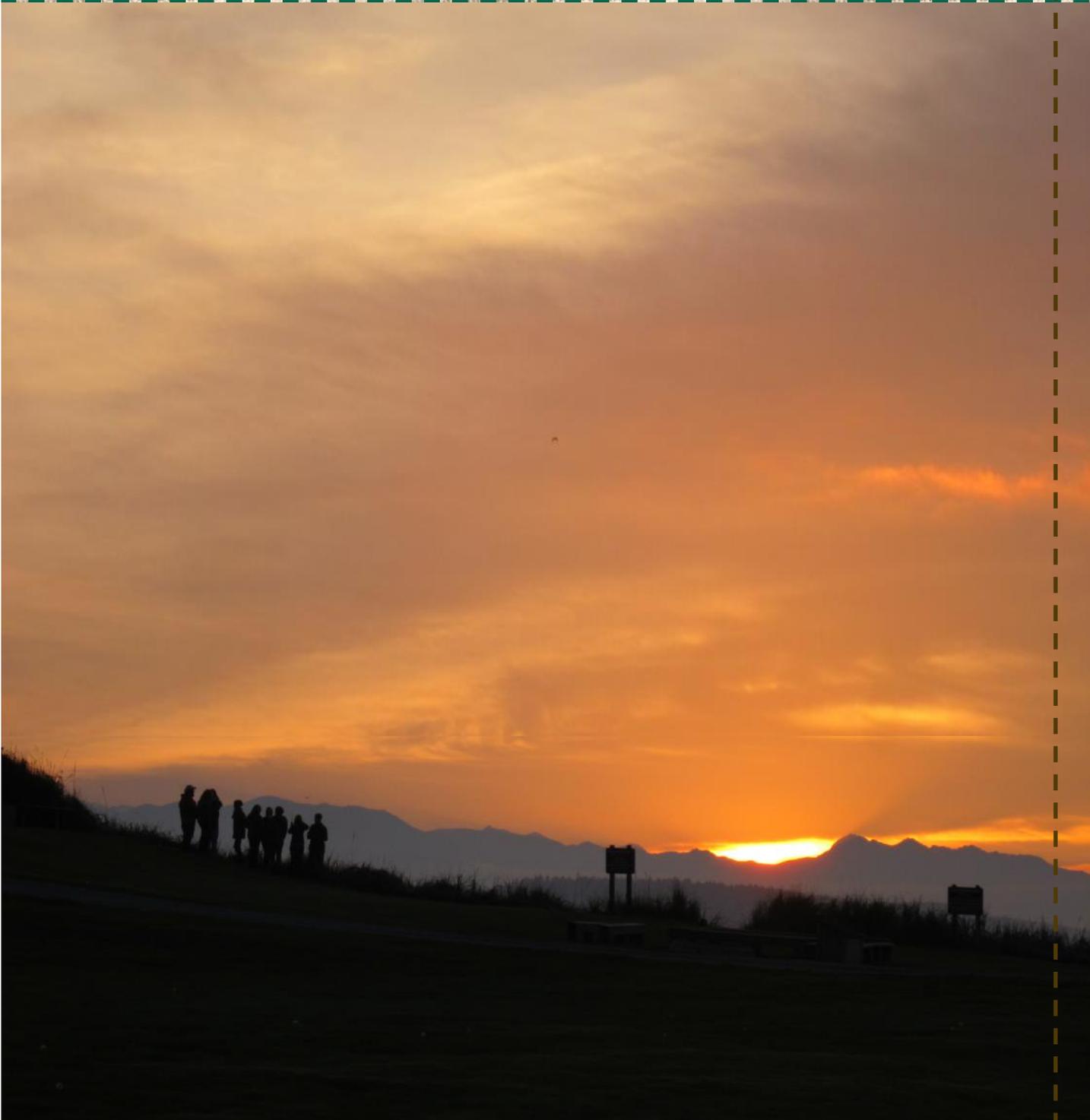




**JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS  
NORTHWEST**

# Discernment Packet: How to Prepare for Your Interview





# Discernment Packet

We are excited that you have completed your application with JVC Northwest. JVC Northwest invites you into a period of intentional discernment to consider the challenge and grace of living in solidarity with marginalized people and vulnerable places for the upcoming year.

