



As stated in the recent issue of our Newsletter, Beth Fleming, Co-Director of the Associate Missionaries of the Assumption said, “The Religious of the Assumption and the Assumptionists have a long history of working together with the laity to bring about God’s Kingdom here on earth.” The founders of both communities, Sr. Marie Eugenie Millert and Fr. Emmanuel d’Alzon were committed to partnering with the laity to respond to the needs of the day, especially to the poor and marginalized.

Given this noblest of goals and sharing profoundly in the mission of Christ and His Church, the AMAs continue their work in many countries. Here in the U.S. late last summer, nine young women began a year’s journey to give witness to their faith by serving some of God’s most needy as lay volunteer ministers.

The Assumption Center in Worcester, MA, which can house up to five volunteers, is the home of the AMAs. Coming from the U.S. and beyond, they help organize and run the Center’s programs and have been essential to its success in providing much needed services, programs and activities to the local community and the neighborhood parish of St. Peter’s.

The community includes Ms. Kristen Penkala, Program Coordinator of the Assumption Center since 2008 and who is a graduate of Assumption College. She is originally from Cumberland, RI and has served as an AMA volunteer in New Mexico.

Joining her as one of this year’s volunteers is Ms. Afton Caterina from Belding, MI who went to St Mary’s in Notre Dame, Indiana where she majored in Spanish and Italian. Afton wanted to do volunteer work and experience what it means “to be a true Christian” before moving on to graduate school. During a visit to St. Peter’s, we experienced Afton’s gentle and effective teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) to a group of adults new to our country.

The second of this year's two new volunteers in Worcester is Ms. Beth Yancy from Baltimore, MD and who is a graduate of Villanova University where she majored in history and geography. Beth also teaches ESL but on a more advanced level. She too is an extension of Christ's compassion, patience and love to all whom she serves.

Though the schedule of services, programs and activities is full each and every day, the community at the Center hold as a priority the growth of their spiritual and social life together. While prayer and the Eucharist is their foundation and source of strength, they observe Tuesday nights as their 'community night' when they take turns preparing dinner and spend extra time together. They also participate in a study group which reflects on the life, writings and ministry of Sr. Eugenie.

The programs, activities and services provided by the AMAs in Worcester are wide and varied.

In addition to the four levels of ESL classes held at St. Peter's two mornings a week where child care is provided, Afton and Beth supervise a mentoring program on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for six to fifteen year olds from 2:30 – 4:30 PM. At that time they are joined by students from Assumption College and Clark University who assist children one on one with their homework and provide opportunities for games, crafts and sports. This program provides a safe and enjoyable environment for children to spend their afternoon hours.

Another significant afternoon offering that takes place at the Center on Mondays is called Girls and Dreams. The basement of the house is a 'hang out' for middle school age girls eleven to fourteen years old. In their own safe space they can develop a healthy sense of self and learn about baking, gardening and crafts as they share games, various projects and time together. Here too, volunteers from Assumption College serve as mentors along with the AMAs.

In addition to these activities, these generous young women work in a food pantry and in the parish's Confirmation program.

Back at the Assumption Center, the AMAs began a community garden in 2009 "in order to promote sustainability and green living and lessen our carbon footprint." The intention was to

grow produce to be shared among the families in the neighborhood. Its maintenance depends on the Sisters, community members and friends of the Center.

Adult education is another example of outreach provided by the Center. In 2009, the GIFT lecture series began for those adults wishing to enrich their faith. It is a series of four to five short talks scheduled yearly on topics of interest for adults. It has been gratefully embraced by the public.

It was evident by visiting the Assumption Center, that the possibilities for future growth in partnership between the AMAs and the Assumptionists is limitless in creatively fulfilling Sr. Eugenie and Fr. d'Alzon's dream of proclaiming God's Kingdom here on earth.

Read more on AMA - http://www.assumption.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=178&Itemid=69