

# The Hartford Catholic Worker



St. Martin De Porres House  
St. Brigid House

"If you want to follow me first sell what you have and give to the poor..." - Jesus



Brian Kavanagh

*...the most wonderful moment of the day is that when Creation in its innocence asks permission to "be" once again, as it did on the first morning that ever was!*

*Thomas Merton  
Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

## Summer/Fall 2010

# The Hartford Catholic Worker

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published bimonthly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics, and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are not a “tax-exempt” agency. We do not accept government funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We are not paid. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, doucot@sbcglobal.net and www.hartfordcatholic-worker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

## “Self-portrait, 2010”

M. Jackson

*Long black-colored corn-braided hair  
Hanging out the back of a black doo-rag cap.*

*Caramel-colored skin, high-structured cheekbone  
Camouflage-fatigue skin, thick like Nestle Quick  
Wrinkle-free and compressed tightly  
With a couple of slash marks here and there  
From the years of battle tears.*

*Light brown cloudy filtered eyes  
Hazy from the years of passersby  
Those days of passersby  
By-by until another time.*

*Button-less shirt with butterfly collar  
A pair of brown zipper-less slip-on pants  
Black on black feet protectors, size 9.*

*Two back pockets filled with lint and emptiness  
And with the hope of one day obtaining  
And gaining the papers of a parolee-inductee.*

*(Mr. Jackson is currently an inmate at a CT Dept. of Corrections Facility) Ω*

## The Magician

M. Rivera

At age eight was when I first seen this magic trick. An old man held this funny-looking wand. He pointed it at this younger kid. The old man didn't make any magical gesture or even say any magic words. I guess the source of his power came from his eyes because you could see the concentration in them. Then it happened—the magic trick. From out of nowhere came a thunderous sound and the young man levitated for what seemed like forever. Then when he finally came back to earth, the second part of the trick took place: his skin began to change color, from a pale white to a cold blue.

An older man who lived next to me grabbed me and brought me back home. I was so angry I couldn't stay and watch the third part of the act till it was explained to me that what I'd just witnessed was not a magic trick but something very horrible and very real. A murder.

I stood in my room confused. Confused because I didn't understand how I really felt. Half of me hated myself for being so foolish by not understanding what I was witnessing, and the other half was amused at the fact that I took the power of death and seen it as nothing more than a trick. Was I a monster at the age of eight or a child whose mind state guarded me from the reality of life's horrible acts by manipulating my understanding of things?

I looked in the mirror and in my eyes I seen the same concentration the man with the magic wand had. Uh-oh. Could it be I, too, am a magician?

*(Mr. Rivera is currently an inmate at a CT Dept. of Corrections Facility) Ω*

## Catholic Worker Calendar

- Please join us on Tuesdays September 7, October 5, November 2, and December 7 at 7:30 PM for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St. (860) 724-7066
- Please join Brian on Fridays from 11:30-12:30 to vigil for an end to war outside the Federal Building, Main St. Hartford. Please bring an appropriate sign.
- Please join us on Sunday, September 19 at 3:30 for a performance of *Peter and the Wolf* and *the Carnival of Animals* by the Kelet duo to benefit the Hartford Catholic Worker. Immanuel Cong. Church 10 Woodland St, Hartford. \$20 adult, \$10 for children.

*Christopher J. Doucot*

It was after dinner and we had 90 minutes of daylight left. At the campers insistence we drove them over to the basketball court in bustling downtown Voluntown where the hatching mayflies outnumber humans a hundred thousand to one. Downtown consists of the library and town hall, a bait shop and a liquor store and is dominated by a massive field. The basketball courts are at the far end of the field. While the kids bounced their slick orange ball against the pavement and off metal backboards I lay down on the grass and gazed at the sky. Never before had I viewed the world from this perspective. From my back I could not see any trees on the horizon; there were no buildings in my field of vision, nor cell towers, or telephone poles. I did not even see a cloud or remnant contrail from a passing jetliner. The sky was an empty palette of azure straight above me with peachy red hues to my left and a deepening sapphire to my right. With neither a terrestrial point of reference, nor libational assist, it seemed to me that I was floating away.

Not a bad feeling.

The thud of the basketball on my gut and the guffaw of the kids returned me to terra firm like a kite downed by an errant gust. With my feet back on the ground I began to wonder where the sky begins, and when does it turn blue? Sure as heck the air before me, lacking in any psychedelic shade- though not effect, was not the sky. By now I was freaking myself out; was I losing my grip? Had somebody spiked my Kool-Aid? What were those mushrooms I had picked to show Jackie? My mom, an early anti-drug zealot, never warned me about the mind altering effects of fresh air and big sky. I wonder what Montana parents do to keep their kids safe from floating away?

