

MERCYWORKS always has

MERCYWORKS
1140 W. Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60607

tel: 312-738-6369
www.mercyhome.org

Faith-based volunteer program of Mercy Home for Boys & Girls

Spring 2008

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.

~ Proverbs 3:5-6

Winter has been a busy (and cold!) time for the 2007-2008 MercyWorks Volunteers, both in Community and at work. In January, the group ventured to a beautiful new site in Madison, WI for their Winter Retreat, where they spent time reconnecting with one another, reflecting on their work at Mercy Home, and engaging in discussions surrounding issues of social justice.



Anlyn,
Molly, Katie
and Karen
enjoy ice
skating at
Millennium
Park during
Christmas
time.

Favorite memories of the retreat include the all-night prayer vigil, mass and dinner with Fr. Scott, small group discussions, visits from guest speakers Katie Smith, Megan Kennedy-Farrell and Fr. Gary Krahenbuhl, and plenty of relaxation time. Since returning from the retreat, the volunteers have been fully submerged in the demands of working in their placement sites and participating in Agency-wide programs like Hoops to Homework. Community nights continue to be a source of renewal for the volunteers each week, and have included a competitive city-wide scavenger hunt, exploring Spirituality in a new way through the Buddhist faith tradition, and Terry Nelson-Johnson's talk on the Paschal Mystery. With spring just around the corner, the volunteers are now anxiously awaiting the opportunity to take Community Nights outside!

Upcoming Events

April 2	Alumni Event with Fr. John Canary: "The Road to Emmaus"
April 26	Jr. Board Event at the James Hotel
April 28- May 1	MercyWorks Spring Retreat Lake Geneva, WI
May 8	MH Faith & Work Speaker Series Event with Fr. Gary Krahenbuhl: "Work as Ministry & Mission"
May 20	6 th Annual Leader Council Graduates' Luncheon
May 24	MHBG Hoops to Homework Championship Game
July 8-11	MercyWorks End of Year Retreat
Jan 17-19, 2009	MW Alum Retreat Weekend
All Spring/Summer	Check out opportunities for retreats and workshops through Charis Ministries at http://jesuits.net/charis/

SAVE THE DATE!!! Get excited for a **MW Alum Retreat** the weekend of **January 17 – 19th, 2009** (MLK weekend). YOUR help is needed to make it a fantastic event for all! Please contact Sheena Jacobi (MW 06-07) at sheenamjacobi@gmail.com or Liz Kuhn (MW 01-02) at lizzykuhn@gmail.com if you are able to help plan the event. They will be hosting/facilitating a brainstorming session sometime in May. We're trying to get as many alumni as possible to attend. Out of town Alums are encouraged to participate as well!

ANOTHER DATE TO SAVE!!

Ringside Date Announced – November 8th

Easter Reflection

**God, my Friend
when Christ came back,
no one recognized Him at first.
That should be a cautionary lesson
about who might
present Him to me.**

Amen

~ William J. O'Malley S.J

Reflections on the Journey

Matt Plaska talks about life with the Noha Home Youth



George Iles wrote, "Hope is faith holding out its hand in the darkness." When all else fails, hope is one of the few things that remains and cannot be taken away.

Even when we have reached the end of our ropes or stand surrounded by darkness on the edge of a cliff, we can cling to hope as a lifeline. Hope extends ropes we think have ended and provides another solid rock to stand upon.

I now see my work with the Noha Home youth as a way to extend hope into the lives of these boys. As a youth care worker I oversee the daily activities of these youth from the time they return from school until they go to bed. I am a disciplinarian, role model, tutor, therapist, mediator, and advocate. But for the youth in my care, I am also – perhaps more importantly - a light of hope and a guiding hand. For these young men who have nowhere else to turn, Mercy Home *has become* the saving source of hope that they cling to. This simple and intimidating reality can easily be lost amidst the daily chaos within each program, yet I am constantly reminded that I cannot cease to have hope and to instill hope in those around me. This business of hoping, giving hope, and recognizing hope already present in each youth is a foundational conviction in my efforts as a youth care worker. Truly, it is hope – in the capacity for positive change and growth – that drives the mission of Mercy Home.

It was this lesson that I was powerfully re-taught in a humbling conversation with a youth one evening. This young man is at Mercy Home because of an abusive father and a terminally ill mother. As we ate dinner in the cafeteria, I had asked him about his day. He replied that he was having a great day so far. "And," he continued, "I realized that I found something that I've been looking for for a *long* time." Curious, I inquired as to what he had found, expecting a response focused on PlayStation games or some similar concern of an average 13-year-old boy. His answer left me speechless and humbled. "No," he said matter-of-factly. "I've finally found a father figure in my life...and it's you. You're like a dad to me."

That instant crystallized for me what is so important about sharing ourselves with others. Although we certainly have our share of seemingly hopeless days in program, I am still privileged to hold the "hope candle" that is a light for these young men amidst their troubling circumstances.

Alumni News

On Friday, January 11th, six volunteers from the 2005-2006 MercyWorks Community gathered to make and serve



dinner for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Lincoln Park. This organization is a home away from home for families with critically ill children receiving treatment in a nearby hospital.

Thanks to experience with preparing large meals for community nights, they whipped up a "breakfast for dinner" feast including pancakes, scrambled eggs, cinnamon rolls, fresh fruit, hash browns and sausage. While providing a hearty meal to families in need, they enjoyed the opportunity to connect and relive the many hours we all spent gabbing in the MercyWorks kitchen. More importantly, though, they were reminded that "happiness...consists in giving and in serving others" (Henry Drummond). ~ Bridget LeClair '05-'06

Wedding Bells

Wedding bells have been in the air for the past few months for the MercyWorks alumni. Congratulations to the following MercyWorks Alums and current volunteers on their engagements.

Grant Gholson and Erica Walter '02-'03
Allison Rainey '04-'05
Joe Wronka and Debbie Rose '04-'05
Laura Wicklander '04-'05
Amy Lutz '05-'06
Julie O'Connor '05-'06
Emily Felton '06-'07
Anlyn Addis '07-'08

Big News for Allison Rainey

MercyWorks Alum Allison Rainey will be ordained into the Transitional Diaconate in the Episcopal Church on June 7, 2008 at St. John's Pro-Cathedral in Los Angeles. 6-7 months later she will be ordained into the Sacred Order of Priests.

Allison has been interviewing for an associate position at several churches in the Los Angeles area and is also completing her Master of Divinity. Allison is also the first woman ever sponsored for Priesthood by the Church of the Ascension in Sierra Madre, CA. She has a deep love for the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, and has found that one of her gifts for ministry lies in pastoral care across the lifespan.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!! If you have big news or updates to share with other alums please send them to Ian McBride at ianmcb@mercyhome.org