



Amate House Newsletter

PUTTING LOVE INTO ACTION IN CHICAGO SINCE 1984

FALL
2010

Our Mission

Inspired by the social mission of the Catholic Church, Amate House supports and develops women and men rooted in faith, dedicated to service, and committed to building a more just and loving society.

For 27 years, we have been dedicated to supporting and forming leaders for the Church and world, as well as responding to the needs of the poor and marginalized.

Today, Amate House Volunteers serve more than 17,000 people across the city of Chicago every year and are transformed by feeding those who are hungry, sheltering to those who are homeless, and comforting those who have been tortured.

“Welcome to the Amate House Family!”

34 Volunteers Arrive in Chicago to Begin the 2010-2011 Program Year



On August 1st, our new 34 Volunteers began their Amate House journey, as they joined with alumni, board members, staff, family and friends for the 2010-2011 Commissioning Mass. Throughout Orientation, Amate House began to burst again with energy and excitement as the Volunteers took their first steps towards building community with each other and exploring their faith in a new way.

In the past weeks, our Volunteers have also begun their work at their service sites. This year they will be serving in 22 different schools, parishes, social service agencies, and non-profits across the Chicagoland area. For the first time, Amate House will have a Volunteer serving at Seton Academy, a Catholic coeducational college preparatory high school. The school partners with families and the community to challenge students to develop spiritually, academically, intellectually, morally, and socially. Kalli Vaughan is working at Seton Academy this year as the school's librarian. The school's library has been closed

for the past two years, and she will be working to reopen it. Kalli is looking forward to working with the students and being resources for them in any way that they need.

The arrival of this year's Volunteers also marks Amate House's 27th year of service to the Archdiocese and city of Chicago. They join over 580 alumni who dedicated a year to living and working with the same goals and determination to make the lives of those in need better. We are very excited to see how this year unfolds and are very proud to welcome this year's Volunteers to a rich tradition of service, community and faith!

Amate House Brings Faith, Service, and Community to the Web!

You can continue to follow our Volunteers' and Alumni's journeys through the Amate House Blog. Visit our website at www.amatehouse.org to learn more and stay connected!

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A Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Amate House Friends and Family,

The other day I was at my son's house for their block party. The police had blocked off the street at both ends, and everyone was having a good time, when all of a sudden a car comes down the street. A policeman on a motor cycle was right behind him in pursuit. They stopped right in front of us. I heard the policeman ask the driver what he was doing. He said "I am on my way home." The policeman then said, "Didn't you see that the street was blocked off?" The man replied, "Yes, I saw it but I did not think it applied to me." The very frustrated policeman said, "Well then who did you think it was meant for?" The man answered, "The people who don't live in our village." The policeman gave the man a lecture about entitlement and sent him back to the main street.

Entitlement seems to dominate our society and as a result we are now witnessing the rise of an entire generation who possesses no patience, little self-control, and an almost complete inability to discipline themselves. Our Volunteers are just the opposite - they're countercultural. They are living out the Gospel of God's love. I am continually amazed at the power of our young adults. They have such phenomenal enthusiasm, really great spirit and an angry hunger to make this world a much better place to live. They are inspirational to those they serve; they are the hope for a future that will leave no one alone, forgotten or abused. They will bring spiritual food to the hungry rich and the hungry poor. They will give meaning to those who are searching. They will encourage and support each other.

Recently, I began reading Matthew Kelly's book, The Seven Levels of Intimacy. In it he talks about what he refers to as the "Collective Ego." I could not help but think of and admire our Volunteers as I read it, because they are doing what he has put into print. He says, "For any relationship to be truly dynamic and successful, the collective ego of those involved must be greater than their individual egos." He goes on to say that relationship is not about getting it all but rather teamwork. Relationships are about giving and receiving, about working together for the common good, and toward the achievement of a common goal. Amate House teaches and reinforces the common good, and the Volunteers seem to "get it big-time." He also says that, "as human beings, we are most fully alive when we are changing, growing and stretching our boundaries in our quest to be all we can be." That line should have a picture of one of our Volunteers right next to it because it fits our terrific Volunteers perfectly.

I often reflect on how great our Volunteers are, and think how lucky they are to have a place like Amate House to help ground them, to give them a place to remove the entitlement disease, and to give them a safe place to really grow in all the important aspects of their life. It is because of you that this happens! Your generosity makes it all happen. You are the very heroes and blessings that young people need and want. You are examples of how to live one's life! I can't thank all of you enough for being an example of 'love in action'. May God bless you for all you do for Amate House, and may all your dreams and hopes for the future be in God's plans for you. God bless us all!

