



Our Kentucky Home

by Anthony Butler, Executive Director

The closing retreat for the 2007-2008 Dominican Volunteers was held at St. Catharine, Kentucky at the Motherhouse. We were graciously and most hospitably welcomed at supper on Thursday, June 5. Each of the volunteers had an opportunity to introduce her or himself and to give a brief impression of what being a Dominican Volunteer has meant. The Sisters were very interested in what the volunteers had been up to and how they were living out a call to Dominican life and mission. The volunteers wanted to know about the sisters as well, but remarked how much more interested the sisters were in hearing than in telling.

Friday was a more subdued day, with the volunteers taking time to move through a directed, individualized proce-



Posing with Farm Manager, Danny Ray, following the hayride through the property.



DVs, Lisa and Ann Marie, meet with two sisters in the St. Catharine dining room.

cedure with Sr. Dot Trosclair, OP (Eucharistic Missionaries). The procedure was intended to help each volunteer process the year and to transition out of the Dominican Volunteer experience. Many volunteers commented that it was so important to have time set aside to be quiet, to be reflective, and to think clearly about next steps. The day closed with vow renewal of two sisters at vespers. This allowed the volunteers to witness the beauty of such a commitment, while also introducing them to more of the Dominican Family.

Saturday was filled with lots of fun! The day opened with a trip to Maker's Mark Distillery in Loretto, Kentucky.

The distillery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The process for making bourbon has been refined by the Samuels Family, and they've continued the tradition for many years. Even for those who are not interested in imbibing bourbon, it is still a great experience to learn how it is made and to see the historic Spring Hill Farm. Besides, the staff and the guides are full of great Kentucky humor and hospitality, and they just make you want to be there.



Regina Botterill and DVs, Lauren, Ann Marie, and Laura Reber, try the fermenting sour mash at Maker's Mark.

DOMINICAN VOLUNTEERS USA

Dominican Volunteers USA searches for new frontiers for the faith by inviting men and women to walk with us in mission as volunteers. Together, we respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers, especially those who are poor and marginalized. We live out the Dominican mission of proclaiming the gospel through our ministry, common life, prayer and study within a diverse, intergenerational community.

Mailing address:
PO Box 891121
Chicago, IL 60608
708-524-5984 (Tony)
708-524-5985 (Stefanie)

Physical Address:
1914 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60608

dominicanvolunteers@gmail.com
http://dvusa.org

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HOME, continued from front

Later in the day, the volunteers along with a few sisters, were treated to a hayride with Farm Manager, Danny Ray Spalding. The farm produces organic beef, and has concentrated it's efforts in the past decade. There are about 700 acres rolling behind the Motherhouse and the adjacent St. Catharine College, and the hayride afforded the opportunity to see much of the property, including the site of the original motherhouse, which burned in 1904. The hot and humid ride ended with some barbecue and cold beers, while watching the Belmont Stakes with sisters in the dining room. The race had some excitement and disappointment with Big Brown losing miserably.

Sunday ended our time together with each of the volunteers being blessed and sent forth to continue sharing the charism through their lives and ministries. These women and men have chosen to live lives of integrity and justice, and they will continue to discover what that means for their own lives.

The weekend together could not have been as successful without the gracious hospitality of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine. We would like to especially thank Sr. Theresa Fox, OP, who represents St. Catharine on our corporate board, and without who's assistance and work as liaison we could not have had such a wonderful retreat. We are also indebted to Bob Botterill, Regina's father, who joined us for the weekend. He lent his wit and wisdom, and helped all of us to see that learning never ends and when we're open to it, we can have moving, life-changing encounters. Certainly this was such an event for all of us who were involved.



HOLY COW! These calves belong to the herd at St. Catharine Farm

Keep Your Coins

by Lisa Boris, Bronx Community

A friend recently emailed me a bumper sticker with a picture of a man wearing a hooded sweatshirt holding a cardboard sign saying “Keep your coins, I want change.” The hood makes the person’s face barely visible, yet I know that I have seen it before, every morning on my way to work. It is the face of an elderly man who keeps his belongings in a shopping cart while his dog sleeps in a large suitcase nearby. This scene is not unusual for New York City; however, rumor has it that this man has an apartment yet chooses to live in a place Andrea and I jokingly refer to as “Murder Park”.

While I’m not sure if the rumor is true or false, this man is an important part of my daily life in the Bronx. Sometimes he makes me smile by singing and dancing on the sidewalk. Sometimes, I get queasy because I see him eating a hot dog with relish for breakfast (yuck!). Sometimes I pray for him and his sickly-looking dog. Sometimes I simply wonder why (if the rumors are true) he would chose to do this.

