

## **2016 Award Script**

### **Welcome and Prayer: Ginny Johnson**

#### **Prayer:**

Compassionate and Loving God,

We praise you for the many gifts you provide us.

May we be mindful of those who go without, each and every day.

Help us to provide the resources needed for our brothers and sisters

Burdened by the suffering caused by poverty and oppression.

Let our work this day be a reminder of our interconnectedness with all your beloved children.

Open our eyes to see the needs of this community.

Cleanse our ears to hear the cries of the poor.

Anoint our hands and feet to be instruments in fulfilling your justice.

We ask this all through your Son, Jesus Christ.

*Amen.*

### **Introduction: Ella Guimond**

As Service-Learning Placement Coordinator, it is my great privilege to introduce Alexandra Wolkoff. Alexandra serves as the Assistant Director of Education at Puentes de Salud. Puentes is an organization that promotes the health and wellness of South Philadelphia's rapidly growing Latino immigrant population through high-quality health care, innovative educational programs, and community building. Service-learning students in both freshman and semester-long courses spend their afternoons providing tutoring support and mentorship to students in grades K through 8 who participate in the afterschool program. Please help me welcome Alexandra.

### **Reflection: Alexandra Wolkoff**

#### **Presentation of Awards: Ann Marie Keffer**

This year we had 473 service-learning students and 35 Faith-Justice Studies Minors.

Through both programs students made intentional choices to listen to the voices of people living at the margins of society, to use their academic course work to enhance their understanding of social and human problems and advocate for a more just world.

The following awards seek to recognize outstanding students and their commitment to this service of faith and the promotion of justice. I ask the recipients to come forward when your name is called to receive your award from Dr. Johnson. Our first awards are first year service-learning student awards.

**The First Year Service-Learning Student Awards** recognize students' academic promise and commitment to service demonstrated through each of our year-long freshman service-learning class.

Our first recipient is Jacqueline Barrett. Jackie's professors Drs. Patterson and Parker and Service Scholars Emily and Michelle all agree that she consistently demonstrates perseverance and positive attitude in her service at Visitation School. They further note that Jackie has grown much as demonstrated in her reflection journals and discussions where she "offers sharp insights and demonstrates her knowledge of social justice issues". Jackie's dedication to service has made her stand out in a class of very committed students. We are confident that this dedication will continue throughout not only her career here at Saint Joseph's but also her career as a teacher. Congratulations Jackie!

Our second recipient is Bridget Buck. Bridget's professors Drs. Green and Gilman note that "she is able to articulate very clearly the theory of service-learning including concepts such as charity vs justice, social class and race in both written and oral reflections in class. Jackie's metaphors are creative and accurate. She is across the board an outstanding citizen in the service-learning course with excellent contributions to class discussion, and consistently displaying curiosity and openness to what is new and different in Philadelphia and her service placement." Congratulations Bridget!

Our next recipient is Mackenzie Gillen. Mackenzie's professor Dr. Linehan notes, "Mackenzie serves at Intensive Outpatient, working with adolescents who are required by the court to participate in the program. This is a challenging assignment for a college freshman not much older than the youth at her placement. I am impressed by the way Mackenzie puts herself "out there" every week, often with people who are new to the group. Her journal entries are models of compassionate wisdom. I believe that she has learned a great deal from this experience." Congratulations Mackenzie!

Brendan Kiley, is our next recipient. Brendan has served at Our Mother of Sorrows elementary school. He has become an integral part of Sr. Rosemary's class at Our Mother of Sorrows for two semesters offering lessons and getting to know students. Brendan's professor, Fr. Joyce notes, "Brendan became well integrated into the life of Our Mother of Sorrows School. He has begun to see the life of the students beyond the classroom and is able to make connections to larger social contexts in which the students live and the school functions. He also has a much deeper grasp of policy implications connected to the education." Congratulations Brendan!

Our next First Year Student Award recipient is Stephanie Sickinger. Dr. Bergen, Stephanie's professor relays, "Stephanie works with adults who are working hard to earn their GED's at Project HOME's Honickman Learning Center....In several class discussions, Steph has raised issues about educational inequality, racism, ethnocentrism and the barriers her students must overcome in order to successfully pass the GED requirements in order to create a better life for themselves and their families... Her experiences at service have been reflected in her journals, class contributions and in her presentation about her placement.... Her passion and commitment provide many teachable moments for the need for social change." Congratulations Stephanie!

Our next recipient is Kelly Smith. Kelly's professor, Mr. Grodecki notes, "Kelly has been quick to make connections between the philosophical texts read for the course and her experiences at Families Forward... She has an insightful aptitude at making connections between what she has learned previously and what she is encountering for the first time in a given text that also enables her to perceive and make connections between the classroom and the service placement. Kelly has also become more greatly aware of the gift that has been her own education and, in a truly Ignatian way, seeks to share that grace with others in a selfless way through the service that she does." Congratulations Kelly!

