



AMA UPDATE

JULY 2022



DIRECTOR LETTER

Welcome Summer! "Love places us at the service of God."

I was fortunate to witness this truth in the service of Tori and Tyler this year. First, in Tori's love and care for the children at Mentoring, and in her inspired effort to provide a welcoming, fun space at St. Peter's. Second, in her love of the GWD kids, and how she would listen to them with concern, and providing her wise guidance. Even though the program is officially over for the year, she is still making time to meet up with them! Finally, seeing her love and pride with her ESL class at their graduation ceremony, I could understand why this was her favorite program each week.

During my visit to Newcastle to see Tyler in May, it was such a joy to see him take charge of the weekly sessions at the different sites where the volunteers serve. It is a lot to juggle, but he does it with his quiet grace and gentle demeanor. It was fun seeing how comfortable the children were with him, not holding back and giving him a bit of teasing - and with love, Ty took it in stride like a good friend will do.

The Double T's (as my husband calls them) gave their all to the youth and adults at their various projects. Tori and Tyler will leave with many new friends, and lots of wonderful memories, but I know their loving presence will linger on in those they journeyed with and served.

We thank you both for your service and your joining of the larger Assumption family. We feel blessed to have had this opportunity to get to know you as you placed yourself at the service of God! Our hearts, prayers, and love go with you today and always. God bless you! -Sandy and Assumption Sisters



"LOVE PLACES US
AT THE SERVICE
OF GOD."

-ST. MARIE EUGENIE

TORI BORRUSO - WORCESTER, MA

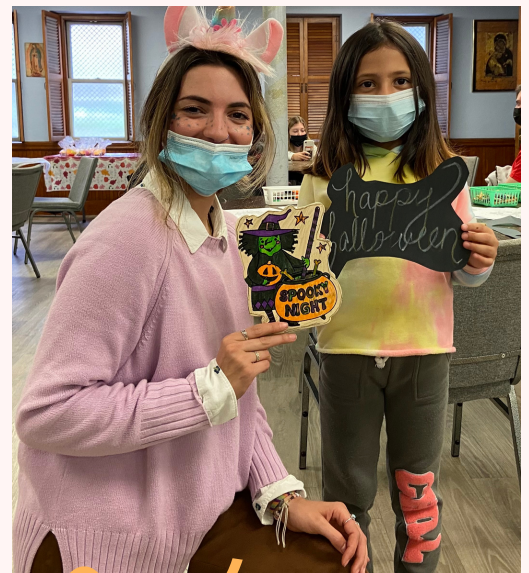
As the final days of being an AMA come to an end it's time to reflect on the work that's been done, who I have become, and the people who will be a part of my heart forever. Starting in late August, I had the wonderful experience and privilege of getting to know Tyler. As someone who was going through the same steps as myself, it brought a sense of comfort knowing he was there. Getting to see the way Tyler has grown through our monthly Zoom calls was really interesting. I got to observe how a year of service shapes someone...even as it was happening to me, too!

"THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON I HAVE LEARNED IS THE POWER OF PATIENCE."

For myself, changes in my life brought about by this year have assisted me to live as the best version of myself. The most important lesson I have learned is the power of patience. Many aspects of the service year have helped me strengthen the art of patience. The challenge was finding an understanding with each individual I encountered, not based on my own experiences but really listening to their words. My first encounters began with the students I met at the Mentoring program.

Mentoring at St. Peter's is where my skills for having patience, in order to communicate better, was strengthened. Mentoring, this year served children ages five to thirteen, and we had our college student volunteers as well. They are so dedicated to making our after-school program a brave-space. My challenge was finding an understanding with each person. The questions and actions the children would participate in made little sense to me at first. Taking a breath and seeing the world through their learning eyes helped me to acknowledge that their growing minds need guidance - which can be found in patience. Instead of ignoring or having negative feelings towards the actions, I was able to help them while they also helped me. Patience is a skill that I had obtained prior to and through this 'AMA-zing' service year. Knowing better the power of patience and how it allows for the lives around you - including your own - to be better, I will take it with me as I move on to the next chapter of my life.

Every program I was a part of had its own sense of community. A strong community to me is defined as a group of like-minded individuals that want the best for themselves and others within their circle - that's what I experienced this year.



The first community I got to participate in was the CANA community at the Assumption Center. I have had the opportunity to live with three really kind, fun individuals. We've had our group dinners and good conversations in the kitchen. It was a community built with trust and the passion to help others in the community of Worcester, as well as their communities at work or school. Most of us were also able to participate as volunteers at the St. Peter's Food Pantry.

Food insecurity is unfortunately common in Main South households, but the food pantry was a delightful experience. The staff are mostly retired women and men who give their Tuesday and Wednesday mornings to others who are in need of life's necessities.



