



Anyone For Deer Chili?

Jonathan Little & Donna Liette, C.P.P.S.

E-mails were shooting back and forth from Rensselaer to Chicago as preparations were being made for the PBMR annual youth retreat. This year Saint Joseph College generously agreed to offer us their facilities and personnel. Our guys sensed something good was about to happen so, they began to sign up...one...two...three...and then eight! Sunday, February 20th came, and nine showed for the trip—YES! Despite the rain and some snow (no, the blizzard was history), the journey was on—nine young men and Dave, Denny and Donna.

These guys had already caught the Precious Blood spirituality from our Chicago Center, but it was obvious that it flowed from Chicago to Rensselaer because that same spirit of hospitality and respect could be felt coming from every person that spoke with us, served us and/or invited us into their lives and their college.

Jonathan, was one of the nine that traveled from the gang banging, violent streets of South Chicago to the peaceful, quiet, countryside of Rensselaer, Indiana. Jonathan tells of his experience:

“Hi my name is Jonathan Little and being part of the Precious Blood Center is one of the most beneficial things going on for me right now. Thanks to Fr. Kelly and Fr. Denny I have met lots of important people that have a passion for helping others. They’ve helped me in plenty of ways for example helping do what’s necessary to get back on track and in school. They took some friends and me to Saint Joseph’s College in Indiana; it was a wonderful experience. Listening and talking to some of the students and staff really inspired me to strive to be successful. Visiting Saint Joseph’s broadened my view on life because of the friendly environment, the beautiful campus, and the inspiring lectures gave to us. I met some wonderful people during the

visit, but there’s one person that stood out the most and that was Br. Tim. He welcomed us with opened arms and it remained that way throughout our visit. The day came for us to go home, but I didn’t want to leave because it felt like I was at home. I talked about Saint Joseph’s for a week straight at work, at home and at my current school. I learned a lot just from that day and a half, but the most important was that despite your background or ethnic group you can be successful if you work towards it. There’s going to be some struggles along the way. You have to look past them, open your eyes and see that there are doors to be opened, paths to be taken. It’s all about which path you decide to take and what door you decide to open. Whatever you set your mind to, you can achieve. Overall my visit to Saint Joseph’s College was exciting, educational and fun. I would love to visit or maybe even attend next year. Thank you. Jonathan Little.”



I, Donna, often walk with a heavy heart as I see “kids”—yes, they are so young and have already felt the victimization of society, the fallout of poverty, family disintegration, poor education. But this experience lifted me, because I saw in the eyes of these young men, a ray of hope, a sense that I could do this, I could go to college and actually succeed.

It was a wonderful experience of Precious Blood collaboration. Brother Tim fixed the “I want your recipe” chili—beef not deer. The members of the Precious Blood family ministering at St. Joe and the staff and students offered their special hospitality, nice rooms, good food and supporting presence. St. Joe college moved prison bars and gates that keep youth like ours locked up and

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invited them into their home and their hearts. Most of our guys have only been invited into a gang, but now they were invited into as one said, “a lovely college.” Another said, “It opened my eyes to bigger things.”

Can you imagine the amazement and joy of these young men? They felt respected—maybe for the first time—by others, except in our Precious Blood Chicago Center. This is restorative; this gave them a voice, a feeling of worth and a sense of crossing over from death to life, to hope. For many of our guys, they wonder if they will live to see college even if they had the opportunity. They plan funerals more than futures; they see more death than life.

After this total experience of fun and information, connectedness and circles, we were on our way home. We were all tired, but all knew we had had a life changing experience. We were given a reason to move on and up—the guys proudly held in their hands a college admissions packet, drank from their St. Joe cup and looked college bound in their St. Joe sweatshirts. Go Pumas Go!

I hope each of you reading this article can feel what we felt, and rejoice with us that these young men—even though not all will go to college—do now look to a future not of destruction but of hope. Actually, two have already sent in their applications. This experience helped them to see that they could break out of a cycle of violence and poverty and give a positive twist to Gaspar’s words in their situation: “I can, I must, I will!”

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and is a college student.*