Meet Mary McGinnity, Executive Director

The new Executive Director of IVC, Mary McGinnity, is no stranger to the organization. For the past five years she has been active in the Northern Virginia and Washington, DC/Metro Maryland regions as a spiritual reflec-
tor and member of a regional council. More recently, she joined the National Board of Directors, and worked closely with board and IVC staff to develop a vision, plan, and strategy for addressing IVC’s challenges. She assumed her new position in February, replacing Suzanne Geaney, who left to enter a period of personal renewal.

Mary brings to IVC 25 years of leadership experience in faith-based nonprofit organizations. She founded and served as executive director of several social service organizations. For the past seven years, she has been Executive Director of the Department of Charity and Justice for the Arch-
diocese of Washington.

Mary has an M.S. degree in pastoral counseling, specializing in systems psychology, from Iona College and a B.A. degree from the College of the Holy Cross. She also has earned certi-
ﬁcation in mediation.

“I took this job because I saw the incredible love and dedication of the staff, of remarkable volunteers, and of a remarkable Board of Directors,” she says. “I know that in this economy, more people will need social services. I see no better way to help social service agencies help those in need than by providing them highly skilled volun-
teers. This organization offers a solution at a time when it is needed most.”

IVC Shifts Focus to Regions

The IVC Board of Directors has voted to make a major shift in the organization’s direction, a move that gives the leadership of each region more responsibility and ownership over their programs.

“This change is exciting for the future of IVC,” says Executive Director Mary McGinnity. “It will constitute a strong Regional Director and Council team, which will result in regions providing more volunteers in service to the poor. This model will foster local energy, commitment, and creativity and build on the strong spiri-
tual foundation of Ignatian spirituality.”

The decision, which came after months of deliberations, was guided by the belief that the strength of the organization is in the relationships that form at the local level between IVC and social service agencies, agencies and volunteers, and volunteers and the people they serve. “The whole focus of the organization will be on making that constellation of relationships at the local level as fruitful and productive as they can be,” Mary says. The national office has redirected its efforts to strengthen-
ing the regions, so that each region can be self-sufﬁcient in the near future.

An important initiative this year will be strengthening regional councils. The board’s evaluation found that the regions with the most success were those with strong regional councils, provid-
ing support to the regional director in such areas as marketing, fundraising, and recruitment. Mary feels the new direction is a sign of IVC’s strength. “In the last year, a sig-
nificant number of nonprofit agencies reduced their services or closed entirely because of the economy,” she says. “IVC suffered, too, but remarkably, the volun-
teers continued to serve, regional councils stepped up to the plate, and our fundrais-
ing efforts increased.”

“The staff made personal sacrifices, yet they worked even harder,” she adds. “The soul of IVC is people’s incredible generosity.”

The Value of Volunteers

Nationally, the IVC has 279 volunteers providing almost 153,000 hours of service, with a value of over $3.4 million because of the volunteers that serve those most in need. For IVC, a $100 gift is worth so much more than that.

Randall Hallett, Chair, IVC Board Development Committee

New England Region Launched

The New England Region, IVC’s newest, is off to a promising start in its first full year of operation.

Dr. Steve John, the Regional Direc-
tor, says that by September 2009, a dozen volunteers were on assign-
ment to social service agencies in the cities of Boston and Worcester, Mass., and Providence, R.I.—double the first-year goal. The region has also recruited nine re-
fectors. The region is one of the first to encompass three dioceses. “Each has a character of its own that has to be considered in recruiting volunteers, raising aware-
ness and planning events.”

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“We are very excited about our effort to decentralize and feel certain it will ultimately increase the value of IVC to all our constituents and result in more volunteers assisting the poor.”

Chuck Krambuhl, Chairman, IVC Board of Directors
Giving Back, with a Bonus

When she retired, Mary Himrod sought an opportunity to volunteer—but she hoped she might also find a spiritual component in her new line of work. While she was considering various alternatives, a friend asked whether she had ever heard of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC). The suggestion was literally an answer to a prayer—and “the rest is history,” says Mary, who is entering her third year as an IVC member.

IVC is a national program active in 16 metropolitan areas, including two in the Wisconsin Province (Minneapolis/St. Paul and Omaha). It offers men and women age 50 and over opportunities to serve the needs of marginalized people, work for justice, and grow deeper in Christian faith by reflecting and praying in the Ignatian tradition. Volunteers are placed in various nonprofit partner agencies throughout a community. Mary’s volunteer assignment is visiting Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly, an organization committed to the well-being and independence of older adults.

Mary’s volunteer assignment is visiting Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly, an organization committed to the well-being and independence of older adults. She visits twelve seniors—six per week, every other week. Because IVC members commit to serve at least two days per week, to six hours a day, for ten months each year, Mary’s visits are more frequent and lengthy than the commitment required by Little Brothers—and she feels this has enhanced her relationships with those she visits. There are other ways IVC has enriched Mary’s volunteer experience as well.

For example, she says, “Previously, I was fairly private with my faith journey, but I think my connection with IVC has helped me to be more open.”

Such openness is facilitated by the IVC model, which offers volunteers regular opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their experiences and contemplate the impact of their volunteering and God’s presence with them. “IVC community members come together monthly to share our stories,” Mary explains. “The sharing also can be a call for assistance or guidance with problems we may encounter while volunteering. In addition, we see other avenues for volunteering through the eyes of our IVC sisters and brothers (as we have the choice of changing our volunteer area at the end of our fiscal year).” Finally, we pray and study together, we pray for another, and we support each other.”

This article first appeared on the website of the Wisconsin Province of the Jesuits (www.jsppartners.org) and is reprinted by permission.

Family and Agency Recognized with 2010 Della Strada Awards

IVC presented the 2010 Della Strada Award to recipients on opposite coasts in April. In San Diego, the award was presented to the San Diego Catholic Worker in recognition of the agency’s outstanding service, at an afternoon gathering on Sunday, April 19, at St. Catherine Laboure Parish. And in Washington, D.C., at the fourth annual Evening of Gratitude following mass at St. Aloysius Church on Sunday, April 25, Mike and Kathleen Curtin Jr., received the award in honor of lives that reflect Ignatian values.

Both events were also successful fundraisers for their regions, with both events exceeding their targets for contributions. The Della Strada Award is named after Santa Maria della Strada, the first church used by St. Ignatius and the early Jesuits to serve the urban poor in the center of Rome. The award honors an individual or organization whose life or mission reflects Ignatian values of service to the poor, and of working and educating for a more just society.

“IVC offers an educational and prayerful arm to volunteerism,” she adds. “Christ has charged us to love one another; that was His greatest commandment. The Jesuit community has become a model of Christ’s teaching for me, and it has helped me in my aim to be a lifelong student of that teaching.”