



# Shepherd Voice

A PROJECT OF THE SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## Unordinary Beauty by Chrissy Lemmon, León, México

I think people often forget to see the beauty in ordinary things. How often do we really slow down enough to be grateful for a beautiful thing said, to laugh at the funny things children say and do, to walk a little slower down the street and take in everything around us, or let the comfort of a wonderful conversation sink into our hearts? I know from experience as a student, as a doer and go-getter, as a person constantly absorbed in the past or future; that I have spent a lot of time missing out on the present moment and the beauty around me. I don't know what changed for me here in México: maybe it's the daily yoga practice where I give myself time to

**“Simplicity is simply being present to what is being offered.”**

rejuvenate and relax enough to stay in the present moment throughout the day. Or maybe it's the adventure of being in a foreign place and having new experiences that are easier to pick out as different. The truth is I don't know. What I do know is that when I stopped to pay a little more attention to the beauty around me, I realized it was everything but ordinary. Maybe that is simplicity. Maybe all we need to do is open our eyes...

Simplicity is tortillas with salt. It's children in my English class saying few words with great love. Simplicity is accompanying Teresita to buy vegetables from Juan Pedro's stand. It's sitting with Ulises and watching his favorite soccer team on TV.

Simplicity is jumping in all the puddles on the way

Chrissy practicing traditional Mexican dance



back from work on a rainy day. It's children who hardly know me kissing me on the cheek, because what they do know is that I love them. Simplicity is a Christmas where the only gift given is the gift of family. Simplicity is women having one hour to themselves to breathe and meditate during yoga class.



GSV Chrissy Lemmon, pictured with her "niece", Vanessa

Simplicity is having a picnic with friends in Sister Gergy's garden. It's the women who sew, who make everything from scratch, and who create beauty. Simplicity is Lupe's laugh. It's Alejandro making me tea from the herbs in his garden. Simplicity is the rolling hills and deep tunnels of Guanajuato and the boys who ride their bikes down its steep streets.

Simplicity is dance class. It's flipping my Mexican skirt around to the traditional songs of Jalisco, Veracruz, and Chihuahua. It's eating tacos from the local stand on Friday nights. It's making chile rellenos, rice, and limeade.

Simplicity is a homemade clown costume. It's Vanessa riding on my shoulders and making clapping noises with her tongue against the roof of her mouth. It's picking corn under the shade of my straw hat. It's riding through the mountains in the back of a truck.

Simplicity is being awake to life. It's being a witness to everyday, unordinary beauty. Simplicity is simply being present to what is being offered. Simplicity is not just the absence of things; it is living in the fullness of life that we so often allow to pass us by.

Embrace the world...

Good Shepherd  
Volunteers  
Mission Statement

Good Shepherd  
Volunteers is a service  
association  
of women and men  
which exists to express  
the gospel values of the  
Good Shepherd in  
today's world.

The Sisters of the Good  
Shepherd and  
the volunteers share  
the same work and  
values in this  
collaborative project.

The basic elements of  
the GSV philosophy are  
exploration of simple  
living, working towards  
social justice, the  
development of  
community bonds, and  
attentiveness to the  
spirit.

## From the GSV Board of Directors

**Traveling to Lima to visit the Good Shepherd Volunteers taught me the importance of three things in service: integration, servant leadership, and laughter.**

**Integration.** The Lord is truly working in our volunteers to do His work. Walking alongside Jeff and Jennifer in their daily service as GSVs in Lima was nothing short of inspiring. Jeff has integrated himself into the daily lives of the children and staff at La Posadita so they reach out to him as one of their own. In the same way, Jennifer, a babe at 7 months of service, is at ease at Reina de la Paz, the home for pregnant and young mothers aged 11-16. The infusion of youth and energy multiplies the Sisters' ministries sevenfold.

**Servant Leadership.** The work that Jeff and Jennifer are doing is not easy. Jeff commutes nearly an hour to La Posadita; Jennifer has to come face-to-face with others' physical and emotional needs in her service. Despite the daily challenges, they persist. Their perseverance is an example of servant leadership—building community through giving of themselves to others.

