



Each summer, Assumption College invites students to develop proposals to receive grants that enable them to explore a particular vocation or to conduct academic research. This summer, Global Studies major Sarah Clancy '18, of Dedham, MA, will use her High Impact Summer Grant to work closely with immigrants and their children while attaining a better understanding of God's calling for her in Chaparral, New Mexico.

While in Chaparral, Clancy will work with the Religious Sisters of Assumption as an Assumption Mission Associate (AMA), serving as a leader of a summer camp for children of immigrants. Over the years, the Sisters have built a bond of trust with the local people, which has allowed them to help the immigrant community in many different ways. A cornerstone of the mission is the educational and recreational programs offered to children and youth, with an eye to helping them develop leadership skills and a culture of community service. During the summer, the Sisters will welcome groups from other parts of the country and Mexico for three or four weeks of camps; in addition to all the fun, these groups get a chance to learn about the realities of life on the border (Chaparral is located near the U.S. and Mexico border).

This opportunity, as well as many others in the past, is made possible by Assumption's High-Impact Summer Grant Program through [SOPHIA](#) (SOPHomore Initiative at Assumption)--one of many Assumption programs created to reflect the College's mission to form graduates known for critical intelligence, thoughtful citizenship, and compassionate service. Targeted to Assumption sophomores, SOPHIA combines residential, academic and travel opportunities, under the guidance of dedicated faculty mentors, to foster a culture of vocational exploration that will help students pursue productive lives of meaning.

"During the summer, many of our students spend time working and learning in communities near and far," said President Francesco C. Cesareo, Ph.D., who leads SOPHIA participants on an annual summer trip to Rome, Italy, where Assumption has a campus. "The summer is an

ideal time for our SOPHIA students to employ the lessons and conversations they experienced during the academic year to explore what will give purpose and meaning to their life, as they contribute toward the common good. This Assumption grant opportunity supports SOPHIA students in their pursuits of testing their God-given gifts and talents as they prepare for personally and professionally rewarding careers.”

SOPHIA integrates residential, academic, grant, and travel opportunities with the guidance of four faculty mentors. The program fosters a culture of vocational exploration at Assumption and helps students discern and choose lives of meaning. During the academic year, students enrolled in SOPHIA are encouraged to apply for the summer grants, which are funded by the Council of Independent Colleges and the Lily Foundation.

The grant program supports student pursuits in three categories: community engagement, faith, and life of the mind. Recipients can discover a deeper connection between their spiritual and religious commitments and their personal and professional lives, in terms of vocation.

Past recipients have used their grants for research and program development. Kelse Merrill '17 used his \$3,460 grant to travel throughout England and New England, to research pre- and post-Norman England. Through this grant, he channeled his passion for history to help better educate future historians. Franchesca McMenemy '17 was awarded \$314 to help develop a program for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts to increase its membership and encourage young people to vote and participate in the civic process. Through this grant she hoped to show youth that they have the power to make a difference.

The children Clancy will be helping at this camp “lead lives faced with economic strains, violence in school, drugs in their neighborhoods, and blurry visions of a better future.” Clancy believes that, “being at the summer camp allows the kids to be kids in a safe environment and forget their troubles for a little while.” She is honored to have the opportunity to bring some joy into the lives of these children.

She hopes this experience will help her narrow down the path to a future career that will help make a difference in the world.

“From the reflection time SOPHIA has afforded me, I have found that my vocation is to help

others to the best of my ability, to play a part in healing the world,” said Clancy. “I also have had a great love for Latin American culture since the beginning of my Spanish language studies in sixth grade. To be able to immerse myself in this culture would be an honor.”