



Denver

Ignatian Volunteer Corps



*Mountain Highlights*



Dear Friends of IVC Denver,

Another year of IVC in the books! As part of wrapping up the year, IVC sends surveys to all the site supervisors. From those surveys, we

learned that IVC members have directly served at least 500 individuals this year with job services, housing assistance, tutoring, food, and various other supportive services. It's difficult to measure since the work of the IVC member really can serve the nonprofit at large and therefore all of their guests. As one staff member wrote, "I love knowing I can rely on her to fill in all gaps when I am lacking on help and coverage from normal staff. I know she will step in and do anything in her power to ease the load of work we each have." But as IVC members noted during our closing retreat, it's often simply their presence that is the greatest gift they can give at the service sites. Yes, they may help someone find housing or figure out how to put a resume together, but so often it's the genuine act of caring and showing up consistently that can make the greatest difference. This notion was shared many times over as IVC members reflected on their service at our closing retreat.

I love reading the responses from our partner agencies as they illustrate the many ways that the IVC members have a concrete impact on so many people's lives. If you were able to join us for the Thriving at Five celebration in April, you heard the stories of both John and Jane, two seasoned IVC members who have been with us from the very beginning. Thank you for joining us for an incredible evening of celebration! What a journey it has been.

IVC is offering the opportunity for a specific journey next fall- a pilgrimage down to the sites of the Sand Creek Massacre and the Amache Internment Camp on October 20th-21st. If you are interested in joining us for a day trip or overnight, please email Erin at [ebenson@ivcusa.org](mailto:ebenson@ivcusa.org). We are looking forward to the many journeys ahead.

In gratitude,

Erin Benson, Director of IVC Denver



## Ann at SAME Cafe

One of the initial IVC Denver service corps members, Ann has served as Development and Internship Coordinator at So All May Eat / SAME Cafe for the past 4 years. Beginning her service in the SAME Cafe, Ann experienced how this innovative participation-based restaurant serving fresh, local food that changes daily, offers the dignity of choice that helps build a community while addressing food insecurity. People of diverse

backgrounds, ethnicities, and values contribute what they can -- time, money, or produce -- for a healthy meal at SAME Cafe.

SAME's unique, community-supportive approach helps people overcome financial and logistical challenges of accessing healthful food, and for some, through SAME's Cook-to-Work job training program, achieve housing and employment stability.

Ann applies the experience of helping in the SAME Cafe and her training in fund raising to support the SAME CEO and engage social work graduate student interns in fund raising efforts as they work together to write foundation applications and reports, conduct an annual mail campaign, assist with donor relations, and research new funding sources to continue to serve nearly 20,000 meals from the Cafe each year. These efforts have also helped SAME purchase a food truck and hire additional staff to be able to reach out to serve meals in food insecure neighborhoods throughout the Denver metro area.

SAME intentionally partners with social service agencies and other food justice organizations providing services to people experiencing homelessness, veterans, members on LGBTQ communities, Hispanic/Latinx/African American communities, immigrants, and persons with disabilities. The combined expertise of SAME's mutually beneficial partnerships collectively presents the opportunity for ongoing and sustainable solutions to address the needs for food access and food service employment on a greater scale than each could do independently.

SAME's unique approach to food justice has positioned SAME as a national model for solutions to food insecurity. From this position, SAME has supported grassroots efforts in Toledo, Ohio to establish a SAME Cafe in the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. This second SAME Cafe site is the beginning of the replication of SAME Cafes in communities throughout the country.

While the immediate impact of SAME is in meals served, individuals trained, and communities reached, SAME also creates positive change over time when people recognize the value they inherently have and what they can offer to others. When people recognize their own dignity and the value they bring, they change themselves and their community.

### **Rest and Renewal**

"You have made us for yourself,  
O Lord and our heart is restless  
until it rests in you" St.  
Augustine.

This quote from St. Augustine comes to mind as we conclude our 5th year of IVC here in Denver. The program year for IVC wrapped up in June and during the months of July and August we take some time for both planning and preparing as well as for rest and renewal. We often surround ourselves in God's creation during the summer months, spending more time outdoors and traveling to see loved ones. In doing so, we are filled with gratitude for the many gifts of nature, family, and friendship that we've been given. There is a tacit acknowledgement of our own created self, rooted in God's abounding love. Sitting with my restlessness and longing while rejoicing in God's creation helps me navigate the daily tensions within our world while providing grounding for the journey ahead. I hope you were able to find some renewal during these summer months as well!



If you are searching for a retreat you can do at home or on a trip, consider this: [Eco-Justice Retreat](#).

May we continue to come together both in our restlessness and in our desire to serve God and one another.



**Make a Gift to IVC**

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