

Love in Deeds of Service

Winter 2008, Volume X, No. 1

Rev. James R. Conroy, SJ, Named Purpose Prize Fellow

Jim Conroy Recognized for Work and Service at Age 60



Rev. James R. Conroy, S.J., founder of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, has been named a 2007 Purpose Prize Fellow by Civic Ventures, a think tank and program incubator based in San Francisco, CA. The Purpose Prize, now in its second year, is a three-year, \$9 million program investing in social innovators over age 60.

Jim was nominated for The Purpose Prize by the Ignatian Volunteer Corps for his commitment to the power of mature adults to change their communities, and, in the process, change themselves. The Ignatian Volunteer

Corps (IVC), now in its twelfth year, gives men and women age 50 and better the opportunity to meet the needs of people who are poor, to work for a more just society, and to grow in through discussion and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.

“IVC is a community service ministry *of* volunteers and *for* volunteers,” says Jim. “Ignatian Volunteers are committed to putting their faith into action, to give back and make a difference in their communities.”

As a Purpose Prize Fellow, Jim participated in an invitation-only *Innovation Summit for Americans over 60* in November 2007 at Stanford University. The national summit connects Purpose Prize Fellows with thought-leaders, scholars, activists, and funders. According to Civic Ventures, “The Summit helps attendees develop their capacity, links them with funders and venture philanthropists, and works to combine individual efforts into a wave of social innovation that could transform America.”

The idea for IVC was sparked by parents of young men entering the priesthood with whom Jim worked. The parents, both men and women, were looking to have the same meaningful experiences their sons were having. In 1995, IVC opened its doors to eleven men and women in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Today, more than 250 Ignatian Volunteers are working in thirteen metropolitan areas across the country. These men and women will provide more than 160,000 hours of service to 213 community organizations nationwide.

“The IVC program integrates Jesuit principles of service, reflection, and education by developing partnerships with community nonprofit organizations and working together to ensure volunteers over 50 years old the opportunity to serve the poor while having a meaningful learning and life experience.”

Civic Ventures, The 2007
Purpose Prize Fellows

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*Emma Grayeb, IVC Washington DC/
Northern Virginia, at the Bryant Early
Learning Center of United Community
Ministries in Virginia*

IVC Mission

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is a national community service organization *of* volunteers and *for* volunteers, and is affiliated with the Society of Jesus. Ignatian Volunteers, men and women age 50 and over, come together to serve the needs of people who are poor; to work for a more just society; and to grow through discussion and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.

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From the Executive Director

Today my mind was wandering. I decided the perfect symbol for the Ignatian Volunteer Corps would be a mirror because what's most distinctive about us is ... (get ready) *spiritual reflection*. Ideas for the back of the mirror began to surface:

*There's nothing like Ignatian reflection... Join IVC.
May you reflect like St. Ignatius did... Join IVC.
Are you the "I" in IVC? Join IVC.*



Probably wise I never wasted my time pursuing a career in advertising, right?

We survey our partner service sites, the nonprofits where Ignatian Volunteers work, and ask what has been most helpful about being a partner to IVC and having an Ignatian Volunteer. Answers are sometimes general: "Mary has been a great addition to our work," sometimes enthusiastic, "We could use several more Ignatian Volunteers like Jose" and sometimes quite specific, "We would not have the (name of program) without Pat's services."

As you probably know, an Ignatian Volunteer commits to serving 2 days a week for 10 months a year. That's a big part of why partners treasure their Ignatian Volunteers. IVC provides the programs with mature, competent, consistent and professional help. Ignatian Volunteers bring a variety of skills and experience to the people and programs they serve, and the programs are as varied as the Volunteers – schools, prisons, shelters, immigration and refugee services, adult education, job training, day care and child care, food banks, hospice care, nursing and healthcare, English as second language, counseling, parenting programs.

One program director said of his Ignatian Volunteer:

His ability to bridge the gap of age, culture and lifestyle helps the students take a risk and try something new. This man shows genuine care and concern for the lives of the men and women of this program. This is all done without judgment and without prescription. The fact that a major component of the IVC program is indeed reflection, is what I believe has led to the success he has had with our students.

Maybe my mirror analogy isn't completely wacky after all. What IVC seeks to do is reflect to others the love of Jesus – as St. Ignatius directed:

*"Love consists in sharing what one has
and what one is
with those one loves.
Love ought to show itself in deeds more than in words."*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Changing The World, One Person At A Time

Chris Swift, Ignatian Volunteer, IVC Washington DC/Northern Virginia

Ignatian Volunteer Chris Swift has served at the District of Columbia Detention Facility as a certified pastoral chaplain since 2002. "I worked with one of the women over a period of months to get her into a two-year rehabilitation program in North Carolina," says Chris. The woman was incarcerated at least three times during Chris's time at the Center. After much work, she was finally accepted into the rehab program. Chris received the following letter from the woman after she completed her first year of rehabilitation.

June 7, 2006

Dear Mrs. Swift,

I wanted to write you this letter because it's very important for me to let you know the impact you had on my life and recovery. I cannot remember the last time anyone had any faith in my ability to change my life. Everyone had lost all hope. Thank you for being nonjudgmental, and for showing me unconditional love.



photo by Alex Harris

All the effort you put in will never be in vain. The attention you gave me and all the other things you did to help my self-esteem blossom will be passed on to other people I meet. When I think about you going to court for me, it leaves me with another reason (among many) to stay clean. If I ever even thought for a minute of turning back the other way all I would have to do is remember your face, because the thought of hurting you would be unbearable. Words will never be good enough, so therefore my actions will speak for itself. Thank you for helping me learn how to really live again. Because only can I live an enriched life, after I learn how to completely surrender to Jesus, and make a solid commitment to enhance my life and enjoy it. I no longer let myself or anyone else decide my destiny. My past is over. One way I can right my wrong is to do the work that my Father puts before me. This will be your payment in full.

