SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Intellectual Disabilities: Site TBD Sun. 3/2- Sat. 3/8

[Host and site location to be finalized.] Spend an inspiring spring break in a program designed to build inclusive communities that form opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to form friendships and engage in community activities. Learn what each member of a community has to contribute by spending time one-on-one with people who have traditionally experienced marginalization in the greater society and whose gifts are now being recognized and included.

- Share in the emphasis on "being with" rather than "doing for" in a celebration of the uniqueness of individuals and the similarities between us all.
- Enter the lives of residents and participate in hands-on activities, daily household tasks and social service opportunities.

Quotes by past SBO L'Arche participants:

"I learned so much in one week about accepting others, realizing we all have our own special needs and disabilities, as well as talents and abilities, and that we can all live together if we all choose to focus on what is more important in life."

Kathryn Tafelski, SBO L'Arche Participant '12

"I learned from my experience how people with disabilities may not be able to say or do things in the manner we consider to be acceptable or comprehensible, but they are capable; they feel deeply and express passionately, love openly and accept freely, work diligently and play whole-heartedly."

Elena Dipipi, SBO L'Arche Participants '13

Environmental and Energy Issues: West Virginia Sat. 3/1 – Sat. 3/8

SBO West Virginia is hosted by the Appalachian Institute of Wheeling Jesuit University, and gives you the opportunity to think critically about energy issues by hearing the stories of people directly affected and meeting with stakeholders on all sides of the issues. Learn about the personal and immediate effects that energy decisions have on the local communities in our energy-producing regions.

- Tour sites in West Virginia where environmental issues are being actively addressed by local citizens.
- Learn about how the harvest of Appalachia's coal, natural gas, and wind affect the local people, and how that energy is used in other parts of the country.
- Hear stories, learn about the issues, and analyze your role in the environment.
- Visit organizations such as Keeper of the Mountains, Friends of Deckers Creek, and Student Environmental Action Coalition are also included.

Quotes by past SBO West Virginia participants:

"My SBO experience to West Virginia was one that will truly resonate with me forever. My eyes, ears, and heart were opened to things I was completely unaware of that were happening in my own backyard. I truly learned about the impact that we each make on one another, and on the environment."

Danielle Donohue, SBO West Virginia Participant '12

"This experience showed us that progress is sweeping through the state, even though poverty is still great."

Megan Byrne, SBO West Virginia Participant '13

HIV/AIDS: New York City Sun. 3/2 – Sat. 3/8

Spend an eye-opening week in NYC learning about issues facing people living with HIV/AIDS. This SBO experience will get you engaged in service and educational activities that will illuminate the many challenges faced by people affected by the disease.

- Learn about the disease through many different lenses: medical, legal, media/popular culture, and everyday life by interacting personally with people who have the disease and experts who work in the many fields addressing it.
- Serve at God's Love We Deliver, a unique and free meal program for individuals with chronic diseases.

Quotes by past participants:

"We met people from many different sociopolitical/economic backgrounds who were all fighting for the same cause but in different ways. This made me realize that oftentimes people discriminate against others just due to their backgrounds when really we are all dealing with similar problems and fighting for the same cause."

Nicole Doster, SBO NYC Participant '13

"What we learned from the week was that HIV and the issues surrounding it are incredibly complex, and we cannot really find resolutions until we move past the stigmas that have been attached to it since the 1980s."

Samantha Van Doran, SBO NYC Participant '13

Migrant Farm Labor: Immokalee, FL Sat. 3/1 - Sat. 3/8

*Additional Airfare fee of $250.00

Experience the working and living conditions endured by some of the hardest-working laborers in the American economy: migrant farm workers. Our host, Casa Hoy, a non-profit organization based out of Cuernavaca, Mexico will lead you through a series of service and advocacy opportunities that will illustrate the range of issues faced by this population.

- Learn about "modern day slavery" and how it still can be seen with this community.
- Learn about efforts to provide housing, food and educational support, and organizing efforts by the farm workers to demand fair and safe working and living conditions.
- No Spanish skills are required, although they're helpful.

