



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

THE ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA CENTER FOR THE

COMMONGOOD



[VILLANOVA.EDU/COMMONGOOD](https://villanova.edu/commongood)

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Mission & Vision

MISSION

Recognizing the dignity of all creation, the Center for the Common Good works with students, alumni, community partners, and campus collaborators to promote the formation of justice-oriented people who serve with our local and global partners and who advocate for systems that advance the Common Good.

VISION

In the spirit of **veritas**, we believe in speaking to the injustices in our world and the importance of reflecting on our collective and personal role in perpetuating and dismantling the systems that diminish the dignity of creation.

In the spirit of **unitas**, we believe all people are active participants in the building of a more just world. Working together to discover a vision of the common good, we all become mutual recipients of a shared hope.

In the spirit of **caritas**, we believe all our work, service and advocacy must be rooted in a mutual love that calls us to a community larger than ourselves where the thriving of one is only possible with the thriving of all.

This is our vision of the Common Good rooted in St. Augustine who said, "No one shall perform any task for his or her own benefit but all your work shall be done for the common good, with greater zeal and more dispatch than if each one of you were to work for yourself alone. For charity [caritas], as it is written, is not self-seeking (1 Cor 13:5) meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that you are growing in love." (Rule of St. Augustine, Chapter 5.2)

Meet Our Team



Marcy Andersen

*Assistant Director for Local Service
and Community Engagement*

RUIBAL, Holiday Outreach, MLK
Day of Service, Food Recovery
Network



Kate Giancattarino

*Senior Director, Center for the
Common Good*

Campus Partner connections,
Days of Service, Back on My
Feet, Villanova Refugee
Empowerment, Vision and
Finance



Dan Griffin

Director, VU Partnerships with CRS

CRS Partnership &
Ambassadors, Global
humanitarian coordination,
STOV Day of Service

Meet Our Team



Abigail Gorman

*Assistant Director of Service
Immersion Programs*

Service & Justice
Experiences, Postgraduate
Service, FIAT, Habitat
Campus Chapter



Josh Kammerer

*Assoc. Dir. for Student Formation &
Community Engagement*

Community Outreach of
Villanova, Philadelphia
Area Social Justice
Internship, SREHUP,
Partnership Database



Farhad Wedee

Program Coordinator

Program Coordination,
Student Worker supervision

2023-24 Year in Review

SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

The 2024 Fiscal year (2023-2024 academic year) was a full and busy year. We started out as a team developing a mission and vision for the Center. We then began to establish a social media presence and established newsletters to remain engaged with all interested groups. In the fall, we moved into our official office spaces on the first floor of St. Rita Hall and celebrated our first year as a center!

We have been fortunate to be asked to speak to various departments about service at Villanova and about the Center in general. We continue to hold campus partner gatherings, this year in small groups during the year and then a larger gathering in the spring. These gatherings allow engaged faculty and staff to come together, engage around connected issues and create areas for collaboration. We have been grateful to be able to co-sponsor several important events and programs, including the Social Justice Documentary screening, a LASO (Latin American Student Organization) event benefitting CCATE (Centro de Cultura Arte Trabajo y Educacion), and a law student experience to provide asylum assistance to refugees.

A conscious effort has been made to create clear processes and procedures to ensure all service programs are compliant, safe, and future oriented. Much of this year was dedicated to document retention; especially with moving offices, scanning documents into a secure service is now common practice. We are moving towards a comprehensive volunteer management solution which will be monumental in future reporting.

Major collaborations this year were strengthened with the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE), especially with the work on the Community Engagement Report and in planning for the forthcoming Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Service. We worked with the Office of Financial Assistance on Federal Work Study needs and opportunities. We have also worked deeply with the Office of Sustainability and with the Center for Peace and Justice Education to ensure our students are supported, our world is considered, and that major elements of the work of Cabrini University can live on.

