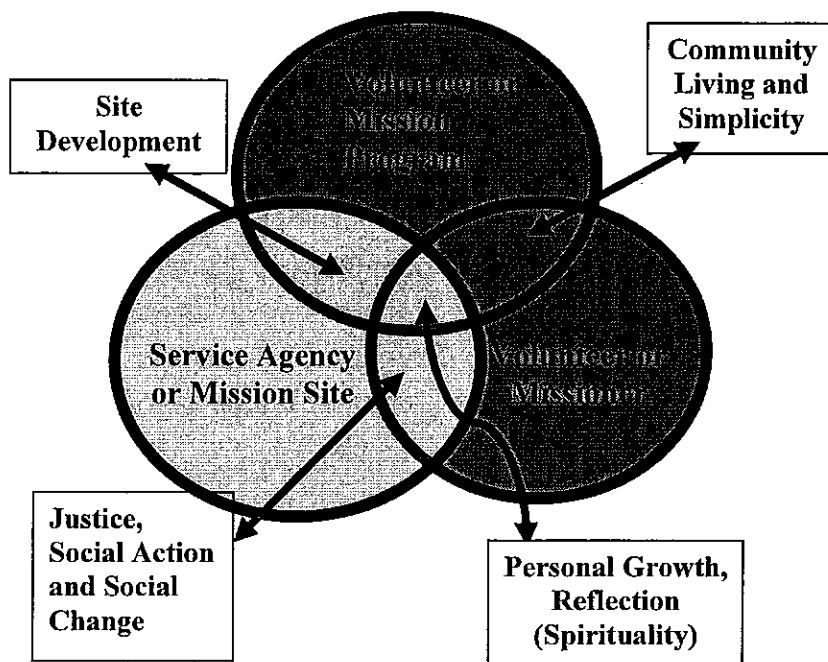


Getting Started: Nurturing Volunteers

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Matt 26:40

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lives within us." Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Nobody grows out of the need to feel loved" Nikolai Kingsley



THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind - the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people. In this era of globalization and continuous change, the world is becoming smaller, more interdependent, and more complex. Volunteering - either through individual or group action - is a way in which:

- human values of community, caring, and serving can be sustained and strengthened;
- individuals can exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities, while learning and growing throughout their lives, realizing their full human potential; and,
- connections can be made across differences that push us apart so that we can live together in healthy, sustainable communities, working together to provide innovative solutions to our shared challenges and to shape our collective destinies.

At the dawn of the new millennium, volunteering is an essential element of all societies. It turns into practical, effective action the declaration of the United Nations that "We, the Peoples" have the power to change the world.

16th IAVE World Volunteers Conference held on the 14th-18th January 2001, Amsterdam, Netherlands

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

Voluntary commitment has been and can be in the future, a tool for social, cultural, economic and environmental development in a changing world. Because it's based on personal motivation and choices, freely undertaken, it furthers personal faith development, as well as active citizenship and community involvement, thus enhancing human potential and the quality of daily life.

Volunteering is about people, people who are seeking to create a stronger sense of community. Their development as an essential resource within the community is crucial. For organizations which utilize volunteers, it is imperative that sound Human Resource management principles and practices are evident.

Issues such as:

- the willingness of volunteers to serve must be considered alongside their skills and competencies;
- the organization must have clear expectations of what volunteers can contribute; some volunteers may be more skilled than paid staff;
- volunteers must be appreciated, affirmed and cared for.

must be considered when creating or sustaining a faith-based volunteer or mission program.

Volunteers and lay missionaries should be held accountable to their projects, so that their volunteer experience and assistance is meaningful and productive.

Within organizations utilizing and nurturing volunteers, individual leadership abilities are developed, partnerships are created, communities are built, rebuilt and sustained. Where there is a strong and committed volunteer ethos, there is a strong community.

Volunteering works its magic upon people in many different ways. At different periods of peoples' lives, volunteering can be used to access a particular career or personal need pathway. But in later life, these volunteers often return to community service, remembering positive experiences which have assisted them to achieve their personal aims, and wanting to pay society back through doing something voluntarily. So volunteering becomes a pathway to greater personal growth and fulfillment within their lives. Ultimately, the altruistic benefits of volunteering are felt even by those who have used volunteering for other pathways in their lives.