This discernment packet offers a summary of the four values of JVC Northwest and additional materials to help you better understand our organization and mission. Please read these carefully and use them in whatever way will be beneficial to you in your discernment, whether that's through meditation, prayer, conversation, journaling, etc. We hope you find the materials helpful in your decision-making process.

## JVC Northwest Mission Statement

Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest engages individuals in a transforming experience of full-time volunteer service. Jesuit Volunteers serve for a year or more in solidarity with persons living on the margins of society and with vulnerable places in the Pacific Northwest.

Rooted for over fifty years in the Jesuit Catholic tradition emphasizing spiritual openness and depth, Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest examine and act on the causes of social and environmental injustice to promote peace and structural change. Jesuit Volunteers live in communities that commit to simple living embodying a healing and sustainable presence on the Earth.

## Discernment

Ignatian (Jesuit) discernment is a thoughtful and intentional way of making decisions. In order to discern if JVC Northwest is where you envision yourself next year, we invite you to pay close attention to the thoughts and feelings that arise as you consider life as a Jesuit Volunteer.

The following format may help with your reflection:

- Set aside some uninterrupted time to reflect on each value. Take some time to center yourself and focus.
- Read the materials, paying attention to the feelings and thoughts that rise up in you as you reflect.
- Consider how you already live these values or desire to live these values and why.
- Share these thoughts and feelings in your journal, in a conversation, or in prayer.

Toward the end of the packet, you will find a copy of the **JVC Northwest Covenant**. The Covenant of JVC Northwest is a relational commitment that all Jesuit Volunteers enter into with each other and JVC Northwest at the beginning of the JV year. The Covenant provides a communal foundation for living out the year in the context of the four values and outlines the agreements around which JVs and JVC Northwest communities form and shape their lives together. Please take some time to review the Covenant and consider your ability to make this commitment.

The final pages of the discernment packet include the **JVC Northwest Drug and Alcohol Policy**, which outlines the expectations regarding JVs' use of alcohol and substances during their JV year.

We ask applicants to sign and return the Covenant and Drug and Alcohol Policy **after** they have been conditionally accepted into the JVC Northwest program. We include these documents in this packet to help you better understand the expectations of the program.

Again, we look forward to getting to know you and helping to guide you through this discernment process. Blessings on this journey!



# Social and Ecological Justice

Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest work for peace and justice through service with those living on the margins of our society, by addressing the root causes of social and ecological injustice, and by becoming aware of how our attitudes and behaviors affect others. We understand our calling to transform attitudes and structures to eradicate poverty, create justice, and support a sustainable relationship with the earth. The following references and readings are to encourage reflection on the meanings of social and ecological justice. Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to ex-

## Scriptural References to help you prepare for your interview:

- Luke 6: 20-47 – Sermon on the Plain
- Romans 8:18-22 – Future Glory
- James 2: 14-26 – Faith and Works
- Matthew 6:28-29 – God and Possessions

## Resources to help you prepare for your interview:

- [“Beyond Vietnam—A Time to Break the Silence”](#) by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving
- [Citizen: An American Lyric](#) by Claudia Rankine
- [“Multiplying our Impact”](#) a video by Van Jones
- [Freedom is a Constant Struggle](#) by Angela Davis
- [“The Earth Charter”](#)
- [“How Economic Growth has become Anti-Life”](#) by Vandana Shiva

## Reflection Questions on Social and Ecological Justice:

Reflect on an experience you have had as a person of certain privileges. Out of these experiences, share an interaction you have had in which you recognized your own preconceived ideas about another person’s race, age, sexual orientation, gender, or socioeconomic status. What did you learn about yourself through that interaction? What did you learn about the other person? How did this experience change you and your relationship with this person?

Reflect on an experience you have had where you witnessed how the ecological crisis is a burden that some people bear more than others. Who are those people and what about where they live or who they are determines how they are affected by the ecological crisis our planet is suffering? Out of this reflection, share an experience you have had in which you recognized your own role in contributing to the pollution of our environment and over-use of our planet's limited resources. What have you learned about yourself and your relationship with the environment? What experiences in life have taught you about the importance of a healthy natural ecology? How have these reflections changed you and your relationship with the world around you?

