

Laurel Curts '05 '06

For Laurel Curts, service to others and life in community are inseparable.

The UIndy student spent nearly a month the summer of 2005 living with intentional Christian communities in Philadelphia and New Jersey volunteering at a free medical clinic for poor and homeless people.

“These are the communities that I feel at home with,” she said. “Not only are they intentional about their life together, they are intentional about the ways in which they are involved in their neighborhoods.”

Curts, a Terre Haute native, was graduated from UIndy in May 2005 with a bachelor’s degree in Religion. She completed an associate’s degree in nursing in May 2006.

During 2004 and 2005, Curts, 23, lived as part of the allelon house, an intentional Christian community at UIndy. The community is made up of students who live together, sharing their possessions and agreeing to pray together, worship together, and serve together.

Her time in the community has had an impact on her understanding of service to others, she said. “The CVOC-306 course we took [as part of the community] taught us that service forms you; you cannot help but be formed by serving other people.”

It was her involvement with the allelon house that got her interested in spending the summer on the east coast. In preparation for moving into the community, she attended a gathering of intentional communities from around the country in Durham, NC, in June 2004. There she met members of the Simple Way, an intentional community dedicated to simple living and service in Philadelphia, and the Camden House, a community located in Camden, New Jersey, one of the most environmentally polluted and crime stricken cities in the U.S.

“They invited me to visit them sometime,” she said, “and when I told them of my interest in nursing, they told me about the health clinic, which is run by the Catholic Worker, another intentional community.”



After returning from the conference in Durham, Curts began making plans to visit Philadelphia and New Jersey. While visiting with the communities, she enjoyed learning from the community about gardening, more responsible shopping, and other issues of daily life when she wasn’t at the free clinic.

Curts said that when she came to UIndy as a freshman, her faith mostly focused on “saving people.” Through classes, mentoring relationships, and life with the allelon house, Curts’ understanding of the Christian life now includes working to meet all the needs of people, including physical, mental, and spiritual health, she said.

This new perspective calls her to give her entire life to Christian service. The way that makes the most sense to Curts is living with others attempting to do the same thing, she said. She will move to the Camden House in August 2006 to live in community, where she will volunteer in the free medical clinic, work as a nurse, tutor children in the local school, and continue to cultivate her gardening skills.

“I definitely think it has to do with justice,” she said. “It’s not just about feeding people and giving money, but teaching them how to do things like cook and manage money. Of course, it’s good to serve at a soup kitchen, but it can’t stop there.”

—Micah Weedman

— Lantz Center Medallion for
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INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHS: IDENTIFICATIONS & PERMISSIONS

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(p. 67) Laurel Curts taking blood pressure of a patient at clinic in Philadelphia, Penn., during her “Greyhound Adventure” vocation exploration pilgrimage (summer 2005). Personal photograph provided by Laurel Curts with permission to reprint.