

Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps

Love in Deeds of Service

Summer 2004

Vol. VI, No. 3



This spring ILVC received its first estate gift. Below we feature that donor through the words of her husband, who was also instrumental in ILVC's receiving this special gift.

Generosity of Spirit A Tribute to Crystal Ann McDonald

by Michael McDonald

Crystal Ann McDonald is blessed with being able to spend more than a mere lifetime in helping others. In life, she used her time and talents working for 35 years as a school teacher, often helping the more difficult students because she was very good working with them. And now, after her passing, she is able to direct her treasure to charitable organizations such as the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps so that the work of helping others can continue.

Crystal's choice to become a school teacher followed that of her grandfather who rose to a high administrative post in the New York City school system during the '20's and '30's, and of her mother, Doris Quinn, who taught at Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School in Bethesda, Maryland, during the '60's and '70's. Crystal was a graduate of the Academy of the Holy Cross and Dumbarton College, both in Washington, D.C. She began teaching right out of college, and spent most of her career as a teacher of fifth grade at the Chevy



Crystal and Michael McDonald

Chase Elementary School in Bethesda. When Crystal retired two years ago, she began looking for volunteer work and learned of the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps. She was very interested in joining as a volunteer given that her father, who graduated from Holy Cross in 1925, had studied to be a Jesuit priest before taking the bar and becoming a lawyer for the government instead. But then came the fits of indigestion that would not go away, the medical tests, the diagnosis – ovarian cancer, the operation, the chemotherapy and finally the dreaded words from the doctors – “there is nothing more we can do.” Crystal died on the 19th of February 2004.

Crystal's contributions in time and talent while alive endeared her to many, and several are now living lives made poorer by her passing. But, because she is able to pass on her treasure to charities such as the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps, others will be enriched.

ILVC MISSION

The Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps (ILVC) provides men and women age 50 and over the opportunity to serve the needs of people who are poor, to work for a more just society, and to grow deeper in Christian faith by reflecting and praying in the Ignatian tradition.

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From the Executive Director



Suzanne Geaney

Dear Friends,

I feel like I'm living in a fabulous house built by a couple talented designers who thought of every detail. Left to my own devices, I might be living in a simple A-frame. But, here I am – heading up the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps – with well thought out rationales underpinning the many unique aspects of this organization.

One question I have often fielded is why ILVC asks its volunteer members to donate two days of service per week. Trusting there was a solid reason, I interviewed Fr. Charlie Costello, SJ, ILVC's co-founder.

I learned that this 2-day requirement was one that both staff and ILVC's earliest volunteers determined together. They discovered that two days assists better both the agency and the volunteer.

The agency benefits from the volunteer's consistent and competent help – to the extent that many volunteers are more like staff members than typical volunteers.

The volunteers have a better opportunity to deepen their understanding of the people being served and with whom they are working side by side. As Fr. Charlie put it, "going once a week is more a gracious act of charity than it is a way to really get to know and understand the heart of the poor."

If you have ever read about the life of St. Ignatius, you would know that he never seemed to do things in a small way. He asked a lot of himself and of his companions in order that they may better serve God.

The ILVC asks a lot of its volunteers because that two day a week service will provide each volunteer with enough "grist for the mill," as Fr. Charlie puts it, for journal-keeping – the personal reflection each volunteer is asked to do. "Two days a week helps you take in the pertinent and important dimensions of what you experience," continued Fr. Charlie, "and there is no avoiding the difficulties of the work if you are there twice a week."

In a related article elsewhere in the newsletter, read more about ILVC's mission of serving the materially poor as I once again draw on the genius of ILVC's founders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne".

Suzanne

ILVC welcomes Josie Piranio, new regional director in San Diego

ILVC warmly welcomes Josie Piranio who has been selected to head up the program in the San Diego area. Josie has worked both on a local and national level as a conference speaker and workshop presenter to encourage all Catholics to enter into the mission of the church by helping them to realize their baptismal call. She is the author of *I Have Come to Give You Life*, a training course on Catholic Evangelization, which furthers this work. For the past nine years she has criss-crossed the United States as a mission presenter with Isaiah Parish Missions, a national organization headquartered in Boca Raton, FL. She is currently completing her certificates in Catholic Studies and Catechetics from the Diocesan Institute of San Diego. She is a native of San Diego, a graduate of San Diego High School, married to her



ILVC members in San Diego gather with their new regional director, Josie Piranio, (far right) during their spring retreat at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, CA.

childhood sweetheart for 34 years, and has three children and two grandchildren. Josie firmly believes that God uses us to do his work in the church. She remarks, "I think we can give God a lot of help if we got that message out to the laity." If you are interested in learning more about ILVC in San Diego, you can reach Josie at 858-484-0027 or by email at SanDiego@ilvc.org.