Back in Voluntown I shot the wayward

ball. I hit nothing but net, the outside of the net. The ball dribbled itself over to the pack of howling boys doubled over at the sight of my circa '65 set shot a la John Havlicek. On the court that early evening were white, black, and brown boys between 8 and 18 years old playing together. Josh P is 14 and entering high school in a few weeks. We didn't see much of Josh last year. We heard he was spending a lot of time doing



*Jose with Black Sea Bass caught on trip donated by Capt Don Roberts of Barking Dog Charters [www.barkingdogcharters.com](http://www.barkingdogcharters.com)*

child care for his new half-brother. He was invited to be a counselor as an enticement to spend more time with our community. Josh is church mouse quiet and emotionally sensitive. Like a few of the kids we know he was like the "sensitive plant" (*Mimosa pudica*) whose leaves rapidly recoil when disturbed; it was his way of coping in a crowded household headed by a tired and aging grandmother who increasingly seems to be at wits end. At some point during his hiatus from the Green House Josh's voice changed and his skin thickened. With his fledgling maturity he was a great counselor

in his rookie season.

Next to Josh on the court was Ramon. Ramon will also be a high school freshman in the Fall but unlike Josh his voice has yet to crack and he has no need for a razor, his voice and face are still smooth. Ramon lives with his family in the soon to be demolished Nelton Court housing project which looks like Warsaw after the uprising. He doesn't know when he is moving or where to though it could be tomorrow and to a destination far away. His mom keeps tidy the tiny apartment that is filled with an air of gentle affection; it's like a womb protecting Ramon and his baby sister from the jagged uncertainty on the otherside of the door. Ramon is timid; he doesn't yet have the inflated confidence of other kids his age: the vulnerability of believing oneself to be invulnerable. He hesitates to speak up for himself, though at camp he did come to me for help when his sense of mischief resulted in a need for confidence not yet in his possession. Ramon is still a boy.

The best player on the pavement was Floyd, aka Pretty Boy. Floyd was all-conference at Weaver who had a shot at playing Division 3 college ball had his educational career been as nurtured as his athletic. Floyd had been a counselor for several years, this year he returned for a final week in Voluntown as a camper. Floyd is one of several Green House kids who graduated from Weaver H.S. back in June. Along with Bubba and Mark, he will be attending Manchester Community College in September after jousting to defeat a Soviet style bureaucracy. Challenge essays were required to appropriately place the matriculating students- English classes begin three levels below the standard English 101 for high school *graduates* who must bring their diploma to register for classes. Parental income verification forms needed completing despite one kid not having parents and the others having parents with no apparent source of income. When determining finan-

**(Please see: *Boys* p5)**

# Change and Constancy at the Green House

*James Conway*

*"Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are" (Bertolt Brecht).*

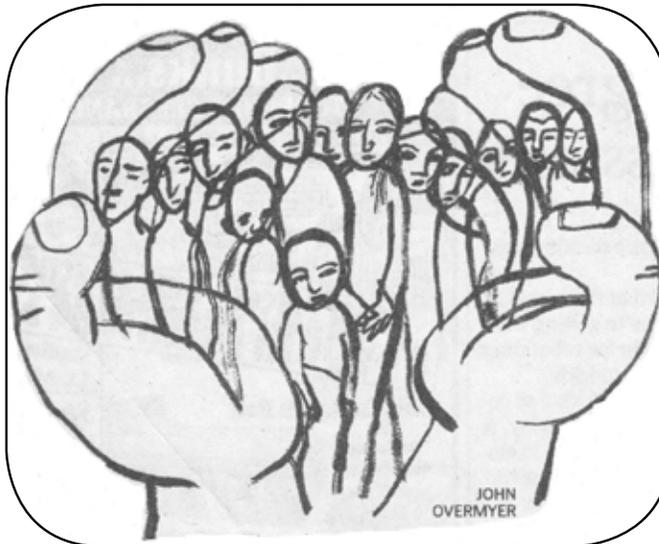
I've noticed that things have been not staying the way they are at the Green House lately, and I guess that's just the way things are. The changes have been good, mostly, but I have to admit to some ambivalence. We've watched kids at the Green House, the long-timers, growing up before our eyes. It's exciting to see them mature but there's a certain sadness in realizing that something precious is gone – the innocence of age 9 has become less-than-innocent adolescence; 15-year-olds have become 17- or 18-year-olds moving on to new stages of their lives, and I wonder how much we'll continue to see them.

