

## Available Placements

Here are a few of the open placements we have for volunteers. Check out <https://ivcusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-07-02-Placement-List.pdf> to see all the placements and for more information.

- Our Daily Bread: *Program Assistant*
- St. Peter's Adult Learning Center: *Program Assistant*
- Esperanza Center: *ESOL Program Assistant*
- St. Elizabeth's Nursing Center: *Pastoral Assistant*
- Apostleship of the Sea: *Seafarer Assistant*
- Jesuit Volunteer Corps: *Finance Consultant*
- The Franciscan Center: *Cook*
- Archdiocese of Baltimore: *Grief Ministry Support Person (coordinating care packages for families who have lost loved ones due to violence)*
- Innovation Works: *Business Mentor Coordinator*
- Loyola Early Learning Center: *Teaching Assistant*
- Caroline Center: *Financial Planning Instructor, Math Tutor, Volunteer Coordinator (3 positions)*

**Ignatian Volunteer Corps Baltimore**  
112 E. Madison St., Ste.301  
Baltimore, MD 21202



## Partner Events/ Ignatian News:

- Catholic Charities: Christmas Festival, Dec 12
- Project PLASE: 1st Annual Blanket Ball, Feb 8. 2020

A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting IVC at 112 East Madison St., Baltimore MD 21202 or 410-752-4686. Documents and information submitted to the state of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage. (410-974-5534).

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# Baltimore *examen*

NEWSLETTER OF THE IGNATIAN VOLUNTEER CORPS BALTIMORE • NOV 2019 • 2.3

## Finding Hope

*"It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work..."*

*(Prayer of St. Oscar Romero, by Fr. Ken Untener)*

How often have you heard (or felt) lately, "It's hopeless!?" We watch the nightly news or hear the story of a neighbor in need and feel there's nothing we can do. Yet the Season of Advent is upon us, a time when we wait in joyful hope for the coming of the Lord, our Prince of Peace.

Have you ever considered Christ's Advent coming as both "already" and "not yet?" Already, because Jesus Christ came Christmas morning, born to Mary; not yet, because the Prince of Peace will come again at the end of salvation history. The Kingdom of God is somehow already fulfilled at Christmas, but not yet realized as we know there is still too much suffering and injustice in people's lives. On Christmas morning--the very day we celebrate the 'already' coming--we know children will wake up without a place to call home, nutritious food, or the assurance of peace in their household.

When asked, IVC volunteers attest they maintain hope through the gift of weekly "encountering" of others at their placement sites. Through encounter, we get glimpses of God working in places we might, from a distance, see as hopeless. You'll read about one such place--Project PLASE--and the IVC volunteers who serve there in the pages of this newsletter.

We have the holy privilege of not only witnessing but also serving to help usher in moments when the Kingdom of God breaks through, disrupts the status quo, and creates a new narrative in someone's life. After much waiting, suffering is transformed and hope arrives as a gift. The encounter, the sharing of suffering, ushers in what we ALL wait and yearn for: the coming of peace and the Kingdom of God.

This Advent, let's share in the search for hope with IVC volunteers. Let's open ourselves to transformative encounter where we find hope, together.

## Events

- Monthly Meeting: Dec 9
- Advent Mass, Concert and Reception: Dec 15, 1-4 pm at St. Ignatius Church (See the enclosed postcard invitation for information--all friends of IVC welcome!)
- Mid-year Day of Reflection: Jan 17
- Monthly Meeting: Feb 12
- Monthly Meeting: Mar 9



## Making a Difference in Irvington

*Project PLASE (People Lacking Ample Shelter and Employment) addresses homelessness in Baltimore by providing housing and supportive services to the most vulnerable and underserved: individuals/families with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, addiction, developmental disabilities, and ex-offenders, etc. We treat, restore, and rehabilitate the whole person.*

Project PLASE is one of the oldest housing agencies serving the homeless in the Baltimore area. Executive Director, Mary Slicher, along with five other committed individuals, started "PLASE," some 45 years ago (yes, you read that right) as a walk-in center for those experiencing homelessness. PLASE opened its first housing facility in 1978, and in FY 2018, served 980 households comprised of 1,565 individuals, over 300 of which were under the age of 18 and 633 of which were veterans. Most of the individuals PLASE serves suffer from some type of serious illness, substance abuse, or mental illness; often, it is all three. Last year, 102 temporary residents transitioned into permanent or appropriate housing.

