



# Shepherd Voice

A PROJECT OF THE SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## Authentic Spirituality by Casey Dave, Astoria, New York

*“Without authentic solid spirituality, you can not do good for others.”*

*~Anonymous*

According to the Funk and Wagnalls dictionary, spirituality is the state of being spiritual. They define the word spiritual as “pertaining to or affecting the immaterial nature or soul of a man,” among other definitions. The word spiritual, to me, is something intangible. The very inward totality of someone is measured by his or her spirituality. My experience as a Good Shepherd Volunteer has truly been an inward journey.

**“I think that it is more meaningful to serve knowing that your service to others is a reflection of God’s love.”**

Initiating myself into the presence of God on a daily basis, and prayer times with my roommates have really kept me from losing focus. Even the times I have been able to pause and say a prayer for the girls that I work with, have given me strength. My faith in Christ and His presence in my life are, for me, directly connected with my spiritual growth, as well as my service as a Good Shepherd Volunteer.

One of the reasons that I chose this program is because of the tenet of spirituality. At the center of spirituality, for me, is God. I think that it is more meaningful to serve knowing that your service to others is a reflection of God’s love. This tenet has also been a challenging tenet to uphold. There are times when I allow my emotions and physical state of being to overwhelm me, causing me to stray away from my Creator.

Another challenge that I have encountered in my spiritual walk deals with my placement. Although spirituality is a key element for the Good Shepherd Volunteer program, it is not as



Good Shepherd Volunteers (l to r) Tiara Silva (NY), Casey Dave (NY) and Corrine Ochipinti (LA) at the Marydell Retreat Center

prevalent in my everyday experiences with Good Shepherd Services and the Euphrasian Residence, a diagnostic center for troubled teenage girls. Although the girls come to Euphrasian for help, spirituality is not a prominent factor in their receiving of help.

My community mates work in similar facilities: Marian Hall and St. Helena’s Residence are group homes for girls, Red Hook After-School Program is geared toward helping children excel academically, and St. Germaine’s Residence is an all-boys non-secure detention center. While spirituality is not at the forefront of our work, the challenges we find there strengthen and encourage us to find God in unlikely places.

He is found in the times I am blessed to tell my Euphrasian girls that they are beautiful. He is found in the sometimes-unexpected laughter of the girls at Marian Hall. He is found in the love and the confidence that the St. Helena’s staff have for the girls as well as for one another. He is found in the willingness of the St. Germaine’s boys to take responsibility for and grow from their mistakes. God is found in the children’s enthusiasm to learn in the Red Hook After-School Program. Thank You God, for making Your presence known in the most unlikely places; You take us closer to You.

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 Director

Dear Friends,

*"Rouse your heart to love, gratitude and generosity." ~St. Mary Euphrasia*

This Lenten season many of us will spend more time in prayer or meditation. Or, some of us may give up one of our favorite sweets. St. Mary Euphrasia's words remind me of why we are challenged to be more intentional during Lent. Lent is about letting go. We hope that by depending less on material goods or other worldly distractions, we can open our hearts and minds to develop our relationship with God. Perhaps one of the most beautiful ways we can express our love for our Creator is in the way we treat others—to rouse our hearts to give generously and be a person for others.

I've witnessed this generosity in our volunteers, who are giving of themselves to so many people. Our volunteers have grown so much in the past six months! It is humbling to be a companion with our volunteers on their journey of justice, of

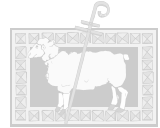
compassion and of self-discovery. The love that our volunteers have for the women, adolescents and children with whom they work is a reflection of their love for God.

We continue to witness our volunteers' growth and we also excitedly look ahead to August when we will welcome new volunteers into the GSV experience. At the office we are busy reading applications and interviewing candidates. We are excited by a positive response so far and hope that we will be blessed with another group of dedicated volunteers in the coming months!

As we continue to journey in prayer this Lent, I am grateful for your support and generosity. Thank you for rousing your hearts to love. May this Lenten season be liberating for all of us and may we journey toward the resurrection with hope.

