Eric Zeitlin

Reporting II

3rd Self-Gen Story

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Winona Minn-Saint Mary’s University 2014 graduate, Katherine Mockler, returned to campus Nov. 2, through Nov. 6, to share her experiences as a mentor and teacher to underprivileged boys while working in New York as a Lasallian volunteer.

Mockler is currently a Lasallian Volunteer living in the De La Salle community in Freeport, NY, and serving with the Casa De La Salle and Martin de Porres communities in Queens, NY. Mockler began her presentation Tuesday night, Nov. 4, 2014 with a prayer and then shared a little history of about the program.

According to Mockler, faith, service, and community are the three core values that the Lasallian Volunteer program prides itself on. “Each community practices the core value of faith by joining together on prayers. Some communities pray multiple times a day whereas other communities pray once a day during a certain time,” Mockler said.

According to Mockler, Lasallian volunteers serve in 28 ministries including teachers, co-teachers, tutors, social workers, case managers, campus ministers, and service learning coordinators. “My ministry of service is with the residents from Casa de La Salle-a residents program for male students ages 14 to 21 years of age,” Mockler said.

According to Mockler the boys in her classroom experience emotional and behavior difficulties, which are impeding their success in school and in their home life. “I serve as a science teacher for the lowest IQ group of boys,” said Mockler.

“Some days a successful day can be having everyone in the classroom, and extremely successful days are when all six boys attend and complete their work, a very rare occurrence but truly rewarding when it happens,” said Mockler.

Mockler said, “As silly as it sounds, one of the greatest rewards is when the boys call you by name, especially when they do not talk to you on a regular basis.” According to Mockler, building a relationship includes tearing down walls they’ve put up, and the walls come down brick by brick, not all at once.

Mockler shared a typical day in the life. “Each day consists of prayer at 7 a.m., driving an hour to school, working, driving an hour home, eating an hour long meal together with conversation, then evening prayer, at 7:45 p.m., we then are able to do what we need to do for our service sites.” said Mockler.

Mockler told a few stories about her experience. “As I was walking into school one day, a bus driver called me over and asked if I worked at Martin de Porres. I said that I was a volunteer, but ‘Yes.’ She looked shocked. She then asked me why I would choose to work for free with those ‘crazy kids.’ I told her it was difficult work, but I enjoy working with vulnerable populations.” Mockler said.

According to Mockler, her duty is to complete 900 hours, or one full year. “I am seriously considering a second year, I will need to make a decision by the end of February,” said Mockler.