

# a Jesuit Tradition

BY: TOBY HEKKANEN '25

Immersion trips are a remarkable way our community serves and connects with the greater community of need. Another way we seek to serve is the annual food drive.

From Nov. 18 to Nov. 22, Jesuit will be holding its 61st Operation Cratchit food drive. This event is an enduring Jesuit tradition and has become representative of our culture, serving as a way of supporting families in need by providing food to the Stanford Settlement.

Student council member George Srabian '25 wants Jesuit students to engage with the drive as "Men for Others."

"The food drive is one of our longest lasting traditions here at Jesuit and it is really something that is a part of being in the brotherhood," George said. "We all want to have a good Christmas dinner with family and with food, and that image lingers in my mind as something we should strive to give to someone else."

Student body president Jayden Canio '25 believes that the food drive is also important for building up our Jesuit community by collectively expressing our values of charity.

"[The food drive] embodies Jesuit values and follows what we are taught," Jayden said. "To be



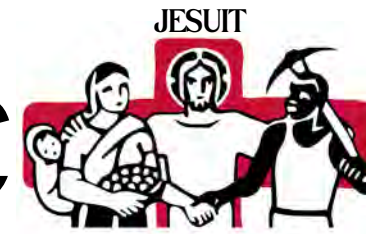
able to bring what we have learned back to our community by helping during the food drive is important and helps represent what it means to be a Jesuit student. This helps to demonstrate our brotherhood and our connectedness to our community in a sort of brotherly love, as our Jesuit culture is tied greatly to being together and doing everything together with everyone."

Student Activities Director Mr. Peter Ferrari hopes that everyone in our community embraces the tradition of donating to the food drive.

"Helping out in this food drive is a part of who we are as a school, and we should be a community that cares about our neighbors in need," Mr. Ferrari said. "It is part of being a Catholic and it is part of our faith that we should be serving others, and so the food drive is a great opportunity for us to come together and serve our neighbors. I really hope that all of our students can really embrace this part of our culture and embrace this part of being a Jesuit student."

During this holiday season, consider the effect you can have on a family by donating food or money to the food drive. Every pound of food and every donation matters; it can make a difference in someone's holiday.

# CATHOLIC WORKER



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## Opening eyes with the Kino Border Initiative

BY: DANIEL BASKETTE '25

When I found out that I got accepted to go to the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) Immersion in Nogales, Mexico, I knew it would be unlike any other experience I have ever had.

My group, led by English Teacher Mr. Ted Hornback '83 and Assistant Director for Office of Service and Justice Ms. Jessica Fuentes, was ready to experience firsthand what life was like on the border, as well as hear the many perspectives on migration.

Initially, I felt a mix of nerves and excitement. While I had been to Mexico several times before, this was my first time experiencing the border with such an intimate, human perspective. I knew this journey would challenge my views and push me to see something new.

Our trip began with a hike in Arivaca, AZ. There we got a little taste of the grueling journey many migrants have to go through when they flee from persecution, poverty, or are simply seeking a better life.

As we trekked through the desert, I learned that many migrants are lied to by crime groups in Mexico and are told that it only takes a day to cross the desert, leading them to be unprepared for the harsh conditions and unaware of the true dangers of the journey.

This discovery deeply affected me when I thought about the desperation that leads people to risk everything – even their lives – in hopes of finding freedom or asylum. This moment really set the tone for the week ahead because I started to understand the complex nature and heartbreaking situation of the border.

Later that day, we spoke with ranchers in a church in Arivaca, AZ. They expressed their frustration with the illegal crossings and emphasized their support for more legal ways of migration. Listening to their views was important: it reminded me that every story has multiple sides and that understanding all of them is crucial to bringing about change.

The next day we crossed the border at the Nogales/Mariposa Port Of Entry, and we walked to KBI's comedor, where meals are served to those in need. I had the privilege of leading prayer the first day and passing out the tortillas to everyone.

As one of the few Spanish speakers in the group, I felt a deep connection to the people there. It was heartwarming to see the resilience and warmth these people had despite the harsh circumstances.

We also traveled to Tucson, AZ to see the court hearings for those who had crossed the border and were facing legal proceedings. It was very interesting to see these court hearings and how different each individual's story was and how miserable it could be. The courtroom was a stark reminder of the human lives behind every headline and statistic about immigration.

One of the hardest parts of the trip for me was visiting the cemetery where many unidentified migrants are buried. Seeing rows upon rows of graves – many of them for infants – was truly heartbreaking for me and many others.

Our group returned the next day to serve more meals and spend time playing basketball and coloring with the children. It was heartwarming to see their

smiles and hear their laughter. I bonded with one father in particular, and his story has stayed with me since because he still had hope. I continue to pray for him and his family.

Thursday marked the last day we got to stay at the border. Saying goodbye to the families, children, and the father was difficult for me. Despite all the sadness, however, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the lessons and experience I had at KBI.

