



Will Help Nonprofit Organizations in South Africa, Ecuador, England, Across the U.S.

Seven Assumption College graduates are participating in a post-graduate “Year of Service” program, helping nonprofit organizations in Ecuador, England and across the United States. The new alumni, who graduated from the College on May 17, 2014, have gone directly from the classroom to assisting in bettering the lives of others.

After graduation, many students decide to complete a year of service in which they can serve their community and develop skills that could further professional ambitions while receiving education awards, living stipends and loan deferment. Assumption students have participated in Year of Service programs for over 40 years and the College’s [Campus Ministry](#) and [Career](#)

[Development and Internship Center](#)

(CDIC) offices collaborate to support them through the process of choosing service as the first step in their careers and to support them through the application process. This collaboration helps students to further discern their vocations and to see how their skills can best serve others.

“Whether it’s faith-based or secular, participating in a post-graduate service program is rewarding and meaningful because the volunteers are making a difference in the communities where they live and work,” said Nicole DiOrio, director of Assumption’s CDIC. “The experience gives them the opportunity to work outside their comfort zone, where they can grow and explore their skills and gifts. Often, participating in service is the first step toward a career because many volunteers are placed in roles with supervisory or project management responsibilities, and as a result, have an edge when they enter the more traditional workforce after the program.”

City Year is just one of the 30 organizations Assumption graduates volunteer with. The education-focused nonprofit partners with public schools and teachers across the country to help students stay in school and on track to succeed. Volunteers provide individual support to students who need extra care and attention, focusing on attendance, behavior and course performance through in-class tutoring, mentoring and after-school programs. City Year trains the volunteers willing to devote a year of service as tutors, mentors and role models for students in grades 3 through 9, who are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school.

Eighty-seven Assumption alumni graduates have also volunteered with Peace Corps since 1961, including three members of the Class of 2013 who are currently serving in Armenia, Botswana and Liberia, according to Kendrall Masten, regional recruiter for Peace Corps.

“Community service is a popular activity among Assumption students, and an ongoing commitment to service is instilled in our students throughout their four years here” said Vincent Sullivan-Jacques, Assumption’s director of volunteer outreach and community engagement. “Our alumni recognize how service enhanced their liberal arts education and helped create an on-campus environment that inspires and supports civic responsibility and community action.

“Most importantly, as with all of Assumption’s service programs, our students and alumni discover through volunteering how their actions impact those they help, more so than how they are impacted by the experience of service,” he added. “That is part of the mission on which

Assumption was founded by Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon."

The following members of Assumption's Class of 2014 will participate in a Year of Service program:

- **Taylor Boyle** of Wells, Maine, who majored in psychology, will serve with the WHEAT Trust, a nonprofit women's work organization. She will help provide training to female-led businesses and groups in the townships surrounding Cape Town, South Africa.
- **Robert Flynn** of Cranston, R.I., who majored in mathematics, will be a member of City Year Boston, where he will work with children in the Boston Public Schools on a variety of mentoring programs.
- **Caitlin Goodhile** of Jefferson, Mass., who majored in English (with a writing and mass communications concentration), will work with Associate Missionaries of the Assumption in Newcastle, England, at Pendower Good Neighbor.
- **Mae L'Heureux** of Scarborough, Maine, who majored in psychology, will serve with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps in Omaha, Neb. She will be responsible for educating the community about mental health with the National Alliance on Mental Health.
- **Colleen Putzel** of East Haddam, Conn., who majored in English Literature, will volunteer with Rostro de Cristo in Duran, Ecuador, living and working with the poor.
- **Cassandra Sodergren** of Killingworth, Calif., who majored in Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies, will volunteer through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) in Berkeley, Calif., as a case manager in a women's shelter at Berkeley Food and Housing Project.
- **Marie Theroux** of Charlestown, R.I., who majored in Spanish, will spend the next two years in the Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers (PACT) program serving as a Catholic school teacher and earning her master's degree in education.

Putzel's commitment to serve in Ecuador provides an example of how her year of service grew out her time volunteering at Assumption. She first volunteered with Rostro de Cristo during her sophomore year at Assumption, as part of the College's [SEND service program](#) and returns there in July, where she will serve for a year.

"Volunteering for one week with Rostro de Cristo through Assumption's SEND program tremendously impacted my life," she said. "It opened my eyes to the world and was my first experience witnessing poverty. I am very humbled and blessed to have been accepted into its program for a whole year.

"I accepted this volunteer position in an effort to begin a life after college that builds on the values created at Assumption: servant leadership, a desire for a faith-driven life, and an intentional commitment to social justice," Putzel added.

Theroux, who recently returned from her orientation in her PACT community, shares that sentiment. She chose to volunteer with PACT because of its combination of service, community, scholarship and spirituality. Through PACT, she will teach Spanish to students in grades 9 and 10 at Bishop Hendricken High School in Warwick, R.I.

"Assumption's Campus Ministry programs and the College's faith-based community inspired my passion to want to serve and give back to Catholic education, of which I have benefited so much," said Theroux, who will begin her master's degree studies this summer at Providence College. "I look forward to growing in my faith and to serving my students and community on this new adventure."