

AMA UPDATE



OCTOBER 2023



DIRECTOR UPDATE

Another volunteer cycle is underway! We sent off Jillian to Newcastle, England to join Nathaniel who will finish out his year in January 2024. Jeanette arrived in Chaparral, NM a couple of weeks ago to join Leny and the Sisters. Katherine is hoping to head to Cork, Ireland within the coming weeks and Emily is scheduled to land in Cork in January. We just welcomed a short-term volunteer to Worcester. Anita Chacko, a junior at UPenn has a hiatus between semesters, so Sr. Gertrude of W. Philly suggested AMA to her and she was happy to join us last week!

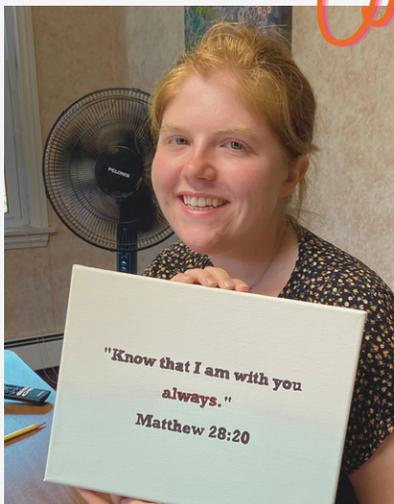
It has been a great joy to meet and get to know such a variety of volunteers. Jeanette is our first volunteer who is over the age of 35, you'll have to ask her when she was born!

In this issue, we will hear from two volunteers, Leny and Nathaniel, who have been at their service sites for the longest. I think you'll be impressed with their reflections of encounters with the people they minister alongside.

-Peace, Sandy

*"We should live more for others if we wish to live for God."
-St. Marie Eugenie*

Orientation



LENY. CHAPARRAL. NM

Hola! I have been serving as an AMA in Chaparral with the Sisters of the Assumption for 6 months now, and I have to say that these months have provided me with a lot of personal and spiritual growth.

Not only have I been serving in Chaparral, but now I am also serving in the parish of St. Francis Xavier in El Paso with the Assumptionist priests. The Assumptionists also serve and help many migrants and refugees, often they receive about 40 people every day!

At St. Francis Xavier I have found a second family, with the members of the parish and the other volunteers who serve, and with the priests. I feel very happy and blessed for the love they have shown me. We are all one family serving and helping the most vulnerable.

When I am with the migrant children, and they approach me to ask for a toy or something to eat, I see Jesus in them. The children give me their love and their hugs, and when I see them smile and play I see a merciful Jesus in them.

In the parish of Saint Thomas More in Chaparral, I now have two new ministries that I am involved in. I feel so happy to be teaching children's catechism to prepare them for First Communion.

Secondly, I am very involved in the parish's music ministry! I am playing guitar at both the youth choir Mass, and again at the noontime Mass in Spanish on Sundays. I feel very happy to play guitar at the Mass for our Lord Jesus.

Left, Leny received a blessing as a catechist, and below playing the guitar



Leny with the migrant children at St. Francis Xavier parish



All the sisters and I are very happy and excited that Jeannette is joining us in the Chaparral and AMA community. We are very happy that she is also coming to serve and share with all of us.



NATHANIEL, NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND



Hello, I run the drama session every week on Friday at Kids Kabin. A few regulars participate weekly, but different people join in now and then. Drama is a very serious business. No mistakes in casting are made (although the talent pool is often thin). When it comes to the act of acting, you must always remember your lines and maintain your character's emotions. The participants at Kids Kabin know this well. The kids come prepared, lines memorized, and ready to immerse themselves in the play. Even though the number is small, they make the most of what they have, turning every session into an opportunity to refine their skills.

You could believe everything above. The reality is that it's a very low-key affair. Kids come in to write a script- we're not performing Shakespeare, spend maybe one minute on props, and then the rest on a compromise for their vision of a play. Each person takes a piece of paper and makes a storyboard to their liking, and then they are combined in a free-for-all way. Much of the time is used during this phase, where each person's character gets made to the actor's liking. This is also where most of the drama in drama happens. The best bits of each person's story are taken and used. We've had plays about cats, sharks, princesses, prisoners, heaven and hell. For some reason, each play starts with the characters waking up rather than once upon a time. A meandering journey then takes place, or no journey at all, a day in the life story. Then maybe one or two practices (or none at all) of the performance are made before we perform for the rest of the kids who aren't in drama.



The kids are not just learning the art of performing but also the fun of collaboration, creativity, and self-expression.



It's been enjoyable to watch the progression of stories; maybe they've gotten better at writing, or I've grown softer as a critic. Even the plays without morals, or really any direction at all grow on you. You start to realize that -- even though your idea of a play, one that explores some concept or issue differently, is also here. It's in a different form, a more straightforward but not necessarily a worse one. The kids are not just learning the art of performing but also the fun of collaboration, creativity, and self-expression. In drama, every play becomes something that might not qualify as a play, but the concept of creating one and the collaboration are still present. The wit or principled messaging of a classic story isn't here, but the method that people use to create is there.



Upcoming News

Sandy will be on the road for recruiting fairs. This month she will be visiting Holy Cross, Boston College, and Merrimack. Next month she'll be in PA for the Villanova and St. Joseph volunteer fairs. Please PRAY FOR AMAs!



Please keep Katherine (and all our AMAs) in your prayers as she waits to hear about her work visa. She is hoping to hear any day now.

Be on the lookout for our bi-annual Friends Newsletter in November. We'll be hearing from Jillian, Jeanette, and Anita. We have two fundraising newsletters a year to support the AMA program, which includes monthly stipends, health insurance and our end-of-service award. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

