

ASSUMPTION MISSION ASSOCIATES FRIENDS OF AMA NEWSLETTER

June 2025

Dear Friends of AMA,

We've been incredibly fortunate to have three amazing young women in our program this year, each bringing a heart full of dedication and a spirit of service. I'm excited to share their reflections with you; they inspire me with their generosity, openness to God's guidance, and the beautiful ways they've grown throughout their journey.

We thank you again for your prayers and donations that help support our program. I am happy to report that we have two young women committed for the fall, but I remain hopeful that more young people will come forward!

The Sisters and I wish you a lovely summer!

Peace, Sandy



*“Our life
must be a
constant
‘Yes!’
to God.”*
-St. Marie
Eugenie

HELEN MAHONEY NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND

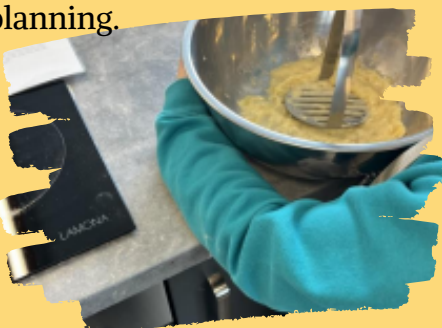
Hello from Newcastle! I've been here for a few months as an Assumption Volunteer, living in the Walker neighborhood and spending my days with the brilliant team and young people at Kids Kabin. It's been an amazing mix of community life, creativity, and a whole lot of learning—both from the kids and alongside them.

Each day starts off quietly with coffee and a run through Walker or along the riverside path. I'm training for a half marathon back in the U.S., and the routes here—whether toward the Quayside bridges or out toward the coast—are a peaceful way to soak in the area's beauty.

Early in the week, another volunteer, Leah, and I head to Pottery Bank Community Centre for a crochet session (well, she crochets—I'm learning!). It's a great way to meet people in the community, and we've even helped out at events like their International Women's Day celebration with Kids Kabin's smoothie bike in tow.

Later in the day, we walk through Walker Park to Kids Kabin, often admiring how spring has brought color to front gardens and public spaces. At Kids Kabin, we help organize groceries for the week's cooking sessions, prep materials for creative projects, and sometimes dive into behind-the-scenes work. I've also been helping with some data analysis—applying a few skills from college to support the organization's outreach and planning.

Once sessions begin, the energy kicks up. Today, a local school came in for themed activities on West Africa. In the kitchen, we taught students how to make banana muffins (which they proudly took back to school!). Meanwhile, others worked on rope art, clay crafts, and building pulley systems in woodworking. Each session is tailored to what the kids are learning in class, so it's always engaging and hands-on.



After the school group leaves, our regular after-school crew arrives. They get to choose what they want to do—whether it's art, pottery, woodwork, or cooking. Our role is to support and guide, but honestly, the kids often take the lead. It's inspiring to see them so confidently explore their ideas and help each other along the way.



Once everything is cleaned up, we head back to the house just a few minutes down the road. Living in the same neighborhood we volunteer in is a joy—we often bump into the kids on our way home, and it's always a cheerful reunion.

Evenings are for community meals, catch-ups with fellow volunteers, and some downtime—maybe a book or time in the backyard, where one of our housemates has started a beautiful garden.

Every day brings something different, but it always ends with a sense of gratitude. I've learned so much and feel lucky to be part of such a welcoming and creative community.

“Living in the same neighborhood we volunteer in is a joy—we often bump into the kids on our way home, and it's always a cheerful reunion.”

-Helen



EMILY SAUNDERS WORCESTER, MA

Hello again! It's Emily! I said “goodbye” to enchanting Ireland many months ago. It still feels like yesterday. I have been in Worcester, Massachusetts, since February. I am so happy to be back working with fellow AMA Katherine Heffernan. I believe we make each other better in both our faith and service. We both still mourn our time at L'Arche, Cork and wish we could rewind the clock. Anyway, we love the work we are doing in Worcester.

Our typical week consists of assisting with English as a Second Language classes on Mondays and Thursdays. I've come to realize that English is a beautiful, complex language - props to anyone who attempts to learn it. I thought I knew English!

Volunteering at Pernet Family Services



“The more out of my comfort zone I am, the more I ask God to use this experience to help me grow.” - Emily

Tuesdays, we spend the morning at the St. Peter’s Food Pantry assembling the boxes that we assist with distributing very early on Wednesday mornings. Wednesday afternoons, we spend with the kids at St. Peter’s Catholic School doing arts and crafts. We have made many variations of flowers, and at our last session, we had the kids draw what they wanted to be when they grow up. However, it isn’t just Katherine and me at the school. We work with lovely students from the College of the Holy Cross who assist us in carrying out the activity. Friday mornings, we joyfully host a knitting group for the Assumption Sisters and some women in the community



FRIDAY KNITTING GROUP WITH SR. VICKY



SPENDING TIME WITH SR. EVELYN

Sadly, this will be my last Assumption Mission Associates update, since I am leaving soon. If someone were to ask me what my favorite activity of the week was, it would be hard to choose, as each is so special and unique. Some things I would take away from my time are that every task is a challenge and a joy. The more out of my comfort zone, e.g., working with children, the more I ask God to use this experience to help me grow. This may come as a surprise, but one of the biggest challenges I faced was utilizing the amount of free time I had, as I am not used to it and love being busy. I could not imagine spending time post-graduation in any other way than serving the Lord.



KATHERINE HEFFERNAN WORCESTER, MA

I have embarked on a new service journey from Cork, Ireland, to Worcester, Massachusetts! Let me say, I am very impressed with what our Worcester service site has to offer. I have been serving here since late January, and I’m getting adjusted just fine. I have jumped into our wonderful service community by becoming involved in two food pantries, Pernet Family Services and St. Peter’s Church. As a team, we are all tasked with sorting and distributing the food we receive from various stores and food banks. Thankfully, we have a large volunteer team to help tackle this large task, since we serve well over 100 families each week. I am getting plenty of Spanish vocabulary review because I am on the front lines interpreting for our Spanish-speaking patrons.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS AT THE FOOD PANTRY



"I am getting plenty of Spanish vocabulary review because I am on the front lines interpreting for our Spanish-speaking patrons." -Katherine

I also volunteer at St. Peter's ESL (English as a Second Language) classes with Sister Evelyn. We meet twice a week and work to teach our students various elements of the English language. My favorite part of teaching these classes is the variety of books we read together to help improve pronunciation. So far, we have read books by Dr. Seuss, Corduroy the Bear, and others.



TEACHING IS A WORK OF HEART



ESOL AT THE ASSUMPTION CENTER

Once a week, I lead the Craft Club at St. Peter Central Catholic School. Meeting and spending time with the kids has been such a blast! They are all so full of creative energy. So far, we have made a list of crafts that have involved painting, scissors skills, color matching, paper flower making, and beading. Our latest big hit was creating friendship bracelets. The kids are so kind to one another, each making one for their friends. I was honored to be given one by a student!

ST. PETER'S CLUBBING PROGRAM



FRIDAY KNITTING GROUP

I usually end the week by helping to host the Friday morning knitting club. Once a week, a lovely group of women comes to the Assumption Center to gather in the living room and be a part of our tight-knit (pun intended) community. While we enjoy cups of coffee and knit away, we listen to each other's lives.

My time in the Woo has been incredible, and I can't wait to see what lies ahead in the remainder of my service journey!

Signing off for now.

