

The St. Joseph WORKER PROGRAM Empowering Women to Change the World

BY ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ

Ashley Guanzon '12 attended her first of many service and justice trips when she was a student at Creighton University in Nebraska. "I actually remember Mr. Kirschbaum telling my senior Spirituality and Justice Class that we should go on at least one service trip in college because it will be life changing. He was right," she said. During her senior year of college she was on a service trip that was hosted by staff and volunteers of the St. Joseph the Worker (SJW) Program in Minnesota. It was there she learned about the policies and principles of implementing justice. Her first experience with the SJW Program was captivating and sparked her passion for social change.

The SJW Program was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and creates an opportunity for women ages 21-30 to serve in underrepresented areas of need in preparation for a life-long commitment to social change.

These women commit to a year of service where they explore the values of justice, leadership, spirituality, and living simply in an intentional community. Fostered within the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Joseph Workers live out "love of God and the dear neighbor without distinction." The SJW Program empowers women committed to social change to respond to the needs of the times.

This national program has seven locations spanning from New York to Los Angeles. When Ashley learned there was a site in L.A., she decided to apply and was accepted to the program. "I really wanted to go back to California after graduating and I loved reconnecting with the CSJ ideals that really transformed me in high school. Everything just fell into place and I knew God was telling me to do this year of service." Ashley began the SJW Program this past August with six other young women. The largest group since the program started in L.A. She was placed at Immaculate Conception Parish School (ICS) located in

downtown L.A. The school serves a Hispanic population with ninety percent of the families identified as living at or below the poverty level. She is a teacher's aide at ICS and teaches Physical Education for elementary and middle school students. She is also the pianist for the school choir.

Out of all of the placement opportunities, the position at ICS was the one Ashley was most interested in. "I've always loved tutoring and had a lot of experience working with kids, so I wanted this position," she said. "I feel as if this position was made for me and that I was made for this position."

Through this program, Ashley has had the opportunity to rediscover and reconnect with concepts that she learned at OLP. "The program really emphasizes female empowerment and I love it. Since the program is founded by the same order of Sisters that founded OLP, they emphasize many of the same concepts such as 'serving the dear neighbor.'" "I truly believe that OLP was the catalyst that inspired me to become a better leader and an empowered woman," Ashley said. "One quote that always stayed with me after I graduated OLP was to do 'all of which woman is capable.'"

Ashley has been keeping up with her alma mater and loves hearing about the new STEM opportunities OLP has been offering students. "OLP is really paving the way for women in STEM industries by providing opportunities to explore traditionally male-dominated fields." She is encouraged by the role that OLP is playing in reimagining possibilities for the next generation of women.

Ashley plans to pursue graduate school or pharmacy school after she completes the SJW Program. For now, she will continue to enjoy this unique experience of changing the world through service.

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Reimagining Possibilities THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE

College professor, author, activist, wife, and mother are just a few of the important titles that Genevieve Negrón-Gonzales '96 holds.

BY ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ

This first-generation college graduate has had an amazing journey since her time as a student at OLP. After graduating from high school at the young age of 17, she left her home in Chula Vista and headed to the Bay Area to join her sister, Angelique Gonzales '94 at the University of California, Berkeley. Four years later, Genevieve graduated with her B.A. in Ethnic Studies and later returned to Berkeley to earn her M.A. and Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Studies in Education.

Genevieve's fervor for social justice has motivated her to be actively involved in challenging injustice and eliciting change in society. Her research and activism focus on undocumented students, the political economy, higher education and social change. She has been able to turn her passion into a career where she teaches and encourages others to challenge injustices to create a just society. Genevieve is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Leadership Studies in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco (USF). She is also the chair of USF's Task Force for Support and Services of Undocumented Students where she advocates for this student population on campus. In recognition for her trailblazing work and commitment to inclusion within academia, Dr. Genevieve Negrón-Gonzales has been honored as the 2016 Emerging Leader Honoree for the Chicana/Latina Foundation.