Thank You and Welcome

ILVC has been very blessed to have had the energy and talents of Sharon Scibek and Steve Callahan on our national board of directors for the past several years. Both Sharon and Steve are leaving the board this summer. We offer our gratitude, prayers and best wishes to both of them as they move on in their life's journey.

At the same time, we are delighted to welcome four new board members, Bill Buckley, Susan King, Helen Kerschner, and Rick Ralphson, S.J. Both Bill and Susan come to us from New York. Bill is retired from Goldman Sachs and is an ILVC volunteer. Susan serves as vice-president for public affairs at the Carnegie Corporation. Helen is president and CEO of the Beverly Foundation in Pasadena, California. And Rick is a Jesuit of the Wisconsin Province who teaches theology at Marquette University High School. We are very grateful to have Bill, Susan, Helen, and Rick join us through service on the ILVC board of directors.

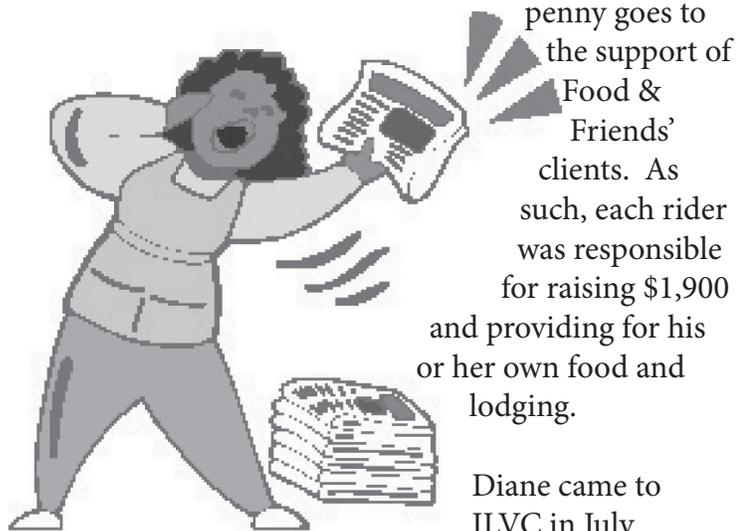
ILVC's national office has some new faces as well. Barbara Reid is now with us as our part-time development assistant. Barbara shares her time between ILVC and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC). In addition, Diane Tollick, long-time ILVC volunteer, is now working as our part-time bookkeeper. A warm welcome to both Barbara and Diane.

News from the Regions

Maryland Province

Baltimore/Washington/Northern Virginia

ILVC member **Diane Tollick** recently purchased a bicycle – the first in her life – and learned to ride so she could participate in this year's Cycle Across Maryland. From June 25-27, Cycle Across Maryland raised \$365,000 for Food & Friends, where Diane works as an ILVC volunteer. Food & Friends prepares and delivers meals six days a week to over 1000 individuals and their families living with AIDS or other life-challenging illnesses. Funds raised from previous AIDS rides included overhead for the riders' food and lodging, whereas this year, every



penny goes to the support of Food & Friends' clients. As such, each rider was responsible for raising \$1,900 and providing for his or her own food and lodging.

Diane came to ILVC in July 2000, already

volunteering at Food & Friends. She has served the organization faithfully in a number of different capacities, including food preparation, meal delivery, and as a volunteer coordinator. In that time, she has developed many significant relationships with the clients served, so during her ride, she carried with her the names of those she knew who died during her time of service. If bicycling across Maryland seems difficult, Diane kept up her motivation by remembering that so is living with AIDS.

Philadelphia

ILVC in Philadelphia now has its local office on the campus of St. Joseph University. The University has graciously provided space in the alumni office for **George Eisele**, Regional Director for Philadelphia.

George reports that the location affords ILVC access to spiritual and educational resources and provides an opportunity to strengthen the spiritual development portion of the ILVC mission. George and ILVC members in Philadelphia are delighted with this helpful and meaningful partnership between the University and ILVC.

