

PHJC Volunteers

Make a difference with heart!

www.phjcvolprogram.org

September 2019

Dear Friends,

We were especially graced this summer to have nine - yes, nine - wonderful volunteers in our ministries and communities! Let me share a bit of their stories with you. You will hear more from them directly in the fall edition of Word Gathering.

A Summer of Gratitude



Volunteer, Christy, join the Sisters in Mexico.

Cristy Contreras

Cristy served in Querétaro for a month while Sr. Mary Jane was in the States. She taught English to Sister Silveria, Ilsy (novice) and Jessica (postulant). She also volunteered at two daycares where they minister, Casa Cuna and Niños y Niñas.

Cristy then moved to San Ildefonso with Sr. Mary Jane upon her return. There she visited women in the village, did crafts with the children, and taught English and computers.

Cristy shared, "I had such a great experience living with the Sisters. I especially enjoyed living in community, sharing prayer, learning about Saint Katharina, and encountering the Otomi women and other indigenous groups. Cristy's next adventure is volunteering in Indonesia!

Lynda Klekowski

Lynda is a faithful volunteer every Saturday at Nazareth Home in East Chicago. She shared a week of her vacation from South Suburban Hospital in Illinois where she works as a surgical technician. Lynda volunteered by spending time with residents at Maria Center and the Catherine Kasper Home. She especially enjoyed visiting the Sisters and has decided to come back the fourth Friday of each month!



Volunteer, Lynda, visits Sisters and residents at Catherine Kasper Home.

Summer Golden

Having attended a senior service retreat with Sr. Connie and after graduating at the top of her class from Bishop Noll High School, Summer gave the month of July volunteering and sharing community at MoonTree.

Matthew Celmer, Director of MoonTree, stated that Summer was "an exceptional volunteer. She fit right in and used all of her skills and knowledge to help in any way she could, including helping us with graphs and charts on the computer and participating in our strategic planning process."



Summer Golden and Sr. Mary at MoonTree.

Summer stated, "For as long as I can remember, I have always been passionate about art, ecology, naturalism, and conservation..." She also made many strong connections with the Sisters during meal times.

Summer is studying at Hawaii Pacific University with a double major in Marine Biology and Environmental Sciences. She will be returning to MoonTree at Christmas and Easter as well as through an internship next summer.

Trip to El Paso, TX: PHJCs Stand with Refugees

In an effort to reach out to our sister and brother refugees, six incredibly generous women joined Sr. Connie on a trip to serve at the border in El Paso for two weeks at the end of June.

Pat (Brackley) Rader is a returning volunteer who served last year at MoonTree. She flew from Wyoming to meet up with the group along with two other young ladies, Ann Perri Olton and Maria Montesano, friends from school who flew in from Georgia.

Sr. Connie drove and first met up in East Chicago with Ashley Comer, a school counselor from Bishop Noll High school who chaperoned one of Sr. Connie's senior service retreats in Donaldson. They then stopped in Joliet, IL to pick up Sarah Nagelhout, a former Wisconsin Badger volunteer. The three continued to Springfield, MO to pick up Amy Wallace, a teaching assistant who raises cattle in Iowa. Quite a varied group! After two days and 25 hours of driving, the seven arrived at Casa del Refugiado for a life-changing experience!

No one really knew what to expect since this was a newly established site in April. It did not take long for the seven to experience the chills and the lump-in-the-throat sensation while



looking into the eyes of hungry, fear-filled, traumatized men, women, and children who had been detained in the inhumane detention centers run by ICE and Border Patrol in Las Cruces, NM and Juarez, Mexico.

With our brightest faces, friendliest voices, and hearts filled with compassion, we did our very best to do whatever we could to meet what we would back home consider the simplest needs: food, water, showers, a bed and blanket, hygiene products, a new set of clothes, diapers and formula for babies, a pair of shoes and yes - even shoe laces! These were taken from refugees by ICE and border patrol for "fear of harming themselves." Smiles and hugs were the greatest gifts, even if we could not speak Spanish.

We sorted donations and opened a new playroom where the children could be children again.

**We left saddened by the stories but fulfilled
in knowing we caused a few ripples of joy and
relief!**

We organized a small clinic for a volunteer nurse intern and doctor to help meet simple medical needs. We sorted and provided clothing, made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with a cross in the peanut butter and a prayer for their nourishment and safety as they traveled to their family or sponsor on a bus or airplane. We packed lunches, played with children, went to the local laundromat to wash Red Cross blankets and towels, bagged hygiene products in gallon-sized baggies and donated mini-pretzels in snack bags. Then we cleaned and cleaned and cleaned again - whatever needed to be done.

Sr. Connie was honored to drive 139 refugees to the bus station or airport and, with the gift of technology and Google Translator, listen to parents' stories of bravery, sacrifice, helplessness and hope as they fled their homes to protect their families. It was impossible to leave unaffected and yet determined to do even more upon the return home to work toward change!

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me..."
Mt. 25:35

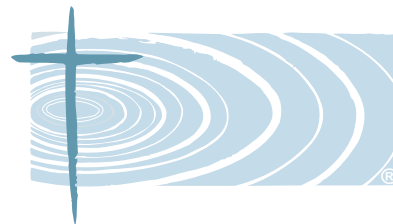


NEXT UP...

Pat (Brackley) Rader arrived August 31 and serves at Sojourner Truth House Monday through Thursday and MoonTree Friday to Sunday. She departs November 1.

WELCOME BACK, PAT!

Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ



Partners in the work of the Spirit

For information about the PHJC Volunteer Program,
please email Sr. Connie Bach at
cbach@poorhandmaids.org



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