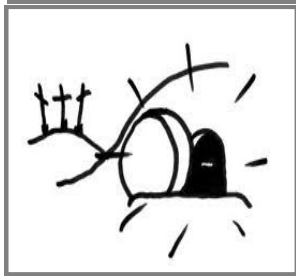




## The AMA UPDATE

### EASTER BLESSINGS!

*"Then the angel said to  
the women in reply,  
"Do not be afraid!  
I know that you are  
seeking  
Jesus the crucified.  
He is not here, for he has  
been raised just as he*



### TRANSITION TIMES

Dear Friends,

May and June – First Communion and graduation time – even getting-a-new-job-time! That's the story here where we've been welcoming our new Director of Vocation and Volunteer Ministry, Sandy Piwko, who joined us in March. Her expertise in vocation discernment is going to be very valuable as she works with FAST (Future Assumption Sisters Team), the religious vocation group of our U.S. Province and, of course, with AMAs, whether present, past, or to come. These next words are directed to her:

Welcome, Sandy! Thanks for joining us in the Assumption project of reaching across boundaries to connect people whose differences – in nationality, language, age, need, and experience – are real, but not enough to keep us apart. When you joined AMA, you were joining not only the Assumption Sisters and AMAs, past and present, but also the many friends who've sustained AMA over the years with their prayer, their interest and enthusiasm, and their financial support. And so now back to our regularly scheduled newsletter:

We hope you'll enjoy this issue, with updates from Liz in Newcastle, England and Elliot in Antique, Philippines. Each one set out last September to do something out of the ordinary, leaving behind what was familiar and safe to experience life as a volunteer in another country. That meant life as a stranger -- or even as an "immigrant" -- for these two young Americans. From what they tell us, their willingness to risk themselves this way has led to a much deeper sense of who they truly are. What a joy to see the truth of this not only in these young people but in so many others who've taken the same leap of faith. Thank you, dear friends, for your friendship and generosity in helping them embrace this challenge. Your support makes it happen.

Many thanks,

Sr. Nuala, U.S. Provincial Superior

### WELCOME ABOARD, SANDY!

Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter greetings and welcome spring! The community garden has been raked and we are ready for "new life" to spring forth!

In that vein of new life and new beginnings during this Easter season we introduce you to our new Director of Vocation and Volunteer Ministry. Sandy Piwko joins us after 20 years of religious education ministry at her home parish of St. Mary of the Assumption in Milford, MA. Sandy grew up in Bradford, MA and was raised in the Congregational faith and converted to Catholicism in 1991. She and her husband Paul are blessed with two sons, Zachary and Nicholas. Sandy received her bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts and after assuming the role as Religious Education Coordinator she pursued her master's degree from Boston College, STM, graduating with an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry in 2015. The topic of Sandy's thesis was centered on vocation discernment.

Sandy commented on her shift in ministry, "God was nudging me toward something new and I am thrilled that I was led to the Religious of the Assumption! I look forward to this new adventure and being a part of the RA and AMA/Cana family.



## *Liz Haggerty - Newcastle, England*

Hi Everyone!

My name is Liz Haggerty and I am currently in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England volunteering at a charity called Kids Kabin. I have been in Newcastle since September and I have to say, it was the best decision I have made for myself. At Kids Kabin, I work with children from ages 8 to 13 who are either arriving from different schools around the area or join us after other school sessions. During the different sessions Kid's Kabin provides, the children have the opportunity to express themselves as we teach them different practical skills, e.g. woodworking, pottery, textiles, cooking, bike repairs, glasswork, and drama. When I am not working with the children, I am working on different projects for Kids Kabin or as a volunteer at a different charity called Wor Hoose. One of those projects involved making shelves. The picture here is of me with one of the shelves I built with a little help from my boss Will. Building this shelf taught me that I can do things I did not think I was capable of doing and showed me different skills I did not know I had. Just like building these different shelves, this experience thus far, has taught me more than I could ask for.



Also, working at the YMCA has prepared me to work with children and to react to different situations involving children. When I arrived to England, I was not prepared for letting go of my control. When I say this, I do not mean letting the children take control over me. I am talking about when the children want to create a wooden box or cook a stir-fry. I have learned to just supervise instead of taking control of what the children want to create. From the start, my boss Will stated "If you do more than 50% of a child's work, then it is not their work. It is yours." I found this to be 100% accurate. Letting go of control has not been the easiest thing for me to do. When I do let go of control, I notice a difference with the children during the session. I let them take the reins and create what they want with supervision. This has taught me that children can do more than we think they can, but the only way we can see that is if the children try to create what they want with the supervision. For example we have let them go into the ocean with all their clothes on, cut plywood with a saw, or even cook a recipe they think they remembered a year ago. By letting the children explore what is around them, the children learn from their accomplishments and their failures



Before this experience abroad I did not know where my path was going, but I knew I wanted to follow what God had planned for me, which I believed was to help others. Over my time here, I have realized that God has been able to work through me to help others learn the practical skills I have been taught. By teaching me, I know he will want me to use these skills in the future. Realizing that God wanted me to use my time by serving others, in return, I feel like I was rewarded a million times over again. I am able to travel, meet so many different people. I am thankful for this journey that God has put me on and especially for the people that He put in my life. I look forward to what is to come!

