



July 7, 2015

Dear parent/guardian(s) of an incoming Jesuit Volunteer,

On behalf of the staff and board of the Jesuit Volunteers Corps, I want you to know how happy we are that your son or daughter responded to the call to put their faith into action by joining the domestic program of JVC. The experience of living simply, in community, immersed in Ignatian spirituality, and working towards social justice will shape their choices and actions in ways unknown to them today.

As they make this choice and commit fully to the experience, I am pleased to provide you with some information that might address your questions about JVC and the implications for family and friends.

As the JVC staff, we accompany the volunteers during their experience. We work with them in the application and placement process, communicate with them in the weeks and months leading up to their orientation, and provide support during their year as Jesuit Volunteers. Our program coordinators have the primary responsibility to be in touch with each volunteer and each volunteer community on a regular basis. As one form of support, a staff person visits each community in the fall and in the spring to meet with each volunteer individually and the community as a whole. Local support teams (former Jesuit Volunteers and/or Jesuits) meet regularly with the volunteers and provide a needed cultural and social perspective that JVs might not gain from dialogue with other JVs alone.

While the volunteers are in JVC, they are expected to have weekly community and spirituality nights where they learn about and build relationships with the other volunteers in their communities. 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. As a staff, we provide resources to support them in this cycle of action and reflection. We also hold a mid-year retreat which offers the JVs an opportunity to reflect further upon their experience of service in light of their faith.

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. As we welcome you into the

JVC family, we extend to you our prayers and support. We have received many questions over the years from family and friends interested in knowing more about the values the volunteers are living. You can further affirm a JV's commitment by supporting her/his decision to stay present to the experience in the locale where s/he serves.

We encourage parents to support the commitment to living simply by sending a minimal amount of material goods (such as care packages and gifts). Our volunteers commit to living on a simple stipend and often times this means making sacrifices. 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.

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 and stranger in a new community. We hope that as a parent 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.

We eagerly look forward to being with your son or daughter and the other new Jesuit Volunteers at our Orientation retreats this coming August. Thank you for your care and support and your confidence in us!

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maggie Conley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maggie Conley  
Interim President  
Jesuit Volunteer Corps