



For We Are God's Helpers

Share your gifts, live your faith, change the world ... and let the world change you.

You Send the Best Trained Missioners Overseas

As a new class of Lay Mission-Helpers is finishing their Formation Program and preparing to go out into the field, we are thankful that your support helps provide for this high-caliber training.

The four-month residential program takes place at the Mission House in Los Angeles. Candidates live together, sharing meals, prayer time and classes.

"Our program prepares people spiritually, culturally and interpersonally," says Janice England, LMH program director. "It gives them a tool box to prepare for situations they will encounter."

When the Formation Program first started sixty years ago, LMH Founder Msgr. Brouwers taught the majority of the classes. It centered on spiritual and faith formation.

Over the years, topics such as culture and personal development have been added to the curriculum. Professors who are experts in their field teach the courses. Classes on "Living and Serving in a Turbulent World: Violence, Trauma and Safety," and "Managing Stress Overseas" give missioners practical training for the range of experiences they will have.

"There is a big emphasis on knowing yourself as you prepare to live in another culture," says England. "Stress is a part of the mission experience, and we want missioners to have coping strategies to use when they are away from the comforts of home."

The four-month program also allows time for the candidates to work through any personal issues that arise. "Things come up in months of community living," says



LMH candidates take courses during formation from professors who are experts in their fields.

England. "It is better to address those living here, than when you are living in another culture."

The LMH Formation Program is highly respected, and develops some of the best prepared missioners in the field.

"Lay Mission-Helpers are some of the most respectful missionaries I've ever encountered," said Sister Rosemary, the director of the nursing school in Cameroon. "They are culturally sensitive, trying to honor our culture and participate in it."

"I am very impressed with the caliber of the program," says Danita Kurtz, currently in the Formation Program. "Each day is like opening up a new gift."

Students Win LMH Essay Contest

"I consider myself a missionary because at both home and school, I've seen the changes I've made in people's lives," wrote Celeste Garnica, an 8th grader at St. Lawrence of Brindisi in Los Angeles.

Celeste was one of three students to win this year's Msgr. Anthony Brouwers Memorial Scholarships given to Catholic middle school students in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

This year's winners chose to write on the topic "How we can be missionaries in our own school or home." The awards were presented at the annual Missionary Childhood Association Mass held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

This year's winners are Kenia Cox, 7th grader at St. Odilia School; Celeste Garnica; and Judith Mares, 6th grader at School of Santa Isabel.

Congratulations on your essays!



Kenia Cox (left), Celeste Garnica (center) and Judith Mares (right) show their awards with LMH Executive Director Chad Ribordy and LMH Board President Marie Brouwers.

Thanks to You, the Blind Can See

"An elderly man came in with cataracts in both eyes. He had not been able to see for over ten years," said LMH missionary Amy Anderson serving as a nurse in Ecuador. "A week later he walked into the clinic alone. I didn't recognize him. The surgeon smiled and said, 'You were the blind man!'"

Miracles happen in mission, and thanks to you, Amy was able to witness one. A team of German ophthalmologists who visited Amy's clinic this year performed 174 surgeries, including this one, and consulted with 1,000 other patients. Amy was there to care for them because you support Lay Mission-Helpers.

Teams of doctors regularly visit Clinica Guadalupe, located in the Vicariate of Zamora, a remote area in the Amazon.

"It is such an honor to work with so many generous, wonderful people," said Amy. "I am blessed to see the benefits of the surgeons in the people who can see again, hear again and are able to work again after surgery."

Despite all the blessings, life in Zamora, Ecuador is not always easy for Amy. In her years as the coordinator of the clinic, she has seen over 500 volunteers come and go.

Recently, the director of the clinic, Padre Jorge, whom she worked with for over 15 years, returned to Austria to continue his work in his



LMH missionary Amy Anderson (top, left) sits with Mission Doctors Association physician Dr. Phillip Hawley, Jr., outside the clinic. (Bottom photo) A team of visiting doctors performed 174 eye surgeries at Clinica Guadalupe, where Amy currently serves.

own country.

The whole town had a party with flowers, mariachi bands, singing and a two-hour Mass to celebrate his farewell. Many people were crying as he left and several followed in their cars as he drove away.

"Change is always constant as a missionary," she said. "Our job is to keep the work that Father Jorge founded going."

Giving Children a Place to Call Home

When Dan and Felicia McClain, LMH Class of 1983, started dreaming up ways to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary, they never imagined a vacation could change the course of their lives.

After serving in Saipan with Lay Mission-Helpers, the McClains spent several years in Southern California before moving to Virginia for Dan's job. Fast forward to 2014. To celebrate their anniversary, Dan and Felicia decided to go on an African safari. Their travel agent recommended Zambia, which was also home to Ebenezer Childcare Trust, an orphanage the travel agent supported. As their planning evolved, Felicia asked if they could visit the orphanage before their safari.