Our final First Year Student Award recipient is Cassandra Snook. Kassi's professor Dr. Johnson remarks how "Kassi contributes to our service-learning class dynamic in many ways. She attends without fail her service at Visitation School where she assists in the middle grades classrooms. She brings her experiences, and her substantial thinking about those experiences, to our class offering examples of classroom practice that enhance the growth of the whole child." Congratulations Kassi!

Our next award is the Curran-Renzetti Scholarship.

The **Curran-Renzetti Scholarship** recognizes the outstanding performance of a freshman service-learning student. The scholarship is made possible by Dr. Daniel Curran, Jr., former Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Dr. Claire Renzetti, Professor of Sociology.

This 2016 Curran-Renzetti Scholarship recipient is Caroline Forrest. Caroline has volunteered at IHM Center for Literacy this year through her English 101 and 102 service-learning courses. At IHM, Caroline helps teach English language skills to multiethnic, non-English speaking adult immigrants. She has developed strong relationships with her students and offers effective and compassionate guidance. Caroline's professors Drs. Green and Gilman note "Caroline is a quiet but thoughtful and reflective presence during class discussion. It is in her field notes that she really shines and her dedication to service is most evident. She writes extremely detailed and thoughtful field notes and reflects on her service site with great intention. She also makes excellent connections between her service experience and the readings for the course and the service scholars discussion." Congratulations Caroline!

**Ignatian Award** recognizes a senior who has demonstrated throughout their undergraduate studies a steadfast commitment to *faithjustice* consistent with the gospel values and global vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola throughout their involvement with service-learning and/or faithjustice studies. He or she embraces the ideal of being “men and women for others” and embraces the call to serve locally, nationally and internationally.

This year’s recipient is: Chris Diehl. Chris is a senior Philosophy and English double major with a Faith-Justice Studies Minor. As a freshman, Chris participated in a year-long service-learning course sequence with Dr. McDonald, who remarks, “Chris stood out immediately, expressing passionately strong views about social justice. His leadership skills were also evident. His commitment to service was unwavering, and inspiring to his fellow students.” Beginning his sophomore year, Chris began working as a Service Scholar in the Faith-Justice Institute. Dr. Ailing Kong, Education professor notes, “As a Service Scholar, Chris helped with students’ questions about their service placement. He also facilitated discussions, one of which was on the topic of solidarity. He was flexible and integrated in his solidarity discussion the awareness of different cultures, which is essential in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and was a topic covered by the course as well. Chris was well-prepared and he asked thoughtful questions to engage all students in active participation. I’m sure he helped make valuable contribution to my students’ learning.” Dr. Betsy Linehan notes how as a student “Chris was a model of respect, caring, candor and refreshing humor in class discussions. He was -- typical for him -- totally engaged at all times....His academic choices as I know them are based on a strong sense of purpose, to make a difference for good in the world.” Furthermore, Chris has served as leaders in retreats, APEX and PSIP, all while continuing to serve his Catholic High School community Xaverian Brothers High School. Chris has accepted a teaching position at Neumann-Goretti High School in South Philadelphia next year through the ACE:SJU program.

**Assumption Award**, initiated by the Sisters of the Assumption, recognizes a female senior who has demonstrated a commitment to faith and justice and is continuing onto a post-graduate volunteer experience. Sarah Ferguson is this year's recipient. Sarah is a senior Sociology major and Faith-Justice Studies Minor. Sarah has taken several service-learning courses including a freshman year-long sequence and semester courses like Poverty, Ethics and Social Policy. Among her many notable leadership activities outside the classroom Sarah is Co-Vice President of SJU's chapter of Alpha Sigma Nu, The Jesuit Honor Society and was the Coordinator of SJU's Philadelphia Summer Immersion Program which brings freshman to campus before the start of classes for a cultural and service based immersion experience. One of Sarah's professor's Dr. Clampet-Lundquist notes, "Sarah is constantly putting herself "out there" in a passionate and thoughtful way for issues that she cares about. She also combines her social justice work with academic pursuits. An example of this relates to her senior thesis. Sarah spent a semester in South Africa in a study abroad program with a service-learning component. While she was there, protests erupted in the U.S. over outrage of the police killing of Michael Brown. Sarah was struck by how open race was discussed in South Africa, so for her senior thesis, she interviewed students at SJU about social media and race relations. Sarah found numerous ways to be involved in positive social change on campus, including working with a group of students to build relationships with and support for contract workers at SJU. This is part of a larger effort among Jesuit institutions to match our rhetoric about social justice with the reality of working conditions. In class, Sarah would make connections with what we were learning in class with action such as this.... Sarah really exemplifies an ideal student – someone who honestly grapples with the ideas we're learning, someone who thoughtfully challenges systems in place, someone who is compassionate, and someone who can have a constructive dialogue with people who don't share her views. These qualities make for a leader for change." Fr. Dan Joyce, who has worked closely with Sarah adds, ""Sarah is a natural leader who has been able to impact a remarkable number of communities at Saint Joseph's University...she knows how to build the sorts of relationships that empower and create a solidarity of love that transforms. Sarah captures the spirit of Saint Marie Eugénie Milleret and the Assumption Community that all action should flow from a life of love." Sarah will be volunteering next year with Mercy Works in Chicago. Congratulations Sarah!