The staff and volunteers at PLASE face the daily challenge of giving clients tools they need to be independent—skills as basic as washing dishes and paying rent on time to planning for the future and managing multiple health concerns. But they also get to

experience the joy as clients heal, learn, and move on to a more independent life. One shelter resident—a 67-year old man—came to PLASE after being in hospice for a number of health issues. PLASE arranged his health providers and monitored his appointments and medication. He was recently freed by his doctor to live on his own in an apartment PLASE helped secure for him. With the help of other agencies, his apartment was furnished, but he still has a PLASE Case Manager for support. He says he was made well by "love at PLASE."

Jordan, a PLASE staff member has this to say: "Project PLASE has been here for 45 years because we put the client first. Working with clients to enable them to overcome the hardships they face can be quite challenging, but also provides us with great hope. We succeed because our staff and volunteers have a passion and love for the work and our clients." IVC Baltimore is proud to be a partner with Project PLASE, helping those most in need in our city.

**"PLASE has partnered with IVC for over 10 years now, and we are always pleased! Each person comes with experience, a sense of joy, and a dedication to service! They are willing to do anything and everything to help. We are so grateful!"**

**Mary C. Slicher, Executive Director, Project PLASE (and winner of the 2018 IVC Della Strada Award for her service to Baltimore.)**

## Making a Difference at Project PLASE

When you walk into Project PLASE, it is a hive of activity—lots of people coming and going. Such was the experience of two IVC volunteers working at PLASE, Ed Sabin and Kathy Gross, who began serving there in 2015 and 2017, respectively. It took a little time to settle in, but both have found worthwhile projects that support the organization's goals by engaging the people they serve, and in record keeping and fundraising.

Kathy was attracted to PLASE to work with a population she knew little about: "I felt called to understand how people become and then remain homeless." She enjoys her current assignment—a story-telling initiative, talking with clients and preparing narratives of their lives. "My greatest joy has been having conversations with the clients, just listening to them tell their stories. It restores some of their dignity to have someone listen."



Kathy, with Jerry (a peer support volunteer), and ED Mary Slicher.

In his four years at Project PLASE, Ed has served many roles, from handyman to helping with grant proposals. He volunteers the equivalent of one day a week, split into two half-days, and is able to do a lot of the data and research work from home. But he's always willing to help on whatever project is pressing at the time: "I enjoy the hands-on aspect of helping with the monthly produce distribution at PLASE for people in the Irvington area. I find hope in the young (and the not-so-young) people working to fix global problems right here in our local community."

Both Kathy and Ed point to the benefits of the IVC community as, in Ed's words, "a place to commiserate, compare notes, and keep on truckin'." Kathy encourages others to consider IVC: "There are many places to volunteer and many do excellent work. The advantage of IVC is the spiritual element we share which creates a tremendous sense of solidarity and purpose."

IVC Baltimore is blessed with so many wonderful volunteers like Ed, Kathy, and Mollie Killbourne, a 17-year veteran "emeritus" Ignatian volunteer who served at PLASE for many years; and Mark Wong, a long-time IVC volunteer who has just joined Ed and Kathy at PLASE after taking a year's sabbatical from active service. We thank them and all IVC volunteers, past and present, for their commitment and willingness to be faces of hope and compassion to all those they serve.