The following pages are filled with details of programs, service projects, and educational initiatives that the Center for the Common Good is engaged in. From the Opus Prize week to the ASACCU Conference, staff have been involved all year with large events, in addition to the daily service happenings, Service and Justice Experiences, classroom teaching and learning, and ongoing support. Working for the Common Good is an ongoing endeavor, and we are grateful to be a part of it.

CENTER-AFFILIATED EVENTS

STOV Day of Service

The staff of the Center of the Common Good jumped into the new faculty/staff committee structure of the St. Thomas of Villanova Day of Service. We worked collaboratively with the STOV DOS staff on site visits to a number of partner sites, learning about the communities in which STOV and many other campus partners serve. We were members of a number of committees and participated in the day itself as support and as volunteers.

Opus Prize

Members of the Center for the Common Good participated in the Opus Prize week committee and supported the programming during the week. Staff of the Center also took on the role of ensuring laureates arrived and were greeted/shown hospitality. The Center for the Common Good took on a major role in the "Panel on Lifelong Service" while also engaging in many of the other events and dialogue opportunities.

MLK Day of Service

Members of the Center for the Common Good participated in the MLK Day of Service Committee and assisted with the logistics on the MLK Day of Service itself.

St. Rita of Cascia Day of Service

The Center for the Common Good helped to organize a Villanova University group of volunteers for the inaugural St. Rita of Cascia Day of Service. The day was a success, largely due to the incredible organization at the Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia and because of the collaboration with the friars who live in the Monastery.

It was a wonderful day of service and community!

ASACCU Conference

The Association of Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities (ASACCU) Conference is occurring in June 2024. The staff of the Center for the Common Good have been heavily involved in the planning and implementation of the conference.



Center-Sponsored Programming

SUMMARY

Local Service and Service and Justice Experiences blossomed this year. The staff of the Center for the Common Good worked tirelessly to ensure that community partners were at the forefront. Each staff member has worked with the student leaders and participants to ensure that there is consistent participation, the opportunity for a deepening of intentionality and for expansion to allow room for all who wish to participate.

RUIBAL

This year, RUIBAL had a goal of more consistent attendance, and this goal was achieved. Less service was cancelled, more van drivers were accessible, and students felt the difference in their level of community and commitment to our service partners.

- Service Sites:
 - St. Laurence School (Upper Darby, PA 19082)
 - St. Ignatius of Loyola/Our Mother of Sorrows (Philadelphia, PA 19104)
 - North Light Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19127)
 - Richard R. Wright Elementary School (Philadelphia, PA 19132)
- Total Participants: Per Semester
 - Fall 2023: **98**
 - Spring 2024: **81**

Community Outreach of Villanova

COV's primary goals were to increase participation and commitment to weekly service as well as increased engagement with formation and community-building activities. For both semesters, COV students regularly served at our sites, participated more in COVUnity programming events, increased their reflection and engagement with social justice concerns, and increased recruitment of new folks each semester who, in some cases, have turned out to be leaders for the groups.

COV's notable successes include donating \$500-\$800 in supplies to the UCHC Soup Kitchen, crucial for their Wednesday operations, a partnership spanning decades with UCHC now overseen by COV alumni. Additionally, COV established a growing partnership with the Breaking Bread Community Shelter, extending beyond weekly service. Recently, through collaboration with the Office of Sustainability and Villanova Recycling, COV facilitated the donation of furniture from Kennedy and Tolentine Halls, upcycled desktop computers with printers, multifunctional printer/copier/fax machines, and kitchen supplies from student donations, benefiting current and recently rehoused residents.