Quotes by past participants:

"The number one thing I learned was the problems that face migrant farm workers, since I didn't know much about them to begin with. It's just even more amazing the energy and spirit they have, even with all that they face. Seeing their faces light up when they saw their children, or the strength in their eyes as they marched mile upon mile along the Florida highway; knowing them truly challenged how I view my own life."

Megan Heaning, SBO Immokalee Participant '13

"I was inspired a lot by these people who had so little and yet so much faith."

Rebecca Scullin, SBO Immokalee Participant '13

Prison Reform: Baltimore Fri. 2/28 – Sat. 3/8

Learn about the human implications of the U.S. prison system in our home city of Baltimore, as well as the challenges faced by people who have been incarcerated in their effort to reenter society.

- Many individuals have difficulty finding housing, employment, and support after being released from prison.
- Participate in service opportunities in a number of agencies and hear local activists, people who were formerly incarcerated, and residents speak.

- Spend two days inside the prison as a participant in "Alternatives to Violence" program that allows you to meet and talk with people currently incarcerated.

Quotes by past participants:

"We came to understand how the systemic problems of poverty, racism, and education play a role. Through our interactions, we made human connections with those most affected by the inconsistencies and problems of the prison system."

Lauren Heery, SBO Baltimore Participant '12

"I learned that the men who we encountered in prison were far from the monsters they are often portrayed to be; they're people, like us, who are able to screw up and act on their impulses and make a bad mistake. Changing someone's life forever, yes, but not any less human in the process."

Tommy O'Donnell, SBO Baltimore Participant '13

Appalachian Culture and Economic Issues:

Virginia and West Virginia (Two sites) Sun. 3/2 – Sat. 3/8

Through direct and indirect contact, learn about poverty in one of the poorest rural areas in our nation—Appalachia. You will have the opportunity to gain a new and complex perspective on rural poverty by examining the systemic injustice that turned this resource-rich region into one where many residents struggle for basic rights and resources. This year SBO will feature two sites in Appalachia—one hosted by the Appalachian Institute of Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia, and the other hosted by Beans and Rice, a social services program is southwest Virginia.

- Spend time with residents to gain an appreciation of the rich history of arts, storytelling and music that binds together the residents of this region
- Participate in service projects around hunger, housing and after-school tutoring for local children
- Develop community through shared experiences in service in the Appalachia region

Quotes by past SBO Appalachia Participants:

"The most profound discovery I made was that although I come from an area that does have as severe generational poverty issue as [Appalachia], I can relate to the situation they are in. I always judged those who didn't want to leave and possibly better themselves, but SBO taught me that you can't expect people to want to leave their homes, even if it means staying in the same situation."

Nichole Adolpho, SBO Appalachia Participant '13

"I learned to live in the present. Not worrying about time, I could be more present to the people around me and form deep and lasting friendships. I also renewed my relationship with God by witnessing his goodness through nature and the community around me."

Rachel Christian, SBO Appalachia Participant '13

Hunger and Homelessness: Washington, DC Sun. 3/2- Sat. 3/8

Learn about urban poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity in our nation's capital.

- Stay at the Steinburck Center, a ministry of Luther Place Memorial Church, a program that offers education, service, research and training opportunities to address the root causes of homelessness and urban poverty.
- The N Street Village, is a shelter for women, run by the church, that also provides service to meet the needs of homeless and extremely low-income women as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency.
- Learn about the affordable housing crisis and the state of Washington DC's poverty through walking tours, immersion, and lectures
- Serve at various meal programs across the District.

Quotes by past SBO D.C. participants:

"People experiencing homelessness are people too. Before this I would have avoided the homeless when they spoke to me because of the lack of knowledge I had, but now I realize that even a small acknowledgement is enough to brighten someone's day."

Margaret Brennan, SBO DC Participant '12

"If the politicians of our country cannot provide substantial programs to assist the hundreds living in poverty right in front of their eyes, then it is up to us as men and women for others to advocate for those whose voices have been overlooked."

Kellianne Hickey, SBO DC Participant '13