

THE COVENANT OF JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS NORTHWEST

"Rooted for over fifty years in the Jesuit Catholic tradition emphasizing spiritual openness and depth, Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest examine and act on the causes of social and environmental injustice to promote peace and structural change."

From JVC Northwest Mission

With respect for individual freedom and our capacity to change, we, the staff and volunteers of the JVC Northwest, are committed to certain common values. We are called to help one another to live guided by the values of Community, Simplicity, Social and Ecological Justice, Spirituality, acknowledging their inherent interconnectedness.

SIMPLICITY Honoring simplicity enables us to value relationships over objects, and self reflection over status. Simplicity is an emptying of the self for the sake of personal, communal, and environmental transformation. In the bioregion of the Pacific Northwest, voluntary simplicity is deeply connected with the value of ecological sustainability, calling us to be mindful and proactive about how we care for the environment that sustains us. When our lives are free of an excess of activity and material possessions, our view of the world and of ourselves is clarified. We are better able to attend to our deepest self, our community, and people who are marginalized.

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE We work for justice by being aware of how our attitudes and behavior affect others. Our awareness urges us to change the attitudes and structures which create poverty, perpetuate oppression, and destroy ecological systems. Solidarity demands that we create change by working alongside the poor, oppressed, and vulnerable. After change has been achieved we foster reconciliation.

COMMUNITY Living in intentional community challenges us to be open, compassionate and willing to change. As we practice deep compassion with ourselves and each other at home, we are strengthened for our work in the world. We affirm our relational natures and seek the sacredness at the heart of our interactions. In community we learn that our lives are interdependent, and we have a responsibility to others, as they have to us. We come together to support and give life to one another; we are in JVC together, we are not alone.

SPIRITUALITY JVC Northwest is founded on the Ignatian principles of action and reflection. Coming together in prayer and conversation, we discover how we are being called to create a just world. We explore what it means to live a faith that does justice, while growing in our own personal spirituality through reflection and service.

SIMPLICITY

- Simplicity of time, energy, and resource means that I will choose to stay present to how my needs relate with the needs of the world, allowing for room to stretch and be flexible so as to truly become "a person for others" while also choosing to practice self care when that is what naturally arises
- I will value people and relationships over possessions or status.
- I will seek simplicity in my use of time, energy and resources.
- I will live on the monthly stipend of \$80.00, not accepting funds from family, friends, second jobs or any other source to supplement my living.

- I will examine and transform my personal values and habits to reflect my care and concern for the environment. Being mindful of my impact on the earth, I will socialize and recreate in ways which enhance my active and true connection with other people and the natural world.

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

- I will seek truth rather than relying on prejudices, assumptions, rumor and incomplete information.
- I will strive to be just in my attitudes, language, and actions.
- I will be, at all times, an ally to myself, to members of my group, and to persons who are different from me.
- I will work and live in solidarity with people who are poor, oppressed and vulnerable toward the goal of structural change in the attitudes, practices and institutions of our society.
- I will act in accordance with my ethical beliefs and responsibilities. I will live in such a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

COMMUNITY

- I will be a source of support to my community members with respect to their service and fulfillment of this covenant.
- I will take part in community business meetings and other community gatherings, at least once a week.
- I will evaluate my behavior and decisions in light of their effects on my community, the agency and locale where I serve, and the JVC program.
- I will address that which may be unhealthy in my own life, and will accept the support of my community.
- I will listen and speak honestly, seeking connection in all interactions.

SPIRITUALITY

- I will spend time in reflection or prayer, seeking to see the sacredness of the persons I serve and encounter, the persons with whom I live and work, and of my experience.
- I will lead and participate in weekly community prayer or reflection, bringing my own gifts and accepting the gifts of others. I will explore my personal spirituality and beliefs this year in the context of community.
- I will participate fully in the three retreats by being present to the community of fellow volunteers, staff, guests and the natural setting.
- I will examine the ways my faith or beliefs intersect with my desire for justice. I will work for justice from a place that is grounded in peace, non-violence, and love.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Reflection and Questions on Alcohol

During your interview, a staff member will discuss with you the Drug and Alcohol Policy for our program and invite you to ask questions. Although many of the following questions will not be included in your interview, they are provided to give you an opportunity to reflect on how alcohol use intersects with the four values. JVC Northwest understands alcohol to be a serious social justice issue for many people that we have built relationship with in the Northwest. We view our policy on drugs and alcohol as consistent with the intentions in our Covenant; to live in healthy community, simply and sustainably, as a spiritual person committed to justice.

1. Would you be willing to live by the commitment outlined in our Alcohol Policy?
2. How has alcohol use (your own or that of others in your family or peer group) affected your life?
4. If a community member of yours was in recovery from drug and/or alcohol abuse, would you be willing to live in solidarity with them by abstaining from all use of alcohol? Would you commit to a dry year if you were placed in a community on a Native American Reservation?
5. What do you consider responsible or intentional use of alcohol?
6. In what ways do you understand alcohol as a social justice issue?
7. What are your expectations of alcohol consumption in your JV community?

JVC NORTHWEST ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) Northwest engages women and men in a transforming experience of full-time volunteer service. Jesuit Volunteers (JVs) in the Northwest examine and act on the causes of social and environmental injustice to promote peace and structural change. We recognize that alcohol has been and continues to be a destructive substance in families and communities around the world; therefore, we ask that serious reflection and covenantal action be taken in terms of alcohol use.

It is the intent of the JVC Northwest staff to challenge all Jesuit Volunteers to:

- be aware of, reflect upon, discuss among themselves, and act intentionally with respect to the use of alcohol in relation to the JVC Northwest values;
- learn ways of socializing which do not involve alcohol; and,
- recognize abusive use of alcohol as contrary to living the JVC Northwest values.

The policy of JVC Northwest regarding alcohol is as follows:

- **Alcohol will not be present at program events for current Jesuit Volunteers which JVC Northwest sponsors (Orientation, retreats, etc.).**
- **A JV will not buy alcohol with community money.**
- **Drinking by a JV which impairs judgment or conscience is unacceptable behavior in JVC Northwest.**
- **A JV who abuses alcohol in a way that is destructive to him/herself and/or his/her community will be asked to agree to an assessment (releasing the information to JVC Northwest) and to follow through with the recommendations of the assessment, entering into substance abuse counseling if necessary. Abusive behavior of any kind is not in keeping with the mission of JVC Northwest and may be grounds for dismissal from the program if such behavior is not treated or stopped.**

JVC Northwest Drug Policy

The use, sale and possession of illegal substances by a JV during the JVC Northwest program year is unacceptable. If the JVC Northwest staff becomes concerned about potential drug use with a JV, and the effect it is having on the JV and his/her community, the JV will be asked to agree to a drug and alcohol assessment. An assessment may include a urinalysis. The results of the assessment must be released to JVC Northwest. The JV must follow the recommendations of the assessor, entering into substance abuse counseling if necessary. Abusive behavior of any kind is not in keeping with the mission of JVC Northwest and may be grounds for dismissal from the program if such behavior is not treated or stopped.

JVC Northwest encourages JVs to reflect upon the drug policy. JVC Northwest has adopted this policy because it conforms with criminal law in the four Northwest states, and because of our belief that the use, sale and possession of illegal substances has harmful effects upon the Volunteer, the Volunteer's JV community, the Volunteer's neighborhood, JVC Northwest, and the placement agency and clients.

I have carefully read the Alcohol and Drug Policy. I agree to abide by this policy during my volunteer year with JVC Northwest.

Name: (please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

