



Catholic Volunteers in Florida

Transforming Lives Through Faith and Service

Service Site Spotlight

L'Arche Harbor House is a community of five family-style homes created to assist people with intellectual and physical disabilities transform their lives. Those who serve here celebrate the unique value of every person and work together toward a more evolved and caring human society. As we celebrate community this holiday season, we are excited to highlight this service site with whom we've partnered for many years. Over time, countless volunteers have lived and served at L'Arche in Jacksonville. Below are the stories of this year's volunteers.



Destiny Johnson



After doing a year of service through AmeriCorp, Destiny was in search of a more personal hands-on experience. She found that in CVIF.

Through our in-depth interview process we knew her skills and interests would best serve the needs of L'Arche Harbor House in Jacksonville. In August, she began her journey with us as a live-in assistant for them.

She looks back now on her experience so far living in community with those she serves and shares her story here:

"As a Resident Assistant, I spend my time serving core members by helping them with every aspect of their day. The degrees of dependency vary depending on the person, some need more than others but they all want to just share a family-like atmosphere in our house. I have learned to expect the unexpected while working with the core members at L'Arche, especially in the Greatfull House where I live and serve. There is never a dull day. I've learned that you need no prior experience or a specialized degree to show compassion and to have a willingness to listen to and share life with someone.

The core members are helping me learn that mistakes are a natural part of life. The fact that no one expected me to be seasoned for this job, but rather that I am allowed to learn as time goes on is an experience so unlike the norm of society. Living in community reinforces the importance of being flexible enough to learn-as-you-go and that has definitely been the most important lesson I learned during my year of service with CVIF so far."

New Year, New Look!

CVIF is so excited to share our brand new look with you. We have been working hard to find new and exciting ways to share our message with the world and we hope our new logo and colors will catch your attention!

Birthday Wishes

Help us send birthday wishes to a few special people!

January 5

Alexis Diaz

January 11

Sister Kathleen

January 29

Julia Morgan

February 5

Bishop Esteves

February 8

Chelsea Wahman

February 15

Michael Sheedy



Laura Layou



Laura is living out her passion to advocate for adults with developmental disabilities as a resident assistant at L'Arche Harbor House. She considers the core members she serves her family and her service site has been deemed a "home away from home."

Read on as she shares a bit about her experience serving with CVIF at L'Arche this year.

"One of my greatest moments is when I came back from Thanksgiving and one of the core members was so excited to see me that she screamed, "You're back! You're back!" and gave me the biggest hug.

L'Arche should be the mold for every residential community. It's about building relationships and sharing life together. It's like nothing I've ever seen. It is the most welcoming, friendly and loving community.

I have met so many amazing people here who have such beautiful hearts.

They give so much to me everyday whether it's a smile, a hug, a pat on the shoulder, or just a simple thank you for helping them."

Creating Community in Four Steps

1. Take it one person at a time. Every person you meet is part of your extended community. Engage in a simple conversation to let them know you care. Celebrate their successes and help mourn their losses. Communities are all about people so it's important to start there.

2. Commit to short social visits with a neighbor or coworker.

The challenges people are facing are usually hidden beneath the surface and not easily shared following a simple "how are you."

3. Plan an activity and invite everyone you know. Do something active like planting a garden or cleaning up a neighborhood park.

4. Get involved with a local faith group. Spiritual and personal growth are important. Find others who are committed to the same principles and you will find a new community to keep you accountable.

Our Mission

Catholic Volunteers in Florida is dedicated to providing people of all faiths the opportunity to volunteer for a year and live out their faith by serving the diverse needs of the people of Florida and the Dominican Republic.

Catholic Volunteers work towards justice and peace, transforming the community they serve as well as themselves.

We live out our mission statement through our five core values:

Doing Justice
Active Spirituality
Creating Community
Living Simply
Personal Growth

Some give by serving,
while others serve by giving.

Click [here](#) to make a donation today or donate by check made payable to:

Catholic Volunteers in Florida
P.O. Box 536476
Orlando, Florida 32853-6476

In The Community

We are looking forward to visiting the following campuses!

January 20, 2016, 10 - 1 PM
Volunteer Organization Fair
University of Florida

February 24, 2016, 9 - 1:30 PM
Spring Career Expo
Flagler College



Alumni Spotlight

Keisha Flucas, Class of 2014-15

"The year I spent with Catholic Volunteers in Florida was an experience like no other.

It was serving at Bishop Grady Villas that I realized the importance of acceptance, love, gratitude, mindfulness, and respect for others.

At each CVIF retreat we were taught ways to express gratitude and mindfulness in our communities and at our service sites. I am grateful for my year of service with CVIF because I feel God led me to find my true calling in life."

Keisha joined our program in 2014 and after careful consideration, CVIF placed her at Bishop Grady Villas in St. Cloud, Florida where she served as a resident assistant for adults with cognitive disabilities.

After completing her year of service, Keisha accepted a full-time job working with a community of individuals with cognitive disabilities in her hometown in Georgia. She has also discovered her purpose in life - to people with disabilities - and will begin her first semester of medical school at St. George's University School of Medicine this semester.

Welcome our new board member

We are so proud to welcome CVIF alum John Zokovitch to our board of directors. With 15 years of experience in communications, John has already been a wonderful asset to the team as we move forward with our new look in 2016.

After earning his Bachelor's degree in Religion from the University of Florida in 1991, Mr. Zokovitch joined the CVIF family as a volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul's farm in St. Augustine. He continued on to receive his Master's degree in Biblical Studies from Notre Dame and has since spent his time teaching and leading the study of scripture.

After spending many years promoting peace and justice, Mr. Zokovitch now serves as the Director of Communications for Pax Christi USA, and is looking forward to supporting our current and future volunteers as they take their journey with us.

"The life of Jesus is a life for others. It is a life of service."

- Pope Francis

February 19, 2016, noon - 3 PM
Spring Annual Career Expo
Stetson University

Maybe you know of an upcoming career fair or volunteer event at your alma mater...let us know if we can participate. We'd love every chance to spread the word about all the great opportunities we have planned for our 2016 - 2017 volunteer class.

Contact Ms. Valarie with details or inquiries at vamica@cvif.org.

Tell us your story!

How did your service year impact you? Where has your service experience taken you? Tell us about it. We'd love to share your memorable moments with the CVIF family.

Share your news!

We want to celebrate your new job, promotion, engagement, or anniversary!

Share your news and memories with us by emailing Vanessa at vhornedo@cvif.org and look out for your announcement in next month's newsletter.

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