- Service Sites:
 - St. Ignatius of Loyola/Our Mother of Sorrows (Philadelphia, PA 19104)
 - Northern Children's Services (Philadelphia, PA 19128)
 - St. Francis Inn Soup Kitchen (Philadelphia, PA 19125)
 - North Light Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19127)
 - Breaking Bread Community Shelter (Upper Darby, PA 19082)
 - St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church ESOL Program (Philadelphia, PA 19145)
 - Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor (Philadelphia, PA 19145)
 - University City Hospitality Coalition-UCHC Soup Kitchen (Philadelphia, PA 19104)
 - St. Laurence School (Upper Darby, PA 19082)
 - Fr. Bill Atkinson Service Corps (Haverford, PA 19041)
 - Holy Family Nursing Home (Philadelphia, PA 19143)
 - Monastery of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova (Villanova, PA 19085)
- Total Participants: Per Semester
 - Fall 2023: **72**
 - Spring 2024: **87**

Service and Justice Experiences



Major accomplishments for the SJE program include re-establishing our international immersions, building new community partnerships, and seeing more engaged and dedicated student involvement. Many students who participated and led this year were students who had been involved in the program before.

We heard from many students about the impactful experiences they had during their immersions over break and we look forward to creating more of these experiences for students in the coming years.

- Fall 2023
 - Participants: **57**
 - Sites:
 - Mustard Seed Communities, Montego Bay, Jamaica
 - Habitat for Humanity of Marion-Dillon County, SC
 - Bethel AME Victory Gardens, Ardmore, PA
 - Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County, NC
 - LEVEL SJE with Triple Play Farm, Davidson, NC
 - Dolores Mission Church, Los Angeles, CA
 - St. Francis Inn, Philadelphia, PA
- Spring 2024
 - Participants: **62**
 - Sites:
 - Via International, San Diego, CA
 - Augustinian Partners, San Juan and Aguada, Puerto Rico
 - Romero Center, Camden, NJ
 - St. Francis Inn, Philadelphia, PA
 - Habitat for Humanity of Marion-Dillon County, SC
 - Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County, NC

Holiday Outreach Programs

The goal of our Holiday Outreach Program is to create opportunities for Villanova community members to learn more about some of our wonderful community partners and to offer an opportunity to share time and resources to support our partners and the families they provide services to. Currently, our Holiday Outreach programs take place over the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Thanksgiving Outreach

Thanksgiving Outreach happens in late October through Thanksgiving and includes donating boxes of Thanksgiving meal supplies and/or ShopRite gift cards for families to purchase their own holiday meal items. In addition to donating meal boxes, Villanova volunteers are also needed to assist with the collection and delivery of meal boxes on the Monday of Thanksgiving week.

This year, we partnered with four organizations for our Thanksgiving Outreach program:

- North Light Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19127)
- Project Home
 - Helen Brown Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19121)
 - Rowan Homes (Philadelphia, PA 19121)
- Dawn's Place (Philadelphia, PA)
- Strawberry Mansion Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19121)

We were grateful to collect **250 complete meal boxes** for our community partners. Each meal

box contained:

- 2 jars of turkey gravy
- 2 jars of applesauce
- 4 cans of seasonal vegetables
- 2 cans of cranberry sauce
- 3 or 5lb bag of potatoes
- 2 boxes of stuffing
- Pack of dinner rolls
- 1 ≤15lb turkey
- 1 fresh pie

On our pledge form, **75 Villanova faculty, staff, and students** pledged to bring at least one meal box. We are especially grateful for departments like Falvey, the Inn at Villanova, Villanova School of Business, the Law School, Public Safety, the Football Team, Villanova Nursing, and UNIT who all pledged 10+ boxes from their respective departments

Our goal was to collect 65 \$50 ShopRite gift cards to be distributed to our community partners. We far exceeded that goal and collected **82 \$50 ShopRite gift cards**. We are grateful for the Compliance office, University Advancement, and the Chemistry Department, for pledging 10–20 gift cards from their respective departments. 28 Villanova members pledged to bring at least 1 gift card, but we recognize that most provided many more gift cards than they originally planned. This was a great surprise for our community partners!



