



the Lantern

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A newsletter of Presentation Lantern Center, Dubuque, Iowa
Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa

Volunteers Value Diversity and More

by Srs. Beth Kress, PBVM, and Corine Murray, PBVM

A checker board, a cup of tea or glass of lemonade and a picture dictionary are among the many bridges that bring tutors and visitors together at Presentation Lantern Center.

Many volunteers from local colleges have served at the center. Each semester for the last five years, Executive Director Sr. Corine Murray visits the University of Wisconsin-Platteville to recruit student volunteers.

"I have learned a lot about different cultures and people," comments Hannah Oglesby, a college student who has been volunteering at the center since her sophomore year in high school. "I have learned vocabulary in different languages and how to communicate with people when their language is different than mine. I can use English which comes easily to me, to help people in important ways."

Many of the student volunteers are preparing to be teachers. In their evaluations at the end of the semester, they express how much they value the diversity at the center. They reflect on what they have learned, not only about persons struggling to learn English, but also about themselves as they reach across language and cultural differences.

"We hope that the experiences of these future teachers will help them understand

the difficult challenges facing new English language learners," comments Sister Corine.

Each semester students from Clarke and Loras Colleges in Dubuque visit the center with their instructors; some do follow-up volunteering. Both students and instructors indicate that the students benefit from the experience. They also share that they will look for other opportunities to volunteer after they graduate.

Rev. Bill Joensen, Loras College philosophy professor, visits with his class to meet the volunteers and visitors and to observe the Catholic Church's social justice teachings in action.

"I think that the Sisters and all who serve at the center are helping to shape society, particularly for those who become citizens while studying English," comments Loras student Sergio Perez.

Several Spanish majors from Loras have volunteered at the center, some of whom have spent a semester in Spain. They know how it feels to be an outsider and have practical suggestions for newcomers.

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LANTERN CENTER

Welcome

by Sr. Corine Murray, PBVM, Executive Director



Eight years ago, Presentation Lantern was looking for a home.



In 2002 after conversations with Archbishop Hanus, Parish Administrator Deacon Tim LoBianco and the St. Mary's Parish Council, two large rooms in the

former St. Mary's School became our home. We are grateful for the hospitality of the parish and treasure the relationships we have with its people. As the Board of Trustees and our staff have worked to extend hospitality to the strangers among us, we have been especially grateful to St. Mary's Parish. For many immigrants who came to the center to learn English and find their way in a new country, our location next to the church has been a source of comfort.

During the past year, the parishioners walked a difficult journey that ended with the closing of the parish. This event raises questions about the center's future. Long term, the center will seek a new location, but for a while it will continue to operate at the current site. The Board of Trustees is considering several options as we move forward into the future. We'll keep you posted.

Volunteering to help people and to make a difference.



Hannah Oglesby



Meghann Toohey



Jesse Ernst



Desiree Schmitz

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Young and New Volunteers



"As a college undergrad, I had the opportunity to study the Spanish language in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, for a semester," comments Jesse Ernst. "In this time I experienced some of the discomforts of being immersed in a culture that was new and a language that I have only spoken in the latter part of my life. But, through this discomfort, I overcame it. I wanted to help this person I worked with overcome his discomfort by providing practical and essential knowledge of the language and culture."

The center also has other volunteers, some of whom work in Dubuque. Desiree Schmitz comes after a full day's work and then drives 30 miles to reach her home.

"My desire to help people has been reinforced by volunteering at the Lantern Center," states Desiree. "It is a wonderful way to appreciate your own education. It has taught me to consider alternate viewpoints and to give as much as I can."

Volunteer Meghann Toohey lives and works in the city. "I would describe volunteering at the Lantern Center as an amazing experience," says Meghann. "Everyone at the center is inspiring in some way. The Lantern Center provides needed services to our community while fostering lifelong learning and relationship-building in a positive environment. I would encourage others to volunteer."

Appreciating the lived experience of others, Meghann continues, "I am always impressed by how hard people are willing to work to achieve their goals. Many of the individuals I work with lead busy lives, balancing work, school and family, yet they still make time to study English."

Often new volunteers come to the center because someone they know is already volunteering there.

Dianne Harris came to the Lantern Center a year ago because her mother, June Ludowitz, has been a volunteer for six years. June told Dianne about the rich experience of meeting people and sharing cultures. Dianne, a retired nurse, got hooked.



Volunteer tutor, Dianne Harris and visitor, Sedina (Bosnia), spend time studying English and getting to know one another's cultures.

PHOTO GALLERY Life at the Center

A day at the Lantern Center can include many things. One might practice writing in English, help make seasonal decorations or come for a meeting. Visitors and volunteers make things happen and give one another space, time and friendship. We applaud Sister Corine, our director, who was recently recognized with a Service Award from the Notre Dame Club of Dubuque.

Left to Right: TOP LEFT, Visitors, Sedina, Zemira and Behira (Bosnia) and tutors, Lindsey Rott and Sr. Mary Crimmin, BVM, complete Easter baskets; TOP RIGHT, Visitor, Leonardo (Colombia) and tutor, Jesse Ernst, read stories in English; BOTTOM LEFT, Tutor, Sr. Ruth Elsbernd, OSF, reviews grammar with Nermin (Bosnia); BOTTOM RIGHT, Srs. Carla Popes, PBVM, and Corine Murray, PBVM, discuss strategic planning for the center.



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Presentation Lantern Center is a drop-in center offering hospitality, educational opportunities and advocacy to women and their children who are striving to better their lives. Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa, the center is a non-profit organization.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesday, Thursday
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Contact us at
563.557.7134
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We welcome your support and prayers. Your generosity touches many lives and hearts from around the world. Please make checks payable to Presentation Lantern Center.