I know many people often wonder the same thing about me—why did I chose to do this? My friends and family often ask me “Wait, you really work for no money?” or “You want to live with nuns next year?!?!?” The simplest answer to these questions is because, as the bumper sticker says, *I want change*—a change of heart, a change of mind, a change of pace, to name a few. As I prepare myself for my last 7 weeks in the Bronx, I reflect on the changes I have experienced in the past year.



Lisa Boris enjoys celebrating with her students. They are pictured above celebrating Valentine’s Day.

First was the geographic change from the Minnesota suburbs to a big East Coast city. With this change, came many other significant changes and adjustments.

Our apartment has changed from a space with walls and some furniture into a home for the DVUSA Bronx community. As the first community to live here, Lauren, Andrea, and I have physically changed the space into a home, but we have also succeeded in transforming ourselves from strangers with different backgrounds to a caring, supportive community. Somewhere early on in this transformation process, I realized that, in some ways, I desired to become more like Lauren and Andrea, who, just by being themselves, have inspired me to change; to eat healthier and exercise more, to be more assertive, and to grow spiritually.

While these changes within my community and self are not as easily seen as some of the changes at my ministry site, I know they happened. My preschool students are talking more, counting higher, and whining less than they were at the beginning of the year. They can complete daily living skills on their own, and have adjusted to changes in teaching staff and their daily routine. I have also journeyed with my students as they experienced significant life changes—parents getting divorced or going to prison, the unexpected death of a little brother, or being evicted from their home.

It has been a blessing to be a part of their lives this year, and as I reflect on the changes I have seen and experienced, I wonder about the changes I have made. I did not work for change on the systemic level, but I have (hopefully) influenced and changed many people, including myself, for the better. Now I am ready for further change. I will change cities, communities, and ministries as I continue to change hearts and minds while serving a second year with Dominican Volunteers.

This year, I set aside the majority of my coins because each coin, no matter how small, is worth something. It does not take too long for all that money in my top dresser drawer to add up to a significant amount.

I have faith that, although it will be a much slower process, the same will happen with the changes I have been involved with this year. All the little changes I created, implemented, and inspired will someday, some way add up to something great that I may never even see. As a volunteer, I have kept my coins and wanted change. I hope that my experiences with DVUSA will continue to inspire me to do the same next year, and all the years that follow.

Keep your coins, I want change.

**ALUMNI, KEEP US
POSTED! WE LOVE
HEARING FROM YOU!**

Plans? Think Again

by Andrea Silva, Tolentine Zeiser Senior Center, Bronx, NY



Andrea, second from left visits with a group of seniors at Tolentine.

“We plan, God laughs.” It seems I’ve had to keep reminding myself of this old Yiddish proverb, as this year has been nothing like I’d planned. When I came to serve my second year with Dominican Volunteers in the Bronx, I was expecting to work at Susan’s Place, a new homeless shelter for women that would be opening late September 2007. Until then I would be temporarily placed at Tolentine Zeiser Senior Center. Due to a few setbacks, however, the shelter was not able to open this year. My temporary placement at the center turned out to be a permanent one! Consequently, the expectations ministry to be placed had never really considered. This was hard to accept, but it ultimately led me to re-embrace the true call of volunteering.

My official title at the senior center was Activities Coordinator, though I did a variety of things besides plan arts and crafts. I gave manicures every Monday, and compiled program reports every month. I served lunch, played games, poured countless cups of coffee, and even learned how to knit. I coordinated health workshops, and helped some of our Spanish-speaking seniors to learn English. Yet even though I was serving in many ways, I struggled with feelings of inadequacy and doubt. I’m not fluent in Spanish, and over half of the seniors were Spanish-speaking. I tried to plan enjoyable activities, but not many people wanted to participate in them. If I couldn’t communicate with the people I was supposed to be helping, and didn’t seem to know anything about them, how was I going to be of any use?

AS A SECOND-YEAR VOLUNTEER, I LUCKILY HAD A BIT OF WISDOM...

As a second-year volunteer, I luckily had a bit of wisdom to draw from. Last year, as a teacher’s assistant at the International Community School in Atlanta, things were tough until I learned to stop worrying whether or not I was making a difference. This happened gradually, but little by little I gave up my uncertainties and lost myself in the ministry. I realized that perhaps I would never know if I was doing the “right” things; I could only offer my heart in service. Now in a ministry where I didn’t know what to do, God was asking of me the same thing.

So, I committed myself to serving the seniors in any way I could. For a long time, this just meant sitting and talking with them. It didn’t matter to them that I felt clueless; they were simply happy that I was there. Even the Spanish-speakers didn’t mind fumbling through a conversation with me and my elementary Spanish. Hearing their stories and getting to know them helped me to learn their interests and find out what their needs were. Eventually, I planned activities that people actually wanted to do! I was delighted to help my seniors learn new things and enjoy themselves.