Another interesting development is that the Green House seems to have become a cool place for older kids to hang out. Our group of maturing high schoolers has drawn in several other kids in about 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and they have become part of the community. This has added a new flavor to things, not to mention higher-level basketball games. Of course, as the demographic has trended toward older kids there are new concerns such as dating and things that go along with it (doesn't take much imagination to know what I mean).

At the same time, we've been blessed with a recent influx of youngsters like Travis, Courtney, Jayshawn, Shadiamond, etc., which has brought a different kind of energy. It's fun to spend time with the little kids where there's no thought of dating, and the biggest issue is whether they're taking turns on the swings. So there's a good mix of ages now, which is nice because the different age groups bring out the gifts of different volunteers – some are drawn to working with the high school kids (e.g., HuskySport students working with them on teen night) and some are drawn to the younger kids. This helps to make a place

in the community for a lot of people and it's fun to see.

The biggest recent change is that 7 of our kids graduated from high school this June and are headed for college! Here's the list: Buba, Floyd, Mark, and Shatoya plan to go to Manchester Community College, Isaiah (G-Baby) is heading to UCONN, K. K. is motoring to Providence to attend Johnson & Wales University, and Latiqua will be at Eastern Connecticut State. We're proud of them and grateful for the example they're setting for the younger kids. And the graduation party was a lot of fun.



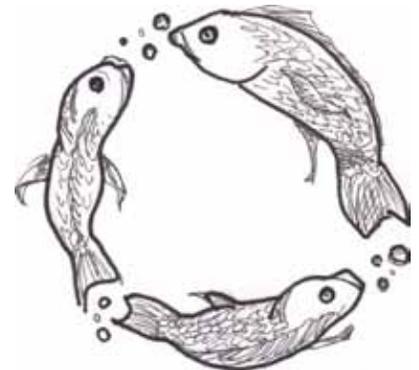
Jackie, Sarah, and Danielle put together a slide show with recent and old photos of the graduates. It was a little startling to see how much they've changed (though one thing that didn't seem to change at all is Buba's face – he's still the same handsome devil he was at age 8, just a lot bigger).

It's exciting as our graduates move forward with their lives, but also a little worrisome. As a professor at CCSU I know something about the challenges of adjusting to college so I feel comfortable saying our new scholars could use your prayers. It's hard not to fret about how things will go at college in the months ahead, whether they'll make good decisions, etc. An excellent (if a bit heavy-handed) analogy presented itself in May when Jackie found a baby robin all

by itself in the middle of Clark Street by the Green House. How it got there, we have no idea. Anyway, Jackie walked up and bent over it to have a look and how did the little thing respond? By opening its mouth wide expecting some food (very cute). A quick trip to the compost pile behind the Green House produced some worms, which Jackie carefully crushed up and fed to the little bird. She then took it to the back yard of the Purple House and set it there in hopes that its Mom would come. We don't know what became of it, but I choose to believe (or hope, anyway) that it's thriving.

Our grads are leaving the nest too, in a sense. Their needs are different from the bird's (and anyway it's gross to think somebody handing Floyd a bunch of worms). They'll need help with math, or writing a paper, or generally understanding the expectations of life in college – and we hope and pray they'll meet caring people at their schools to guide them. They will also need the support of their community on Clark Street. In fact, that's what I need too. Community is what nourished the early Christians,

and our beloved community is what helps me to feel Ok in the face of these changes. It has a constancy that provides stability, meaning, and a sense of belonging. It does the same for lots of kids and adults, and we hope our graduates will continue to think of the Green House as a place where they feel comfortable and welcome. Ω



*Jacqueline Allen-Doucot*

## When Boys Become Men, cont.

5

cial aid eligibility the Federal government won't consider these boys men until they are 24. And then there were the Selective Service forms to sign. The Federal government won't consider a financial aid application unless these 18 year old men register with the military. Six months before graduating high school Floyd became a father.

