

# Post grad service

**By: Taylor Olson**

**Posted: 10/22/08**

After leaving college, many students go on to graduate school to further their education or find a job to start paying back their loans. Other grads go a less traditional route and serve with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps, JVC, is an organization that places college graduates in cities across the country to do full-time volunteer work. Volunteers live with three to eight other volunteers during their service.

Room and board is covered by the JVC and each volunteer receives an \$80 monthly stipend. Additionally, volunteers may qualify for college loan deferment and can apply for an AmeriCorps Education award to help pay off loans.

Amid the benefits JVC offers, most rewarding is the opportunity to live simply and deliberately, say participant. Sheena Raab, a volunteer currently serving in Portland, Ore., has enjoyed having the opportunity to reflect on the values important to her.

"There has got to be more to this life than earning a paycheck," Raab said. "Here I have the opportunity to live out the question of 'What am I doing with my life' by living

beyond a focus of just meeting my own needs."

Raab is serving at the Raphael House of Portland, a domestic violence shelter. Though it has been challenging stepping outside of her comfort zone, Raab has seen the benefits firsthand.

"We work for positive change, and it is so fulfilling and rewarding to be a witness to that change whether it's in the population, the community or in an individual," she said.

Erin O'Keese, another volunteer placed in Bethel, Ala., says she enjoys living with other volunteers.

"You're living in a community with people that you wouldn't necessarily pick as your friends," O'Keese said. "You learn a lot about yourself when you're living with people from different walks of life."

Although the volunteers spend a lot of time with their roommates, they have a community night and a spirituality night every week. Whether the time is spent talking, laughing or praying, it gives the community an opportunity to get to know each other better.

"It's a time for us to come together in a more intentional way," O'Keese said.

The volunteers also attend three retreats a year with other JVC groups.

Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest places volunteers at agencies in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Leah Dahlin, recruitment and alumni coordinator for JVC Northwest, speaks with students at colleges and universities all over the country. She said it is important to ask as many questions for individuals to find the program best fit for them.

"If you are interested in helping and changing structures of people and places in need while being changed in the process, this program may be for you," she said.

Raab said she felt the need to give back to her community. She said she has become friends with many of them, but more than that, they have been her teachers. Raab said she has learned how to care for people not because of who they know or where they are from, but because she is another human being.

"There are no grad schools or textbooks that could teach you that," Raab said.

JVC representatives will be at the Idealist Nonprofit Career Fair Oct. 22 in the Champion Ballroom.

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