New York Province

New York Metro Area

Myrtle McGrath reports that she ran a year-long Bible Study for women at the Valhala Jail and still had time to tutor ESL students at Cabrini Immigrant Services in Dobbs Ferry. **Bill Crowley** was busy this winter sheltering the homeless at a coalition of several churches in Elizabeth, NJ. When the temperature read 34 degrees or colder, Bill was there with open hands and a warm heart. Now he is part of a group looking into starting a Catholic Worker House in Elizabeth. **Deacon George Browne** teaches 5th and 6th grade students at DeLaSalle School in Freeport, Long Island and reports the work as challenging and rewarding. Intrepid workers **Jack Dwyer** and **Fran Skinner** serve the poor at Our Lady of Loretto Parish Social Ministries in Hempstead, NY, primarily as client interviewers and counselors. The agency serves over 600 registered families of Latino and African-American descent with supplemental food for 400 families each month and needs assessment and counseling services.

Wisconsin Province

Minneapolis/ St. Paul

Coming onto the national ILVC board is a Jesuit of the Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus, **Rick Ralphson S.J.** He teaches theology, serves as vocation promoter and spiritual director at Marquette University High School in Milwaukee, WI. He has been very active with two regions of one of our sister organizations - the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. For the midwest and northwest programs he has served as "support person," given talks and

served as spiritual director for some of their retreats. We welcome Rick to ILVC.

Chicago Province

Chicago

ILVC member, **Bee Benesh**, who volunteers at St. Malachy parish school on West Washington Blvd., was recently featured in the *Daily Herald*, a newspaper for Chicago's northwest suburbs. At St. Malachy, Bee helps the school maintain its medical records, works with parents on updating medical and dental checkups for students, and assists in a preschool classroom. To get to St. Malachy twice weekly, Bee takes the Metra train from suburban Barrington, then travels to the school on the CTA bus. ILVC member **Pat Guillen's** work as a reading tutor at Aquinas Literacy Center in the McKinley Park area in Chicago, was recently highlighted in the *Back of the Yards Journal*. Before her retirement, Pat held several administrative positions at Loyola University. **Mary Fauls** was recently named "chaplain of the year" at Stroger Cook County Hospital. Mary was an ILVC member for 2001-02 who continues to volunteer at Stroger; Mary is also a trained doula (child-birth companion). Two other ILVC members, **Jorge Caicedo** and **Maureen Treanor**, currently volunteer at Stroger Cook County Hospital. Jorge frequently ministers to Spanish-speaking patients; Maureen works in the palliative care unit.

Detroit Province

Detroit

*Detroit Regional Director **Ruthann DePonio** offers these reflections on her first year with ILVC in Detroit.*

At the close of my first year as the Detroit Area Coordinator for ILVC, I must admit that I feel awed by the experience: visiting agencies, meeting their dedicated staff and wonderful volunteers, listening to them as they talk about the enormous needs that exist not only in their community, but also in their agency as they attempt to meet these needs. Hearing about what has been accomplished and all that they hope to accomplish in the days and years ahead,

sometimes with a very small staff and a shoestring budget, is inspiring and overwhelming at the same time.

When I talk to agencies about the ILVC volunteers and their willingness to give 2 days week, I see the wheels turning in their heads and listen as they begin to share about all the things this person could do to help - to make a real difference. It is at that moment that I wish every person knew that they really can make a huge difference in this world by giving their time and talents for 10 short months. And it makes me wish I had 200 dedicated volunteers to send to them!

Listening to our ILVC volunteers reflect and share on their volunteer and prayer experiences this past year, I realize that they have grown in their appreciation for their own lives, have a deeper faith in God, and have been forever changed by the people they have met.

California Province

San Diego

An article in the Southern Cross, the local Catholic newspaper, featured the ILVC and drew a number of people to the June informational meeting, three of which have submitted volunteer applications. **Carmela Cavero**, a San Diego volunteer, gave a presentation at the meeting on the challenges and joys of her volunteer experience at San Diego Youth and Community Services. Her work with drug-addicted teenage moms had caused her to feel helpless on more than one occasion. She shared how she worked through the challenges she faced. At the end of her presentation she said, "I used to say the words 'I'm going to put this in God's hands.' This experience helped me to realize what that really means; it's about giving up control. It taught me that I have to put all things completely and wholly in God's hands if I want to accomplish God's work." Carmela felt she had truly found God in a new way. This is what the ILVC is all about.

Thank You!

