



AMA UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! That greeting can feel hollow given the state of the world these days. The scriptures are filled with stories of the Israelites crying out to heaven, asking, "Where is our God? Why is God silent?" But, as Christians, we must remind ourselves that our loving God is always near and never absent from our lives. We simply need to look back and see where good has overcome evil, and remain steadfast in our hope and belief that a new day of peace and justice is coming.

Something that gives me hope is accompanying our volunteers and witnessing their dedication to the people they serve in their volunteer sites. We said goodbye to Emma Goddard in December, after her 3-month stint in Worcester. We are so grateful for her willingness to come and serve in our city. The sisters, Cana members, and many of our friends came to love her warm, quiet presence, and we miss her very much.

I hope you enjoy reading Emma and Katherine's reflections, and may they lift your spirits as they do mine.

Wishing you peace, health, and joy in 2026. -Sandy

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

EMMA GODDARD - WORCESTER, MA

Being an AMA was both a formative and transformative experience. I am grateful to the program for providing me with the time and space to serve and connect with God - two things I yearned for in my pre-AMA life.

I was touched by the way the sisters welcomed me and validated and honored my spiritual journey. Praying with them in their chapel and practicing Lectio Divina together in their living room was so special. I felt close to them and close to God.



Through service, I learned a great deal about myself and my "growing edges." The volunteering I loved most surprised me, as did the parts I found most challenging. While I've always been a morning person, I never expected that leaving the house at 6:00 a.m. for the St. John's food program would make me feel so alive and deeply connected. Even now, my heart still burns with love when I think about those mornings.



Discovering, on my final week in Worcester, that we could get a week's free trial at the local YMCA was a particularly fun and unexpected blessing. Swimming with my two dear AMA friends - Maura and Katherine every day - before, after, or in between our service - somehow solidified our bond. I love and miss the friends I made very much.



Celebrating birthdays!



Outings with the AMAS!



Special moments with other volunteers at St. John's

My AMA experience also helped to clarify my desire to work closely with people on the margins, and I have recently accepted a job at a drop-in day center for homeless people in my hometown. This feels like a natural continuation of what began during my time in Worcester, and I carry forward the spirit of community, service, and compassion that was nurtured during my time with the Assumption family.

KATHERINE HEFFERNAN - WORCESTER, MA

Memories

It's me, Katherine! Let me start by saying how grateful I am for all of you who have watched my journey as an AMA from the start. I can't believe that this is my final chapter as an AMA the time has gone by so fast. For my last chapter, I would like to take you all down memory lane.

My AMA journey started in my senior year of college at Anna Maria. I was attending daily Mass and, by chance, stopped by the empty campus minister's community room afterward. It was there, hiding under a little stack of papers, that I found a little flyer for Assumption Mission Associates.

That summer following graduation, I attended a lovely spiritual orientation that Sandy and the sisters put on for us. We had a special commissioning Mass. The three of us AMAs became very very close and I am blessed to say I am in contact with them today.

A few months later, my visa was approved, and off I went on the most exciting and life-changing journey of my life - to the Emerald Isle- Ireland, to serve others in the name of Jesus!! I began volunteering full-time at L'Arche Cork, working with adults with intellectual disabilities. I lived with five incredible core members - Aoife, Sharon, Jim, Nuala, Mary, and Eileen.



Katherine with Aoife & Nuala

I also had the honor of working alongside approximately 22 other assistants from around the world. We all created an unforgettable, tight-knit community, and I am honored to call them my friends. I had so many life-changing experiences that I will always hold in my heart. I grew so much in my faith during my time in Cork. I felt as though God was connecting puzzle pieces in my life, and I felt whole. Serving those in need and providing a real sense of community among everyone at L'Arche Cork in God's name.

“I felt as though God was connecting puzzle pieces in my life, and I felt whole.”

After my year in Ireland, I headed home, still feeling like I had more to give, so I started a year of service here in Worcester. This is the city where I was born, and my family is somewhat close by, so I was thrilled at the prospect of working directly with the sisters and St. Peter's. I have spent the past year hosting our Knitting Club, lesson planning for our English as a Second Language courses, volunteering at Pernet Family Services and St. Peter's Food Pantry, teaching the Arts and Crafts section of our after-school program at St Peter's Central Catholic (as well as many other things in between!)



**Clubbing on Wednesdays!
Planning arts & craft projects!**



ESOL with Sr. Evelyn - Monday at the Center and Thursdays at St. Peter's



**St. Peter's Food Pantry
Tuesday & Wednesday mornings**

Outside of my volunteer work, I also had the opportunity to spend time with Sister Evelyn, Sister Vicky, Sister Bea, Sister Ake, Sister Phuong, and Sister Nuala. I shared many community dinners with them and our beloved Cana community, too. This past December, Emma, Maura, and I enjoyed a fun outing to the New England Botanical Garden Christmas light display, which was such a blast! Creating community with everyone has been such a blessing.

I want to express how grateful I am to The Sisters of the Assumption, Sandy, L'Arche, Saint Peter's, and all of you for taking a chance on me and believing in me and my volunteer work.

feeling
BLESSED



**Katherine with AMAs Emma & Maura,
Director Sandy, and
Srs. Ake, Phuong & Bea**

These past two years have been the most influential in my life, and I am so blessed to say I have grown a great deal. God is so unbelievably good, giving me the gift of being an AMA.

With much gratitude and love - Katherine



Sharing the AMA mission and making lifelong friends, both here and in the UK!

