of the prime factorization tree for any number. As is the case with all math, these trees were a foundation that had to be laid before we could cover the steps of finding the greatest common factor of two numbers and the least common multiple of two numbers, which in turn is the foundation for working with fractions.

Even though their paper and pencil test scores didn't show it, I knew I was making a difference. Anything they recalled from the day before was a victory. Even just hearing from another teacher that my students were reciting a cheesy math line that I created (Division is really multiplication in disguise!) in her Language Arts classroom was another victory. They are listening. They are learning. They may not be able to remember everything, but I am making a difference.



Students with their factorization trees

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"May our presence and care to those most in need reflect the gentleness, esteem and dignity we see reflected in the life and work of Jesus."

~St. Vincent de Paul

Gracias por el viaje (Thank you for the journey)

by Kelly Mahoney



Kelly

When I began my volunteer year at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Criminal Justice Ministry, I knew I would get the chance to enter a jail or prison facility. I did not know how

much the experience would enhance my range of knowledge of the Criminal Justice System and would also open my eyes to the injustices that occur behind jail walls. I have been able to apply my Christian beliefs to my ministry which has expanded my ability to help the individuals that are facing jail or prison sentences. I know I cannot change the System overnight, but I also know that I can impact individual lives and can really encourage a person to achieve goals that he had never envisioned before. Through changing lives, my heart has been touched by the experience I have had as a Vincentian Service Corps Volunteer in St. Louis, MO.

With my university degree of Criminal Justice and Political Science, my mind was filled with statistics and theories. Theories are great tools to learn when studying the subject of Criminal Justice but what I quickly realized is that I could not place just theories onto an entire population made up of individuals. It was through my experience inside the jail walls that I understood; these are people and not statistics to be placed into general theoretic studies. Each inmate deserves to be treated with respect because that is the most fundamental right we have as Americans and more importantly as Christians.

I serve as a teacher's assistant to the "English as a Second Language Class" in the St. Louis County jail. I work with men who are seeking to learn or better apply English language skills. Our classroom is open to any inmate needing to learn English; most speaking Spanish and one, Chinese. The class has about fifteen to twenty students. I had a few years of Spanish language in high school and I am sure my

teacher is getting the last laugh after I claimed I would never need to speak Spanish again after graduation. While teaching my students English, they enjoy helping me brush up on my Spanish. This is encouraging to the guys because they are able to give something to me in return. The men I work with are eager to learn English and are so proud to be in the United States. The way they speak about American values and ideals that they have learned about gives such a great witness to how truly blessed we are to be a part of this country. The situations my students have gone through under the governments in their home countries make our issues as a country look somewhat petty. No government is perfect; hearing how much America is appreciated by these men gives me hope that not all is lost here.



Kelly with students

there are always mixed emotions that can range from hope to frustration, from compassion to helplessness. While I am so grateful for the students in my class, I am also frustrated at the way they are treated by the Criminal Justice System. I have students who have been locked up for months before they are appointed a public defender, let alone able to speak with one. When they are finally able to meet with their attorney, a translator is never provided and they are rarely able to meet for more than ten minutes. I have seen one student receive a ten year sentence in prison and another receive an eight month sentence in jail for the same involvement in the same crime only because one was able to afford a lawyer and the other was not. I know these issues are not meant to be discriminatory, but the amount of injustice I see can make me feel helpless against a system that has not been changed for decades.

Thankfully, most of the time I am able to look beyond the issues that I cannot

change immediately and focus on what I can do. I have realized that it is the little things that really impact the lives of people who come from lower incomes, unsupportive families and criminal backgrounds. I have seen the face of one student light up when I handed him a 25¢ postcard of the St. Louis Arch that he could send to his wife in Seattle, WA. I searched for a Valentine's Day card written in Cantonese to give to a student from China that he sent to his family, which he still thanks me for to this day. My students thank me every day for being there to help them understand English and for just giving them a chance which many people are not willing to do.

What they don't know is how much they have given me that has made this time so wonderful. One student went from not understanding me in class to now talking with me about getting his G.E.D. and applying to higher education programs once he is released. When another student was released, he returned to Mexico to attend school because he feels he can make a difference and inspire people from his hometown. I receive monthly letters from a former student, serving his sentence in a Missouri prison, about how much he has progressed in his language skills and that he is now helping other students in prison learn English as well. I have seen a student's eyes fill with tears after I sang one of his favorite songs, "On Eagle's Wings", for the class.

I could talk for hours about how my students have given me the courage and strength to continue to work in jail and prison ministry and also how much hope I see in the people being released. I encourage people to volunteer with prison and jail ministry because it is an area that is in major need of attention. Whether it is meeting with a person who is currently incarcerated or speaking up on behalf of the institutional changes that must take place within the system, both aspects deserve more consideration from the Christian viewpoint and from the American population. I am so proud to have been given the chance to meet and interact with the men in the English class, they have really made this volunteer year amazing.

