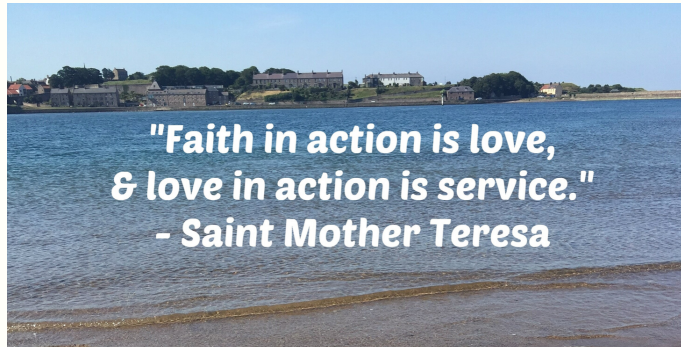


# POMEGRANATE JOURNAL

A Glimpse into St. John of God Community Services, its Programs, and its Volunteers



## New Year Message

from SJOGCS Executive Director  
 Brother Thomas Osorio, OH

Dear Volunteers,  
 It is difficult to believe that 2019 has come to an end. Even more so, we left another decade. Much has happened- too much in fact to list without running the risk of missing key points. However, we the Family of St. John of God were and are grateful; we are grateful for the support of our Volunteers, coworkers, benefactors, our partners, and the local community. Through their support we saw in 2019 the opening of our After Care Program, and we sent five coworkers to Grenada, Spain to walk in the footsteps of our Founder St. John of God. In February the Order held its General Chapter in Rome, Italy. The highlight was meeting with Pope Francis who challenged us to not lose hope and always be at the side of the sick and poor. Our new website (many months in the making) was launched; please visit often for new and updated information. Our Family of St. John of God continues to grow with new students and adult clients. Over Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas we were able to serve over a hundred families. The Philly Phanatic also paid us a visit at our annual Carnival, and later on in the year the Phillie Phanatic Charities, Inc. also awarded us with a \$15,000 grant. We welcomed Brother Raphael Mieszala to our community when he was transferred here from our ministries in Miami, Florida. We sadly also lost Brother Joseph Daly after a long illness. Most recently, our St. John of God Board of Trustees Dr. Wilma Farmer also entered into eternal life. We have so much to be proud of and grateful for in 2019, but most importantly we are humbled by the generosity and goodwill of so many that assist us each day. In the words of our Founder St. John of God: let us "do good for ourselves by doing good to others."  
 Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous 2020,  
 Brother Thomas Osorio, OH.

## 2019 Examen

by Casey Schell

Happy New Year, SJOG Volunteers!  
 For this month's issue I thought I'd switch it up a little for my monthly article. For those of you who do not know, I received my bachelor's degree in International Studies from the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. It is a private school that is affiliated with the Society of Jesus (commonly known as the Jesuits). Their founder St. Ignatius Loyola is particularly known for creating the *examen* or "examination of conscience" in which an individual reflects upon their day (for about thirty minutes or so) using a list of questions to see where God made Himself present. It's a way for people to "notice, be grateful, and experience the desire for change" (Martin, 2019). Though it's encouraged to undergo this experience every day a particularly well-known (and locally raised) Jesuit named Fr. James Martin, S.J. recently posted an article in *America* magazine (December 30, 2019) suggesting that an examen can be a great exercise when reflecting upon the previous year- which many people tend to do around New Year's Eve.

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I therefore would like to encourage Pomegranate Journal readers (particularly the Volunteers of St. John of God) to reflect upon their time in service to our great agency this past year by undergoing their own *examen*. For reference, please use the questions below.

- 1) **Remember that you're in God's presence.** Imagine God is looking at you.
- 2) **Call to mind what you're grateful for.** Think about all the wonderful things that you were a part of at St. John of God this past year.
- 3) **Review your year of service.** Think about when you said "Yes" to Him at St. John of God.
- 4) **Express your sorrow.** Think about times when you might have displayed hospitality a little differently that you would have wanted to.
- 5) **Ask God for the grace to live 2020 as a good person.** Be specific about wants and needs, and of course: ask for the grace to see God's presence in the New Year.

Adapted & Sourced from: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/12/30/new-years-prayer-nearly-everyone>

## Volunteers Wanted:

### NEW OPPORTUNITY IN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE!



One of the new openings for volunteers within St. John of God Community Services is in the Development Office currently operated by Nancy Mansfield (NMansfield@sjogcs.org) and Karen Sapio (KSapio@sjogcs.org). Their goal is to secure financial contributions on behalf

of the agency so we can continue our mission of providing services to individuals with disabilities (and their families) in a hospitable environment. At this time they are in search of a volunteer to help out- ideally on Wednesdays and/or Thursdays from 1pm-3pm - sorting through mailed correspondence. Other primary work duties would involve assisting them with event planning and research into potential donors. If you are thinking of a career in fundraising/development then this volunteer assignment might be a great fit for you! If you or someone you know is interested in this opportunity, please contact me (Casey).

### CLASSROOM HELPERS IN ADS & ECC



There is always a need for volunteers in Archbishop Damiano School. Though the needs of each classroom might vary, in general volunteers assist students with lessons/cleanup as instructed by a teacher or classroom assistants. Volunteers also make a sincere effort to learn about each student's individuality and adapting their interactions and support based on their needs.

What is special about being a classroom volunteer is that you get to learn how the teachers and assistants facilitate those "little miracles" that are so often talked about within and outside the agency. Your task might be as simple as helping a student paint an art project- a common task for all students- but for our students with sensory processing issues our volunteer's enthusiasm can make all the difference in the world.

If you are interested in becoming a classroom volunteer, please contact me (Casey).

## Event Recap: ADS Christmas Dance



On December 13th, 2019, a group of students from the Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCCLA) chapter at Gateway Regional High School in Woodbury Heights, NJ volunteered at the annual Archbishop Damiano School Christmas Dance. Their sole responsibility for the afternoon was to make sure our students enjoyed dancing and the pizza lovingly provided by another community organization: the Knights of Columbus chapter (Council 6735) from St. Peter's church in Merchantville, NJ. All those in attendance had an amazing time (my feet ached for the rest of the day!)- so much so that even Santa Claus stopped by for a little while to enjoy the event! I thank everyone who made this dance an enjoyable experience for ADS students.

## Volunteer Spotlight:

### Julissa Rodriguez



One of our newer volunteers, Julissa has been here since October 2019. Currently, she has been assisting one of our ECC-based speech therapists on Fridays-Sara Ambrose. Julissa loves volunteering here because she looks forward to learning the new techniques Sara teaches her weekly seeing students get increasingly comfortable with her. A current Psychology major at Rowan University she will graduate in May 2020 with a bachelor's degree. She intends on pursuing a doctorate degree tied to Speech Pathology research. On behalf

of the agency I congratulate her for her hard work in school and within St. John of God Community Services and Archbishop Damiano School.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE PROJECTS OR HAVE QUESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE POMEGRANATE JOURNAL PLEASE CONTACT  
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