



Featured Sponsored Ministry: Notre Dame of Maryland University

Prayer Intention: The NDMU Community asks our colleagues to join with us in praising and thanking God for 120 years of blessings and in asking for an abiding trust in God's loving providence.

Notre Dame of Maryland University

Established by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Notre Dame of Maryland University has anticipated and met contemporary needs with visionary and pragmatic educational programs since 1895. Rooted in the Catholic traditions of the liberal arts and

service to others, a Notre Dame education challenges students to strive for excellence, build inclusive communities and promote social responsibility. NDMU was the first Catholic college for women in the United States to award the 4-year baccalaureate degree.



Transforming the world through service



Service to the community has always been an integral part of a Notre Dame of Maryland education, a practice rooted in our Catholic tradition. The Notre Dame mission proclaims its commitment to build inclusive communities, to engage in service to others and to promote social responsibility.

But what impact can a group of students really have in the community? Added together, it is considerable.

Last academic year, 1,400 members of the NDMU community, including students, faculty and staff, devoted more than 104,600 hours to service activities. Given that non-profit experts have estimated the value of a volunteer hour at \$22.14, the economic impact of Notre Dame's service to the Baltimore community is \$2.3 million for that year.

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Service is integrated in Notre Dame's educational programs at every level. In September, more than 200 students, faculty and staff boarded buses and traveled downtown to the Baltimore Convention Center to volunteer for the United Way of Central Maryland's Project Homeless Connect, which helped link Baltimore's

homeless community to vital services. Notre Dame had by far the best turnout of any of the local colleges that participated.

In the School of Pharmacy, all students participate in service projects through the AdvoCaring Program. AdvoCaring places groups of 12 students in local agencies such as

The Arc Baltimore, Our Daily Bread soup kitchen, Gilchrist Hospice Care and St. Jerome's Head Start.



Pharmacy students from NDMU volunteer at The Arc Baltimore

When asked about their experiences, one student's comment succinctly summed up not only AdvoCaring, but also the University's strong commitment to serve those in need: "I was able to play with children in my AdvoCaring group and meet

the wonderful teachers completely dedicated to them. The look in those children's eyes when we had a health fair geared toward them is something I will never forget. They felt important and they were eager to participate because we were not talking to their parents, we were talking to them."



1,400

NDMU students, faculty and staff devoted more than 104,600 hours to service activities during the last academic year.



NDMU students in the village of San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala

Notre Dame also offers several international service opportunities. For example, twice a year 10 students embark on a two-week trip to the village of San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, where they have home stays and do service. They help out at the Montessori parish school, work at a reforestation project, help build homes and observe the ins and outs of this integral development project.

But the Notre Dame service component is even larger. Each year the group brings back 12 suitcases of Guatemalan crafts purchased from women's co-ops that are then sold to the University community and at churches. Proceeds are used to defray the cost of the trip for the next group of students going to Guatemala. The new group of students fills these 12 suitcases with medical supplies, children's clothing and school supplies, which they take down to San Lucas on their service trip, thus perpetuating the cycle of helping San Lucas.

Through their service experiences, NDMU students are able to engage on a personal level vulnerable and underserved people, and learn that through serving others, they can truly transform the world.

Leadership and social responsibility in the SSND tradition

At Notre Dame of Maryland University, leadership is demonstrated in many different ways. The phrase “. . . *educating women as leaders to transform the world* . . .” appears in the first sentence of the University's mission statement. One professor said: “One of the things that I have valued the most during my 18 years at Notre Dame is having the opportunity to learn from the School Sisters of Notre Dame as they live the mission of our institution, developing and promoting leadership and a sense of social responsibility in members of our Notre Dame community.”

NDMU's Community Day, celebrated annually in late October, is an outgrowth of the institution's celebration of SSND Foundation Day, Oct. 24. Community Day themes always focus on issues of Catholic social justice and responsibility. This annual event is a unique opportunity for all members of our Notre Dame community to share in the vision and values of SSND. Faculty, staff and students are invited to present and/or attend workshops that complement the theme.



Sister Linda Stilling (center) with students

The SSNDs have also helped so many students develop their full potential as leaders.

In the first-year seminar course, students participate in a service project. They travel to Villa Assumpta, where they are randomly paired with some of the School Sisters living there to record their oral histories. Every year it is amazing to see some of the quietest students in the class confidently interacting with the sisters. Through their humble encouragement, the SSNDs are able to bring out the best in the students.

An SSND serves as a connector in each first-year seminar course. The students especially enjoy Sister Mary Roy Weiss' visits when she brings her musical talents to the classroom. S. Mary Roy has a way to get even the least-engaged students in the class on their feet singing, dancing and fully participating in the activities!

Sister Gerold Mobley and Sister Marie Vincent Brothers found ways to tap into the creativity of students who insisted they could not even draw a straight line! The students were inspired by the artistic talents of these two sisters, who will be greatly missed. There are reminders everywhere of the sisters' work: notecards, bookmarks and programs used to mark many Notre Dame occasions.

The School Sisters also sponsor a Service Abroad program where students have the

opportunity to travel abroad to complete service projects under the direction of School Sisters around the globe. Sister Kathleen Marie Engers is one of the key promoters of this program.

Every other year, a group of students sponsored by the Global Solidarity Committee joins SSNDs at the UN Commission on the Status of Women to participate in sessions on global issues affecting women. Sister Sharon Kanis has often accompanied these students.

Students have opportunities to participate in an alternative spring break. In Spring 2014, Sister Linda Stilling accompanied Notre Dame staff and students to the southwestern U.S. to learn about immigration issues at the U.S.-Mexico border.

“
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”

Sister Mary Fitzgerald has accompanied groups of students from Notre Dame, along with high school students, on several trips to work in areas of New Orleans ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. They build houses with Habitat for Humanity.

These are just a few of the ways that SSNDs promote leadership and instill a commitment to social responsibility in members of the Notre Dame of Maryland community. NDMU has been enriched and inspired by the firm, confident guidance of SSND. ■