It didn’t happen overnight, but I slowly became part of the community. My acquaintances with the seniors grew into friendships. At some point- I don’t know when- finding my way was no longer my concern. Each person who welcomed me into his or her life gave me purpose to be right where I was.

To be a volunteer is to have an open heart, to be willing to do what is needed, to “be of service wherever you are,” in the words of St. Catherine of Siena. The beauty in this is that sometimes, we end up in places we don’t expect. That’s when we have to fall on our knees and ask God how we can serve. Serving at Tolentine this year was humbling in this way, and I am blessed because of it. This year was an offering, and that is what it was always meant to be.



Andrea and some of the senior women at Tolentine.

DVUSA, New Orleans Loses a Hero

by Anthony Butler and Shirley Bodisch, OP

On Thursday, June 19, Dominican Volunteers USA was struck with deep sadness. It was on that day we received word that we had lost one of our staunchest supporters, Sister Mary Jeanne Girshefski, OP. Sister Mary Jeanne was one of the original founders of Dominican Volunteers USA, bringing the Dominicans of the South onboard after closing the Southern Dominican Volunteer Program. We are forever indebted to her vision, her charity, and the joy with which she spoke of all the volunteers.

Sister Mary Jeanne was born Shirley Mary Girshefski in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was the daughter of the late John Girshefski and Rosetta Fischer Girshefski, half-sister of the late Mrs. Ruth Burst, Mrs. Mae Norris, and



Sr. Mary Jeanne speaks with Paula Sims at the 2003 midyear retreat

Mrs. Ethel Richard, and sister of Jeanne G. Dunn.

Sister Mary Jeanne received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from Louisiana State University, a Master's degree in Secondary Administration and Supervision and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from St. Louis University. After professing her vows in 1952, Sister taught at St. Peter in Reserve, St. Mary's Dominican College where she served as Chair of the Education Department, and St. Anthony of Padua School in New Orleans. For six years she served as the Aspiranture Directress in Rosaryville.

Sr. Mary Jeanne was one of the three educators appointed in 1978 to write Louisiana's regulations for implementing a federal law that required schools to begin educating handicapped students to the best of each student's ability. She was appointed Assistant Director of Educational programs in the Division of Special Education in the State Department of Education for seven years. Sr. Mary Jeanne served as Principal at Holy Ghost School in Hammond, Louisiana and at St. Joseph's High School in Greenville, Mississippi.

In 1999, Sr. Mary Jeanne was honored as the Nun of the Year by the St. Dominic's Catholic Daughters of America, and she was the outstanding volunteer honoree of



Sister Mary Jeanne Girshefski, OP served God for 56 years as a Dominican Sister of St. Mary, New Orleans. Used with permission of Dominican Sisters of St. Mary.

the Women United for Civic and Governmental Improvement. For the past six years she has served on the Board of Directors of the Southern Dominican Volunteer Program and is presently a member of the Corporate Board of Dominican Volunteers USA. She also volunteered for the Special Olympics. She served on the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Advisory Committee, the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Louisiana



Sr. Mary Jeanne and a former DV at the first DVUSA Orientation held in New Orleans in 2001.

Full Circle

by Stefanie Flax, Assistant Director

God truly does work in mysterious ways. I entered into the Dominican Volunteer program with the intention and expectation to devote a year to God's will and to be of service. In retrospect, my expectations were entirely met, but on a level I could never have imagined. Someone told me that when doing service, you will always get more than you give. As hard as I tried to not let that happen, it did, and I was naïve for thinking it wouldn't, but I am blessed that it did!

I am a talkative and wordy individual, but with that being said I find myself at a loss to sufficiently explain and give proper words to my volunteer experience. However, I do know that I write these words with a forever changed, developed, and opened heart, mind, soul, and spirit. I have gone through a transformation of who I am, who I want to be, and what I stand for and that is because I was given the privilege to serve.

Over these past few months I have told so many people my tales of personal joys, heartbreaks, awakenings, and friendships I have made in Chicago, at my ministry site (Deborah's Place), within my community, and with Dominican Volunteers, yet so many remain untold. How does one aptly explain growth, challenges, learned lessons, a strengthened and deepened relationship with God, and a certain understanding that was not present before ten months in mission? If you know, please enlighten me, but until then I am relying on the saying "actions speak louder than words".

The men and women who were/ have been Dominican Volunteers with me and the beautiful, brave, and caring women at Deborah's Place have taught me more about the human spirit and kindness than I ever thought possible. My volunteer term has impacted my life more than I am aware and that is something I will cherish for the rest of my life- which is amazing because how many times do we get to say that, especially at 24?

