This year we are celebrating a quarter century of saving lives through education!

Yes, saving lives! We all know that access to quality education is one of the most critical issues facing our country. Our volunteers who are serving in schools and at community centers in cities across America are able to give individualized attention to the students who need it the most—crucial one-on-one focus which helps the most vulnerable kids reach their goals and find success.

It is humbling to think of how many lives we have touched, and been touched by, these past twenty-five years. Of course, the history of NDMV goes back a little further than that. For the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, this journey began in Belgium in 1804 when their foundress, St. Julie Billiart, established a group of Sisters to “exist for the poor” and “teach them what they need to know for life” around the world.

In 1992, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers was founded by the Sisters as a small volunteer program with just a handful of volunteers serving in Boston, Massachusetts, with the belief that education is the fundamental tool in the struggle of the poor for human dignity, self-esteem, and self-determination.

A few years later, in 1995, NDMV partnered with AmeriCorps and was..Story continued on page 5

Bakery Project Progresses in Haiti

Since 2013, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers International, led by Sissy Corr, has worked alongside children and families in Les Cayes, Haiti. In partnership with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the communities in Les Cayes, our collective vision has been creating sustainable pathways out of poverty for these Haitian families through education and vocational training. With enthusiastic support and guidance from the community, NDMV embarked on a project to complete a bakery to provide training and jobs to families in the Les Cayes area.

We are pleased to report that construction on the bakery has now been completed, and the equipment is being installed! This would not have been possible without the dedication and generosity of so many donors, friends, volunteers, advisors, and of course the people of Les Cayes.

Job creation is key to our overall goal of providing educational opportunities for the people of Les Cayes; By providing families with sustainable economic security, families can afford to send their children to school. During the construction of the bakery, which was completely Haitian-built, we employed over 30 people.

We still have a long way to go. We are now entering into the next phase in which we will test our bread recipe, hire our first cohort of bakery employees, and establish our customer base. We will also provide classes for staff on financial literacy, English language, and computer skills, and we will continue our scholarship program providing scholarships for school tuition to children in Les Cayes, through which we were able to serve 30 students last year.
How has your NDA service influenced or changed you?

“Thank you to the sisters for inspiring a deep sense of belonging I have gained through my service. I felt like I was a part of a force to change the world, which has uncovered a desire and a realization to CHANGE WORLDS!”

-Boulder member

“This experience helped me recognize God in the eyes of another.”

-New Mexico member

“I feel valued in a new community. I have become more passionate about education. I have fallen in love with the mission of the SNDs.”

-Cincinnati member

“I have come to realize the importance of working with the community not just in it.”

-Chicago member

“I’m a better human being for this experience. I have met and built relationships with people I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

-Apopka member

“I have honed my passion for supporting and advocating for the needs of people in a holistic fashion.”

-Rochester member
Dear friends, colleagues and partners in service,

As I reflect on the rich twenty-five-year history of Notre Dame Mission Volunteers, I think of this question: how do we sustain our commitment to incremental change? Our hearts have truly grown as wide as the world, and our program has expanded to all corners of this country and beyond. How do we continue to grow, as an organization, not only wide, but deep?

I remind myself that what it really comes down to is a daily practice of finding the goodness within each person and entering into that space with them in a spirit of openness. The moments in which we are truly present with others are the moments in which we transform. If you can get one student in one classroom to believe in themselves, you have made a significant change in the world. If you can make a genuine connection with someone whose life experience is different than your own, you have learned the true spirit of education. These moments ripple out into the world and create the sustained change we seek.

We could not do this work without you, our NDMV community. Members, alumni, advisors, supporters, partners—I am so grateful for the abundance you all share with us. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

So what is ahead for us in the next twenty-five years? NDMV was founded on the ideas of building community and lifting up individuals, and these core beliefs will continue to sustain us as we challenge ourselves to reach even further. In a world which can seem more and more troubled and polarized, we must continue to ask: who are we not talking to? What resources have we not yet tapped into? Who else can we invite to the table? What are the bridges we have yet to build?

