

A “Funky” Reflection

As I look back at my last four years on the ALIVE Team, I do so with gratitude and pride. I have been blessed with an opportunity that few students ever experience and that is to be a part of a growing community that encourages and inspires personal development and spiritual enrichment.

I joined the ALIVE Team my freshman year as an apprentice working in the Bergstrom residence hall. I was coming to St. Norbert College and the ALIVE Team after a rocky transition at my home church caused me to question the very foundation upon which I based my beliefs. That aside, my only experiences with the ALIVE Team thus far were my interview, which was very comfortable and relaxed, and a greeting I can only describe as overzealous by a couple over-caffeinated upper class coordinators making the rounds during my move-in period. I was excited, apprehensive, uncomfortable, and vulnerable wondering “What in the world have I gotten myself into this time?!”

As I got familiar with the ALIVE Team and the students and staff associated with it, I quickly found a home where I could walk in solidarity with those around me as we grappled with questions of meaning and calling in our programming or team meetings. These were challenging questions that I had not properly addressed or lacked the place or skills to do so. I had in those first few weeks found a new energy, a new support system, and, for all intents and purposes, a new family.

With the passing of time I soon took on more and more responsibility with the support and encouragement of my boss and the students I worked with. I became a coordinator my sophomore year and even became coordinator for two freshman halls simultaneously later that same year. Eventually I became the Team Coordinator, a leadership role that I am still in today.

As I gained more responsibility, I also developed new skills and gifts. I established a leadership style, learned the art of small group conversation, and developed a sense for group dynamics and teamwork. These are things that I hold tightly to as I prepare myself for graduation and new possibilities.

There may not be any single thing that is more important than how my experience in the ALIVE Team has helped me grow as a spiritual being. I have been challenged and enlightened through conversation, reflection, mentoring, and solidarity. My experiences with our programming have allowed me to gain insight into what it means to live a life of fulfillment and meaning where I can constantly challenge myself to grow. Thanks to this place and these people I have a renewed spirit and appreciation for the presence of grace in my life and the lives of others.

I am approaching the end of my experience at St. Norbert College and more specifically with the ALIVE Team. I am thankful for the opportunities that I have had here as well as the encouragement, feedback, and support I have been given. I am also proud of the things I have been able to accomplish here. With the help of the students and staff of the ALIVE Team, I have developed into a strong leader and a well-rounded member of this gracious and loving community and that is truly an honor.



Kevin Funk '11
Team Coordinator

Confrontations in the Quiet

In the Summer of 2009, I attended the Summer Retreat Seminar on Vocation. I had selfish motivations for registering: a night at the Abbey (translation, “peace and quiet” which is very precious and rare when you work full-time and have a husband and four teenage children); speakers that included Paul Wadell, Julie Massey and Becky Welch; and the promise of the ever elusive time to slow down. Weighing these positives against missing 3 days of work and the pile of papers on my desk that required attention, I decided the paperwork could wait; after all there were the months of June and July to play catch-up.

My expectation of having time with no outside responsibilities was met, but not in the way I had expected. I had envisioned sitting outside reading books and/or materials, interspersed with short presentations by speakers and walks around the grounds with others also on the retreat. In reality, the retreat far surpassed my expectations and changed me in ways that I am still discovering two years later.

The days were well planned with a quiet ebb and flow to them. There was time for communal prayers, meals, speakers, small group discussions, walks around the Abbey grounds, and visiting with fellow retreat participants. The days were full, yet there was no sense of urgency or rush. I’m sure there was a master plan, but Julie and Becky never let on if we were behind or ahead of schedule. They would gently guide us along, ok, maybe occasionally prod us, in an unhurried way to the next activity on the agenda.

My thoughts about vocation were enriched by the discussions with other participants which included a board member, a Norbertine, faculty, and staff. We each brought and shared our different perspectives on work, community and home. I took notes during the presentations by Paul Wadell, Julie Massey and Becky Welch, which were more like scribbles until I typed them after the retreat. These notes continue to be a treasure for me. At the time, they were ideas that I shared with others on the retreat and that I reflected on at night in the quiet. Now, the notes remind me of the unique opportunity I had to slow down and reflect on vocation and specifically my vocation. The questions and ideas are just as relevant to me now as they were two years ago.

I had my quiet night away from my family and the quiet days away from the work on my desk, and I had opportunities to walk the beautiful and serene grounds around the Abbey; however, I do not look back at the Retreat as a time of rest or relaxation. With all my physical needs met, I had time and space for self-reflection and contemplation. There was time to be brutally honest with myself and confront patterns and obstacles keeping me from being the mother, wife, employee and person that I wanted to be, that I am called to be. The presentations gave me new ways to understand vocation and all that it encompasses and the words to set goals and direction.

