

Briana Ciccarino, B.A. '15



Being called by God was something I felt in the past, especially when I chose Loyola. Last year, I felt called to do a year of service. Contrary to the perception of Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers, though, I do not “want to save the world.” No, instead I want to live out a calling from God: to love goodness, to act justly and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Personally, I find myself answering this call through service, through the work of vulnerability and by cultivating authentic relationships in hopes of creating justice.

This is possible without volunteering for a year or two. We can all do this in our everyday lives. For me, I ask myself this question: if Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28), then how can I be a servant of God? Vulnerability is key to working with others in order to allow ourselves to be impacted by them no matter who they are. I have discovered that to be servants of the Lord, we must be open, vulnerable, and authentic. Then, we must ask questions. Justice does not come without challenging the status quo. For me this means questioning a teacher when she yells at a non-English speaking middle school student in front of the whole class though he cannot understand her. This means questioning how many students of color went to my Catholic, New Jersey high school. It means questioning

why the life expectancy rates differ for people on the West and East sides of York Road, Baltimore. This means asking why journalists called the 2015 spring events in Baltimore “riots” but community activists call them “uprisings.” Micah 6:8 calls us to be uncomfortable, but uncomfortable and restless all the time! We cannot accept the status quo when a teacher says, “S/He’s one of the bad ones.” Ask why and how we can label a 12-year old student “bad.” What are the implications of that? We cannot accept the status quo when Baltimore City wants to invest money in jails and not in schools or homeless shelters. Ask why! Let us not accept the labels we slap onto one another. Let us not define someone by their condition. Let us find out our areas of ignorance. Let us ask questions and not stop asking them until we create better solutions. God is calling us. S/He’s waiting for our response.