## For God's Greater Glory

*Elaine Ireland, Baltimore's Spiritual Development Associate, spoke with Fr. John Donahue, S.J.,\* about the challenges of finding hope in difficult times. Here's an excerpt from their discussion.\*\**

*Let's talk about hope. You emphasize the importance of parables and imagination to draw us forward into a hope-filled vision of what the world can be. Can you elaborate?*

First, let me say my interest in imagination, stories, and hope has been nurtured by the late Jesuit, William Lynch and his writings. For Lynch, hopelessness is an illness of the imagination—those without hope are locked into a single despairing vision of the world. That's why Jesus' parables were so powerful. The people of his time were stuck in what Lynch calls a "univocal" way of thinking—a mindset that does not engage the possibility of diverse life experiences. Jesus' stories turned this way of thinking on its head: the Good Samaritan, the vineyard owner who pays the last first. The parables express a paradox that caused the people then, and I might add, us today, to think differently; we still think in univocal ways.

*We talked about the hope Pope Francis has brought to the world as a whole. What are other stories and events you look to today as a source of hope?*

Again, I'll reference Lynch from his book, *Images of Hope*. He says those who suffer from hopelessness need another's imagination to work with his or her own so that a new future can be envisioned. I hear the Pope encouraging this, and I see it at work in the youth of the world who are taking a stand against economic inequality and climate change. I also see it in the work of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, mature men and women who refuse to sit back or become jaded, who continue to work one-on-one in their communities to bring a vision of hope.

*We encourage Ignatian volunteers to reflect on their service experiences. What advice can you give to them to guide their reflections? What are the Scripture passages you pray with when you feel challenged to hope?*

St. Ignatius encourages us to engage our imaginations to participate in the gospel stories and scenes. This can help us learn to use our imaginations to create parables for today. "What do I desire, wish for, hope for this person or the world? What things can I do to bring about that for which I hope?" Hebrews 6:19 tells us to have hope as "a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls" The psalms, specifically 3, 62, and 71 are good prayers to remind us that our hope must rest in God and God's promises.

\*Fr. John R. Donahue, S.J., S.T.L., Ph.D., is the Raymond E. Brown, Distinguished Professor of New Testament Studies (Emeritus) St. Mary's Seminary and University. A source of constant hope is the new life parents bring into the world, including his five and soon-to-be seven great grandnieces and nephews. As the late Elijah Cummings said so beautifully, "Children are the messages to a future we will never see."

\*\* Go to <https://ivcusa.org/ivc-offices/welcome-to-ivc-baltimore/> for a complete version of this interview.

## From Nora

I'm thrilled to be the new Director of IVC Baltimore. Steve Eberle left me big shoes to fill, having grown the impact of IVC in Baltimore in significant ways during his six-year tenure. Thankfully, Steve is now devoting his talents to growing IVC's national profile as Associate Vice President for Advancement. Thanks, Steve!

I too hope to see IVC Baltimore continue to grow in meaningful ways. In my first two months, I've learned so much having visited over half of our 25+ amazing non-profit placement sites. Let me share with you one of the creative ideas that has emerged while I've been "making the rounds." In 2020, IVC Baltimore will mark 25 years of service to the city! To celebrate, we hope to host a Volunteer Day, drawing hundreds of volunteers to our partner service sites across the city. The day will end with an evening reception with performances and recognitions. We'd love for you, our long-time supporters, to be able to join us in service and celebration. Stay tuned for details!

A little bit about me: I live in Baltimore City with my husband, John Paul, and two children, Colin (7) and Maeve (4). Both attend our neighborhood elementary school, Thomas Johnson. Most nights, you'll find my family "stooping it" with neighbors out front of our row home. I was drawn here to accept a job with Catholic Relief Services where I was blessed to have worked and learned for the past 13 years. I'm truly thankful to now have the opportunity, through IVC, to give back to Baltimore—a city my family and I have come to love. I hope I will have the opportunity to meet all of you, loyal supporters of IVC!



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## Making a Difference for IVC Baltimore

**July 1, 2019—Oct 22, 2019**

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