The remaining pages of this handout provides samples of some of the basics that are essential for a volunteer/missioner to have a XXXXXXXXXX experience during his/her time of service. Also include is some optional samples of materials that can enhance how a program nurtures its volunteers/missioners.

GOALS FOR M.V.S.C. VOLUNTEERS

The Marianist Voluntary Service Communities Program is a lay volunteer work program in service among the poor and powerless of our country. The MVSC is sponsored by XXXXXXXXX.

PROGRAM GOALS:

A) *Volunteers' personal growth as reflective and aware Christians through:*

- meeting and ministering to suffering and often oppressed people
- responding to the difficulties of serving as a volunteer - both external (other people) and internal (one's self).
- living closely with people of different backgrounds, educational training and life experiences.
- sharing with, listening to other Christians involved in ministry among the poor.
- sharing with, reflecting with M.V.S.C. resource people.

B) *Community building through:*

- experiencing simplified lifestyle lived in community.
- developing communication skills which will facilitate relationships in community.
- worshiping and faith-sharing with other volunteers, Marianists and members of the Family of Mary.
- relating with other volunteers, Marianists, and members of the Family of Mary.

C) *Service among the poor and powerless in urban settings through:*

- the work of each volunteer in connection with a human service agency.
- input from M.V.S.C. resource people on the Church's social mission.

We believe that the volunteer experience is a faith journey with the Lord. Through the diverse experiences of the year - reflection and prayer, relationships, community living and ministry - we expect that each volunteer will be called to a deeper faith in the God of love and justice, to a more committed following of Jesus and to a more prayerful life.

MVSC VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Revised/Updated: July, 1998

PURPOSE OF THE MVSC

We are a lay volunteer program in service among disadvantaged people in urban areas of the United States. Our purpose is two-fold:

1. To provide services through existing social agencies in order to improve the quality of life for people in our country and
2. To offer the opportunity for mature Christian lay people to develop personally and spiritually through the experience of service, simple lifestyle and Christian community. Our program is sponsored and financially supported through the efforts of Marianists priests, brothers, sisters and lay people.

Organizationally, we have two full-time staff in the Central office; the Director and Associate Director. We also have part-time Local Coordinators in each city where we place our volunteers. It is the job of the Directors to find work placements for each volunteer. The local coordinator(s) act as a support person for the local volunteer community.

SERVICE POSSIBILITIES

We place our volunteers with church and secular non-profit agencies serving disadvantaged people in urban areas of the U.S. Some possibilities for service include teaching, day care work, crisis counseling, peace and justice education, community organizing, housing rehabilitation, and services to the elderly. Anyone applying to the MVSC should be very thorough in describing his/her work interests and job skills. We try to make a compatible match between a potential volunteer's work interests and skills and the needs of agencies.

We ordinarily ask our potential volunteers to come to the city where we have been processing their application for two or three days of job interviews with different potential employers. This allows the potential volunteer a choice in work situations. We usually set up this visit six weeks to two months prior to our orientation in mid-August.

URBAN AREA PLACEMENT SITES

At present, we place volunteers in the urban areas of Dayton, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Ohio; Covington, Kentucky and New York City (Queens and Brooklyn), New York. Potential volunteers can list a placement site preference on their applications. Ordinarily, we place elsewhere a volunteer whose home city is one of our placement sites.

CNVS Conference November 17, 2001, *Getting Started: Nurturing Volunteers – Understanding the Basics*
Laura Libertore

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE MVSC

We accept male and female volunteers over age 20. Eligible are single persons and couples without dependents.

The MVSC is open to committed Christians of all Christian denominations. We have our roots in the Catholic tradition which is reflected to some degree in our prayer and worship style but we are open in our communities to the influence and style brought to us by members of other Christian denominations.

We expect applicants to be mature adult Christians, open to dialogue with others, flexible in their relationships and willing to grow personally and spiritually during their time in the MVSC. The opportunities for growth come primarily through one's daily experience of service, community and simple lifestyle.

HEALTH CONCERNS

All applicants are required to complete a physical examination and must be eligible to receive medical insurance coverage.

As every applicant's situation is unique, care and sensitivity will be taken when addressing health concerns. If the staff has reason to believe a volunteer has a serious or potentially life-threatening illness, the decision to accept the applicant will be based on the staff's assessment of the applicant's ability to live the full life of a volunteer in light of his/her present condition as well as the prognosis of the seriousness of the potentially life-threatening illness.