**Laughter.** There is no substitute for laughter. I have not laughed as hard or as often as I did in the seven days Michele, Jeff, Jennifer, and I spent together. The most mundane tasks—buying bread, taking the bus, finding a suitable place to use the restroom—all became subjects for tall tales and making jokes. Jeff and Jennifer's senses of humor have certainly added to their ability to adapt and integrate. We can thank God for the gift of laughter in their day-to-day service.

I pray God may continue to bring all of our volunteers joy and newfound friendships among those they serve. I also thank God for the chance to see our volunteers in service; from a board member's perspective, I cannot imagine how we have not sent volunteers to Lima in the past, and will commit to making sure that they are able to serve there in the future.

*Erin McMahon is a new GSV Board Member, who recently traveled to Lima, Peru with Michele Gilfillan to visit our two volunteers, Jeff Fulmer and Jennifer Griffin.*

## Deepening Faith by Jenna Mueller, Wickatunk, New Jersey

Whoever said, "spirituality is a journey" was right. I am sitting in silence during our retreat marking the eighth month as a Good Shepherd Volunteer. As I reflect upon my journey these last eight months, I realize that a large portion has been dedicated to better understanding my beliefs, faith, and spirituality. Three terms inexorably linked in my mind. My Good Shepherd journey has been one of growth and deepening of faith.

I always considered faith to be deeply personal. So personal I rarely discussed it with even my closest friends. I viewed it as something to be lived, not discussed. By discussing my faith I thought others would think I was trying to convert them, judge them, or did not respect them enough to honor their faith. The legacy of our last pope helped me to think differently. By focusing on our commonality, recognizing our differences, and most importantly, opening the lines of communication to work for the good of all. As my thoughts turn back to the joys, disappointments, and understanding

**"My Good Shepherd journey has been one of growth and deepening of faith."**

of my ever-changing journey, I recognize that it is a journey we are all making. A journey that is as different for each of us as is our faith and our relationship with a Creator. For me, reading, thinking and yes, even discussing my faith helps on the journey. Then when my head is full of thoughts bouncing around, it is time to be silent to the world, to listen, to hear and to grow.



Jenna Mueller  
assists with  
science classes at  
Collier High School

## Alumni Corner

We wish much joy and love to GSVs who are engaged to be married: **Franziska Sander**, '00 and Zacharias Wagner who will be married in June, 2005; **Jessica Kochis**, '00 and Sean Fedeli; **Christine Mariano**, '03 and Andrew Crocker, who will be married in July, 2005; and **Heather MacAdam**, '01 and Tomasz Janik who will marry in Cuba in July, 2005.

Congratulations to **Elizabeth McLaughlin**, '99 on the completion of a dual Masters in Elementary Education and Special Education; **John Bosco Nsamba**, '00 who recently graduated with an MBA from New York University; **Libby Cunningham**, '04 who will be volunteering with an HIV/AIDS prevention education program in Belize; **Cristin Mathiez**, '03 who has just completed her MSW at the Columbia University School of Social Work; **Megan Davis**, '00 on her new job at the University of Florida at Gainesville; and **Michelle Massett**, '04 for her acceptance into the MSW program at Louisiana State University.

We are working to stay connected to GSV alumni, and are looking for suggestions on how to do so! Please send us your ideas and any updated contact information to [GSV@goodshepherds.org](mailto:GSV@goodshepherds.org) or call 1.888.668.6GSV ext. 780

## Spread the Word!

**Where are you called to serve?** Good Shepherd Volunteers (GSV) is looking for volunteers!

Positions are still available in New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles and Washington, DC.

Discover how you can make a difference in the lives of women and children in the fields of human services, education, counseling or advocacy.

Job descriptions are available at:  
[www.gsvvolunteers.org/opportunities.htm](http://www.gsvvolunteers.org/opportunities.htm)

For more information call  
Mary Helldorfer at 1.888.668.6GSV ext. 717

Applications are now being accepted for the August 2005 volunteer year. Positions are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## Waking Up by Jessica Nelson, Itauguá, Paraguay

Given the indisputably dreadful sound of alarm clocks, naturally one would do everything within her power to avoid listening to it more than once. Nevertheless, in that groggy purgatory before I haul myself out of bed, I am a piteous snooze addict. One perk about the transitory, yet intense cold of Paraguayan winters is that I can bury the battery-operated hellion under the blankets, muffling its shock waves. Perhaps even more distressing to my morning-self is the cold. It waits patiently for me, lurking about the room, just daring me to abandon the warm cocoon of my fortress. But eventually I surrender to the dual harassment of clock and cold and shuffle my way to the bathroom.