Also present on the court that night, albeit as apparitions only, were brothers Carlos and Herbie. They had spent several summers at camp while most of our current campers were still spending their summers in strollers. Herbie was shot dead four years ago at the age of 17. He left behind a one year old child. In his memory we have been building a cabin at camp for the counselors. Bubba, Micah, and Sasean *aka The Mayor*, among others, have helped with the construction. This Spring, the day after Jackie was "facebooking" with Herbie's mom to make arrangements for Carlos and the rest of Herbie's family to see the cabin and enjoy a weekend in the woods, Carlos *aka Bang 'Em* was killed in a car chase. The car come crypt also killed a teen girl passenger when it was severed by a tree. Dozens of the fluorescent green air-brushed shirt memorials worn by mourners at Carlos' funeral tritely bid him farewell declaring: "You outta da 'hood now". RIP memorial cards with a photo of Carlos, and his birth and death dates, hung from the necks of children weighing them down like the Coleridge's albatross of doom. Many of the kids were tethered by several of these dog tags. Carlos was 15 when he stopped coming by. Bang "Em was 22 when he was killed.

Carlos was a member of the "Wes Hell" gang, though members of the various crews and posses in the neighborhood seldom use the word "gang", preferring instead "family". On one level these "families" provide a sense of belonging, of being an insider welcomed despite being rejected, outcast or simply left behind by the wider society outside "da hood". The "families" typically control the drug trade and thus provide jobs in a neighborhood that industry and retail

fled decades ago. These "families" will endure for as long as the vacuum of equality and opportunity perpetuated by poverty and racism endure; and they will sell drugs as long as kids from "good families" come here to buy them.

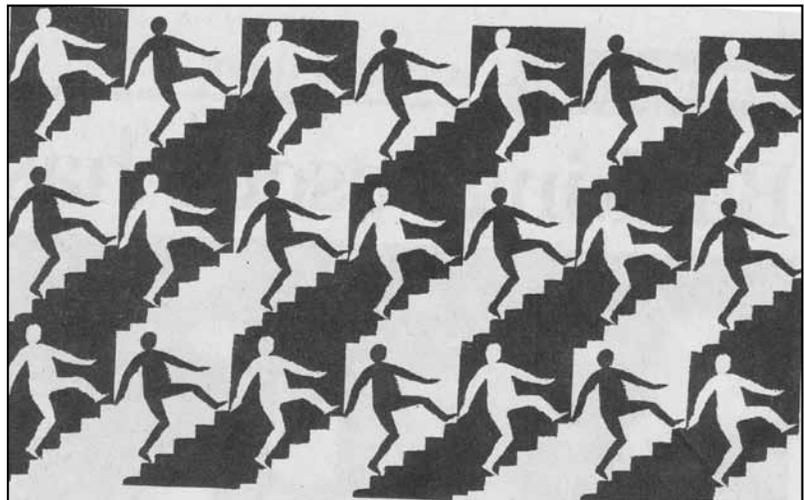
In June we hosted a graduation party for 7 Green House kids. Dozens of revelers bid the graduates a generous farewell as they prepared to leave the 'hood for UCONN, ECSU, Johnson and Wales, and MCC. (Yes, Manchester Community College is often preferred over Capitol CC by neighborhood kids because by travelling just 8 miles they are "outta da 'hood".) Most of the younger Green House kids were also at the graduation party viewing a slide show of the graduates featuring photos of them as little kids at the Green House and watching the adults heap praise on the magnificent 7. I wish I had made laminated cards with lanyards using the graduates' year book photos and listing the college they were attending along with their high school and college graduation dates to hand out to our little ones as buoyant tags of hope.

Through Camp Ahimsa, Teen Night, our Saturday and afterschool programs, our

monthly mass and our daily lives on the streets of this neighborhood we are trying to forge community among and with Micah, Floyd, Bubba, Sasean, Josh and the rest. Though these boys have varying degrees of uncertainty about their future none of them doubt that they have a future as healthy, educated, and valued Adult members of our Green House community- and hopefully our society as well. These kids stand outside the trend in Middle America to prolong adolescence/postpone adulthood through the 20's. They are battling the pressures of poverty which often pre-empt adolescence and resisting the violence which too often prevents adulthood.

During the gang wars of the early 90's "family members" routinely pledged 24/7/365, that is they pledged to have each other's back 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. But for how many years? The Green House kids are family to us, and to each other, 24/7/365/4eva.