The Kino Border Initiative immersion really opened my eyes and gave me a real sense of what is going on at our border, and that the realities and humanity at our border often get overshadowed by politics and headlines. I learned that the human trafficking and drug trafficking crisis are distinct from each other, but tragically intertwined in this region.

Above everything, I was reminded that migrants are God's children, and they are often escaping situations we could barely imagine.

For the classes of '26 and '27, I cannot recommend this immersion enough. If you want to gain a deeper understanding of the world and challenge your views, this experience is a great opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and witness life on the border firsthand. These lessons extend beyond the classroom and will be the kind that stay with you for a lifetime.



A letter from the Editor-in-chief

## What is *The Catholic Worker*?

*The Catholic Worker* is a newspaper and social movement that has promoted nonviolence, has performed works of mercy, and has embraced voluntary poverty since 1933. Originally founded by Dorothy Day, the publication highlights current issues in society and offers resolutions that reflect the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

In collaboration with the Office of Service and Justice, *The Plank* is publishing this rendition of *The Catholic Worker* to inform and inspire. We hope that you gain a better understanding of how Jesuit students have served communities across North America, and that you find your own way to help those in need.

Jason De Guzman '25

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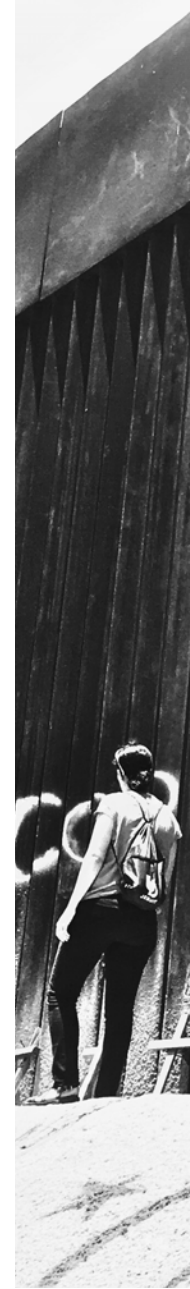


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# Growth at jerusalem farm

BY: LUKE DOUGHERTY '25

When many people think of Kansas City, Missouri, they think of Arrowhead Stadium, Royals baseball, and flavorful barbecue. This past summer, however, a group of Jesuit students learned that there is much more to Kansas City than they previously thought. As a part of a special immersion trip, they spent a week living and serving at Jerusalem Farm (JF), a nonprofit organization based in Kansas City.

The group departed from Jesuit on June 2. Upon arrival, they were greeted warmly by members of the JF community serving and living there. The community members had varying levels of history with the program and its four cornerstones: community, prayer, simplicity, and service. The Marauders lived and grew in these values through daily life on the farm.

Life at JF was incredibly simple. While living simply demanded an adjustment, Jayden Canio '25 found the adjustment to be worthwhile. "It was definitely different from what I'm used to at home," Jayden said. "A vegetarian diet, limited A/C, and short showers were things that I had to adapt to, but it was great to be aware of the meaning and intent behind that."

Jesuit students found themselves being present in the moment and liked working outside in the community garden. Jayden appreciated being able to "unplug" during the trip.

"Going on this trip, I wasn't really sure what to expect," Jayden said. "I knew that we were gonna be

without our phones and [everyday] technology, though. I wasn't looking forward to that at first, but later I came to appreciate it because I know my phone would've prevented me from living in that simplistic way."

Robert Whitney '25 believes that the relationships he formed with his fellow service members were a standout part of the experience.

"The service ended up being a really enjoyable part of the trip," Robert said. "When we went to some of the worksites, it was cool to be able to get to know people who have such a different background from me. I specifically remember talking with a worker named Joseph, who is from the Congo. We were able to have a nice conversation about sports while painting a house, and that was a great part of my trip."

During the trip, students were able to serve members of the Pendleton Heights neighborhood. Like with the connections he made with fellow workers, Robert values the relationships he formed with residents in the neighborhood.

"Doing work on those houses was tough, but [what made] it rewarding was getting to meet some of the homeowners," Robert said. "My workgroup got to meet one of the older homeowners named Bobby. Bobby was a great dude and it was awesome that he wanted to make us feel at home."

The trip to JF was a great experience for all that were involved. Jesuit students gained insight into a simpler way of living, and they learned how to make a lasting impact in their community.

BY: TOMMY MILLER '25

Before my trip to Jerusalem Farm, the only thing on my mind was that I wouldn't have my phone all week and would have to eat vegetarian. I spent the week with some of my classmates, Director of Campus Ministry Mr. Paul LeBoeuf, and Science teacher Ms. Amy Becker. On arrival, we took a tour of the place and got to meet the all-girls school from Chicago with whom we would work.

On Monday morning, we split into different chore groups. I signed up for planting in the garden with Amelia, one of the counselors. We started by cleaning out the planter box, which meant pulling weeds, and then turned the soil to get it prepared for planting.