In Christ's love,

John Lucas

P.S. - I am continually grateful for your prayers. My CT scans are cancer free. I now see the doctor every three months. Praise be to God!

A Walk Through Little Village

A Reflection by Carlos La Puente

Today I walked home from work. While finishing my last year of college, I often thought of what my life would look like after graduation. Would I have a job? Where would I be working? What would the commute to and from work look like? What would go through my head as I made my way back home after a day at work?

As graduation came closer, and things with Amate House became more finalized, I had a good sense of what might be the answers to those questions, but I don't think I could have prepared myself for the incredible uniqueness of this community.

I work in Little Village, at St. Anthony Community Wellness Program. So far I've sat in on appointments to help people get free health insurance; I've carried bags of food up flights of stairs for people at a food pantry; I've helped set up for a visit from the USDA; I've distributed information at health fairs. Most of these things have thrust me right into the middle of this community within a matter of weeks.

So when I walk home from work, I see familiar faces. Children play soccer in the streets, cars blast Spanish music, the smell of tacos lingers, and parents nod as I walk by. One of the reasons why the walk home is so pleasant is that I am reminded of those I'm serving. I have the opportunity to be a servant and with each family I walk by, I'm reminded of that.

If nothing else happens this year, I will have been given the blessing to be a servant. Although plenty of Amate alumni can share their stories of personal growth and developed skill sets, I find consolation in the fact that I get to be a servant. Sure, that might entail growth and development, but for now I'm reminded of a verse from scripture: As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).

Being far from my home in California, it is good to feel a sense of community here in Chicago. And I thank God for those walks home, when I get to say hi to the people He's asked me to serve.

The Power of a Gentle Nudge

A Reflection by Jeannie Mulcahy, 2004-2005 Amate House Alum

I remember when I first read through the list of Amate House service placement sites and job descriptions. I was so excited – and, admittedly, a bit overwhelmed – by the wide variety of choices that lay before me. As I began to highlight the ones that I was interested in, there was one thing that I knew: I did not want to teach. I enjoyed working with children and had done some volunteering in college with a literacy and mentoring program, and I certainly wanted to look into site placements that would offer me the opportunity to continue to work with young people in some way, but I absolutely did not want to be a teacher.

So when Meg Murray, Amate's then Program Director, urged me to visit "just this one school", I thought twice before I agreed. But a few days later, I was walking through the door of the Academy of St. Benedict the African – Lafin, and my life took on a whole new direction. I called Meg before I was even out of the parking lot, gushing and asserting that without a doubt, this school, this haven in the middle of Englewood, one of Chicago's most notorious neighborhoods, is where I wanted to serve.

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The Amate House Book Club

In preparation for the start of their year, each Volunteer was asked to read one of the following books:

- [The Call of Service](#) (Robert Coles)
- [The Holy Longing](#) (Ronald Rolheiser)
- [Compassion](#) (Henri J.M. Nouwen)
- [Voluntary Simplicity](#) (Duane Elgin)
- [Community & Growth](#) (Jean Vanier)

During Orientation, the Volunteers spent time in small groups chatting about these books and how the themes they introduced will affect their year to come. As a way to share an idea of what was expressed during these discussions, South House Volunteer **Ali Schlereth** has provided this reflection.

Intentionality of Life

As I enter the Amate House community, the idea of intentional living has become a focal point within my thoughts. As Duane Elgin discusses in [Voluntary Simplicity](#), our daily actions are largely run on automatic. Not only the method, but even thought-patterns and problem solving rationales are products of habit. An instinctual, mechanical life is not a necessary fate.

One of the tremendous gifts nurtured by the Amate House program is that of self-reflection. In these last few weeks, as my fellow Volunteers and I have begun work in new and challenging surroundings, this foundation of intentional existence has helped us focus on the good being done rather than the trivial stresses inherent in daily work. Through communal support, we may form habits of conscious action. This is my hope for the 2010-2011 Amate House community, that we may establish for ourselves an adult life, founded on intentional living.

Through a willful consciousness of our actions we may be able to procure for ourselves a self-determined life. We may not simply exist, but truly live.