"I walked onto this campus and saw a small building for girls, one for boys and one for toddlers," says Felicia. "As the toddlers came out to sing for us, I picked up a little girl and asked, 'What is her name?'"

"Her name is Felicia," came the reply.

"The worker didn't know my name," said Felicia. "I closed my eyes and said, 'Okay God. I heard you.' And I looked around and opened my heart to what I was supposed to feel."

In response to meeting the children

and the dedicated staff, Felicia and Dan started the Ebenezer Foundation to provide financial support for the orphanage. Felicia serves as president, and Dan does fundraising and PR. The Foundation helps feed and house almost 60 orphans and educate another 350 poor children in Livingstone, Zambia. They have visited them twice, in 2014 and again in 2016.

"I wear my Lay Mission-Helpers ring and it reminds me every day that we are still God's Helpers wherever we live," says Felicia. "There were so many lessons and difficult trials we experienced during our mission years in Saipan that have been a great help in this new undertaking. Mostly we know we need to stay patient and faithful despite setbacks."

"It's scary to lead a foundation," she says. "There is no Plan B for these children if we don't support them. It makes me thankful for the three years we served as Lay Mission-Helpers."



Dan and Felicia McClain, LMH Class of 1983, with the children of the Ebenezer Childcare Trust.

Remember LMH

Thank you for showing great compassion and generosity in helping us support the work of our missionaries around the world.

By partnering with Lay Mission-Helpers, you serve the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. You send them men and women to be the hands of Christ.

"In Cameroon, they often say, 'We are together.' I think it is a beautiful phrase. I feel like we represent not just our family, but all the people who sent us. We share with those we serve the love that people send from back home," commented returned LMH missionary, Maura Martin.

"We are together."

There are a couple of ways from your own home you can be "together" with our missionaries and those they serve. First, your monthly donation ensures continuing support for missionaries like Amy Anderson (see article left), serving as a nurse in Ecuador.

By including Lay Mission-Helpers in your will or estate plans, you can support nurses, teachers and other professionals sharing their gifts for years to come.

For more information on specific ways you can include Lay Mission-Helpers in your charitable giving plan, or to set up a recurring monthly donation, please visit www.LayMissionHelpers.org or call 213.368.1870.

One Nurse Changed a Generation

“Do you know Grace?”

Sister Olive smiles, holding up a picture of her nursing teacher, Grace Gonzales, LMH Class of 2001, that she keeps on her desk. “I ask every missionary if they know Grace. I love Grace Gonzales! My students call me ‘Total Patient Care’ because of Grace!”

Imagine Sister Olive’s surprise to see Grace Gonzales walk into her office this past March.

It’s not often that a Lay Mission-Helper gets to revisit her service country, but Grace visited Cameroon last spring with Elise Frederick, LMH Class of 1978, and director of Mission Doctors Association.

And before her eyes, Grace saw an answered prayer.

“When I was in mission, every day I prayed ‘God, if you could just give me one nurse that gets it, one that becomes a good nurse, I will be happy,’” Grace said. “It turns out, He not only gave me a nurse, He gave me the matron.”

Sister Olive is now the director of Njinikom Hospital in Cameroon.

“Sister Olive is in charge of everything at the hospital,” Grace said. “I am so proud. It makes me feel good to see her still using what I taught her.”

“The most important thing Grace taught me is that when you care for someone, you are caring for their whole person,” says Sister Olive. “When I teach nurses now, I have them draw the same compass Grace taught me, to help them look at every aspect of the patient.”

A whole generation of nurses was trained to provide total patient care because of Grace. During the three years she served with LMH, she taught over 150 students at Shisong Nursing School who are now working in the clinics and hospitals throughout Cameroon.

“I am the matron because Grace taught me to be a good nurse,” said Sister Olive. “And I am making



Sister Olive holds up the photo she’s had of Grace Gonzales since 2000.

sure the nurses are good because of Grace.”

“Grace told me, ‘I taught my students that there is not an African or an American way to be a nurse, there is a right way,’” said Elise Frederick. “Grace is a legend in Cameroon.”

“It was challenging every single day,” said Grace. “There were no books. There were no computers. I drew everything on the chalkboard. I drew the digestive system every day for two weeks! But I was happy with what I did, because it worked. By the end of those two weeks, each student could visualize the esophagus, stomach and pancreas.”

Lay Mission-Helpers change lives by their presence. Sometimes they see the changes while they are in mission. Sometimes, the changes will make a lasting impact on the next generation. God is always at work.