



Introducing the 2015-2016 AMA Volunteers

Elliot Simmons-Uvin – Worcester, MA

Hello Everyone! My name is Elliot Simmons-Uvin and I am from Boston, Massachusetts. I recently graduated from Boston College this past May and majored in Sociology. I have a twin brother Stephen whom I spend a lot of my free time with fishing, cooking, and watching films. I enjoy playing basketball, tennis, drawing, and traveling.

Four years ago, when I started my freshman year at BC I knew I wanted to do some volunteer work, but did not really know where to start. I had participated in various volunteer opportunities in high school: served food at a homeless shelter, participated in charity walks, developed a fundraiser for brain cancer, and supported my aunt with her film festival, but at BC I was looking for a service opportunity where I could be more engaged with individuals I am serving and learn about who these individuals are and who they will become. I came across the BC BIGS Franklin Field Program, which is a mentoring program where college students are paired with at-risk youth in a neighborhood in Boston. Becoming a mentor has allowed me to become more patient, flexible, and engaged with a community different than my own and be a part of a new family. This experience sparked my interest to work with youth as a camp counselor and youth development coach at the Oak Square YMCA.



As my time at BC came to a close, I was once again in a moment of discernment deciding what volunteer program to choose, how will I know this is the right place for me? As I was walked through the Volunteer Fair in early April I stumbled across the Assumption Mission Associates table. After a brief conversation with Michelle, a little research, and a visit, I knew this was the right place for me. I was attracted to the mentoring program and the Sisters mission to educate the Worcester community. My hope is to help with the mentoring program and be involved in the AMA community as much as I can this coming year. Looking forward to meeting the AMA community!

(Above, Elliot and Alexis, his “little brother” for the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program and at the left, Elliot and his uncle Bart in Belgium.)

Maria Palacios Paz – Chaparral, NM



Maria is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, where she studied Spanish. One of her application essays reads: *As I approached the end of my college career I knew that I wanted to spend a year doing service before getting caught up in the chaotic and fast pace of life. I looked into different service programs, such as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, but nothing was really calling my name. Meeting the Sisters of [the] Assumption through my film class was not only destiny but also one of the greatest things that could have happen to me. Sister Catherine and Sister Mary Ann are such loving and caring individuals*

that will do anything for the growth of their community. As soon as I met them, I was welcomed with open arms and beautiful smiles. These sisters welcomed me into their home as if we had known each other for years. I was just there to take footage of the house for the video, and left feeling intrigued by the love that was felt all around that house by everyone. Not only were the sisters amazing but everyone in that event was so happy and you could truly see how much they appreciated the sister. I was extremely impressed by this and after taking a selfie with Sister Catherine, Michelle, and another member, I knew there was something very special about this group of strong women of faith. I began to get this feeling that I was where I was meant to be. That God had provided me with this opportunity because he had a plan for me, since I originally was not in the Assumption group for my film class.

Meaghan Hickey – Worcester, MA



Hey, all! My name is Meaghan Hickey and I am from Arlington, Massachusetts. The oldest of three children, I have a 20 year old sister and a 16 year old brother. Everyone in my family is a huge hockey fan, however I am the only one who does not play—even my dad plays! Instead, I enjoy singing, acting, reading, writing, arts & crafts, and cooking. I am ecstatic to know that I can regularly continue most, if not all, of my passions in my year with AMA.