No One Ever Said I'd Fall in Love

by Kristina Schliesman



Kristina

It was my second week at my service site when Mary approached me with a new client in tow, "Kristina, this is Vantrice" and asked me to help her find something to eat in the kitchen and get settled. Vantrice looked young, younger than I, and was very pregnant. I soon

found out her baby was due any day. Vantrices's journey to Our Lady's Inn was nothing short of a miracle. She had been staying with friends and family for awhile and had called Our Lady's Inn weeks earlier at the suggestion of a friend but there were no openings available. Just prior to moving to the Inn, she had spent a few days on the street and had managed in all the shuffle to lose her diabetic supplies. She was urged to call us one more time. Vantrice moved in a few days later, I met her at the hospital and waited patiently with her for the arrival of her new son. I held the tiny newborn in my arms for the first time, counted his fingers and toes, and whispered, "You're going to be great someday," as I have done to every one of "my babies" this year. I was suddenly overwhelmed with emotion, my stomach churned and my heart raced. Since I'd heard of people getting light-headed and fainting at a birth before, I didn't think much of it. I sat down and waited for the feeling to pass.

A few months later, Thanksgiving was celebrated at the Inn. It was a Tuesday and I woke up sick. I stayed in bed, but couldn't fall back asleep. My mind kept replaying the promise I had made to Ladona and Tisha to help with Thanksgiving dinner. So I dragged myself out of bed and in to work. When I arrive at work late, a very pregnant Ladona greeted me with, "Where you been?" She had no time for my excuses. We got right to work in the kitchen. We talked and laughed and made enough macaroni and cheese to feed a small army for a month. As we removed the final pan from the oven and took celebratory photos of

us and our deliciousness, I became overwhelmed with emotion, my stomach churned and my heart raced. Since I'd been sick that morning, I didn't think much of it. I sat down and waited for the feeling to pass.

That weekend I was showing my visiting family around St. Louis when I received word that Chanise had gone into the hospital. Chanise's baby wasn't due this soon. I quickly did the math and realized she was only 25 weeks along in her pregnancy. I had grown very close to Chanise and her two boys during their time at the Inn. On her first day at the Inn, I was assigned to take her in to the hospital and watch her youngest son while she was monitored for some spotting. So, when I heard she was in the hospital again, my heart sank. Later that weekend, I heard that the labor could not be stopped and Chanise would be delivering. I knew the risks involved and the odds of survival. My heart broke. I waited in patient prayer for the good news that baby Janeka was born alive, one pound and eleven ounces and doing okay and that Chanise was just fine. I was overwhelmed with emotion, my stomach churned and my heart raced. Since I'd been through so much pain and joy that weekend, I didn't think much of it. I sat down and waited for the feeling to pass.

I visited Janeka in the hospital a couple of weeks later. She was about the size of a potato. Her foot was no bigger than my thumb. I put my hand on her glass incubator, peered through the blue light she was "tanning" under, and told her she was going to be great someday. I began to cry. And, yes, sure enough, my stomach churned and my heart raced. And that's when I knew what had happened to me. I had fallen in love. Deeply, madly, passionately in love.

Now I knew what had happened to me, but I didn't know how to tell anyone about it, or even if I should. And so I kept it to myself. I didn't want to share my feelings because, to be honest, they scared me. I never meant to fall in love. I thought, "How could I let this happen? This will only make things harder in June when I have to leave. I can't be in love." But the damage was done. And since love isn't something you can easily undo, I decided to keep it to myself.

It only took a month, though, for my secret to come out. It was three days before Christmas and we had just finished packing up from the Inn's annual Christmas party. It was an evening full of good food, singing carols, lots of noise and a visit from Santa who brought thousands of gifts for the moms and children. I was exhausted. All night that now very familiar feeling had been present. Only this time I didn't mistake it for exhaustion or eating too much Christmas dinner. There was no denying it this time. I called my parents to tell them about the party and mid-story started to bawl uncontrollably. I was overcome with emotional, stomach-churning, heart-racing love and searched desperately for the words to express myself...finally, "I JUST LOVE THESE PEOPLE SO MUCH!" I cried through my tears. Phew!

With each mom and child, my heart grew bigger and bigger. In May, as my service year began to wind down, I was spending time with a few families in the community room before dinner one evening. Moms were sitting around talking and rocking babies and children were screaming and running and jumping on furniture. One mom looked over at me as I was pummeled by about seven small children and said, jokingly, "Aren't you going to miss this, Kristina?" I replied, in all seriousness, "You have no idea." I will miss this beautiful family I've become a part of. I will miss them like crazy. But the greatest lesson I've learned this year is that when you allow yourself to fall deeply, wildly and passionately in love, and you give that love away freely, you create space in your heart for love from others. And the door to the heart is a one way door; once a person gets in, it's impossible to get out. So, while I'm sad to leave my family at Our Lady's Inn, I truly do believe, I'll never be without them, because they'll always be in my heart.

I didn't have many specific expectations when I began this year of service. The expectations I did have were based on what other's told me. They said I'd be changed, I'd have bad days, I'd cry, I'd make friends...but I never expected this! No one ever said I'd fall in love. It has been the most unexpected, beautiful, life-giving blessing I've received this year!