In Peace,

*Michele G. Gilfillan*



## The Simple Life by Megan Massett, Astoria, New York

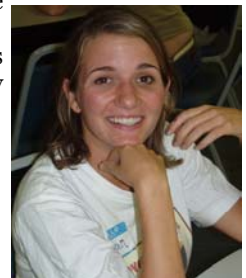
Our dear friend Mr. Webster defines "simple" as "not complicated; ordinary." In that case, living simply is not always simple. While the idea of simplicity—living on a monthly stipend without the hassles of bill paying and the pressures of commercialism—brings an image of candles, peace, and Gandhi to mind, this way of life can be challenging.

*"To have simplicity of mind and heart, trying to do all things with pure, simple love...is a constant struggle for me."*

On a material level, living simply is counter-cultural. With New York City as the epitome of American commercialism, it can be a challenge to be unable to afford a frozen caramel macchiato everyday, or even every week. A store near the group home where I work has a ring that I really like. To know that buying it is not smart nor necessary is a hard realization.

For me, though, living simply is more complicated on an introspective level. For instance, the deadline of writing this article has been in the back of my mind all week, adding unnecessary stress to my life, which, to me, contradicts the idea of simplicity. To have simplicity of mind and of heart, trying to do all things with pure, simple love and let go of the stress that builds up from working with frustrated teenage girls, is a constant struggle for me. My work at Marian Hall consists of being with eighteen girls who come from backgrounds of hurt and brokenness. While this work is challenging, the simple reward of a grin from a girl who rarely grins, or a hug from a girl who greatly hurts, is immeasurable.

However, the fruits of these challenges—outer and inner—are in no way ordinary. Though I share my honest struggles with living simply, the frustrations are hugely outweighed by their rewards. I have never experienced true contentment, intentionally working for love, like I have this year. The peace and joy that come from simple living—being able to live happily on a modest stipend and to take the time to focus, breathe, and just be—cannot be contained by any dictionary.



Megan Massett  
comes to GSV from  
Louisiana!

## Alumni Corner

We wish much joy and love to GSVs who are engaged to be married: **Jim Spillman, '00** and Katie Pytlak will be married in the fall of 2005. **John Bosco Nsamba, '00** and Allen Agaba will be married in the summer of 2006, in Uganda.

Congratulations to **Sarah (Cavell) '99** and James Brogan who welcomed a baby boy, James Richard, into their family in November '04. James joins his big sister, Erin who was born in October '03.

Congratulations to **Kathleen Wurth, '99** on her October wedding to Lance Yeager, and to **Toni Crowell, '95** on beginning her PhD in Human Development at the U of Missouri-Columbia.

We are working to stay connected to GSV alumni, and are looking for suggestions on how to do so! If you would like to share ideas with us, please contact us via phone or email. Please send us any updated contact information on how to get in touch with you!  
[GSV@goodshepherds.org](mailto:GSV@goodshepherds.org) or (888) 668-6GSV ext. 780

The new GSV website is up and running and includes many photos from past volunteer years. Log on to [www.gsvolunteers.org](http://www.gsvolunteers.org) to view pictures from your year! If you have any photos that you would like to share, we would be happy to post them for you.

## Winter Retreat

From January 28-30, the domestic GSVs came back to their roots at the Marydell Retreat Center in Nyack, New York. GSV alumni Jim Spillman, '00 and Elizabeth ('00) and Trevor Thompson facilitated the weekend on GSV tenets of Social Justice and Simplicity.

The volunteers discovered the interconnectedness of justice and economic equity, and simplicity and conscientiousness through reflection, discussion and sharing their experiences of service.



GSVs (l to r) Jenna Mueller (NJ), Casey Dave (NY), Tim Huegerich (DC) and Elisa Bresba (NJ) celebrated their time together on retreat.

## Building a Community by Corrine Ochipinti, Los Angeles, California

The Los Angeles community is comprised of four very different women who have chosen to share their unique gifts and talents: Beth Thornton – outgoing, talkative, passionate, and always willing to share herself. Judith Widmer – energetic, very committed to serving others, spiritual, and grounded. Corrine Ochipinti – caring, open, and always willing and wanting to help others. Monica Kiefer – loving, lovable, and always providing a laugh.

**“Community isn’t just living and eating together. It’s talking to each other, laughing with each other and listening to each other.”**

This is our community, our apartment full of laughter, our school full of hard work and our weekends full of sightseeing and exploring. We are four



Corrine Ochipinti

ladies from the east coast, working in LA and living in North Hollywood, who are similar, yet completely different. Knowing each other for only one week, we departed to LA to spend one year living and working together. We had one common goal, to commit ourselves to serving others as Good Shepherd Volunteers.