Volunteers' Wish List

- Box fans
- Brooms
- Can openers
- Cars & Vans
- Casserole dishes
- Extension cords
- Large Pots & Pans (with lids)
- Lawn mowers, Weed wackers, & Hedge trimmers
- Vacuum cleaners

Please call 773.376.2445 to arrange pick-up of your items. We are so grateful for you!

Memorials Established in Memory of Roark Sennott and Catherine Schouten



On July 26th Amate House lost two of its Amate House Family members, Roark Sennott and Catherine Schouten. Both lived their lives the **AMATE way...putting love into action!**

Roark Sennott did many things for Amate House and the people related to Amate House. He helped with the 25 Ton Food Drive and Serve-a-thons, served as an Amate Magic committee member, prepared and cooked Amate House Family Thanksgiving dinner for the past 12 years, and answered the needs of the Volunteers from buying everyday items like jumper cables and tools to just being there for laughs and emotional support.



Catherine is the grandmother of Amate House alum Kathleen (Beck) Ruppert. She is remembered for the ways she taught those around her how to love humbly, generously, selflessly and unconditionally and for her great sense of humor. Truly putting her faith in to loving action, she was the mother of 4, grandmother of 13 and great-grandmother of 15. Catherine died at the age of 101.

Memorial gifts were designated to support the work of Amate House through the generosity of both Roark and Catherine's families. Amate House is deeply grateful for the generous and thoughtful gifts from both families.

May Roark and Catherine rest in peace and rise with Christ!

If you are interested in setting up a memorial in a loved one's name, or if you would like a packet of remembrance cards to be used throughout the year for memorials or celebratory occasions please call Chris or Becky at 773.376.2445.

Please Pray for these Special Intentions

In Memory of:

Alice Altergott
Robley Bermel
Patricia Callahan
Judy Collins
Peter Farina
Jane Haggerty

Houk Family Members
Kevin Kimbrell
Kelly Marie Lillwitz
Baby Connor Olsen
Ronald Ploszaj
Baby Vincent Reed

For Improved Health:

Bernie Beazley
James Friedel, OSA
Jon Pykett
Ron Wagar

In Honor of:

Rev. Mark Krylowicz
50th Birthday
Sr. Kathleen Scott, LCM
Golden Jubilee of Entrance into Religious Life
Rebecca Muder
Esther Pomranky

“The Power of a Gentle Nudge” continued...

My year of service there, while often exhausting, was unquestionably fulfilling. I assisted in teaching Kindergarten with Amate alum Stephanie Walker, who was my much-needed mentor and remains one of my best friends. At St. Ben's, I was welcomed into a kind of family that I didn't know could exist outside of the one that I was born into (and, I learned, could be present in community as well). I was supported and respected as I stumbled along. Each day I learned something new, all while spending my days with the most beautiful children I've ever known. When the year came to an end, though I'd been so sure that teaching wasn't in my game plan, I found that I wasn't ready to leave yet. Fortunately, God has plans for us beyond those that we can imagine for ourselves.

A few weeks ago, I began my seventh year at St. Ben's. In the time since I left Amate House, I completed a Master's program at Dominican University in Early Childhood Education and taught second grade for four years before moving into my current position as Assistant Principal. As much as I'd like to feel proud and accomplished for the work I've done in my time here so far, I know that the true beneficiary isn't the children or their families or the staff, but me. The professional experience has been invaluable, but I'm most grateful for the personal growth that St. Ben's has inspired in me. I've been fortunate enough to share in the heartaches and the blessings in the lives of some genuinely amazing people. Every morning, smiling

young faces burst through our front doors, with courage and eternal hope masking what are often countless obstacles and tragedies that I can hardly comprehend. Standing behind them are the parents who choose to make tremendous sacrifices in order to send their children to our school, daring to imagine a future that is different than the one that so many outside of here have already established for them.

Our Principal, Pat Murphy, has selflessly dedicated her life to cultivating a school culture that values and nurtures each individual. Because of her, for the people who come to work in this building each day, it isn't a job; it's a mission to serve these children and their families to the best of our ability. It isn't easy. In fact, it's challenging in ways that I doubt many outside of it could begin to understand. Of course, we educate and strive to prepare our students for success as future leaders. But most importantly, we are a place that heals brokenness. I've seen the face of God every day. Every day. I've found a home in a place that is truly holy ground. It is humbling to be a part of it.

I never would have imagined that this is where my life would lead me. Through my experiences here, I've discovered something that I'm passionate about, I've committed myself to something that I believe in, and I have been abundantly blessed. And it all started with Amate House and a gentle nudge from Meg.