



801 Saint Paul Street
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 jesuitvolunteers.org

July 7, 2016

Dear parents and guardians of our new Jesuit Volunteers,

On behalf of the staff and board of the Jesuit Volunteers Corps, I want to share our collective excitement that your son or daughter chose to commit a year of their life to encounters of faith, purpose, and belonging with JVC! Over the past nine months since I joined the JVC team I have consistently been humbled and amazed by the community of Jesuit Volunteers—generations of people who radically chose something different.

You may know a lot about us (in fact I know some of you are alumni of JVC yourselves) or you perhaps you are just learning about JVC for the first time. Wherever you are I would invite you to continue to learn and connect with our community and our four values of spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice. Your son or daughter has committed to our program, and thus you too now join our community. The fabric of JVC weaves together our Corps members, our alumni, our agency partners, and the entirety of the communities that surround and support each of these.

The 250 young people who make up this class of JVs for the 2016-2017 program year are truly inspiring. It is clear to me their passion, wonder and commitment comes in no small part from the way you raised them. Thank you. I also recognize you may have some questions, and hope to use this letter, as well as future correspondences and our website to help answer these as best we can.

First a bit about our community and the network the JVs enter into. Community at JVC has so many layers. Each JV lives in a community with four to seven other JVs; this is their house community, or in some regions, their *casa*. Together JV communities share meals, chores, finances, and weekly community and spirituality nights. They support and push one another in dialogue, growth, challenge, and joy. And yes, there is both tremendous grace and challenge. Through this we all grow and deepen in our connection to one another and our faith. JVs are also part of a city community, surrounded by and enriched by neighbors, Former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs), mentors, friends, and support networks to help each individual and house connect more deeply to their new city or neighborhood. There is also our JVC staff community, made up of about 30 of us who support JVs and their collective networks through retreats, logistics, connections, and conversation. Many FJVs share that the network of support and community in JVC is one of the richest parts of the experience.

Next a bit about the commitment your son or daughter has made. They are committing to this life and this work through July 31, 2017, and I cannot predict precisely how it will manifest, but I can promise that JVC will inspire change and transformation in their hearts and minds. As individuals and as a community JVs take time to examine the social, political, cultural, and economic realities they see every day in their neighborhoods and work placements. Each JV has a full-time job at a placement partner that has been screened and reviewed by our team. More than 75% of JVC placements have been with us for over five years and many FJVs work



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at our partner sites. Work in direct service can and will be challenging, and we strive to provide the support and coaching JVs need to stay sustained and fulfilled in their work. We go on retreats to step away from day-to-day life to pray, rest, and reflect. Just as Jesus spent time away in the desert and mountains, we all need time away to re-energize and re-center.

We realize that it is not only the volunteer who is making a commitment to JVC, but that you too make that commitment in support of your son or daughter. Perhaps you wonder how best you can help or support your son or daughter and their community. One of the best things you can do is pray with and for us, and affirm the JV's commitment to staying present to the full experience, through the joys and the struggles. We encourage parents to find creative, non-financial ways to support—through sending letters, emails, and prayers. In respect for the commitment to simple living we ask that you send very few material goods (such as care packages and gifts). We encourage the JVs and their families to appreciate other ways of being present to one another. JVs and their families often find that their relationship grows in deeply profound ways during their time with JVC, despite geographic distance and the JV's choice to intentionally forego certain materials resources. If you have the opportunity to visit your son or daughter in the community where s/he serves, it is a wonderful opportunity for you to understand their experience and show your support!

There are many more details about benefits, finances, safety and health, simple living and staying in touch on our webpage created just for you: jesuitvolunteers.org/parents-friends/

We recognize the importance of this time of preparation leading up to the JVC year. It is not only a huge transition, but also a great honor and gift to be received as a guest in a new community. We hope you are able to extend your support to your son or daughter in these days of transition, and also grow in your understanding of what her/his personal choice to JVC's program means. While it may be hard we invite you into dialogue and conversation with your son or daughter about what is lighting their heart on fire, what is pulling them to our community, and where they are challenged—then to sit with them in those spaces.

JVC provides fertile ground for growth and deepening of faith and relationships, and with your commitment we all have the opportunity together to grow and build a more just and hopeful world. We eagerly look forward to being with your son or daughter and the other new Jesuit Volunteers at our Orientation retreats in August. Thank you for your care and support and your confidence in us. Welcome to the JVC family.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Shriver', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Shriver
President
Jesuit Volunteer Corps