God is Love. Love casts out fear. Even the most ardent revolutionist, seeking to change the world, to overturn the tables of the money changers, is trying to make a world where it is easier for people to love, to stand in that relationship to each other... There can never be enough of it.  
~Dorothy Day

I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.  
~Audre Lorde

I don't believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is vertical, so it's humiliating. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other and learns from the other. I have a lot to learn from other people.  
~Eduardo Galeano

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise . . . It is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.  
~Earth Charter

## Reflections from JVs and Jesuits:

“Justice is a manifestation of goodness and truth, which we perhaps understand, but it also intercourses with beauty, removing all blemish, irregularity and unevenness. It’s about harmony and pattern. Justice, for example, is beautiful because it always recognizes persons above things. Capital punishment is unjust because it is disordered, ugly and degrading to killer and killed. It just isn’t fair to human society on any level. It sets up a dissonance. It’s the same with racism, sexism and ageism; they all mar truth and deface beauty.

We fail our own humanity when we allow fear to shy us away from the chaos and collisions that surround our journey through life. Rather, let’s see it all as a challenge to dare, to risk, to jump in and participate, mind and heart, soul and strength, in the awesome flowering forth of absolute truth, goodness and beauty. Dance the dance of justice, sing its song, sculpt its lines, do her portrait in brilliant color. Justice is God’s call to walk the royal road to integrity. Beauty, harmony, integrity and justice are all one.”  
~Jack Morris, SJ, co-founder of JVC Northwest



JV Nick Ponzetti ('12-13 Sitka) at his placement, Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)



JV Elizabeth “Bubba” Murphy ('14-15) serving in Spokane, WA

Social justice is the fire of moral outrage that ignites somewhere deep inside you each time you realize how broken this world actually is. That fire will stay with you. It will make you realize your own brokenness. And it will inspire you each day to show up, to fight a rigged system, to advocate for basic rights you’ve taken for granted your entire life, and ultimately, to make the world a more equitable place.

~Cole Merkel, Portland 2010-12

“One of my supervisors at SOLVE, always ends emails, conversations, and our time working together with, “see you downstream.” Ecological justice, in my opinion, can be summed up with those three words. The acknowledgment that we are all connected by the environment we share creates a deeper respect for the health of the earth and each other. It causes us to look ahead to the future, to what is downstream from here, and work to make it better....In the process of renewing our connection to the land, we renew our connection to ourselves and each other—creating hope and justice downstream. “

~Gina Graziano, Sitka, AK '10-11, Hillsboro, OR '11-12

JVs live in intentional communities, sharing material resources, spirituality, recreational time, and the joys and struggles of daily life. Community life in JVC Northwest is much more than living together in the same house or sharing common space with others of like interests or like mind. While great friendships may emerge out of community, that is not the goal. The goal is authentic living. Life in this program calls the individuals in each community to make a commitment to personal and social transformation. This means that conflict and discomfort are welcomed as invitations to growth. JVC Northwest is fundamentally interested in how your encounters with others facilitate the unfolding of your deepest self.

Community can support and challenge us to be open, compassionate, and willing to change. We expect all applicants to demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary for creating and sustaining a vibrant community life. When these skills are faithfully practiced, the community experience is one where you learn to engage and love the profound imperfection of being human.

The following references and readings are to encourage reflection on the value of community. Please choose whatever materials you feel drawn to explore.

### Scriptural References to help you prepare for your interview:

- Matthew 18: 15-35 – Communal life
- John 13: 1-20 – Washing feet

### Resources to help you prepare for your interview:

- [“Tragic Gap”](#) - video by Parker Palmer
- [TED Talk on Vulnerability](#) by Brene Brown
- [“The Invitation”](#) by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

### Reflection Questions on Community:

How do you understand intentional community? Why are you choosing to live in intentional community for a year? How do you think living in community will challenge you? What do you think will be exciting or fun about living in community? What are some needs you have regarding community that are important to you? How do communicate your needs to others you live with? How can living in an intentional community enhance the success of the greater community (neighborhood, town, etc.)?