By the time we left the park a star appeared in the sky and dew had formed on the grass dampening my shorts. I don't remember wetting myself, but then again I don't exactly recall when the day became night or these boys became men.  $\Omega$



John Overmyer

*There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause: through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then skepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more?*

-Herman Melville

# My Revolution

Elizabeth O'Neill

I did not know what to expect. My heart pounded in trepidation as we drove through North Hartford, and I tried to absorb this coexisting universe, previously unbeknownst to me. A cacophony of sounds pierced the air; music pounded loud and steady, stronger and stronger, and words sprang from the mouths of those walking down the crowded streets, languages I was not familiar with, talking faster than I could comprehend. People – everywhere, different expressions etched across each of their faces, different stories fraught with pain, and hope, and fear, and beauty. I observed, passively, listening to and watching the lives of these people. As we drove, I saw a young boy in a wrinkled school uniform standing on the sidewalk. I smiled at him. He looked up at me in question, his eyes hesitant and his youthful face doubtful. He finally smiled, the corners of his mouth turning up to form a slight crescent, and turned away as we drove on.

Clark Street. I bit my lip, and silently I prayed that I might be able to help those I met with compassion, sincerity, and love, as I had so hoped in choosing to work at the Hartford Catholic Worker House.

My fears, I realized, had been rooted in prejudice based upon my limited, tainted knowledge of the North End of Hartford. But as I arrived before the Catholic Worker House, I felt disturbed by the prejudices I had held prior, and as I stood, looking up at the house, I dismissed and defied these judgments. The house was painted green, and it looked like life, like hope, like refuge and safety and peace in the tumultuous world in which we live today. As I stepped through the threshold of the Hartford Catholic Worker House for the first time, I was pleasantly surprised to observe a sea of genuine smiles greeting me. I felt myself surge with newfound dedication and determination.

I wanted to work in an environment in which I impacted someone other than myself through my service. I wanted to interact with others to promote meaningful relationships and connections that would endure beyond the confines of the House. I knew that I would be able to forge this connection to establish a relationship built on the foundations of respect, empathy, and love, if I placed myself in a group of people with whom I could identify – with youths and adolescents, as I am an adolescent whose heart



knows it to be youthful. I hesitated little in choosing to work at the Catholic Worker House to fulfill what I believed to be these requirements. The first day that I walked into the Catholic Worker House, affectionately known as the “Green House” by those who call its familiar atmosphere *home*, I had no idea that working within those walls would not only fulfill my expectations adequately, but exceed anything that I could have ever expected. I cannot even justify calling my experience at the Green House “work,” because I feel no sense of superiority, no obligation to control or monitor, no outstanding and unattainable responsibility. Rather, I swell with excitement to see my friends, and paint, and play, and be... me.

My first day at the Catholic Worker House was a Thursday in September, the 24<sup>th</sup>. The smiles that welcomed me were the only invitation I needed to become a member of the Green House family. The afternoon was divided into two segments;

the first segment was time in which we were able to converse freely – free of restricting racial barriers; free of binding fear; free of accusation, insult, and disparity. In this time, we were able instead to sip tepid water from the little teacups in the miniature painted china set, to sip and to pretend we were sitting righteously as queens and kings at a *lovely* tea party, *darling*; we were able to compete in riveting Connect Four tournaments, hoping that the red or black piece in our hands would win us a victory; we were able to play an aggressive game of basketball, to challenge athletes whose faces illustrated determination, resilience, persistence. On Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, I wandered around the House in an attempt to discover what this afternoon would promise me, who I would befriend, where I would belong. A little girl was walking around; perhaps she, too, was searching, was discovering. She looked at me curiously. I risked a smile. She returned it. I found

Nangely that afternoon.

Nangely is a five-year-old girl with long, shiny black hair, olive skin, sparkling eyes, and a smile that is truly irresistible. She led me through the Green House, and guided me outside, into the sun. Nangely ran to the swings, and I claimed the seat beside her, letting my legs dangle beneath me as I soared high, the two of us, flying. Periodically, I jumped down and gave Nangely a push. Her laughter rang in the air, and I released my anxiety and my inhibitions and I let myself laugh too. It seemed as though it were mere minutes before “Circle” was called. Nangely and I ran to join the circle, and we all grasped hands, waiting to hear the words that would determine our assignments for the remainder of the afternoon.

Nangely picked me to work with her on her “homework.” We walked up the stairs and sat down on a bench. I laid a piece of

**(Please See: *Revolution*, p8)**

# Metro Ministries of Brooklyn

*Charles Hebert*

Metro Ministries, located in Brooklyn, New York, runs the worlds largest Sunday school, on Saturday, for thousands of young children ages 7 – 12. Metro Ministries is located in one of the worst and most violent neighborhoods in the United States. The founder Bill Wilson created this ministry 30 years ago in an effort to change lives one at a time. He was abandoned as a child at age 14 and was taken in by a person that believed in him and gave him a chance.