I still struggle with making time for reflection, and some weeks Sacred Hour is my only time. However, I am making the effort and realize the importance for me to be more authentic and contemplative in my life. The experiences I had on Retreat gave me so much more than the time and quiet that had attracted me; they gave me a glimpse of a better me.

Kelly Krummel
Administrative Secretary of Humanities and Fine Arts



Register Now!

Retreat Seminar 1
May 24-26, 2011

See the link on our home
page at
snc.edu/vocation



To What am I Called?

Editor's Note: Theresa Beaumier '11 served on the ALIVE Team her first two years at St. Norbert College. This year she studied abroad in Chile in the fall and, upon her return, took a position in the Center for Community Service and Learning. Theresa has been accepted into the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and will begin serving in Los Angeles in late summer. Theresa gave the following reflection at Common Prayer in Spring 2011.

Vocation. To what am I called? How can I merge my passions and my talents with the needs in the world? In other words, how can I, at my best, widen my circle of concern? More than an individual question, vocation illustrates that my authentic development as an individual, in the fullness of my passions and talents, occurs in the context of the world's needs. Vocation is not a complacent self-reflection, but a dynamic call that urges my truest self into action and moves me beyond my ordinary circle of concern. Nor is vocation reserved for some distant time in the future, when I have everything "figured out." The exploration and living out of my vocation is happening now, as I actively question who I am and what I do well, and learn about the needs of the world . . . and in each moment that I choose to direct my energy towards a response to these needs. There is no guarantee that I will ever find a "perfect fit," in which I dedicate my life to a particular type of work that allows for the optimal growth of both me and those around me. Perhaps such a fit could exist in many forms in my life, or maybe not at all, as I sometimes fear.

Reflecting on vocation makes me think of Calling Cards. If you've ever been an ALIVE Team member or a regular program participant, you're familiar with these decks of cards, similar to playing cards in number, size, and pliability, but intended for vocational exploration. Each card is labeled with a skill or type of work: "Giving Care," "Seeing the Big Picture," "Investigating Things," or my favorite – "Selling Intangibles." I don't think I've ever quite understood what that one means. Calling Cards are used by sorting these descriptors into three categories: "fits me," "doesn't fit me," and "maybe," and then eliminating the "maybe" pile through further sorting. The funny thing about Calling Cards is that each time I end up with something different in my final pile. The skills that fit me each time seem to shift. Perhaps, then, vocation is not singular or fixed, but a work in progress.

Maybe it is not so important to wonder about what vocational opportunities may exist in my future, as it is to ask myself what vocational work I am doing now. What am I currently doing to widen my circle of concern so that my personal development occurs in response to the needs of the world?

Theresa Beaumier '11





SUPPORTING THE WIDER CONVERSATION AROUND VOCATION

AS 88 SCHOOLS AROUND THE COUNTRY WRAP UP THEIR "LILLY VOCATION GRANTS," (THOSE SUPPORTED BY THE LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.'S PROGRAMS FOR THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF VOCATION), IT IS APPARENT THAT THE WORK OF BRINGING A VOCATION PERSPECTIVE TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION MOVES FORWARD. IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING THE WORK OF OUR PROGRAM OF FAITH, LEARNING & VOCATION, ST. NORBERT COLLEGE IS SUPPORTING THE WIDER VOCATION CONVERSATION BY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGE'S NETWORK FOR VOCATION IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION (NETVUE).

- **FLV HOSTED A REGIONAL GATHERING "MODELS OF EXCELLENCE IN VOCATION MENTORING" IN NOVEMBER 2010. FOURTEEN MIDWESTERN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATED IN THIS THREE-DAY GATHERING WHICH EXPLORED HOW WE CAN EFFECTIVELY MENTOR STUDENTS OUT OF A VOCATION PERSPECTIVE.**
- **REBECCA WELCH AND JULIE MASSEY, ALONG WITH THEIR COLLEAGUE CHRIS JOHNSON FROM GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE, SHARED THE THEMES AND LEARNINGS FROM THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MENTORING AT THE MARCH 2011 NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR NETVUE.**
- **JULIE MASSEY HAS BEEN NAMED A CAMPUS CONSULTANT FOR THE NETVUE INITIATIVE AND PAUL WADELL SERVES ON THE NETWORK'S ADVISORY COUNCIL.**



Intersections

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