Christmas Outreach

Christmas outreach happens in late November through the end of December. Our Christmas Outreach offerings reach a wide range of children and families in the greater Philadelphia region. Villanova community members are invited to “Adopt-a-Family” through North Light Community Center, to donate gift cards to various community partner organizations, and/or to contribute to a local Parish’s Amazon Wish List Toy Drive. Villanova community members are also encouraged to volunteer their time collecting and distributing gifts in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

We partnered with three organizations for our Christmas Outreach programs:

- North Light Community Center (Philadelphia, PA 19127)
- Church of New Hope and Faith (Philadelphia, PA 19104)
- Romero Center (Camden, NJ)

Through our community’s generosity, we sponsored **20 families** from North Light Community Center for Christmas this past holiday season. **Hundreds of gifts** were brought to the St. Rita Community Room on December 15 and were delivered to North Light thanks to a team of Mission and Ministry staff. Gifts included new clothes, children’s makeup and nail polish, all kinds of toys, dollhouses, and children’s bicycles. The Office of Mission and Ministry also sponsored **2 families** from the Romero Center and provided gifts like new clothes, toys, and children’s jewelry.

In addition to sponsoring families, Villanova community members donated **\$575 in Visa gift cards** which were given to local families in need to support their family for the holiday season.

Lastly, **10 Villanova community members** supported the Church of New Hope and Faith’s Youth Council Toy Drive and **contributed \$790** to their Amazon wish lists.

Philadelphia Area Social Justice Internship (PASJI)

A total of about 600 hours of work was provided to the community partners over the 9-week program in the summer of 2023. We provided room and board, food, and transportation for all three interns in addition to their \$3,000 stipends. For the first time, PASJI received a donation from an external donor.

2023 Cohort Placements:

- Centro de Cultura Arte Trabajo y Education (Norristown, PA 19401)
- Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor (Philadelphia, PA 19145)
- Catholic Relief Services

Postgraduate Service

Postgraduate service is another aspect of the work of the Center for the Common Good, as we accompany students discerning doing service after graduation. We are proud of the following 5 Villanova students from the Class of 2024 who have committed to postgraduate service programs next academic year:

- Annie Eby: Jesuit Volunteer Corps National (Nashville, TN)
- Taylor Hultquist: St. Joseph the Worker Program (Los Angeles, CA)
- Grace Manion: ACE Teaching Fellows (Washington, DC)
- Genevieve Mohr: ACE Teaching Fellows (Milwaukee, WI)
- Isabella Roberson: Forever Angels (Mwanza, Tanzania)

“To give treasure away, as **Saint Thomas of Villanova did**, is the duty of the rich and the privilege of the wise. Villanovans know that this wealth of learning, like love itself, is a gift which we possess never so much as when we give it away.”

Reverend Neil J. McGettigan, O.S.A., D. Min.

Center-Student Groups

SUMMARY

This year, the staff of the Center for the Common Good took on new roles as advisors of Service Student Groups and welcomed all the CCG student group leaders into St. Rita Hall once it opened. We then accompanied student groups throughout the year. We are proud of the work of these groups and honored to work alongside them.

Student Groups:

- Back on My Feet
- Villanova Refugee Empowerment (VRE)
- Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter
- Student Run Emergency Housing Unit of Philadelphia (SREHUP)
- Food Recovery Network
- CRS Global Ambassadors

BACK ON MY FEET

Weekly on Friday went to Point Breeze Philadelphia and walked/ran with people experiencing homelessness.

14 Fridays in the fall semester with an average of 16 participants a morning.

14 Fridays in the spring with an average of 13 participants a morning.

5k in the fall during HHAW with 60 participants, raising \$900 for the Back on My Feet Organization.

VILLANOVA REFUGEE EMPOWERMENT

Held a back to school backpack supply drive to benefit families with NSC.

Collaborated VSB Students to create Financial Literacy materials.

Participated in the Special Olympics Festival.

Held a "Roses for Refugees" Fundraiser with VIDA, CRS, and VU Pride.

Maintain a roster of about 20 active members.

