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Friends of AMA Newsletter



Inside this issue:

Tyler's reflection	1-2
Tori's reflection	3-4
Milestones	4

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
Come, come
Emmanuel
Son of God appear
heaven and earth
rejoice, salvation is
drawing near,
salvation is drawing
near!



Dear Friends of AMA,

Happy Advent!

I don't know how you're feeling as we approach this special time of year, but I feel as if this Advent and Christmas season are going to be a lot different than last year. For me, last year was full of dread about getting together with a few loved ones or friends. This year, however, I am anticipating this season with joy and great hope that this year will be different. Perhaps we will all have a new appreciation for gathering again to celebrate the great gift of Christmas!

Our AMAs, today and over the years, have been "gifts" to the people they serve and the Sisters with whom they have shared their lives. We want to thank you, our donors, who have supported the AMA mission over these past 67 years! With your continued support, both financial and spiritual, we have faith that our AMAs Tori and Tyler will continue to build up God's Kingdom at their volunteer sites in Worcester, MA and Newcastle, England.

My wish and hope for each of us over these next four weeks, is that we will ponder anew God's faithful, unending love that has carried us through this pandemic, and that we'll be able to stop and appreciate the moments spent with our loved ones once again this Christmas.

God bless us everyone!
-Sandy

...We should tend towards this ideal, and, since this is not always what we find in ourselves, we should ask with ardent longing that Our Lord reign totally in us and that His coming be renewed in us."

- St. Marie Eugenie

Tyler Reese—Kids Kabin, Newcastle, England

While service is supposed to be selfless, I think people that serve in their communities realize that they receive far more than they could ever give. So maybe this could be seen as a selfish reason to volunteer! From my experiences serving on various school-sponsored mission trips and through my University's chapter of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, I experienced this ambivalent feeling first hand. Every time I served I felt that I had received much more from the people I served than what I'd given. Reflecting on those times while discerning the call to do a year of service, I know that I longed for the joys both of giving to a community in need and of receiving so much love, joyfulness, wisdom and awareness in return. My

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time in Newcastle has already filled that longing and I've still got nine months to go!

In just under three months of serving in Newcastle, I have received much more than I could have ever imagined. Working in Kids Kabin, an after-school program for kids to do art, drama, woodwork, pottery, and much more, I have gained so many practical skills, from lesson planning to how to build things like wooden shelves and even an outdoor brick oven. While these practical skills are certainly great, they are nothing compared to what I have received from the kids themselves. Though three months is a short time, I can already see the positive impact I have had on the kids and it is so rewarding to witness. For example, during our half-term outing in which we took the kids to a hostel near the coast, I was walking with them from the beach when I decided to teach them a song I remember from my days as a kid, camping at Jellystone campground. The song, a simple repeat-after-me song called Boom Chicka Boom, fascinated and excited the kids, who repeatedly asked me to lead them in singing the song for the rest of the trip. Now, whenever I see some of them, instead of being greeted with a simple hello, they greet me with a big smile and say, "*I said a boom chicka boom!*"

Oven made with clay from the pottery room



What makes the whole experience even more rewarding is that we live right in Walker, the main community we serve and get to see the kids outside on a daily basis. Anytime we're walking back to our house during the day, we're sure to be stopped by one, if not several, of the kids that attend our after school sessions. I was able to see just how much of an impact the international volunteers have on the kids when my roommate Sasha announced to them that he had to leave due to his visa expiring. Word of his departure traveled very quickly after he first announced he was leaving, and several of them stopped him on his way back from the store, asking him if what they had heard was true, and pleading with him to stay longer. In the weeks after Sasha's announcement, the kids have made him cards, artwork, and even a song expressing their gratitude for his time at Kids Kabin and explaining how much they will miss him once he leaves. Though it's sad to say goodbye to Sasha, it's also been quite amazing to see how much the kids really do appreciate what we do and enjoy our presence in their lives. Though I am not looking forward to the day I have to say goodbye, I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to get to know all of them even more in the next nine months. When it comes down to it, and what the kids we serve do not quite understand, is that the love and appreciation they show to us is much more than anything we could ever give to them.



Tyler on the beach with the children.

Tori Borruso—Worcester, MA

The number three is used to represent God's presence and harmony. At the beginning of Revelation, He is stated to be, "... him who is, and who was, and who is to come." (Revelation 1:4). Meaning that the presence of God is found in the past, present, and future. The presence of God in the Assumption Center programs existed before I had knowledge of them, and will continue after my ministry with them. The harmony in time allows for the programs I am involved in as an AMA to continue to grow from where they are.

Mentoring at St. Peter's Catholic Church begins at 2:45 pm. The Mentors arrive and one or two children trickle in after that. By 3:00 pm, without missing a beat, all the kids have arrived and the services of the volunteers are in sight. Currently, from my three months of service here I have been able to reflect on the "meeting of minds." I'm struck by the generosity and balance of the volunteers as they put aside their busy schedules to allow for the flow of the Holy Spirit to be present during the three hours they are serving. The meeting of minds is a common theme that is present through each ministry.