TERM OF SERVICE

We ask our volunteers to seriously consider a commitment of two years. We ask at least a full year's commitment. We believe that two years as a volunteer is best from the viewpoint of personal development, quality of service given and development of job-related skills. Our volunteers begin their volunteer year with an orientation program in mid-August.

TWO MONTH REVIEW

The first 60 days of placement with the MVSC are officially considered "probationary". After an initial two month period of service and community living, our Local Coordinator will formally set up a meeting with each of the volunteers to review their working and community situation and to make whatever changes are necessary. The Director and Associate Director will also check in with each volunteer as to how the agency placement is going.

VOLUNTEER STIPEND

MVSC Volunteers are paid monthly by the agency which employs them. The gross yearly salary (before taxes) for a Marianist Volunteer is \$5,400.00 or approximately \$450.00 a month, leaving between \$350 and \$375.00 a month in take-home pay.

Out of the take-home monthly income, a volunteer pays the following:

1. Room and Board at the local volunteer community. A volunteer who decides to leave the program before the end of his/her commitment will assume responsibility for the increased financial burdens thereby placed upon remaining members of the community.
2. Transportation costs to and from work.
3. Personal expense items.
4. Extraordinary expenses such as an emergency trip home, etc.
5. Return travel home at the end of the volunteer commitment.

NOTE: *some lay mission volunteer programs arrange for stipend payment differently.*

The agency the volunteer works for provides adequate medical and hospitalization coverage or makes the payments for a plan that the volunteer is already on. Volunteers should remain on their own medical coverage plans until notified by the agency that they are covered by the agency's plan.

A volunteer shall not take on outside remunerative employment or student status without discussion with/and the consent of the Director. Living within the stipend is an important element of MVSC life. Student status can interfere with the life of the volunteer community and should be an "exception" only.

DEFERMENT OF COLLEGE LOANS

Volunteers who have a college G.S.L. or a N.D.S.L. loan to pay off can receive up to a three year deferment on the loan during their volunteer service time. The volunteer must be doing "secular work" (cannot be religious instruction, although one can work for a church institution) during their time of service with the MVSC. The Director or Associate Director should be contacted for details on the procedures of a loan deferment.

Access to the AmeriCorps educational awards only grant is available for some of the placements. Approval may vary each year and is based on congressional funds.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE VOLUNTEERS

We have the following expectations of any agency that one of our volunteers serves with:

1. The agency will provide the volunteer with a clear job description.

2. The agency will provide the volunteer with a eleven and a half month work program which is compatible with the volunteer's skills and work interests.
3. The agency will give the volunteer the needed time-off to participate in all MVSC-sponsored programs.
4. The agency may make reasonable requests on the time and energy of the volunteer. While we understand the need to work extra hours at times, we are concerned that the agency supports the volunteer's need for a personal and community life outside the agency.
5. The agency pays the volunteer's stipend and all agreed-upon benefits.
6. The agency provides the volunteer with vacation time compatible with whatever other volunteer's receive.

NOTE: *some lay mission volunteer programs have different agency requirements and/or process for volunteer missionaries receiving their stipend.*

PERSONAL EXPENSES

The following items we consider personal expense items and are not paid for by the agency or the MVSC.

1. Travel to and from the interviews with the agencies and the visit to the local MVSC Community.
2. Travel to the Community at the beginning of the volunteer year (i.e. before the Orientation Program).
3. Personal insurance policies other than those supplied or paid for at the volunteer's place of service.
4. Car payments, mortgages, college loans and outstanding personal debts will not be paid for by the MVSC or the employer.

NOTE: *some lay mission volunteer programs take care of some or all of the above mentioned expenses.*

EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY LIFE

An important part of the MVSC experience is life in a Christian household made up of three to five other volunteers. Each volunteer community has a staff person who facilitates the beginning of the community life and who acts as a support person for the individual volunteer and the community.

We of the MVSC Staff have the following expectations of our communities: 1) that the community has common prayer of its own style at least three times a week: 2) that the community members have common meals together at least three times a week: 3) that the community designates a "community night" each week when all members are present for purposes of doing business, sharing, formation and reflection: 4) that all members of the community participate in the maintenance and upkeep of the community: 5) that the decision-making process in the community include everyone and that all members actively participate in it. We also hope that volunteers will avail themselves of the varied opportunities to connect with local Marianist communities and/or the neighborhood community.