We work in a domestic violence shelter for women and children alongside the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. We are teachers to students that have never felt safe, have never been recognized for positive reasons and have never been able to trust. Sharing ourselves with them is very rewarding, but takes a lot out of us. Therefore, we try to make our home a place of peaceful retreat. Like any complete strangers that move in

together, we have our differences. In the beginning, we weren’t communicating well and we realized that we were sharing an apartment, but not sharing ourselves. These days, however, I couldn’t ask for anything more. Our community life is great! We know each other; we know when we can tease each other and laugh about it, and we know when someone’s had a hard day. Community isn’t just living and eating together. It’s talking to each other, laughing with each other and listening to each other. One thing we do to stay connected to each other is “God Bless.” Everyday when we get home from work, we sit down and pray together. We each bless somebody, or pray about something that is on our minds. This allows us to check in with each other, share our concerns and stay grounded. Not only do we have our daily God Bless, but we also try to do at least one group activity per month. We have our community nights weekly, but going out together on the weekends allows us to enjoy each other’s company outside of the workweek.

Although the work with the women and children at the shelter is emotionally and physically challenging, we try not to let this interfere with our community life. We have learned how to listen to each other, to help each other and to support one another. We know that no matter how different we may be, we are not just a group of ladies from the east coast that moved in together, we are a community.



The LA Community at the annual Good Shepherd Shelter Fundraiser (l to r) Corrine Ochipinti, Monica Kiefer, Judith Widmer, Beth Thornton

we are a community.

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# HandCrafting Justice

 by Christina Harris, Washington Heights, New York

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Your children are crying as they walk barefoot on the cold earth floor inside your family's one room shack. It has been two days since they have eaten and their bellies are growling with hunger. You want to pick them up and tell them that it will be all right, but you know that it will not be. You work long hours at the factory and for what? The little bit of money you make is not enough for you to survive, let alone you and two children. You are desperate. You feel you have no other choice. Tonight you will make your way to the brothel and sacrifice your soul, but your children will not go hungry.

Fiction? No. Reality? Yes. This is a reality that plagues many women in the developing world. With limited rights and resources women are left in poverty. They have few, if any, opportunities to better their lives and their situations.

These women do have rights, and this oppression, this injustice, must be stopped. That is why I have committed a year of service to HandCrafting Justice\*. HandCrafting Justice is a non-profit, fair-trade project working for economic and social justice of individuals, particularly women, in fourteen developing countries. Their beautiful handcrafted goods are marketed in the United States and Europe, giving them the opportunity to earn a living



(l to r) Amy Flaherty, Michelle Rader, and Chrissy Harris at the SOA protest

wage, provide for their families, and better themselves. This is not charity, it is justice. The women want to work and they want their work to be respected and admired. And it is.

**“What I do with my life and what you choose to do with yours has an effect on our sisters and brothers around the world. Let us remember this.”**

There are times as I'm lifting boxes, cleaning the boutique, going to the bank, or even driving to a sale at 7:30 am on a Saturday that I have to remind myself why I'm doing this. I have to tell myself that there is a reason. I may never personally meet any of these women, but their lives go on. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Our struggle is one. Our lives are interwoven. What I choose to do with my life and what you choose to do with yours has an effect on our sisters and brothers around the world. Let us remember this. And let us envision a world of peace and continue to work for justice.

**\* HandCrafting Justice was formerly known as the Global Women's Exchange.**

**For more information or to purchase beautiful handcrafted goods, check out [www.handcraftingjustice.org](http://www.handcraftingjustice.org)**

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## Good Shepherd Volunteers

337 E. 17th Street  
New York, NY 10003  
Ph: 888-668-6GSV x780  
Fax: 212-979-8604  
E-mail: [gsv@goodshepherds.org](mailto:gsv@goodshepherds.org)  
**[www.gsvolunteers.org](http://www.gsvolunteers.org)**

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 Bulhuis, 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.gsvolunteers.org](http://www.gsvolunteers.org)**

**“If you always love one another, uphold one another, you will be capable of working wonders!”**

**St. Mary Euphrasia**