Unfortunately, we forgot to bring a shovel, which meant I had to volunteer to dig the hole with my fingers. But when we finished, the garden looked great. It was awesome to see that we created something that will someday be someone's source of food.

The next day, we were assigned to our work groups. My group worked with Larry, a Kansas City homeowner that needed his house painted. While priming Larry's house, I got to interact with his granddaughter, Gemini, who loved to talk to us and play music. At the end of the day, it was amazing to see the house in a different color, and it looked much better than when we got there; our hard work paid off.

On the third day, we were sent to work at the goat station down at the park. Our job was to move Jerusalem Farm's goat trailer down the road and set up the electrical fence in the new grazing area. After moving the goats into the trailer, we started to pull up the fencing from

the old area and set it up in the new space. We carefully planned out its path, and then hammered in the stakes. It was incredibly fun and rewarding to watch the goats explore their new home.

On Thursday, we worked at Rob's house, who lived close to the farm and needed some interior home repairs. I was assigned to caulk the corners of each room, which was pretty easy once I started to get the hang of it. While I was caulking, the other people in my group painted the inside walls of the house. Rob wasn't there that day, but hopefully, he was happy with the work that we did.

Our last full day was Friday, and we were assigned to help out in the garden. I got assigned to mix the compost. Following that, I helped water the blackberry vines and cut down dead branches. We finished the day by watering the rest of the sprouting plants. It felt good to help maintain the garden where so many people can get their food. After work, we packed and got ready to depart on Saturday.

I had a wonderful experience at Jerusalem Farm. At the farm, I had so many unique opportunities to learn and help others. I was proud that the work I was doing was positively affecting the lives of those in the Kansas City community. I was able to meet many new people and create relationships that will last a lifetime.

This immersion also made me incredibly grateful for the opportunities I am given in life, and I gained a greater appreciation for the planet. I brought a lot of the practices I learned at Jerusalem Farms home with me, and one day, I hope to build and maintain my own little garden.

## Fostering friendship in Del Norte County

BY: TRISTAN MCLOUGHLIN '25

Sunday, July 7 began with an early wake-up call. I was drowsy, yet I couldn't help but feel a little bit excited for the week that was about to come. I've always loved community service, so committing a whole week to it was very exciting.

Our immersion journey started at Jesuit, and after a seven hour drive, the wait was over: we had arrived at our church in Del Norte County, California.

Immediately, the staff at Sierra Service Project (SSP) tried to establish a bond with us volunteers – they were incredibly open and welcoming. We did some ice breakers with students from other schools that were also volunteering that week; it was great to build friendships with people I already knew, and with those I wouldn't have met otherwise.

The second day was when the work began. We were assigned to our groups and sent to the places where we would help those in need. My group worked on

creating a ramp and a porch for the disabled people that lived in a house. We got off to a strong start, laying down the groundwork and making sure we accurately calculated the ramp's dimensions.

On the third day, my group went back to the site where we were working. There, I thought about how I should carry out my life by not giving full effort, or should I put in full energy and discover new things, like a new sense of self or becoming closer to God? As I continued to work during the immersion, I came to the conclusion to commit myself to putting forth full effort not only in the work I was doing, but also in my relationships with others.

On the fourth day, everyone went to the sand dunes to pull out invasive grass. Working at the dunes was an important job: if we didn't do it, the invasive grass would steal important resources and nutrients from the native plants. Later that day, the SSP staff held a social interaction with all the groups, where we had the

opportunity to swim in a river and then have a barbecue. It was fun getting to hang out with my new friends and being able to grow my relationship with my existing ones.

Unfortunately, disaster struck soon after. On the fifth day, I got sick with COVID and had to return home, missing the final two days.

Reflecting on my immersion, I am incredibly grateful I was able to unplug and go on the trip. It was a great experience that taught me many things about myself and others. I created unforgettable memories by spending time with people from my class.

Overall, this immersion program taught me to be more open to new things. I was able to spend my time helping others while also learning to be more inclusive and make new friends.

The immersion at Del Norte was a great experience, and I recommend it for any student who wants to grow as a person and a brother.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JESUIT SERVICE & JUSTICE

Jesuit students at the beach on the last day of the Del Norte Immersion.



Sierra Service Project  
Del Norte County, CA

L'Arche Tahoma Hope  
Tacoma, WA

Darst Center for Peace & Justice  
Chicago, IL

Kino Border Initiative  
Nogales, AZ & Sonora, Mexico

Jerusalem Farm  
Kansas City, MO

Courts for Kids  
Panama

Camp ReCreation  
Eagle Lake, CA



“At first, I thought that I wouldn't enjoy the immersion. But, I gave it a shot and found more than I could have ever imagined; I loved my experience. Consider participating in an immersion, especially with SSP. I'm confident that you too will find more than you can imagine.”

Logan Keefe '25

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