As a Staff we are committed to providing the resources necessary to facilitate a growthful community experience for our volunteers.

FORMATION PROGRAMS FOR MARIANIST VOLUNTEERS

We provide an initial orientation of several days duration for our new volunteers. The purpose of the orientation is to prepare applicants for their volunteer service. Particular focus is given to preparing individuals to participate in a community living a simple lifestyle.

We also provide three weekend retreats/workshops. In addition, there are programs organized on a local basis for the individual volunteer communities. Community and personal development meetings, as facilitated by the local coordinator, every other weekly community meeting (see above under experience of Christian Life)

Each volunteer can participate in the Friend in Ministry Program and is "assigned" a person involved locally in Christian service who will meet with the volunteer on a monthly basis to discuss the volunteer's experience of community, work and lifestyle. "Friends in Ministry" will be selected by the Local Coordinator with each volunteer's input.

The Marianist Family Contact Community (MFCC) is either a vowed Marianist Community or lay Marianist community or both, that "adopts" each volunteer community on a yearly basis. This can help provide a larger sense of the "Marianist Family" as well as a more personal sense of the Marianist Charism. In addition, individual Marianists are able to feel more connected to the work of the volunteers. Together this provides an opportunity for reflection about the ongoing experience of community and service.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MVSC

After some discernment, a volunteer may feel that he or she should withdraw from the MVSC. A volunteer who decides to leave the program before the end of his/her commitment will assume responsibility for the increased financial burdens thereby placed upon remaining members of the community. The process for voluntary separation from the MVSC is explained at orientation.

PETS, SMOKING and FIREARMS

Pets, smoking, and firearms are not permitted inside an MVSC house. No Exceptions are made to this policy.

ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The MVSC staff feels it is necessary to raise a cautionary warning about abusive use of alcohol or drugs by a Marianist volunteer. Abuse can lead to dismissal from the MVSC. This policy is discussed during the screening interview and reviewed at Orientation.

PROOF OF DRIVER'S LICENSE AND INSURANCE

Those having a driver's license should provide MVSC a copy of this license with the signed MVSC covenant. Copies of both the driver's license *and* proof of insurance will be required of anyone planning on driving a personal vehicle or a service agency vehicle during the MVSC year.

* Anyone bringing a personal vehicle to their MVSC community, who is willing to let community members drive this vehicle must provide proof of "additional-driver" insurance.

DISMISSAL FROM MVSC

The MVSC may feel it is no longer effective or beneficial for a volunteer to remain associated with the program. Poor job performance, sexual misconduct, inappropriate behavior on the job or in community, violent behavior, theft/illegal actions, application misrepresentation and failure to live up to the MVSC covenant are possible reasons for dismissal from the MVSC. Other reasons for dismissal from MVSC include obvious disregard or violation of placement agency policies, use of illegal drugs, and conviction of a city, state or federal criminal statute. These policies will be distributed in detail at orientation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications should be submitted to the MVSC Director or Associate Director. The medical form should be mailed by the physician who completes it.

Reference forms are mailed to people who are recommended by the potential volunteer. Upon receiving these, we forward the resume and references to appropriate agencies for possible job placements for the volunteer. As placements are available, the Directors contact the volunteer in order to set up dates for interviews with the agencies and for a visit with the current members of the volunteer community. We ask potential volunteers to plan on being in town for two nights so that there is sufficient time to spend with present and/or former volunteers and current staff. The potential volunteer pays travel costs to the interview. We provide the room and board during the visit.

The final decision about entering the MVSC depends on the volunteer's desire to join completing the visit, the positive response of an agency to the volunteer because of the interview, and the Local Coordinator's assessment of the potential volunteer's readiness to live a community lifestyle as an MVSC Volunteer. Potential Volunteers should send applications to the Directors preferably by June 1. Early spring application is recommended.

The MVSC may require psychological testing or request permission from the applicant to see the results of any previous psychological testing. The MVSC will pay for any psychological testing required. The MVSC may also require a police background check and will pay for any that is deemed necessary.

The MVSC may also ask that the applicant respond to a phone interview conducted by a person associated with the MVSC.

