



Bring up the subjects of poverty or public policy, and Melissa Chalmers Broome is sure to have something to say. A 2001 graduate of Loyola College, Broome returned in 2003 to pursue a MBA degree, which she attained in 2005. Today she works as a Senior Policy Advocate for the Job Opportunities Task Force and attributes her passion for non-profit work to her experiences at Loyola.

"Loyola gives you all these fantastic business skills and the non-profit world needs those skills," she says. "Loyola pushes you to think hard about complicated issues."

While an undergraduate, Broome worked at the Center for Values and Service, now known as the Center for Community Service and Justice. During that time, she was greatly inspired by the Center's director, Sister Catherine "Missy" Gugerty, S.S.N.D. "Because of her, I knew I wanted to work in the non-profit field," says Broome. During her sophomore year, the Center hired her to serve as a Student Coordinator for a local outreach program, which she continued to run for a few years after graduation.

Her senior year, she participated in Project Mexico, a program that culminates with a 10-day service trip to Tijuana where Loyola students renovate schools, visit orphanages and experience the conditions of the poor. "There's no way anyone could go on this trip and not be changed forever," she says.

But Broome's life truly changed when, as a graduate student, she won a Kolvenbach research award. Her project, which focused on low-wage workers, resulted in a publication, *Working for Pennies: The Plight of Baltimore's Urban Poor*. As a result of her research, Broome quit her job at a graphic design firm and went to work for Catholic Charities as a Job Placement Manager. There, she assisted ex-offenders with resume development and interview preparation. She also worked with area employers to encourage them to hire her clients.

In March 2006, Broome left Catholic Charities to work for the Job Opportunities Task Force as a Senior Policy Advocate. In her new role, she advocates policies to improve opportunities for low-income workers and lobbies for legislation in the Maryland General Assembly. While she is still doing the same type of work, she now has the opportunity to effect change on a larger scale.

"I'm very lucky. I have a job I love where I actually get paid to do work that I believe in," she says, explaining that she wants to continue working on social justice issues at the state level. "I get a chance to be a voice for people who don't have a voice."