TORI AT THE FOOD PANTRY

I was welcomed from my first Wednesday to my last, and I know I will always be welcomed back with smiles. We always shared good conversation, and sometimes I was given advice from those older than me. Even in times when we were under high stress of not having enough to give, all of us would problem-solve on ways to provide more to the clients.

"TEACHING ESL WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST EXPERIENCES I HAVE BEEN A PART OF."

While all of the communities will be forever in my heart, the one most dear to me, is my ESL class. Teaching ESL was one of the greatest experiences I have ever been a part of. Helping adults who were dedicated to learn a language, which is incredibly difficult, was a huge privilege. Their aspirations to do well in class, while absorbing as much information as possible, taught me the value of learning and of teaching. Although there was a language barrier, it never got in the way of forming a strong community. At the end, they even gifted me with a bag that was similar to the one I owned because they knew I liked that pattern!

One last experience that I will never forget was meeting the Chaparral Sisters. The feeling of love and acceptance was felt the moment we got off the plane. I have experienced the strongest form of love - **agape** from both the Sisters here in Worcester, and out there in New Mexico. The pure and passionate love they have for charity and for others is something that I have always wanted to experience and I am glad I got to feel it with them. I know for years to come I will be in their hearts, and they in mine.

Learning the power of patience and the importance of strong communities are the best gifts I received this year, and I'm thankful. I know these two things will remain a strong part of my life. Serving as an AMA is one of my best accomplishments where I was able to thrive. Being here in Worcester, was the easiest of hellos and now it is the hardest of goodbyes.

TYLER REESE - NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND

Deciding to embark on a year of service was certainly a difficult decision - probably the toughest decision I've had to make thus far in my life. However, as my time of service in Newcastle comes to an end, I can fully and confidently say that this, the most difficult decision I've had to make, was also the best decision I have ever made. In fact, I cannot imagine my life had I not taken the leap of faith and decided to serve in Newcastle.

"THIS YEAR HAS BROUGHT ME SO MUCH HAPPINESS AND LOVE THAT I NEVER EXPECTED."

This year has brought me happiness and love that I never expected. Though I expected I would meet several amazing people, learn more about myself during this year, and develop new skills, I never could have imagined the immense joy, happiness, and love these experiences have brought me. I knew I would meet wonderful volunteers and Assumption Sisters with whom I hoped to develop strong relationships, but I never could have imagined they would provide me with such a strong sense of belonging - more than just a sense of community - a sense of **family**, which brought me so much comfort as I lived far from my real family for the first time in my life.

TYLER WITH 2022 ROOMATES AND KIDS KABIN STAFF



Similarly, I expected to meet awesome people while working at Kids Kabin. I hoped to learn a lot of practical skills from them, but I never expected to develop such strong friendships and learn so much about life from them. Another thing I didn't expect was meeting so many amazing people outside of work. But now, here I am, so blessed to be a part of a community of friends from all over the world. Of course, saying goodbye to them will make leaving Newcastle very difficult.

One of the best things about meeting so many people from all walks of life and corners of the world is how much they can teach you, not just in their words but in how they live their lives. I have learned so much - not just about the world but about myself as well - through these connections. And I see that all that learning has been reinforced by my faithfulness to reflecting on each day in my journal. That was unexpected, too.



"I HAVE LEARNED THAT EVERYONE, FROM THE SCREAMING CHILD TO THE ANGRY PARENT, HAS SOMETHING TO TEACH US. WE SIMPLY HAVE TO LEARN TO LISTEN, EMPATHIZE, AND SEE THE GOOD IN EVERYONE, TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THIS LESSON MIGHT BE."

It's easy to interact with others without any lasting impact on yourself; journaling, however, has allowed me to uncover and reflect on all of these experiences. It has given me glimpses into who I am and my purpose in life, and has taught me a little about the type of person I want to be. Similarly, I have learned that everyone, from the screaming child to the angry parent, has something to teach me - us! We'll only really learn the lesson, however, if we first learn to listen, and to empathize. Those "skills" can help us see the good in everyone.

Speaking of skills: when I first arrived at Kids Kabin, I was already pretty good at painting, cooking, and woodwork. But, I was quite afraid to even **begin** learning how to use the pottery wheel. A few months ago, however, something prompted me to try. I have never looked back. Though deeply frustrating at times, especially at the beginning, using the pottery wheel has brought me joy, satisfaction, and tranquility. I never expected that.



Pottery has taught me so much about patience, persistence, gentleness, and empathy as well as the importance of living in the moment and accepting failure. In some sense, using the pottery wheel is very akin to doing a year of service: it is difficult and intimidating at first, but once you take that first step and decide to dedicate yourself to it, you find how insightful, rewarding, and satisfying it truly is.



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