The Friend in Ministry Program or Companion

In order to provide personal support for individual Marianist Volunteers, the MVSC has instituted a *Friend in Ministry* program. This program was developed in response to the needs which accompany the experience of leaving a secure home and job in order to immerse oneself into a new community, a simple lifestyle and service with and among the poor. The adjustment required for such a commitment is immediate and can at times be "burdensome". Thus, individual and personal support has proven to be an area of programming for which the MVSC provides.

The MVSC's *Friend in Ministry* (F.I.M.) program matches an experienced person in the area of service and community with a Marianist Volunteer. The purpose of this match is to provide the volunteer with someone with whom to relate - about personal concerns or needs as well as to have someone with whom to reflect about the ongoing experience of community and ministry. The Friend in Ministry is not required but is encouraged to meet with the volunteer on a monthly basis during the year(s) of service.

Expectations of the FIM Program

The MVSC staff has developed the following expectations of the relationship between the Friend in Ministry (F.I.M.) and the volunteer:

1. The Friend in Ministry would be notified in advance about the person with whom s/he would relate during the given year of service and would be given for informational purposes, a copy of that volunteer's application.
2. With the assistance of the local coordinator, the Friend in Ministry would make the initial contact. Subsequent contacts are the responsibility of both the F.I.M. and the volunteer per his/her interest in having an F.I.M. and the availability of the person chosen to be the Friend in Ministry.
3. The relationship between the volunteer and the F.I.M. is not necessarily a counseling relationship nor is it traditional *spiritual direction*; however, depending on the needs which arise, the F.I.M. interaction may involve some counseling and/or spiritual direction.
4. The F.I.M. is encouraged to share his/her own experience of work, community, and prayer with the volunteer.
5. The volunteer can share with the F.I.M. concerns about work, community, prayer, personal development, and the future.
6. The F.I.M. is not a substitute for the volunteer's obligation to communicate with the MVSC community, MVSC staff, (or with professionals as needed). The *Friend in Ministry* was developed precisely for the personal enrichment of the individual volunteer and his/her personal experience during the MVSC year.
7. MVSC Directors and staff recommend that meetings and gatherings between the F.I.M. and the volunteer occur monthly.
8. The MVSC local coordinator will ask the volunteer and/or the F.I.M. for periodic feedback on the developing *Friend in Ministry* relationship.
9. Should the F.I.M. relationship not prove to be a good match, the volunteer or the F.I.M. can request from the MVSC local coordinator a change in person.
10. The MVSC staff will not ask the F.I.M. to break any confidentiality of the volunteer/F.I.M. relationship.

THE MARIANIST FAMILY CONTACT COMMUNITY:

In order to provide Society of Mary province and Marianist "Family" support for Marianist Volunteer Communities, the MVSC has instituted, along with the Marianist Provincial Councils, the Marianist Family Contact Community (MFCC) program. Basically, the Marianist Family Contact Community, is an SM (or possibly FMI) community that "adopts" the volunteer community, each year.

This program was developed in response to the needs of the MVSC and the Society of Mary to connect the individual volunteers with the larger Family of Mary, thus giving them a more personal sense of the Marianist charism. Some needs are immediate upon the beginning of their volunteer experience: feeling connected to something beyond their immediate community, feeling support as they leave a secure home and job in order to immerse themselves in service and a new community while at the same time following a simple lifestyle. Other needs are more long-term or relational: contact with provincial administration(s), discussions about spirituality, etc.

These matches provide the volunteer communities with Marianists to reflect with about the ongoing experience of community and ministry. The MFCC community meets with the volunteers on a regular basis throughout the year of service. *The MFCC is not a substitute for the volunteer's obligation to participate in MVSC community or to communicate with the MVSC staff, but can enhance the volunteer's experience throughout the MVSC year.*

It is understood that the MFCC is established with approval of the current provincial administrations. The MVSC or the Provincial Administration may ask the volunteers and/or the MFCC for periodic feedback on how the relationship is going. The volunteers or the MFCC can request from the MVSC/Provincial Administration, a change in the MFCC if things are not working out.