Together, with hearts wide but also deep, we embrace the road ahead, one moment, and one connection at a time.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Andrews
Executive Director

National Office staff (Adrienne Andrews, far right), Site Directors, & SND Congregational Leadership Team gather in Baltimore

[Image: National Office staff (Adrienne Andrews, far right), Site Directors, & SND Congregational Leadership Team gather in Baltimore]
Alumni Profile: Becky Richey

NDMV AmeriCorps Alum Becky Richey served in New Orleans, and is currently entering her second term as a Notre Dame Mission Volunteer in Haiti. She spoke with us recently about how her AmeriCorps service year prepared her for her role as an international volunteer:

“In New Orleans I served as a teacher’s aide in a sixth grade English classroom. This was my first full time position assisting with kids, though I had done some volunteering in the past. Through my NDMVA position, I quickly realized how much I love building relationships with students.

“Now I can confidently do what I love best with students – engaging on a personal level to build and enrich comprehension. These skills have been particularly necessary during my service in Haiti, where building relationships with my students, their parents, and other community members has been a core aspect of my role.

“NDMVA also gave me an opportunity to move to a city where I had always wanted to live. New Orleans was expectedly very different from Cincinnati, where I have spent the vast majority of my life. But my team members, who were split fairly evenly between New Orleans natives and transplants like myself, helped me explore and feel at home. Through our team service projects, I also got the chance to see different aspects of the city I might never have seen otherwise.

Honoring Sister Dorothy Stang

On Sunday, September 10, 2017, NDMVA Team Dayton members and Sister Judi Clemens participated in the Peacebuilders Walk in Dayton, Ohio. The Peacebuilders Walk (www.peaceheroeswalk.org) was a family-friendly event to celebrate positive peacebuilding efforts in the Miami Valley. Team Dayton members, Site Director Lisa McGurk, and Sister Judi walked as a tribute to Sister Dorothy Stang.

Sister Dorothy Stang, who was born in Dayton, was a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur who worked to preserve the Brazilian rainforest. Sister Dorothy’s ultimate dream was to have a certain area of the land in Brazil designed as a federal reserve where the poor farmers would always be safe; where they could till the soil and establish their own income-producing businesses through sound, sustainable development; and where the farmers and their families could always live in peace and with dignity. Her work with the farmers was opposed by the wealthy land owners.

In February 2005, Sister Dorothy was walking to a meeting with the farmers when two men shot and killed her.

The Sisters state: “She was our Sister. A joyful member of the Ohio Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. With every inch of her being, she embraced our mission to make God’s Goodness known throughout the world.”
Celebrating 25 Years of Educating

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able to expand across the country and take on new initiatives like environmental education and serving children of incarcerated parents.

Since then, Notre Dame AmeriCorps has been able to serve close to 775,000 Americans thanks to the nearly 5,000 Notre Dame AmeriCorps members that have gone through the program. Just like the Sisters, wherever we have expanded, we have also stayed rooted in our mission to empower through education.

We draw strength from the Sister’s belief of cultivating the interior spirit through reflection, and we are thankful every day for this community and its shared values that uphold the human dignity of each person.

As we begin a new service year, we take a moment to reflect on our journey, and we look ahead, energized by the Notre Dame community, to the next twenty-five years!

**NOTRE DAME MISSION VOLUNTEERS THROUGH THE YEARS**

- **1804-09**
  The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur were founded and headquartered in Namur, Belgium, by St. Julie Billiart, in order to provide education for the poor.

- **1995**
  Notre Dame Mission Volunteers partnered with AmeriCorps, expanding its reach to Baltimore, Cincinnati, Washington DC, and Apopka.

- **1992**
  Notre Dame Mission Volunteers was established in order to extend the work of the Sisters in providing opportunities for education in low income areas. Its first group of volunteers served in Boston, MA.

- **2007**
  Notre Dame AmeriCorps expanded to New Orleans, helping to rebuild homes for families still displaced after Hurricane Katrina.

- **2012**
  Notre Dame Mission Volunteers was asked by the Sisters of Notre Dame Congregational Leader to expand its international program to Haiti, and sent two volunteers to Les, Cayes to work in the Notre Dame Family Education Center.

- **2017**
  In 25 years, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers has expanded to over 23 cities in the United States and partnered with over 170 local sites and programs, in order to provide high quality access to education across the country.

The work in Haiti has continued with the groundbreaking of a new bakery that will provide job training and money for scholarships to the local community.
HELP US RECRUIT

Do you know someone interested in giving a year of service? Send them to our newly relaunched website:

ndmva.org