**Conflict and Conflict Resolution** are a normal and healthy part of relationships and community life; conflict enables relationships to grow and deepen. And everyone responds to conflict differently. Many of the ways we react to conflict do not actually help us come to a healthy resolution. As outlined in the Covenant, JVC Northwest community life invites the JV to live honestly and openly, lovingly bringing conflicts out into the open in a safe and non-judgmental environment, so that conflict can be resolved and relationships can heal and deepen.

Please describe a situation in which you were hurt or angered by someone. How did you react? How was the situation resolved? Give an example of a time when you came to understand you were in the wrong and needed to take responsibility. How did you feel? How was the situation resolved?

There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace, and ultimately no life, without community.

~M. Scott Peck

We are rarely able to interact only with folks like ourselves, who think as we do. No matter how much some of us deny this reality and long for the safety and familiarity of sameness, inclusive ways of knowing and living offer us the only true way to emancipate ourselves from the divisions that limit our minds and imaginations.

~bell hooks

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love.

~Coretta Scott King

## Reflections from JVs:

“JVC Northwest [has] begun to open my eyes, heart, and spirit to the true meaning of community. Through the relationships I am forming with my fellow Sitka JVs with whom I share the joys, blessings, challenges, and struggles of living in intentional community...[I am learning] the skills and art of healing and of opening the self to being healed. It has become clear to me within these past few months as never before how essential it is for the human family to come together in light of – rather than in spite of – our differences.”

~Ryan McCafferty, JV Sitka 2003-2004



Boise JV Andrew Williams cooking for community dinner

“We give hope, time, and listening whether celebrating with or struggling with one another. This is a home, and we don't give up! Community is always worth it.”

~Erica Carmody, Hays, MT 2011-14

“In my experience Community is taking a risk with your vulnerability and the deepest parts of yourself and being open to sharing your life. Putting faith in the risks of sharing all the struggles, joys, growth, and empowerments with the people you have opened your life to takes great courage. I am certain that Community is challenging, but life changing and worth every moment.”

~Christina Stewart, Seattle 2012-13



Big Sky region JVs playing cards at retreat



The Ashland Community (2015-16) recreate one of their first community photos from Orientation.

Simple living is the emptying of self for the sake of personal transformation, valuing relationships over objects, living in sustainable relationship with the earth, and in solidarity with marginalized members of our society. JVC Northwest expects all applicants to demonstrate the ways in which their use of time, money, and resources embraces the value of simplicity. In this technological age of smart phones, Internet and computer overuse, we invite JVs to think critically about how these things distract us. During this era of overconsumption of media, gas, food, energy, and other resources, we invite JVs to focus more on relationships, and less on acquiring and taking care of stuff. The following references and readings are to encourage reflection on the meanings of simple living. Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.

### Scriptural references to help you prepare for your interview:

- Mark 6: 6-11 – Mission of the disciples
- Luke 12: 13-34—Parable of the rich fool

### Resources to help you prepare for your interview:

- [“A Garden of Simplicity Is Growing in the World”](#) by Duane Elgin
- [“Peaceful Simplicity: How to Live a Life of Contentment”](#) from Zen Habits
- [“The Movement to Live More Simply is Older than You Think”](#) by Roman Krznaric

### Reflection Questions on Simple Living:

How does your present lifestyle reflect, or not reflect, the value of simple living? Please refer to your use of time, money, material objects, technology, and/or travel. How will you do you imagine getting your entertainment needs met, free from casual shopping trips, reliance on streaming movies, and eating out frequently?

JVC Northwest asks JVs to limit their use of technology throughout their JV year and even to consider a technology fast by not bringing smartphones, laptops, or tablets with them. Additionally, the JV houses do not install internet in their homes. We ask that you push yourself to discern what is truly necessary during your year. What would factor into your decision to bring a laptop or other technology to your JVC Northwest year? If you brought it, how might it hinder your experience?

What about travel? How do you want to develop a sense of place during your JV year? How might traveling impact your sense of place, your ecological impact/environmental footprint, and relationships with those in your community and those you serve? Please note that we ask JVs to limit travel during their year of service, to bring attention to the limited resources we use sometimes unthinkingly and to deepen relationships with those in our communities.