Genevieve has written numerous articles about undocumented students that have been featured in the Harvard Educational Review, Jesuit Higher Education and The Journal of Latinos and Education, just to name a few. She also co-authored the book, *Encountering Poverty: Thinking and Acting in an Unequal World* that was published earlier this year. She takes joy in writing and sees it as a tool to help shape public opinion.

Genevieve feels that her experience at OLP played a significant part in forming who she is today. "OLP inculcated me with social justice responsibilities," she said, as she remembers her time serving as ASB president, a peer counselor and campus ministry leader. She fondly remembers religion class with Ms. Suzie Knapp '79, which provided her with the framework to pursue social justice. She is grateful for the OLP faculty like Ms. Knapp and Mrs. Jeanette (Prantil) Handelsman '64 who mentored her throughout her high school years.

She attended Catholic school since 1st grade and while she values the importance of public education and feels strongly about fighting for the equality of it, she is very happy to have found her place at USF, a Jesuit Catholic college. In a way, she feels reconnected with OLP as there are many similarities between a Jesuit education and the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, which OLP is rooted in. "Teaching at USF has reignited my interest in Catholic education and has fostered a space that allows me to do the work I want to do," she said.

Genevieve uses her leadership skills to inspire her students to invoke change in the world. She reimagines possibilities everyday as she teaches her students to think about and question why things are the way they are. She asks, "How can we reimagine what higher education in the United States looks like? How can we effect change?" They spend time discussing topics such as inequality, student debt and the cost of education. She interacts with students who want change and is very optimistic about the next generation of leaders.

This December, Genevieve hopes to come back home to OLP for the Candlelight Procession during Christmas At Our House. She will bring her husband Jason Negrón-Gonzales, and her two children, Amado and Mayari, to enjoy the experience of one of her favorite OLP traditions.



American Sign Language Returns to OLP

BY SAMANTHA LEAGUE

Walking into an American Sign Language classroom is like walking into a library: everyone is silent. This doesn't mean they're not communicating, though!

OLP just brought American Sign Language (ASL) back into its curriculum, but ASL has deep roots with our CSJ Sisters. In 1836, a small group of the Sisters of St. Joseph moved to America to open a school for the deaf in St. Louis, MO. They set up their covenant in a small village on the outskirts of St. Louis named Carondelet. Their response to the need of the deaf community began the American congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and they still run one of the most prestigious schools for the deaf today.

Ms. Sabrina Vasconcelos joined us this year as our ASL I and II teacher. She was exposed to, and fell in love with, the deaf community's language and culture when a group of deaf people started attending her church in Brazil. In stark difference to Sabrina's

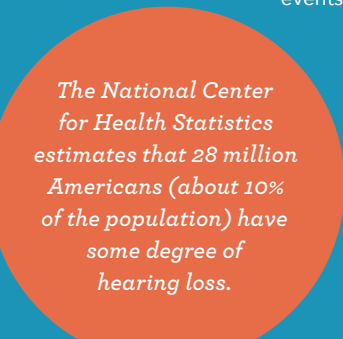
experience, not many of her 18 students know a deaf person. The girls are interested in the language for a variety of reasons, ranging from "it's a visually beautiful language" to "it's fascinating to communicate without sound."

"Sometimes the girls struggle with not being able to talk, though," Sabrina says with a smile.

What many may not realize is that sign language is not a universal language. Signs vary from language to language, which makes it difficult for international communication. When Sabrina moved, she had to essentially learn two new languages: English and ASL.

Sabrina's personal experience with sign language has given her an advantage in the classroom. While her

curriculum incorporates ASL-basics and lesson plans, she is also preparing her students for interactions with those who know a different form of sign language. For example, one activity required students to describe household objects without using ASL so students get a better feel of what that may look like. Sabrina also requires her students to attend deaf events throughout the semester so they can be truly exposed to deaf culture.



The National Center for Health Statistics estimates that 28 million Americans (about 10% of the population) have some degree of hearing loss.

Taking ASL I and II fulfills the 20-unit World Language requirement for graduation, and ASL I is a University of California-approved course. OLP is very excited to revive the language our founding Sisters crossed the Atlantic to teach.