We took a group of 30 youths from our parish; St. Mary's in Unionville, CT, to participate in one the Saturday – Sunday School programs at Metro Ministries this Spring. Seeing and riding in the school buses, the programs and thousands of kids was a sight and experience to behold.

Bill's mission is not to necessarily have his kids go to college and become lawyers or big time business people. He is trying to keep them from succumbing to the drug dealing and prostitution that is rampant in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. He wants to let the children know that Jesus died for their sins and offers the promise of hope for them. He wants the children to also know that they are loved and cared for. Most of the children come from broken homes with no father and in many cases coming to Sunday school is the only time they leave their tenement apartments due to the danger within their own neighborhoods.

Bill Wilson is an ordained pastor who moved to New York to take his ministry to one of the neediest areas of the United States. This was in the late 1970's when the ghetto's of large cities where often areas where the police were afraid to go. Bill raised money throughout the country and ended up buying an old brewery in Brooklyn to be the home of his ministry. He sends out dozens of school buses to the neighborhoods of Brooklyn and brings the kids to his "school" for 90 minutes of fun, discipline and a strong message of religion from the bible in the form of a skit. The kids receive

prizes for participation, getting questions right and remembering the lesson of the previous week.

Metro Ministries touches the lives of over 21,000 children in New York every week. Over the last 30 years Metro Ministries has been replicated around the world. In the Philippines over 22,000 children participate in Sunday school each week. There are also locations in Romania, Italy and South Africa.

According to Bill Wilson "We seek to bring hope to urban children through faith based and character education while addressing issues such as hunger, AIDS awareness, and child abuse".

During the week school buses that have been converted to performing stages go into the neighborhoods of metro New York City and deliver the same message of hope, love and salvation. This is called the Sidewalk Sunday School.

Metro Ministries has hundreds of volunteers and interns that deliver the programs, drive the buses and develop relationships with the children and their families. Many volunteers and interns come from Europe and other locations abroad. Many of them have read Bill Wilson's



book "Whose Child is This?" and become inspired to come to Brooklyn to be part of this ministry for 6 months to three years. Many of these interns and volunteers are responsible for the spreading of Metro Ministries around the world and have taken the programming back to their country and started similar programs.

The Hartford Catholic Worker reminds me in many ways of the work being done in New York by Metro Ministries. Both organizations are committed to reaching out to children that find it hard to have reason for hope and often are searching for love and a feeling that someone really cares for them. (Charley Herbert is Capital Campaign chair for the Holy Family Retreat Center)Ω

**Thank-you for  
your:**

- Prayers**
- Donations of food**
- Work for justice**
- and**
- Financial support**



## Revolution, cont.

paper in front of her, and gripping the pencil tightly in her hand, she wrote her name, all seven letters, each formed very deliberately. We spent an arduous hour writing a series of figures that she identified as “letters” on sheets of white paper. I showed her an error in her haphazard alphabet and she pouted. “Noooo,” she moaned. I yielded to her discontented eyes and adorable face, which she had pulled into a taut frown. She proceeded to write, the intense concentration behind her eyes piercing the page with determination. She erred only several more times, and I *almost* corrected her. Nangely and I love to take photographs on my camera; to call each other from several feet away on plastic phones that in her five-year-old youthfulness she insists are quite real; to paint pictures; to run across the basketball court and slip beneath the provisional fence comprised of dowels and twine, and fall down onto the grass so that we can lie on our backs and look at the sky, or sit on my sweater and talk. Sometimes, Courtney, a little girl whose age she insists is a trivial matter, joins our games. An avid reader, Courtney loves to hear *The Cat in the Hat* read aloud to her, and often volunteers to take a turn orating...

To say that I instructed the ignorant would be giving myself credit where credit is not deserved or warranted, but I would like to think that I was able to transform *my own* ignorance into Christian love as I learned from myself and from those around me...

As I begin my nightly prayers, which I would also like to think of as a discussion with God, I have taken to listing people I would like God to watch over. In my heart I know that I could never name everyone in need of prayer, and God will watch over all of us regardless, but for my peace of mind, I record an additional two names, often more, every night in my notebook. I know the names of nearly all of the kids at the Catholic Worker House, and they are all in my prayers.

I learned many important lifelong lessons in the time I have spent, and will continue to spend, at the Hartford Catholic

Worker House. I have learned that the true definition of prejudice is simple – *ignorance*. I have learned how to defy prejudice from an individual who consistently rises above it. I have learned that no two people are alike, and instead of rejecting the differences among us and distancing ourselves from these differences, we must learn to embrace them open-mindedly.