Consider the difference between a year of “challenge” to a lifelong lifestyle change. How would you plan to take your simple living from your time as a JV forward with you – back home and beyond?

The best things in life are the nearest: breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of right just before you. Then do not grasp at the stars, but do life’s plain, common work as it comes, certain that daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

Be still, and the world is bound to turn herself inside and out to entertain you. Everywhere you look, joyful noise is clanging to drown out quiet desperation.

~Barbara Kingsolver, High Tide in Tucson

Simplicity involves centering thinking and action upon what is most essential and central to our humanity...The goal is not just to minimize spending or to maximize recycling. The goal is to build our lives around different values.

~Mark Burch

## Reflections from JVs:

“For me, simple living binds all of the other values together. Once you challenge yourself to find ways to live more simply and with intention, the other three values of Spirituality, Community, and Social Justice become much more accessible.”  
~ Charlie Vogelheim, Tacoma 2010-11, Hillsboro 2011-12

“This year I've learned what my non-negotiable essentials are. I can live without the Internet in my house. I can live without a latte everyday from the coffee shops around town (hard, though!). I can live without a perfectly warm house. By shedding away the parts of our lives that are extraneous... we find out what is most crucial... This elimination of non-essentials allows us to enjoy the reality of life, where happiness lies. Happiness lies in simplicity of heart, which can be cultivated by creating an environment free of unnecessary objects.”  
~Karen Harmeyer, Seattle Cherry Abbey 2006-2007

“Living on the reservation has made me view [money] in a completely different way. Though the monthly stipend does not go far in our modern consumer society, I now recognize how many people would consider themselves lucky to have [any money left over] after paying for rent, food, gas, and other necessities. Yet, even though money is tight for many people on the reservation, they are still incredibly generous. The richness in their lives does not often stem from money, but from familial and community ties. I have learned immensely from this different perspective.”  
~Megan Reilly, Hays 2005-2006



JVs Emmy Morris (Yakima '15-'16, Ashland '16-17) and Matt Hansen (Yakima ,16-17) jamming at Orientation



JVs often bike commute to their service sites. Above, Portland JVs are feeling strong about their bike commuter status

Below, JVs learning how to compost



Spirituality moves through the depths and heights of each human person. It is how we name and encounter the Divine Presence – that which is beyond us. How we imagine God is a very personal truth. How we respond to that image reflects our experience, our hopes and fears, and the tradition in which we participate.

According to James Martin, SJ, Ignatian spirituality means finding God in all things, becoming a contemplative in action, looking at the world in an incarnational way, and seeking freedom and detachment. Spiritual expression and reflection are important elements of the JVC Northwest experience. We welcome applicants from all traditions and denominations, as well as those fully engaged in the questions of their faith.

The following references and readings are to encourage reflection on the meanings of spirituality. Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.

### Scriptural References to help you prepare for your interview:

- Mark 12: 28-34 – The Greatest Commandment
- John 9: 1-41 – The Man Born Blind

### Resources to help you prepare for your interview:

- Excerpt from [“Illuminata, A Call to Prayer”](#) by Marianne Williamson. Please click on Part One of the Illuminata on the left side of the page.
- Excerpt from [“Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith”](#) by Henri Nouwen

### Reflection Questions on Spirituality/Reflection:

- What do I understand spirituality to be?
- Share two or three key moments on your spiritual path thus far.
- What connection do you see between your faith/beliefs and your desire to work for justice?
- Recognizing that JVs are on diverse spiritual paths, reflect on how you respond to others whose spiritual or faith life is different from your own. Can you listen to others open up about their mental models of the divine without judging them or telling them how they are incomplete or wrong? Can you be open to the wisdom of spiritual paths other than your own? Can you take part in spirituality nights led by JVs coming from traditions different from yours?
- How would you seek to grow and explore your ideas of spirituality this year?



“Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

~ Pedro Arrupe, SJ

## Reflections from JVs:

“The heart is my image of God. It is central to our being, without it we could not live, and it is when you truly connect with another person, on a heart-to-heart level, that you can feel the presence of God and you feel it in your heart. That day, and every day, Jo was Christ for me. She helped me to feel a deeper connectedness to my job and to why I’m here.”