## *Elliot Simmons-Uvin - Antique, Philippines*

### *Round Two of AMA and Time is Running Out!*

Hello Assumption Family! *Kamusta?*...It's your friend Elliot Simmons-Uvin, or as some of you might know me better as Mr. Moody. For those of you who were unaware of my whereabouts, for the past eight months, the cow has traveled 8,626 miles to Sibalom, Antique, Philippines, for my second year of AMA. This year I'm no longer called Mr. Moody, but now Joe. This year has been quite the adventure working as a teacher, exploring the Philippines with co-volunteers, and finding God in the smallest things.

My AMA year began way back in September when I became the Grade 6 English and P.E. teacher at Sta. Rita Academy (SRA). I remember entering the school for the first time, trying to poke my head into the classroom of sixth graders to see who my students would be, were they well behaved, how many were there, and how is there English? Then the day came, my first class, September 3, 2016. There were 43 new faces in front of me, their English was average, and they were excited to have an American teacher. The only difficulty was language. I couldn't understand Tagalog or Visayan, and they couldn't understand my English vocabulary. Despite the language barrier there were many moments that we enjoyed one another's presence. For example, we sung YMCA camp songs at the start of class, they asked endless questions about life in America and my personal life. We bonded over Pokémon, and even painted a mural together. As I got to know my students more, I started to understand the culture of the Philippines; the role of faith, and the sacrifices some families make just to make ends meet. As a teacher I have realized that it's the little things that you do that go a long way. The simple kind gestures that come from the heart; a simple high five, a joke, or spending five minutes after school to explain/finish a project that really makes the difference. Even though I am only here for one year, I have learned so much from my students, the faculty and staff of Sta. Rita Academy, and the RA Sisters. As I continue to adjust to the culture of the Philippines, I continue to be exposed to many challenges, and new opportunities every day.

There have been many "firsts" in my journey. My first time to go island hopping, to swim in a waterfall, to hike with slippers, to swim in a cold spring, to hitchhike, to ride a tricycle, to teach English and P.E., to commemorate a graduation, to dance at the Department of Education Night and SRA Family Day, to go camping with the boy scouts, to try to learn a new language, and finally tasting the culinary art of the Philippines. These new experiences were a lot of fun, but at times they were awkward, uncomfortable, and sometimes even painful because I had to communicate with people with limited language skills, travel to unknown places, and go out of my comfort zone. It was these experiences that allowed me to take a leap of faith, to grow personally and professionally, and in the end to strengthen my confidence in myself and my faith in God.

If I were to answer the question, "What is the one thing you will never forget about the Philippines?" I would say the people. The people have made my experience so fruitful and enriching. Here, I'm a tall white American, named Joe. Also known as Sir Elliot, or just "L." I have especially enjoyed the AMA community; the *Kamustahans*, Mid Year, and Year End activities with the other volunteers really make you feel like you're apart of one big family, with endless brothers, and sisters. Filipino's are hospitable, compassionate, jokesters who really know how to make you feel welcome and have a good time - it is the people that have made this year an unforgettable experience. Some of you are curious I'm sure to what have I learned so far in these eight months. Well, I've learned to let go, to let of go time. By letting go of time I can be present in whatever journey awaits. These eight months have been a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience, embrace, and receive a different culture. I think its only fair for me to say, "Its more fun in the Philippines!" Talk to you all soon. This Joe's got to go.



# ASSUMPTION INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PILGRIMAGE-PREPARATION UNDERWAY!!!

Pilgrims from all over the world are getting ready for the upcoming Bicentennial Pilgrimage to France this August to celebrate St. Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel 200th birthdays. Eighteen U.S. Pilgrims from Worcester, Chaparral and Philadelphia have been meeting in small groups to learn more about St. Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel and the foundations of the Religious of the Assumption. We have been impressed and inspired to learn of their devotion and dedication in seeing their vision for the Assumption come to fruition! And, we have a renewed sense of the Sister's love of Christ, the Church, each other and their tenacity to never give up, even when powerful forces of this world are working against you!

**Pilgrimage Itinerary - Please keep all the Pilgrims in your prayers!**

**August 16-26, 2017**

Arrival: Paris  
Days 1 - 2: Preisch - Metz (*St. Marie Eugenie was born & raised*)  
Days 3 - 5: Lyon via Taize (*overnight stay in Taize*)  
Days 6 - 10: Paris



## **CANA COMMUNITY-WELCOME CLAIRE!!**

We are happy to welcome a new member to our Cana Community. Claire Keating, who will be graduating from Assumption College this May. Claire was recently given the grand tour of the Assumption Center by Kate and Ally and she has committed to moving in at the end of May. Claire will be starting a new job with the Department of Child Welfare in Worcester on June, 1st. We wish you all the best Claire as this next chapter of your life begins!!

We are also happy to report that Kate Carew will be returning again this year, while Ally Longchamps will be staying on through December until she begins her next adventure with L'Arche in spring of 2018. Congratulations Ally!



Kate's Moms recently shared with us the technique of decorating Easter eggs Lithuanian style!

### **Good News!**

Now you can support the good work of AMA by sending your donations online. Simply go to <http://assumptionsisters.org/donate>, click on the PayPal icon and specify that your help is for AMA. Thank you!

### **Good News!**

### **Good News!**