Tori with Valeria from Mentoring

Teaching English as a second language, ESOL, has already been rewarding to my life and who I am to become. Before the program began, I was insecure about my abilities to be able to communicate with my class as someone who identifies as Hispanic and yet had very little Spanish speaking skill. At the same time, insecure thoughts probably flooded the minds of my three students for similar reasons of only knowing Spanish and wanting to learn English! Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the harmony between my students learning English and them supporting my efforts to explain the lessons in English first and Spanish second allows for a melody to play out each week in the continuation of learning. The balance has allowed for each of the students to gain the knowledge that they were seeking and continue to show progress with every class. I have also been able to gain more confidence in my Spanish because of my class.

The students I have been given the privilege to teach have a love for knowledge. Knowledge has always been in existence. The essence of knowledge brings us a wanting to know, and that's when learning happens. Similarly, in nature, God always exists. God is a being than which no greater being can be conceived (St. Anselm Ontological Argument). He exists with or without the existence of man to think of Him. God is not dependent on our existence, but for every part of His being to be so. He exists in the good and created us as an act of love, for ourselves and others. His essence can be found in love. He is not dependent on us to love in order to exist. Love exists with or without it being acted upon because God always exists; we are able to see God through love. The essence of learning is not dependent on the teacher but on the student's love of knowledge. With love, God is present and the potential of growth is endless.

"The essence of learning is not dependent on the teacher but on the student's love of knowledge."

God's presence of love blossoms through the *Girls with DREAMS* program. The people of the program show love to themselves and to the others to create an accepting community that looks to the future with hope. The three girls currently in the program arrive at the Center around 3:00 pm. They are all people who want to create a better future for themselves and the world around them. They do this by being present each Monday with an accepting perspective of who each person is. The essence of God's

Norma Gutierrez
Nubia & GF Hariss
Liz Hagedorn
Theresa & Kyle Haggerty
Sylvia Harrington
Anne Hochberg
Nora Hunt-Johnson
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 Thuvan Tran
 Marie Valdes
 Margaret Vance
 Paul & Patricia Verderese
 Thomas Volkert
 Bob & Mary Wagner, Jr.
 Catherine Wood
 Brooks
 George & Christina
 Woody
 Gwendolyn Yu

THANKS

love is present in each of the beautiful individuals that I get to be a mentor to. Being a mentor has allowed me to expand my love for others' growth and to help support each of them in their journeys of discovering who they are.

Each ministry continues to allow me to practice love for others for the bettering of their futures and mine. God continues to be at the hand of each ministry because of the love it started from, the love that currently builds them, and the adoration for the future of the programs. Love, trust, and acceptance are three prominent characteristics of each individual who is a part of or volunteering at each ministry. With these characteristics present in the foundation of each ministry, and each mind, the programs have and will continue to be strong through God's graces.

Tori pictured with *Girls with DREAMS* kids.



AMA & RA Milestones

*Kisten Klotz Cobb (Kids Kabin 2008-09) and her husband Brian welcomed baby Desmond (Desi) in March. Big Sister Moira is enjoying her new role as Big Sister!

*A major shout out to our AMA alums who are on the front line of the country's COVID19 response : Kevin Molyneux (Chaparral 2014-15) and Matt Collins (L'Arche Bognor-Regis 2006-07). As a doctor and as a nurse you bring healing and care to so many in need. Thank you!

*All the best to Meaghan Hickey (Worcester 2015-16) who successfully completed her first year of Law School in May. Way to go, Meaghan!

*We offer our sincerest condolences to Maggie McCormick McCabe (Chaparral 2005-06) on the death of her brother Joe in June. The Lansdale community of Sisters is grateful to have been able to attend the Mass in celebration of his life. AMA alum Kristin Prinn was there as well.

*Please pray for Conner Morgan (Worcester 2019-21) who is now studying at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore as a seminarian of the Diocese of Worcester. We miss you in The Woo but support you with our prayer and friendship!

*Myra Villas (Kids Kabin 2018-19) finished two years of a wildly successful time as the first Youth Programs Director of Assumption Center in Worcester, negotiating the many challenges of COVID time with grace and skill. She left The Woo in the summer of 2021 to begin a Master's Degree in Social Work. at the University of Chicago. All the best, Myra. We miss you in The Woo!

*Megan Zack Cramer (L'Arche England) and her husband Sean are expecting baby #3 in January 2022! Big Brother Zack and Big Sister Abbie can't wait!

*Welcome to Sr. Anne Christopher Wright as the new Provincial of the US Province! She began her three year mandate in August. Sr. Anne Christopher lives in the West Philadelphia community.

*Other changes in the RA world in 2021! Sr. Catherine moved from the Lansdale community back up to Worcester and became Superior of the community in February. Sr. Mary Ann moved down to the Lansdale community in February and finished her mandate as Provincial in August. She's on sabbatical now prior to moving to her new mission as Superior of the Chaparral community in January 2022.

*We bid farewell to Sr. Alice Njuguna of the Worcester community as she returns to her Province of East Africa. Sr. Alice came to the USA in 2018 for studies and graduated last December with an MBA from Assumption University. Godspeed, Sr. Alice. Thank you for all you brought to us during your time here. We wish you well as you go home and promise to keep you in our prayer. We'll miss you!

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