I love you, M.

Abandon No One

Richard Reilly, Ignatian Volunteer, IVC New York

My assignment as archivist at the New York Foundling (NYF) in Manhattan was a fortunate confluence of the goals of the Foundling, and my personal interests and business experience.

The Foundling, founded by the Sisters of Charity, has been providing needed family services to New Yorkers since 1869. The records of their rich history include tens of thousands of admission records for abandoned babies, baptismal records, adoption records, and other evidence of a constantly changing array of services as the Foundling responded to the needs of an evolving New York City population. The reach and depth of the New York Foundling is so extensive that their motto is, "Abandon No One."

Since the documentation of their vibrant 137-year history was stored at multiple locations there was no database of the contents, and the material was not available to the public for research. A long-standing goal of the NYF was to move these vast files to a central location in order to categorize the material into a database and to provide the space and tools for research by the public.

In 2006, I asked Liz MacMahon, IVC New York Regional Director, for an assignment in Manhattan. Although I live in New Jersey, it is an easy train commute to Penn Station in

mid-town Manhattan. Through discussions with managers at NYF, they learned I was a New York City history buff, collected old printed materials about New York, and had work experience that included automating large paper based depositories. So my personal interests and business experiences meshed nicely with a longstanding goal of NYF.

While categorizing and reading thousand of documents, one comes to understand the skill and absolute love the Sisters of Charity brought to the challenge of saving and caring for thousands of helpless infants and young children. These dedicated women were helping Christ. For He said, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me." Although the focus of NYF today is children of all ages, and in many cases their families, the focus on caring and love is constant.

You can read a recent New York Times article about Richard Reilly's work and the meaning of the archives to the New York Foundling at www.ivicusa.org/news.html.

The Tent Of IVC

Bob Harper, IVC Board of Directors

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is a big tent. And there are many people who live under this tent – people who are touched and changed every day because of the work IVC does.

First, there are the hundreds of marginalized people served by Ignatian Volunteers. They include children being mentored in day-care facilities, seniors being comforted in convalescent homes, families getting assistance with immigration issues, homeless men, women and children being fed in soup kitchens, inner-city kids being lifted-up by teachers' aids. The list goes on and on.

And then there are the volunteers themselves. Women and men, aged 50 and older. Some retired, some not. Some giving with their hands, all of them giving from their hearts. Some using the professional skills they acquired over their working lives; others doing something brand new, and hoping to find a new understanding of what it really means to give and to receive.

And there are spiritual reflectors -- religious and lay, men and women, who guide Ignatian Volunteers in the unique spiritual reflection component of IVC. They meet with the Volunteers once a month to help them find meaning in their volunteer experience and, in the words of St. Ignatius, find God in all things.

These are some of the people of IVC, and I am none of these people. But I too live under this tent.



I am a member of the National IVC Board. My personal history is steeped in the Jesuit tradition -- a graduate of Loyola Marymount University; a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Alaska; four years as a teacher and counselor at St. Ignatius High School in San Francisco. I have been formed and changed by my Jesuit training. I have been blessed with faith. I care about people who are poor. I appreciate

the value of volunteering, realizing that we invariably receive more than we give. All this made me a good candidate to become involved with IVC.

But by nature I am uncertain and cautious. Knowing what God wants me to do is not always clear. Nonetheless, I accepted the invitation to join the IVC Board because I share the values of the organization: service to people who are poor; personal reflection; searching for the presence of God in all things. Helping to guide this vibrant organization is not always easy, and there are challenges all along the way. But I know that God wants me to be here, supporting this important work. And so, under this tent, I feel more certain and confident. And I work and pray that everyone else under this tent is able to feel the same.

IVC Launches New Website

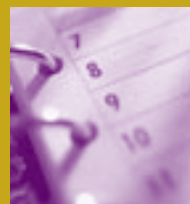
Along with the new logo, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps has launched a new website:

www.ivcusa.org

The new site features the regional programs, with easy-to-use navigation buttons on the home page. Visitors will find volunteer stories, regional events, past newsletters, and much more. Visit IVC on the Web today – and let us know what you think!



Save the Date!



April is the month to recognize those individuals who embody the ideals of IVC, especially during National Volunteer Week beginning April 27. Plan now to celebrate in these cities...

- Baltimore, MD – 2008 Della Strada Award, presented to Fr. Bill Watters, SJ, April 10
- Minneapolis, MN – Markoe Volunteer of the Year Award, IVC Minneapolis/St. Paul, April 6, 2008
- Washington, DC – An Evening of Gratitude, IVC Washington DC/N. Virginia, April 27

See www.ivcusa.org – for more details.

Friends and Supporters of IVC

We are honored to be able to recognize the individuals and organizations whose generous financial support helps to provide IVC members opportunities 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.

Listed alphabetically. List represents gifts received between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007.

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Gary and Robin Cerny
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Meg Connolly
Jim Conroy, SJ
Randall and Mary Lynn Hallett
Mary Halverson
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Tom and Alice Kullman
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Della Strada Award

Los Angeles

A Place Called Home
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Mark Adams
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Maureen Diener
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Elysian Heights, Inc.

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John Watkins
William and Barbara Weber

Della Strada Award

New York City

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Henry and Joan Barry
Vincent Biagi, SJ
Natalie and John Blaney
Peter Brogan
Richard Burke
James and Pat Butler
Vincent Butler
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John and Marie Dempsey
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David and Lynn Foster
Munir and Myriam Gabriel
James and Toni Gallagher
Frank and Judith Galvin
Samuel and Rosetta Giuliano
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Margaret and Thomas Healey

Charles Henderson
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