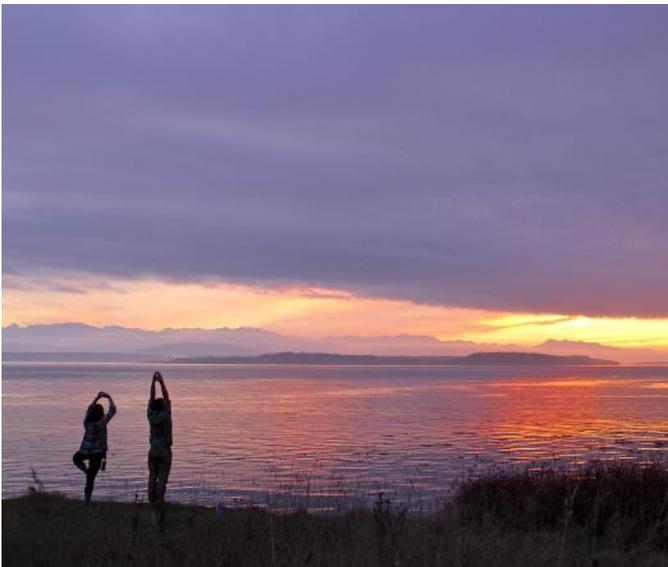
~ Kelsey Yorks, Anchorage 2006-2007

My goal for spiritual growth during my JV year was focused on how to link my personal faith journey and sense of spiritual meaning to my daily work. My service to my patients experiencing homelessness compelled me to accompany individuals through some of their darkest and emptiest moments. I was moved by their losses and humbled by their hope. Their struggle was a constant manifestation of the divine. My spiritual journey invited me to grapple with their pain and isolation, with the knowledge that it wouldn't simply get better. The words of "The Long View" became my mantra: "This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We are prophets of a future not our own." The JVC NW value of spirituality helped me to cherish my role as companion to my fellow human beings in crisis, even when hope for a better life was a long way off.

~Maggie Wright, Portland 2011-12



A JV taking time to reflect on the Mountain West region Spirituality Retreat



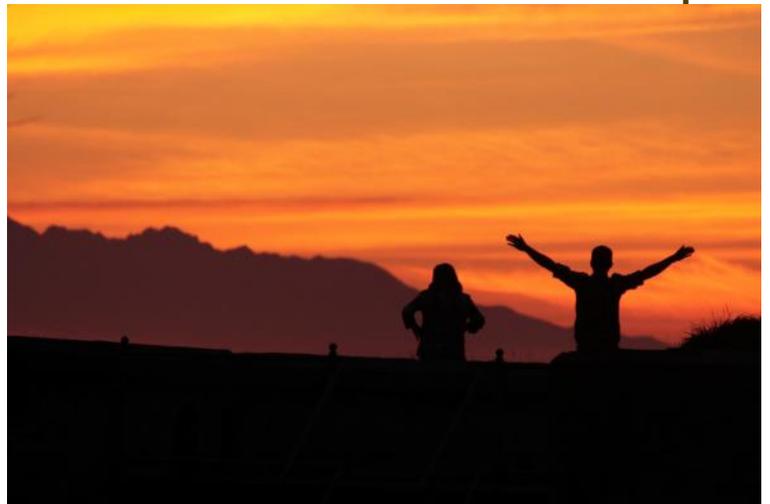
Seattle Cherry Abbey JVs doing yoga at sunset



Mountain West retreat region lighting candles for their closing activity

JVC Northwest values the health and wellbeing of every JV. JVs are placed in agencies that work directly with people who are often experiencing crisis and poverty. We believe in the importance of developing healthy practices for dealing with the everyday stresses of justice work and value an individual's ability to care for their own mental, physical, and spiritual needs.

While most people find their JV year to be a very rewarding one, JVs live and serve in potentially stressful environments. Tension may arise between housemates. A client at your service placement may relapse into their addiction. Another client may describe to you the difficulties of getting out of an abusive relationship. Your placement site may experience a change in leadership that affects who your supervisor is. Your supervisor may need your feedback to give you the quantity and quality of guidance that you need day-to-day. A family member or friend from home may struggle and seek your support. In your transition to a new living environment, service site, and town or city, you may be far from family, friends, and other individuals that have supported you in the past. Any of these factors, along with others, may potentially trigger stress.