A 'Coming of Age' Year

by Molly Rawicki

I have just completed my year with VSC and it was truly a "coming of age" year. In some ways, I feel like I have learned more this year than in the rest of my life combined. At my service site I learned about the care of young children, love, self-giving and patience. In my VSC community I learned about cooperation, teamwork, understanding and true friendship. In St. Louis I learned about poverty and acceptance of all people and came to realize how truly lucky I am.

This service year I served at Guardian Angel DeSales Childcare with one year old children from low-income families teaching these adorable little human beings all the "basics": how to speak, how to walk, how to recognize people, objects and animals. I was very worried about making up for what might be lacking in the children's' homes so I researched how to better nurture the children. I learned how important it was to speak correctly to them in order for them to learn to speak themselves. It became very important for me to read books often with the children, to hold them, to give them attention and to teach them manners. These toddlers picked up on every mood that I had. When I was happy, the day would go smoothly with many little smiling faces. Some days, when I would try to hide my sad emotions, the kids would act upset and instinctively know to come hug me and sit in my lap. I quickly realized how incredible these little sponges of human beings are and was able to let go of all my baggage when I walked into my room in the morning to fully open my heart, mind and arms.

By the end of my service year each child knew how to say, and shout multiple times a day, "I love you!" They were able to "apologize" to each other when they would wrong the other by going up and offering sweet hugs and a badly enunciated "sorry". Most could make animal noises when asked and obediently hold each other's hands while waddling around the block. I cried for a full ten minutes when one little boy ran up to me on his second birthday to sing himself the birthday song. Each step of progress that they make gives me such joy. The older one-year-olds take care of the younger ones when they are sad. These children taught me more patience and love than I thought possible. I feel so proud of them and truly feel as if they are my own.

For the first time in my life, I worked with many adults that were dealing with poverty. Many of my coworkers were so different than I am but I learned so much from them. I was able to use our differences to really create an environment that was supportive and loving towards each other and the children. It blew my mind that in the act of trying to aid others that I, myself, was helped so fully.

Through working with the poor at my service site, I lost the guard I had put up earlier in my life towards those living in poverty. I finally wanted to get to know these people rather than give them a few dollars and walk out of their lives. They are full of talent, stories and passion. I began to finally see the personalities through the masks of dirty clothes and hand-held cardboard signs. This was a miracle for

me because they taught me what really mattered in life. No longer did I take for granted the food I ate, the clothing on my back and the roof over my head. But more importantly, I learned that all people are interesting and beautiful.



Molly

These children, staff members and people out in the city taught me how to love. The act of serving others opens a door to let people in. When I was able to let others in, I was able to learn to grow. I do feel like I helped the children by teaching them the "Twinkle, Twinkle" song and that a dog says "woof" and I do think that I made an impact with the staff by bringing a positive attitude, but the people I came across this year helped me so much more fully. I now know that I want to go into a career working with children. I also know that I will never be happy if I am not doing some type of service. I have a new respect for all people. This respect makes me want to be a better person. I have a sense of profound thankfulness in my heart for how lucky I have been in my life. This year is something I will not let myself forget. This year changed my heart and let people in.



Emma

Emma Olwell shared her story, "I've Decided I'm a Learner" in the Spring 2009 Newsletter. If you missed it, you can still read it online at www.vincentianservicecorps.org You will find it at the bottom of the home page.

"Be kind and love for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring them."

~Sr. Rosalie Rendu

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**Vincentian Service
Corps-Central**

A Year of Service Makes a Lifetime of
Difference



Address Correction Requested



Dear Friends,

Many who know me are aware that I am not good at all with numbers. However, there are two very significant numbers I would like to share with you.

This community of VSC Volunteers (2008-2009) who are completing their service have served 1,304 people and have given 15,283 hours in service of persons who are poor.

As I reflect on this, I know that statistics can be rather sterile. However, I do believe that these numbers come alive as we envision a face, a story, a family, embedded in these statistics.

Our volunteers have given many hours of service this year and have touched many lives. In turn, I am certain that

those whose lives have been impacted by our volunteers have gone out and continued to touch the hearts of others they encounter each day. So the numbers grow and the ministry continues to be alive and well.

Please enjoy the ministry stories our volunteers share with you in this newsletter. It is the living reality that makes the numbers come alive in a great way.

Yes, I am not good at all with numbers but it is these numbers that give me a great deal of joy and energy. I hope they do the same for you.

Thank you once again for your financial generosity and prayerful support as these young adults continue to reach out to serve "Our masters", persons who are poor.

As we send this community of VSC Volunteers to continue their service in other areas of our country and in many differ-

ent ways, may they be blessed in a special way.

May each of you also enjoy the many abundant blessings of our loving God.

In the spirit of Vincent and Louise...

God Bless each of you,

Sr. Teresa Daly

Director,
Vincentian Service Corps-Central

*To share what one has is nothing
if one does not give oneself.*

~St. Louise de Marillac