I have learned the value of faith, and I have learned I more about life from kindergartners and first graders and sixth graders and tenth graders than I ever would have learned on my own. These lessons are applicable to nearly everything I do. For example, I have learned that we all need to take the time to enjoy the precious things in life, like babies, and kisses from dogs, and pebbles, and sidewalk chalk. I have learned that we all need a friend, no matter how independent or defiant we may seem. I have learned that it is okay to ask questions and seek answers. I have learned that we cannot always get what we want or even what we need, but we can all try our very hardest to focus on what we do have. I have learned that sometimes faith is all we have to hold onto, because God is *always* there.

In Jn. 17:20-26 Jesus prays for his disciples... The disciples are called to bring a sense of unity to the sometimes discordant world, and to work to establish solidarity among all of God’s children, who are indeed created equal in Christ. We join hands and hearts to become equal in Christ, and in a literal sense, we even become part of the Body of Christ when we take the Eucharist at Mass. As I interpreted the Gospel, we must be the disciples of our Lord in order to create one family which indiscriminately loves and respects the dignity of those around us so that we all may participate fully in the Kingdom of God.

In my experience at the Hartford Catholic Worker House, I experienced my faith at a heightened level, and I became a part of the Kingdom of God. My experience with Nangely, in which I became the best Elizabeth Catherine O’Neill I was capable of becoming, helped to shape the role I play in my own life, and in the lives of others,

to be a girl who was looked up to, admired, even. I felt worthy to participate and worthy to be God’s child, as I tried to share the love of Jesus Christ with others and actively seek harmony and cohesion. I saw the community around me growing in the same way.

In our Saturday tea parties, as Tatayanna pours lukewarm water into every attendant’s delicate china cup, and springs to her feet to refill the sugar dish, allowing me to accompany her, I see Jesus’s indiscriminant compassion. He cares not about age, or race, or gender, or wealth, or ethnicity; He refills each and every one of our cups, and our hearts, daily. In Paula’s friendly and serene aura, as I walk into the Green House and she smiles and waves quietly, I see Jesus’s acceptance and open-heartedness.

Jesus smiles at all of us every day, and if we return the smile, maybe thank him once in a while, he may wave at us, even touch us in ways unique to our individual character.

I seem to see Jesus more in others lately. The Catholic Worker family has helped to open my eyes, my mind, and my heart so that I can better understand my role in the Kingdom of God, and so that when I walk down the street, I smile at everyone who walks past... And I smile up to him too. (*Elizabeth will be a junior at Northwest Catholic this Fall.*) Ω



*New Orleans Catholic Worker*

## Notes, cont.

of the woods... the quiet... the spiders even! I feel like I get to introduce them to Mother Nature, God's feminine face. Another favorite moment is all of us making a chain in the water (dubbed the Soul Train of course) with 7 or 8 of us hanging onto Bubba. He was pulling us all and laughing and that pretty much sums up Bubba...."this going is hard, so might as well make it fun!"

This year would not have been possible if it had not been for the BIG group of extended community that kept things going in the absence of live in community. I hate to name names...because for every one that is mentioned...there are at least 10 more who are not.



We do need a special shout out to our summer crew. Amanda Tremblay was once again the head anarchist for the summer program. With her experience and the new energy of Teresa and Ellen from Notre Dame there was a seamless flow from the after school to the summer program. It was a joy to watch the love and friendships blossom between the kids and these amazing young women. With the assist of the Saturday regulars like Steve, Edna, JoAnne, Christine, Javier and Carmen, Joan and Bill, Danielle, Pete, Denise and Justin we were able to keep the Green House open all summer!

Down at Camp the Lachapelle family was a big boost to our ranks. Wayne worked with Chris and some of the kids on building the counselors cabin. He also taught the little guys how to shake/make homemade ice cream using dry ice and Ziploc bags. Christelle, Lily, Eli and Levi (or Bubba II) made regular Thursday runs to Misquamicut Beach with us and kept us company at Beach pond. St Tim's, St Pat's, Corpus Christi, St Peter Claver and St. Christopher's kept us in gas, groceries and prayers.