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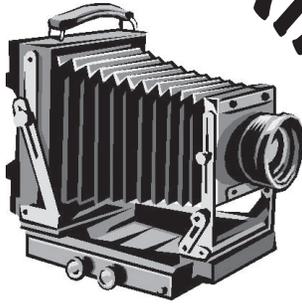
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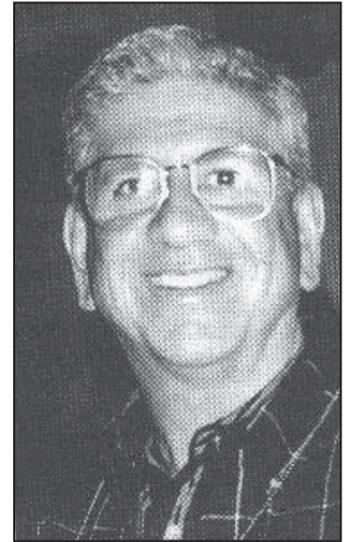
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occasions in a
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a gift to ILVC.*

ILVC photo Album



Father Gil Gentile, S.J., who has been a tremendous help with ILVC in San Diego, celebrates the 25th anniversary of his ordination this year.



Detail of photograph by Alex Harris

ILVC member Ambassador Tom Byrne talks with ILVC co-founder Jim Conroy, S.J. Tom has been with ILVC for five years.



ILVC board member and spiritual reflector, Sister Bernadette Duross, RSM (L) recently guided the ILVC staff through an experience of praying the Examen. She is pictured here with ILVC director Suzanne Geaney.



Detail of photograph by Alex Harris

ILVC member Irene Sailer talks with a client at Food for Others in Fairfax, VA.

Compassion for the Poor

by Suzanne Geaney

How I wish that we could just make a choice and then be done with ever considering it again! It rarely seems to work out that way. I promised to be my husband's wife in April of 1984 and still find myself choosing to be his wife twenty years later.

The Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps chose to serve "materially poor" people when it was founded in 1995 and still continues to do so today. Its roots are in the Old Testament where the prophets announced God's special love for the poor and in the life of Jesus Christ who identifies himself with the poor when he says, "What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me."

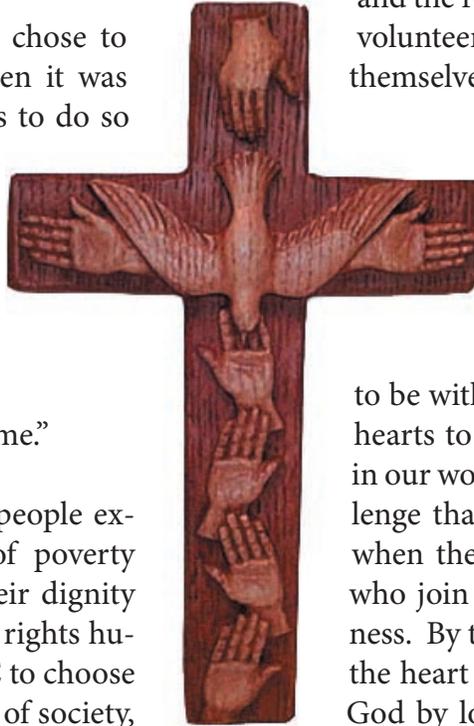
ILVC was designed to minister to people experiencing the most basic kind of poverty – whose daily life robs them of their dignity because they lack some of the basic rights humans are entitled to. For us in ILVC to choose to be in solidarity with these "least" of society, we are choosing to follow Jesus in his love of and identification with the poor.

What ILVC volunteers do is often hard and discouraging. Occasionally I have heard volunteers be discouraged about how little an impact they are making on the poverty in their city. Sometimes the longer volunteers do their work, the more discouraged they

become, because change is sometimes slow to happen. That is why the spiritual supports of ILVC are so pivotal to a volunteer's life. Keeping a journal keeps volunteers in touch with what is happening in their spirits. Participating in city group meetings and the retreats throughout the year also helps volunteers understand what is happening in themselves and in other volunteers.

The deeper volunteers go in exploring and sharing their experiences with one another, the more they will feel the compassion of God and of Jesus who lived among us. Certainly, choosing to be with the materially poor by opening our hearts to loving them is not a popular choice in our world – and that is the magnificent challenge that so many people are responding to when they explore joining the ILVC. People who join the ILVC inspire me by their openness. By their very lives they are responding to the heart of the Gospel: to show their love for God by loving one another as God has loved them.

I pray that we will all choose to follow Jesus in our own ways – be we ILVC volunteers, spiritual reflectors, friends of ILVC, retreat presenters or staff members. The more we experience the depth of that call to follow Jesus, the more we are emptied of ourselves and God fills up those spaces.



My prayers are:

- Let us all take time to reflect on what we do, no matter where we are in our journey through life. Just the act of setting aside time to reflect and pray means that we desire to deepen our experience with God.
- Let us be confident that God greatly desires us to be closer to God - to live out of the love we have been graced with.
- May we have the patience and grace to enjoy the choices we will make again and again.
- And, in a special way, may we grow ever deeper in compassion for the materially poor whom God has loved into being.