One of our house walls is made of hollow brick, a typical Paraguayan architectural response to the heavy heat that reigns nearly all year long. It makes for lovely ventilation on summer days and provides endless entertainment for the 'lil ones who are inordinately amused by watching (and commenting on) our daily routine. But on a day like today it simply adds to the chill. I shiver my way through a quick shower, trying to stay beneath the warmish water as much as possible before dancing my way into my clothes, limbs jolting in a futile defense against the frigid air.



Jess Nelson shares her gift of music with children in Itauguá

Upon entering the "Club de Niñ@s" I am met with the uncurbed jubilation unique to children gathered

with the promise of play. Leticia looks at me and asks incredulously, "¿Vos te bañaste recién?" (Did you just shower?). There began our discussion of bathing, hygiene being a familiar topic in the group (lice has been a continual issue for us—and I mean *us*). Most of the kids do not have hot water, and many live without running water at all. Some families will place a large basin of water under the sun so that by the end of the day it might be more tolerable.

"Are simplicity and solidarity not two fundamental tenets of the life I am trying to live?"

So who am I to have warm water? Albeit our house is freezing, but it is sturdy and has plumbing! Are simplicity and solidarity not two fundamental tenets of the life I am trying to live? But then again, where do I place my limits? I do remember "spasming" through a week of freezing showers last winter when our precariously assembled water heater broke. A mantra got me through those icy moments: *This is the kids' reality*.

Commitment to solidarity does not come in two-year doses. The discernment and following of the call that led me here did not end upon my arrival. Everyday is a montage of callings that I must choose how to answer. It is often as simple as how to spend a free hour of my time. It is finding that balance between service to my community and taking care of myself. Today I let this reminder of my community's inhumane conditions sink into me in order to be humbled. Tomorrow I will quiet the mental grumbling that so often accompanies my mornings and replace it with gratitude.

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# Learning to Serve

by Elisa Bresba, Wickatunk, New Jersey

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Being a volunteer, sometimes it is easy to become complacent. You have “given up” a year of your life; you are living on a limited budget; you work hard to help those in need. Isn’t that enough?

It is also easy to get bogged down. With all the issues, with all the injustices in the world, it seems too complex, too big for one to handle. Am I not doing my fair share? How much is enough?

And then sometimes as a volunteer you learn how we all have so much to give and we can all help change the world.



NJ GSVs Jenna Mueller and Elisa Bresba at the Spring Spirituality Retreat

On March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, some of my fellow Collier High School Staff members and I took eight Collier High School students on an overnight school trip. We had to raise over a thousand dollars for this event, we had to give up our Saturdays, and sleep overnight at a facility with

no showers. What was this excursion for? It was to volunteer with Youth Service Opportunity Program (YSOP) in New York, where we volunteered at food banks and soup kitchens around the city.

**“We all have so much to give and we can all help change the world.”**

My students at Collier High school have not had easy lives. Some have dealt with trauma, violence, depression, pain, and death. It would be easy to understand why our students do not want to give back. What kind of life has been dealt to them? And yet they are so willing to give, willing to share, willing to help.

It is not only these eight extraordinary girls that are so generous with their time. Collier students are active in the community. Through the school, they volunteer at soup kitchens, help at blood drives, and work with senior citizens. The very people whom I gave up a year to serve are teaching me how to serve others. I have not given up a year but have been gifted with a year to learn.

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## Good Shepherd Volunteers

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Michele G. Gilfillan—Director  
Mary Helldorfer—Assistant Director  
Tuleisha Signs—Administrative Assistant

## Mail To:



We are excited to announce that we have a new GSV T-shirt! Designed by GSV alumna Karen Bulthuis, it reads “Just Love” (St. Mary Euphrasia) and is available in sizes S-XL. Please contact us to order yours today!  
\$5 or a

Embrace the world!  
14 years of service



“Just Love.”

Experience GSV again or for the first time with the new website:

[www.gsvvolunteers.org](http://www.gsvvolunteers.org)

“My strength is in silence and hope. God’s mercies give fresh vigor to my soul.”  
**St. Mary Euphrasia, Foundress,  
Sisters of the Good Shepherd**