I want to say a word about our sons Micah and Ammon. They are the silent (sometimes anyways) heroes of the Green House. It is no easy thing to share your Mom and Dad with some 70 odd kids (ed note: they not really all that "odd"). Neither is it

an easy thing to grow up in a neighborhood where you are the only white kids who live there. Micah has been pulled over by the cops weekly for years for "walking while white". Both kids have had their toys, bikes, games and privacy taken from them. They are turning into wonderful men before my very eyes and I thank God for them. Ammon passed a grueling lifeguard course and did a phenomenal job of keeping all the swimmers safe. He also astonished his parents and the other adults by being incredibly good with the little people. He not only invented a crazy game wherein the children and coun-

selors chased each other thru the woods for 9 hours with big foam swim noodles, but he also was fabulous at leading capture the flag and scavenger hunts. Micah was once again the fishing counselor and shared the gift of patience (a mandatory one for fisherman) with the kids as he spent countless hours untangling lines, putting on bait, and repairing reels. I am sad to say that yesterday he fell down the stairs and broke his arm in two places. Please keep him in your prayers for a speedy recovery. I know your prayers work wonders because in our last issue I asked for prayers for our nephew Dan who was hit by a car, and he is recovering nicely.

Summer is over and the transition now begins to autumn and a new school year. We hope that from the joy of our sum-

mer we may harvest the energy, love and patience that will be required of us as we continue to grow and breathe together as a community.

I hope that all of our readers had a safe and blessed summer as well. We thank God for all of you and each other.

*In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.*  
-William Blake. Ω



Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

Overheard during grace at Camp Ahimsa: "I'm thankful that I have my own bed to sleep in this week." Michael, who is 6 and missing his front teeth, asks Chris everyday if his missing finger has grown back yet.

Read with worry this summer: "For them, Christianity was not a cultural expression- it was a personal relationship with God. It wasn't about behavior" potential '12 Republican candidate for president Mike Huckabee, in the June 28, 2010 issue of *The New Yorker*, on "authentic Christianity".

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## Notes From De Porres House

### *Jacqueline Allen-Doucot*

It is hard to believe that it is August already and that thoughts are turning once again from summer camp and summer program towards the new school year. It seems like yesterday that we were awaiting the arrival of Theresa and Ellen, our Notre Dame summer interns. Now the kids are having a going away party at the Green House, we are trying to figure out what night will be teen night. and when we will begin giving out the "back to school" backpacks! This week we learned that the young woman who was going to join our community for a year long internship will not be able to join us. I took that news pretty hard. Since Sarah left we have been trying to hang in there and keep up with the demands of the work here with one less person. As Sarah was quick to mention during her last visit....it was too much work for 4 people even when she was still here. I have been keeping myself going for months by telling myself "...in September when there are 4 of us..." so the thoughts of another year like the last one are too much to bear and I am really praying hard for God to send us someone.

That being said....the summer was filled with joy, children, laughter and lots of water both in Hartford and at camp. In Hartford, the water was from the hose and either poured into the sprinkler, onto each other from pails and buckets or dumped into a small kiddie pool. If it is going to be hot and humid....you might as well get wet.

The only fight allowed at The Green House is a water fight. The last day of school I bought these giant foam water squirters that you fill like a giant syringe. Josh Rosa and Jose were the counselors on duty....and they wanted



*Green House girls Nangelly, Courtney and Ashanti chillin' on pillows they made with Green House volunteer Denise Weeks.*

to try them out. I said sure, and off they ran to fill up a few water tubs. There was a great deal of squawking and squealing...and one of the littles came in to complain "they are soaking us and not letting us have a turn." When I came back to the yard I told them the new rule was that every 5 minutes the squirters had to go to a new person. Then the counselors were squawking !!!! Needless to say they were soaked within minutes. The thing we are the most proud of is watching how well the older kids have grown into the role models we need them to be both at the Green House and at Camp Ahimsa. At camp...the water is both the lake and

the stream. At the lake time is divvied up between fishing, kayaking and swimming. Even the little people who went to Ahimsa not knowing how to swim left with a dog paddle that could keep them afloat and that they could be proud of.

That's kind of a good analogy for what our efforts at community building tries to do; enable the kids to believe in themselves and give them both the faith and skills to keep their heads above water so even if they feel like if they might go under... they know there will be someone around who cares enough about them to pull them up. The best part is when they pull each other up.

Here are some of my favorite images from camp. The first is sitting behind a little one pad-

dling the kayak. At first they do not know what they are doing and the movements are jerky and awkward. We clonk paddles a lot. They get tired easily and will rest the paddle across their lap and their hands just naturally fall to the sides of the boat and trail water thru their fingers. They take deeper breaths, even the bigger ones breathe deeper. I can feel the Holy Spirit around me. Little by little they begin to get the feel of it so that by the time they get to the end of their week... they are outdoors people. They are no longer terrified by the strangeness

**(Please see: Notes, p9)**