I just graduated from Saint Anselm College with a major in English and minors in Latin and Theology. During my time at Saint Anselm, I went on two Service and Solidarity trips through Campus Ministry. The first week-long trip was to a self-sufficient homeless community in Maine. Not only did the trip wipe out my prejudices about poverty and homelessness, but it kindled in me a love for serving and a desire to continue to serve. My second trip, also a week long, was with Habitat for Humanity to Vineland, New Jersey and was equally as powerful and affirmed in me that God's next project for me would be to commit myself to service for some time. It was also at Saint Anselm where I attended a post-grad volunteer fair. I was drawn to the AMA table, right away. After hearing about it, I immediately felt a call to the program. I applied and went to the Assumption house in Worcester to spend a day as an AMA. I fell in love with everything about it and felt right at home. It was then that my heart and mind were made up. God wanted me here. I don't know exactly what God's plan for my life is, but I am certain that He intended for me to be an AMA. I find that so incredible and I am very grateful for such a wonderful opportunity. The year will present its challenges, but I am certain that the rewards will be greater. I know I will impact others just as much as they impact and teach me. Although I am nervous, I cannot wait to grow in love, prayer, and solidarity with my fellow AMAs, the Religious of the Assumption, and the entire AMA community!

(At right, Meaghan and her roommates pose for a goofy Christmas photo!)



Additional Cana Community Members in Worcester:

AMAs in Worcester live at the Assumption Center during their year of service. Other young adults are invited to live in the community and share life together: This year, we welcome back Ally (who was here this summer) and Kate (who has been part of the community since last August)!

Ally Longchamps – Returning Cana Member



Hi I am Ally Longchamps and I am from Newington, CT. As a 2015 graduate of Assumption College, I am looking forward to a new phase of life which will involve working as a case manager at Elder Services of Worcester Inc. While in college, I enjoyed being part of campus ministry and it was through my friend Brittany, actually, that I was introduced to a few of the sisters who went to mass at Assumption. Throughout my years at AC, I got to meet some of the Religious of the Assumption sisters in Lansdale and Philadelphia, PA when I went on an alternative spring break trip and I remember learning more about the AMA program through Michelle. So, when my friend Brittany was discerning whether or not to do a year of service, she told me about the Cana community. It sounded like a wonderful opportunity to live in community, to explore my faith, and even be close to where I will be working. I

look forward to getting to know the others in the house, participating in prayer and service opportunities and being part of the Religious of the Assumption *family*. I also hope to grow deeper in my faith and form last friendships.

Kate Carew – Returning Cana Member

Hi, everyone! My name is Kate Carew, and, while I'm not an AMA, I am a member of the Cana Community again this year. I'm a middle school ESL teacher, and in my spare time, I like to read, spend time with the other members of the Cana Community, volunteer, and explore Worcester. I'm a former Jesuit Volunteer and a former community member at L'Arche, and I've found that living in community always pushes me to new growth. I first became connected with the Religious of the Assumption through the garden and later Lectio during Lent, and so was really excited when there were openings in Cana for non-AMAs this year. I'm hoping to deepen my faith and get to know the other members of Cana and the Sisters even better this year.



Additional Casa Maria Eugenia Community Member in Chaparral:

AMAs in Chaparral live at the Casa Maria Eugenia during their year of service. This year, we invited Idalia, a friend of the Sisters and Chapa native to live in the community with Maria. We are so happy she said “Yes!”

Idalia Mora

Hello my name is Idalia Mora, I am 23 years old, and I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in sociology. I've lived in Chaparral since the age of 2. Previously, I lived in Ciudad Juarez, which is the city that I was born in. So, Chaparral is definitely home to me. I am an avid football (soccer) fan. Most weekend mornings, you'll find me supporting my favorite team with a passion. Sundays you'll find me in mass playing guitar with the choir.

My hopes while living in community are to further strengthen my faith, as well as be of help to Maria in getting to know the area and being a support for each other. Giving back to the community is very important to me. With the help from the Sisters, I got the chance to meet some pretty great people who have always been there for me. So, with this opportunity to be an AMA, it gives me an chance to give back to the Sisters and the community.



**Have a wonderful year,
Elliot, Maria, Meaghan, Ally, Kate, and Idalia!**

If you would like to send our new AMA volunteers a note of welcome that they will receive during their Orientation Program, please send them by August 20th to:**

AMA Director Michelle Sherman - Attn: AMA Orientation - 16 Vineyard Street – Worcester, MA 01603