**Faith-Justice Studies Minors:** The Faith-Justice Studies minor is an interdisciplinary, self-designed curriculum that enables students to integrate their major area of study with inquiries into social justice and faith issues. Through six courses the minors have engaged directly with the "sufferings of the poor" and explored the call, not only to serve them, but also to stand in solidarity with them, analyzed institutions and social structures, questioned prevailing systems of thought that systematically contribute to modern-day social problems and considered existing social values in light of Gospel values and faith-based traditions of social justice. This year, there are 16 seniors graduating with the minor. When I call your name, please come up and receive your honor cord from Dr. Johnson.

Vincenza Bartholomew, Colleen Carmody, Chris Diehl, Michelle Donnelly, Sarah Ferguson, Lindsay Hueston, Elizabeth Maguire, Kaitlyn Martin, Erin McGrody, Amy Perfetti, Kathleen Rodgers, Gabriela Rosazza, Cheryl Rozinski, Daire Ryan, Liz Sohmer & Lindsey Stamer.

**Service-Learning Community Partner Award** recognizes an outstanding service-learning community partner who through their collaboration with service-learning faculty and program is a true co-educator.

This year's recipient is St. Ignatius Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center. St. Ignatius Nursing Home works with Drs. Sillup and DelConte's Pharmaceutical Marketing class Health Care Delivery Alternatives. Dr. Sillup notes, "Five years ago, when Tony and I were evaluating service sites for our service-learning course, we met John Meacham, Administrator of the St. Ignatius Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center. Very quickly, we saw how he differentiated St. Ignatius as an ideal location for students to complete the service component. Through his leadership, John created and maintains an environment that enables students to interact with residents as well as with his staff, who are performing services to support the residents. He ensures that St. Ignatius is dedicated to compassionate care for the poor, which is consistent with the standard the founding Felician Franciscan Sisters envisioned – that none of the residents will become part of the marginalized segment of the U.S. population. As a leader, John is a role model to be emulated by students. He initiated and institutes programs that immerse all employees with the care of the residents. One example is the restaurant-style dining that requires all staff, from the janitor to top management, to work a meal a week. He's the cook for dinner on Wednesdays. Of course, this includes service-learning students. And, if their service time commitments don't intersect with meals, the students are assigned to help with other tasks that support the residents, such as working with the laundry to fold and deliver bed linens to the residents. John is also receptive to innovative approaches to enhancing the relationship between students and the residents. ...In addition to being a service placement for eight courses over the last five years, John has supported research intended to improve the lives of residents." We recognize the extraordinary leadership of John and look forward to deepening such a valuable partnership!

**Ed Brady, SJ Faith in Action Award** recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated steadfast service and commitment to the Faith-Justice Institute. In honor of Fr. Ed Brady, SJ, the founding Director of the Faith-Justice Institute, recipients of this award embody the Ignatian ideals, especially that of *cura personalis*. This year's recipient is Fr. Tom Brennan, Associate Professor of English.

Tom has been a dedicated and inspiring advocate for the Faith-Justice Institute and a model of academic rigor in the classroom. Tom serves as an integral member of the Faith-Justice Institute Advisory Board. He teaches both freshman level service-learning courses as well as semester-long *Inside Out* courses which take place at a local correctional facility with both SJU students and inside students. Tom also teaches Faith-Justice Studies courses such as *Texts in Context and Gay and Lesbian Narratives* . Among his many accomplishments outside the classroom, he organized the extraordinary and impressionable campus visit by Ms. Jennifer Finney-Boylan broadening people's perspective and understanding of transgender issues and spirituality in Fall 2015. Tom has extraordinary talents in creating inclusive forums for different marginalized populations to explore faith issues, conflict resolution and diversity. Finally, and perhaps most notably among faculty, staff and students alike Tom is always willing to lend an empathetic listening ear and it is his an authentic self that models St. Ignatius' generosity of spirit and critical thinking. As his colleague Dr. Betsy Linehan notes, "Tom is "all about justice," especially for those most oppressed and excluded. I have seen this up close, in our shared work for the Alliance, in our team-teaching in the Inside Out Prison Exchange Program (five times at least), in presentations we have done together at justice conferences at Fairfield and Creighton Universities, and in conversations about our experiences teaching service-learning courses. In some of those classes Tom has gone the extra mile and volunteered alongside his freshman students. Surely this is faith in action!" Thank you Tom for your service and Congratulations!

Thank you for sharing in our celebration!