

Holiday Greetings !



Winter 2006

Our New Digs

by Jordan Skarr

This fall, shortly after joining the Project, Katie and Jordan were charged with the exciting task of finding a place to house our growing organization. After some deliberation we decided that having an office was critical to our organization's expansion for it gave us a certain amount of constancy and centralization as we continue to reach out to other cities, while remaining in contact with our efforts already on the ground.

After a brief escapade into the glories of commercial real estate leasing, Katie and Jordan thought it best to inquire at some other agencies for help. As luck would have it, St. Gertrude's Parish, a vibrant north side community, offered us some space in their old convent, now transformed into a ministry center. A few weeks later, and one wall less, we were in. The community at St. Gertrude's has been extremely welcoming to our nascent organization and we look forward greatly to utilizing the space in the future.

If you are ever in the area, please feel free to drop by and say hello or give us a call, we're always around!

Jordan Skarr is one of two new JVC Magis volunteers working for the Ignatian Spirituality Project this year. Originally from Iowa, he attended Marquette University, was part of JVC in Tacoma, WA, and is currently getting his Master's in Divinity from Loyola University Chicago.

An ISP First

by Katie Sullivan

On November 18, 2006, the Ignatian Spirituality Project held its first One Day retreat for homeless women recovering from addiction at the Loretto Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Eight women from three shelters (Family Rescue, Interfaith House, and St. Martin de Porres House of Hope) participated in this retreat, along with two formerly homeless women from St. Martin's and five team members. The retreat team, which first started gathering last spring, put great effort into ensuring that this retreat would be unforgettable and also attended the retreat as participants, as is customary on all ISP retreats. Using a similar format to the men's retreats, the retreat provided an opportunity for the women to come together to share their stories and ponder the presence of God in their lives.

The day's many exercises included a witness talk, a meditation exercise, small and large group sharing, and reiki, or healing prayer, offered by the retreat center. It was a deeply moving and emotional experience for all the women involved, and many women said they were able to talk about things they had never previously discussed. Many women also expressed interest in attending other retreats run by the Ignatian Spirituality Project, and hopefully, this one was the first of many!

Looking ahead, the first weekend retreat for women is scheduled for the weekend of January 13-14, 2007, with hopefully more to follow later in the spring.

Katie Sullivan is the other JVC Magis volunteers working for the Ignatian Spirituality Project this year. Raised in Colorado, she attended the University of San Diego, did JVC in Hartford, CT, and is currently getting her Master's in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University Chicago.

*The Ignatian Spirituality Project was founded in 1998 by **Father Bill Creed, SJ**, of the Chicago Province of the Jesuits. ISP retreats are designed to help homeless and addicted men and women as they transition out of recovery programs. Using the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, ISP retreats, which have been held in Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Boston, and San Francisco, are spiritual experiences that foster trust in God and one another while also building community. This year, ISP has become a non-profit organization, has expanded its staff and retreats, and opened an office. **Bob Stephan, SJ**, a Jesuit scholastic from the California Province studying at Loyola, is the new program coordinator. Our new office is located at*

6214 N. Glenwood Ave. | Suite 3 | Chicago, IL 60660 and our phone number is 773-465-8699

Networking

by John Howard

The Ignatian Spirituality Project held a one-day workshop on Saturday, November 11th at Loyola University in Chicago. The purpose of the meeting was to train men and women in the Illinois area on the issues of homelessness and how the Ignatian inspired retreats help those suffering the problems associated with homelessness. The goal was to expand the group associated with the Ignatian Spirituality Project in Chicago, as this would allow ISP to impact a larger number of people.

The day started with a prayer of inclusion by Katie Sullivan and then an overview of the homeless situation by Jordan Skarr. Jordan's presentation pointed out that the statistics are not showing dramatic improvements in the numbers around homelessness and may in fact be getting worse. Loss of jobs, a shortage of affordable housing, a drift up in poverty and lack of healthcare insurance all contribute to this problem.

A panel discussion followed with four previously homeless men and women telling the stories behind the statistics. Each of their stories was truly remarkable and added much depth to the understanding of the problem. Their stories showed not only that homelessness affects a wide range of people but also that it is possible to move to a better place through hard work and the help of others.

Father Bill Creed, SJ, and Bob Stephan, SJ, spent the rest of day discussing Ignatian Spirituality, the retreats for the homeless and how people could get further involved. There was a brief discussion on the happenings of ISP and the plans for the coming year. In short, it was a remarkable day. A special thanks to those who were willing to share their stories to allow others to grow.

John Howard is the Executive Director of the Ignatian Spirituality Project. A former business executive, he lives in Barrington, IL, and started working with ISP as a member of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps.



Building Relationships

by Todd Keough

On November 11, 2006, the second One Day men's retreat in Chicago was held at Loyola University. The retreat focuses on self-discovery and building a relationship with God using a non-denominational approach. Our team includes those who are in recovery and have experience working in the recovery community. The focus of the retreat is on personal story.



On this retreat, I gave a lead and then the men shared their stories. The retreat topics included the following: fears, significant events and relationships, God's presence and absence, patterns, letting go, and trust. The men participated in a guided examen, a tool to help them recognize God's presence in their day-to-day lives. The men were also given the opportunity to have one-on-one spiritual conversation with a Jesuit scholastic. Other activities included a guided meditation, a chance to learn how to pray, and final sharing on how to take what those on the retreat learned and share it with others.

Because this retreat occurred on the same day as the one day reflection of lay volunteers, they joined the large group that was meeting to hear the recovery stories of other men and women. This activity was quite beneficial to those on retreat as they had a chance to relate to others' stories.

If you would like to become involved with these retreats in any way, please contact us.

Todd Keough, SJ, is a Jesuit scholastic originally from Washington. He is part of the Oregon Province and is in his second year at Loyola University. He volunteers for the Ignatian Spirituality Project as a retreat coordinator and is founder of the One Day retreat program.

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Contributors: John Howard, Todd Keough, SJ, and Jordan Skarr
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Thanks for your continued support in our ministry. Please contact us with any comments or for ways to stay involved. We look forward to hearing from you.