



# FRIENDS OF AMA NEWSLETTER

June 2023

Hello Friends of AMA!

The first six months of 2023 have been full of activity and adventure for our volunteers and me! Currently, we have four volunteers serving both here and abroad. We welcomed two new volunteers this spring. Lena Magana arrived in Chaparral at the end of April and recently we welcomed Marie Metais, a short-term AMAti from France here in Worcester!.

Between orientations and a trip to Paris for a Communication Session for the Congregation, I managed to fly to Newcastle to check in on our two volunteers - Nathaniel and Lauren.

I'm very happy to report that everyone is doing very well! One of my favorite aspects of my role is observing our volunteers in action. When the kids enter Kids Kabin it's clear how excited they are to see the volunteers and staff members. The team has prepared the activities that the children will get to choose to participate in. This day it was woodworking, batik, or making pizzas! The number of children varies at each session (3 that day!) and the energy is always high!

I hope you enjoy reading the reflections from our four volunteers. With your support - financial and spiritual -- our AMAs will continue to have the opportunity to "be all Jesus wants [them] to be." (St. Marie Eugenie)

Wishing you a wonderful summer! In gratitude - Sandy & RA Sisters

**Marie - Worcester, MA**



Bonjour! I began my volunteer experience at St Peter's School for a month and that was a very enriching experience. I enjoy taking care of children so it was a perfect fit for me to help the teachers. In the beginning, the children were fearful but after a few days, we were all playing together. We started our day with morning prayer, and then I would read them stories, we did puzzles, and played games to improve their motor skills. The children have time to take the air outside and we liked to use chalk to make our portraits. Volunteering at the school allowed me to acquire patience and to be attentive to the children's needs. It was a very rewarding experience!

On Tuesday & Wednesday mornings I help at the St. Peter's Food Pantry. I observed how the donations avoid waste while feeding people in need, it is a cause that I find important. On Tuesday morning we receive products, sort them, and then we distribute them on Wednesday morning when the families come to collect them. Soon I will be helping out at two summer camps in the city!



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## Leny - Chaparral, NM

My time as an AMA in Chaparral with the Sisters and the community has been great so far. My experiences of service and spirituality have helped with my personal growth and faith. I feel it has helped me to have a closer relationship with God through prayer, work, service, and vocational discernment.

**"Thanks to all these experiences I can discover my vocation which is to teach with love to others."**

I have had the opportunity to live beautiful experiences with new people and to know new places, but the most important thing is that I have been able to help and serve my fellow brothers/sisters and work with many children. When I play with them and see their faces of joy, I can see and feel God through them and work for the kingdom of God. I have also had the opportunity to teach English to children and adults in the shelters.

The best moments, besides being with the children, are being able to help my Latin American sisters and brothers, and listening to the stories of their journey of leaving their countries of origin in search of a better future for themselves and their families. Having experienced immigration from El Salvador myself, it is a great satisfaction of love and generosity to help a person in need.



Leny makes lunch at the shelter. Below: sharing lunch with other volunteers



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## Nathaniel - Kids Kabin, Newcastle, England Nurturing Kids' Growth Through Encouragement

Working with children (these past 6 months) can sometimes pose challenges due to their limited attention span and lack of motivation. Their fragile personalities can be hindered by the fear of failure and the ongoing process of self-discovery. As adults, it is important to exercise patience and provide encouragement to help them overcome these hurdles. It is crucial to acknowledge that children may not always respond to our desires or requests, but by offering praise and avoiding repetitive tasks that they are comfortable with, we can effectively inspire them to engage in positive activities and explore new experiences.

Just like adults, children seek validation and continuous love. However, providing these can be demanding at times. It requires us to consistently demonstrate adulation and affection towards them, even when faced with challenges. By fostering an environment of support and encouragement, we can create a space where children feel empowered to explore their interests and develop their unique personalities. Together through patient guidance and a balance of praise and constructive feedback, we can help children grow and thrive, promoting their overall well-being and success.



## Lauren Pugh – Kids Kabin, Newcastle, England



### Process Over Product

When I first arrived in Newcastle, we were breaking up the roles of what we wanted to take on at Kids Kabin. I volunteered for several different roles, including becoming Kids Kabin's environment champion. At first, I wasn't sure exactly what this role would mean but I was interested in environmental things and thought it couldn't hurt to learn. I quickly found out that this role was very new to Kids Kabin and that I would essentially be helping to develop the tasks for the role. I had never put together tasks like this before and wasn't very sure where to start, but Will told me to just talk to the staff and see what they think could be improved around the building that would help lower our heating and water numbers as well as conserve our resources.