- What triggers your stress? What ways have you found for successfully dealing with personal stress?
- What challenging experience or transition have you actively worked through? What did you learn about yourself through the experience?
- One challenge of the year is trying new things that you don't have much experience with yet. There are times when we all may fail to meet our own or other's expectations. We often learn more about ourselves through things that don't go as we've planned rather than through our successes. Please share a time when you've struggled and/or faced failure in your life. What did you do to move forward? What did you learn through your experience, and what are you still learning?
- JVC Northwest tries to establish relationships with local resources in the community in all the locales where we place JVs. Such resources include spiritual directors, psychologists, and mental health therapists. We recognize that there are times when a JV could benefit from support that extends beyond what a community, Program Coordinator, or local support people can provide. Knowing what you know about yourself, how open would you be to seeking out such resources if you thought it might be helpful for you?

## Reflection Questions on Alcohol and Drugs

During your interview, a staff member will discuss with you the **Drug and Alcohol Policy** for our program and invite you to ask questions. Although many of the following questions will not be included in your interview, they are provided to give you an opportunity to reflect on how alcohol and drug use intersects with the four values. JVC Northwest understands alcohol and illicit drugs to be a serious social justice issue for many people with whom we have built relationships in the Northwest. We view our policy on drugs and alcohol as consistent with the intentions in our Covenant: to live in healthy community, simply and sustainably, as a spiritual person committed to justice.

- Would you be willing to live by the commitment outlined in our Drug and Alcohol Policy?
- How has alcohol use (your own or that of others in your family or peer group) affected your life?
- In what ways do you think alcohol relates to the values of social and ecological justice, spirituality, community and simple living?
- A dry year means that you would abstain from consuming alcohol in the locale where you serve. What is your level of interest in being part of a dry community?
- If a community member of yours was in recovery from drug and/or alcohol abuse, would you be willing to live in solidarity with them by abstaining from all use of alcohol? Would you commit to a dry or discernment year if you were placed in a community on/near a Native American reservation or in Bethel, Alaska?
- What do you consider responsible or intentional use of alcohol?
- What are your expectations of alcohol consumption in your JV community?
- Please take some time to read our Drug and Alcohol policy. Reflect on questions or concerns that the policy raises for you. (You can bring these up in your interview.) Would you be willing to live by the commitment outlined in our policy? What are you open to exploring in terms of your relationship with alcohol?



# AmeriCorps Considerations

As a faith-based and justice driven service program, JVC Northwest welcomes and embraces the opportunities for Jesuit Volunteers to participate in the political process and advocacy efforts. At the same time, our partnership with AmeriCorps requires that our JV/AmeriCorps Members not engage in the below listed prohibited activities during their service day, as outlined by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS):

- Attempting to influence legislation;
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
- Participating in, or endorsing, activities that include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- Engaging in religious instruction or proselytization, conducting or providing worship services, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship;
- Providing a direct benefit to a business organized for profit; A labor union; A partisan political organization;
- Conducting a voter registration drive
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.



Additionally, AmeriCorps members may not engage by recruiting, training, or managing others for the that engage in the activities listed above. The full list of prohibited activities is available online under 45 CFR § 2520.65.

**Note:** We encourage our JVs to exercise their rights as a private citizen and individuals to participate in the activities listed above on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear AmeriCorps gear.

## Consider in your Discernment:

*The vast majority of our placements are AmeriCorps placements. As you explore your service interests, consider whether you would prefer to be in an Independent Placement (non-AmeriCorps placement) in order to serve in advocacy or ministry positions. If you become an AmeriCorps Member, do you think you can successfully carry out the full expectations of service?*

We are excited that you are considering JVC Northwest for your next journey. We hope this discernment packet has offered valuable resources for you in this application process. As you continue into the interview process, pay close attention to the thoughts and feelings that arise in conversations. We look forward to learning more about you and guiding you through this process. Blessings!



Our 2016-17 Jesuit Volunteers at Orientation