Mary & Elizabeth Center

Women Helping Women

The Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps is a partner with the Mary & Elizabeth Center on Long Island, NY. Its director, Louise Sandberg, writes about a recent retreat held at the Tabor Retreat Center.

On April 22, 2004, the Mary & Elizabeth Center held a bilingual retreat at Tabor Retreat Center in Oceanside. Sister Helen Chasse kindly waived the fees because she could see that we were making quiet time with God available to women who could not otherwise afford it. Volunteers provided transportation, food, and babysitting.

Twenty women from five different parishes attended. For some of the women it was their first retreat. Even though it was only four hours, they soaked up every morsel of peace, every crumb of spirituality, and every sign of love and friendship, in English and in Spanish.

The women were amazed and amazing. One of the women kept looking for Mary & Elizabeth,

expecting to see two modern day women joining us. It wasn't until the retreat leader read the gospel from Luke about the visitation that she realized which Mary & Elizabeth the center is named for! It was her first retreat since her marriage, and she brought her two small children with her. She said, "I made many retreats before I was married, but after I had the children, I would look at the announcement for a retreat and say, 'That is not for me anymore.' Then this one said, 'Baby-sitting available,' so I knew it was for me."

Other women shared their stories of struggles to come to this country and about women who were there for them. They touched one another deeply, black and white, English and Spanish speaking, through music, prayer and sharing, eating and playing.

Four hours can transform a life of dailyness, living in one room with a bunch of kids, never getting out of your little neighborhood. Energy, hope, love and life were restored in each of these women, bonds of friendship were forged and deepened, and loneliness, isolation and language barriers disappeared.

Bette Cassidy, our volunteer from the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps, has been instrumental in the community building of these groups, helping to start the Uniondale group and being present at the Hempstead group every week. She is very conscious of the justice dimension, pointing out the hardships of the women, concerned for whomever is missing, reminding me that it is a hardship for some women to do the driving or cooking. She is able to be present to the women in a way that helps them feel comfortable, welcome and loved. We are grateful to Bette for two years of faithful service to the women of the Mary & Elizabeth Center.



The Human Touch

ILVC member Jack Lynch works at Access Family Health Center in Chicago. ILVC's regional director in Chicago, George Sullivan, received this letter about Jack from his supervisor at the center.

Dear George,

I wanted to let you know how grateful I am for all the hard work Jack did this year. The patients love him and stop by to see him often. Kathleen now wants his schedule so the receptionists can tell people when he will be in.... if Jack continues next year, we will all be thrilled.

I cannot express how much Jack's commitment has meant to all of us. Since Jack started we have generated about one-half million dollars of medicine for over 500 patients living in poverty. These medicines are the big guns. They are medicines which prevent strokes, heart attacks, keep peoples' kidneys functioning, and prevent unnecessary pain, infection, and loss of limbs. Jack has obtained medicines which keep people functioning within their relationships, families and society, and most importantly, medicines which help preserve human dignity.

True, Jack has learned much about the pharmaceutical art of keeping people well, but he has also created the "human touch" at the clinic. The guy who cuts through all the red tape and nonsense. To get things done.

Thank you George, for being the "cogent" to make this all happen. And if you decide to clone Jack, send us another.... For next year.

Peace,
Monica



Jack Lynch talks with a patient at Access Family Health Center in the Rogers Park neighborhood in Chicago.

Here's what some other partner agencies are saying about ILVC members...

"Tom is an instrumental team member at our center, and through his volunteerism and daily actions, exemplifies our mission and core values."

"It is a tremendous gift to have Diane's continued support, as well as the continued support from ILVC. We are honored to be your partners in service to the community!"

"Mary is the kind of volunteer you dream about. She has the energy of a woman in her twenties and the wisdom of a mature woman!"

"Having Selette as our ILVC volunteer has been such a wonderful blessing for us. She treats each resident as an individual worthy of respect. Once, when she returned after two weeks away and walked into their meeting room, there was spontaneous, genuine applause from the residents to see her again!"

Love in Deeds of Service

Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps

801 St. Paul Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

Nonprofit Organization

US Postage

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Baltimore, Maryland

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**Our first task in approaching
another people
another culture
another religion
is to take off our shoes
for the place we are
approaching is holy.
Else we may find ourselves
treading on another's dream.
More serious still, we may forget...
that God was there
before our arrival.**