***I was working towards the goal of earning our bronze certification for all the staff at Kids Kabin, for the kids we work with, and for our planet that we all share.***

I worked hard for weeks putting together a list of tasks and talking with the staff about what jobs they had the capacity to help with. We started checking things off of our list and felt confident in our accomplishments. Will then asked me if I would be interested in training with Smart Carbon and Investing In the Environment (IIE) to work towards lowering our carbon footprint. Of course, I said yes because it was an amazing learning opportunity, and it could be a wonderful tool for Kids Kabin to teach younger generations to care for our environment. I did the online training, read all the materials, analyzed all of the water, electricity, gas, travel, and waste numbers, and spent countless hours putting them into our carbon calculator. There were days when I was exhausted from looking at spreadsheets and numbers for hours on end and I felt almost stuck in a cycle that led to exhaustion, but I didn't give up.

There was even a point where Will and I took a scale outside and measured our waste and recycling amount to get an accurate number for our waste and recycling numbers. I worked tirelessly towards a goal not only for myself but something much bigger than I. I was working towards the goal of earning our bronze certification for all the staff at Kids Kabin, for the kids we work with, and for the planet that we all share.



**The children participating in environmental activities!**

In the moments when I was exhausted from working on filling out environment numbers or when I felt frustrated because I got stuck on something, I would stop and think of a quote I love by St Marie Eugenie, "Love never says I have done enough". That quote alone is such a huge part of the mission here at Kids Kabin. This mission year has given me a hunger for wanting to give more and more. Before this year I thought of myself as a fairly giving person. I thought that I lived simply but through this year's challenges, I have seen what simple living and giving selflessly truly is. Even on the nights I would stay late to work, help others on the team or volunteer for extra things, I never felt as though I was doing enough. I felt satisfied with the work I was doing but I wanted a lasting effect. I wanted something I could leave behind that would continue to help. That is such a huge reason that I worked tirelessly towards achieving our bronze certificate. Even though I could never pay back all that Kids Kabin has done for me and taught me, I hope that it will continue to serve the goal and mission that I've been working so hard towards.



## Lauren Pugh - Kids Kabin, Newcastle, England cont.

Another quote I love by St. Marie Eugenie is, "The spirit of the Assumption is characterized by straightforwardness, openness, thoughtfulness, simplicity, honor, kindness, and courage." These are some of the many characteristics that I have learned working not only on the carbon footprint project for Kids Kabin but that have been intertwined into every challenge and moment of my life in Newcastle.



***So going forward I pray to be straightforward, open, thoughtful, simple, do things with honor, kindness, and courage, and live my life not looking at the product but the process.***



I've seen these characteristics in Will when he leads our team, in our community, in the kids we teach, and, in the sisters, here in Newcastle. They have taught me that true happiness doesn't come from things or what we can achieve but from how we achieve them and the beauty of life that we experience on the way. So, while I am still working tirelessly towards the goal of achieving our bronze certificate, I am focusing much more on the lessons I have learned on the way. Like Will says, "It isn't about the product but the process they follow to make the product." Sometimes in life, we focus so much on the product that we forget to pay attention to the lessons that helped us get to that point when in fact those lessons are often the most important part. So going forward I pray to be straightforward, open, thoughtful, simple, do things with honor, kindness, and courage and to live my life not looking at the product but the process.

***Lauren, pictured in front with the team from Kids Kabin on a recent KK outing. Pictured: Sari, Courteney, Nathaniel, and Will.***

## **Other News & Updates**

### **AMA 2023-2024**

Currently, we have two new volunteers planning to serve abroad this September. Jillian Boes, a graduate of Indiana University, will be heading to join Nathaniel in Newcastle. Katherine Heffernan, a graduate of Anna Maria College, will be serving in Cork, Ireland in a L'Arche community. We are re-partnering with L'Arche this fall and are very excited about this renewed partnership.

### **Upcoming Retreat and Province Assembly**

The Sisters will be heading to Pennsylvania in mid-July for an 8-day retreat before their annual Province Assembly. Please keep them in your prayers as they do for each of you throughout the year.

***The Chapa Sisters, Vietnamese Sisters of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart, and Leny striking a fun pose!***



**ENJOY THE  
SUMMER**