Expectations of the MFCC:

The MVSC staff has developed the following expectations of the relationship between the Marianist Family Contact Community (MFCC) and the volunteers:

1. The MFCC will designate a member of the community to act as "liaison" with the volunteers and with the MVSC local coordinator (part-time staff person). This should be done when the MFCC is established.
2. The MFCC would be invited (by the local coordinator or the volunteers) to the volunteers' commissioning/potluck at the beginning of the MVSC year (sometime in late August, early September).
3. After the first potluck, the MFCC would then make the follow-up contact inviting the volunteers over for dinner, prayer and sharing until a routine is established. A regular schedule of shared meals/prayer is recommended to occur monthly and could, perhaps, rotate between the MFCC house and the volunteer house.
4. The MFCC will be the contact for the volunteers and local coordinator when provincial or general administration visits are occurring. The MFCC will see to it that the volunteers are "visited" somehow - making arrangements that best fit into everyone's schedule: perhaps inviting the volunteers over for dinner and a social evening, perhaps seeing to it the administration representatives visit the volunteer communities; perhaps arranging for some formal exchange

(especially about what the volunteers are doing for their year of service), etc. The timing of this would vary, by city, according to provincial visitations.

5. The MFCC will also be sure to invite the volunteers to any kind of Marianist prayer day or celebration. Some possible dates would be:
September 5, Queen of Apostles; September 8, Birth of Mary; September 12, Holy Name of Mary; October 2, Guardian Angels (Foundation Day); October 9(?), Marianist World Day of Prayer; October 12, Our Lady of the Pillar; November 21, Presentation of Mary; December 8, Solemnity of Immaculate Conception; December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe; January 10, Anniversary of death of Adele; January 22, Anniversary of Death of Chaminade (Founder's Day); February 2, Presentation of the Lord; March 20, Joseph, Husband of Mary; March 25, Annunciation; May 25, Ascension; May 31, Feast of the Visitation; July 11, Feast of Saint Benedict
6. The MFCC will invite the volunteers (or see to it that they are invited) to Formation Weekends (and other Province-wide programs) *when appropriate*. The MFCC should check with the Office for Religious Life and the Marianist Formation Team about such events. There are Formation Weekends in October and March.

The MVSC staff has developed the following recommendations of other things that can take place within the relationship between the MFCC and the MVSC volunteers:

1. The MFCC is encouraged to share on things that are unique to the Society of Mary: its charism, shared leadership, democracy in communal living, aspects of spirituality, relationship with Mary, etc. Both the volunteers and MFCC members can share mutually on experiences of work, community, simple lifestyle, justice issues, personal development and prayer. The MFCC can invite the volunteers to share in Monday night community night discussions/activities when appropriate.
2. It is recommended that some time be devoted to initial sharing early in the year. This objective is to give the volunteers a little bit of information on the Marianist Charism and local Family of Mary. Some individual storytelling would also be appropriate by the Brothers and the volunteers. It is recommended that this take place sometime in September - perhaps on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon/evening.
3. The MFCC and volunteers will try to mutually encourage informal ties with each other (inviting them over for casual fun - movies, favorite TV shows, cards, games, etc.)
4. An action or service project done together would also be beneficial - perhaps at a ministry that a brother or volunteer currently participates in; or perhaps completely separate: (a soup kitchen on a holiday, rehabbing a house on a Saturday afternoon, visiting local shut-ins, elderly in the parish, etc.) This requires initiative and planning by one or two individuals, otherwise it won't occur.
5. The MFCC could provide hospitality to volunteers who may be unable to leave town over a holiday weekend; also possibly providing hospitality to visiting applicants that the local coordinator may need to house when the volunteer community is empty.

Name: _____

Date: _____

HOPES FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER YEAR

As you look forward to beginning your year of service and community living in the Marianist Voluntary Service Communities, please take some time to reflect on and answer the following questions.

1. What do you hope living together in community will do for you?

2. What would you like to learn from your year of service?

3. What do you think budgeting for and living a simple lifestyle means?

4. How would you like to grow as a person, in prayer and in forming relationships?

At Orientation you will be asked to give more specific hopes you have with regard to such things as meals, household chores, community recreation, personal time, privacy, etc. Over the next few weeks we recommend that you think about these areas and jot down some of your hopes. The "Life in the MVSC" description (which you should have already received) is an expression of some basic expectations of the MVSC program. Please read it carefully and be ready to ask any questions you might have about it at the Orientation. Thank you!

Return to the: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Address