At Mass during our closing retreat in Kentucky, "The Summons" was sung; for me, the words acquired an entirely new meaning and I found it as a wonderful way to help sum up my volunteer year and the questions I constantly face (d)....so in an ironic manner I have come full circle and exit as I entered the Dominican Volunteer program, asking myself "Will I?".



Marilyn Derr, OP, Stefanie Flax, Tina Beine, and Juanita Brown at the Deborah's Place learning center.



Back row: Reg McKillip, OP, AV '81-83, Ann Marie Castleman, Erin Day, Stefanie Flax. Front row: Marilyn Derr, OP, Patricia Davis, OP, and Bernadine Karge, OP.

The Summons, written by John Bell

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known, will you let my life be grown, in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind, if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind, and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer, in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see, if I but call your name?

Will you set the pris'ners free, and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen, and admit to what I mean, in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide, if I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside, and never be the same?

Will you use the faith you've found, to reshape the world around, through my sight and touch and sound, in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go, where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

State Use Council, the New Orleans Public Schools Task Force, and Louisiana Employment Network. She served on the Archbishop's Commission for Persons with Disabilities for a six year term (1994-2000) when she rotated off the



Carla (Johnson) D'Rozario, Sr. Mary Jeanne, and Heather Phillips at the 2005 midyear retreat in New Orleans.

Commission. At the time of her death, Sr. Mary Jeanne, was the Executive Director of Strive Incorporated, managed Strive Center, a work program for persons with mental retardation; Miller Manor, a group home for six ladies who are mentally retarded; and Miller Action Center,

Staff Turnover, Smooth Transition

by Anthony Butler, Executive Director

In late March of this year, Dominican Volunteers USA began a process of staff transition. We have had the blessings of the skills and insights of Regina Botterill since December 2005. Regina felt that her gifts for enhancing DVUSA were maxed out after two years of being at the helm. She helped the program to enhance administrative processes and to streamline paper-pushing within the office. She has also helped us to stay true to our mission of ministering among the poor and marginalized, as well as focusing us to see the needs for systemic change. This has allowed us to maintain a mix of ministries which properly reflects the many ways the Dominican Family is sharing the charism across the United States.

The Board of Trustees set up a search committee for Regina's replacement. They first looked internally, and soon found they needed to look no further. Anthony Butler was invited to the position of executive director, and he accepted without reservation. Anthony had been the assistant director since September 2006. With Anthony stepping up, his post was left vacant. Regina and Anthony decided

an innovative recreational program for the handicapped.

Sister Mary Jeanne is survived by her sister, Jeanne G. Dunn, and nieces and nephews.

"What I remember most about her was her delightful sense of hospitality. She could not wait to show off her beloved city of New Orleans. Forever emblazoned in my memory is the image of her walking down Bourbon Street at 10 PM on a Saturday night in her habit, with 5 young volunteers in tow, awestruck. People were moved to see an old nun walking around Bourbon Street with a broad smile on her face. She waved and shook hands with everyone on the street and she hugged a few strangers too. She loved every minute of it, and so did we. She took good care of us whenever we were in town, and I pray that she is now enjoying herself at the great eternal banquet. God bless Mary Jeanne!" Shannon Green, past Executive Director of DVUSA.

"I would add 'a grand ole woman of the South.' How she loved her city! I had a note from Mary Jeanne last week and she was still giving her best efforts. We have lost a formidable watch dog over the integrity of DVUSA -and a true friend," Joan Harnett, OP, DVUSA Board of Trustees.

"In the long hallway of her New Orleans [home] she had lined photos of the DV's from each year, and while we were there in February, she led our 07-08 group proudly down the hall. It was deeply touching, and a great memory of her love for DVUSA," Regina Botterill, past Executive Director of DVUSA.

Sister Mary Jeanne will be deeply missed by many, but we know she has left a legacy that will not soon be forgotten. May she rest in the eternal peace of Christ, and may the angels rejoice that she has joined them.

to look internally as well, and invited Stefanie Flax to apply and interview. Stefanie proved to be just what the organization was looking for in an assistant director.

The new team is now in place, and is grateful for the support we've received thus far. We wish Regina well as she has moved on to a position with Sarah's Inn in Oak Park, Ill. "Sarah's Inn is committed to ensuring a violence-free society with guaranteed rights, protection under the law and equal access to services for all women and their families," (www.sarahsinn.org). Overall, the transition, designed by Regina, has gone very smoothly, and we are thrilled about what the next year holds.



**Gina-
Remember
all the fun
times we
had!**



DOMINICAN
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1914 SOUTH ASHLAND AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60608
[HTTP://DVUSA.ORG](http://DVUSA.ORG)

