

# Community Service at Loretto Motherhouse in Kentucky

*running a day camp • visiting sisters in the infirmary • tending gardens • learning history • becoming friends with Nerinx and Loretto Academy students*



The whole compound had tranquility about it. It was a beautiful place. I had never thought about Kentucky as a paradise, but it really was. Everything was green and lush, and there were beautiful rolling hills on the horizon. We were enchanted by the mist that sometimes settled on the field and the wildflowers and by the hummingbirds, and most of all, the fireflies. I had not really seen fireflies before, and we never got tired of watching their little bodies light up.

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Every morning after breakfast we would do garden work around the Motherhouse grounds with some of the sisters. We planted flowers, pulled weeds, trimmed bushes and even fixed the path around the lake. Working with the sisters was inspiring because despite their age, the sisters we worked with were very tough and strong. If they could do the work, then we could easily do it!

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Every day we would eat each meal with the sisters. They all wanted us to sit and eat with them, and if somebody needed a place to sit they would make room. Eating meals with the sisters was a time for us to talk to them so that they could share their experiences with us. We found that many of the sisters had attended our schools or even taught at our schools.





The day camp was great. Each of the children had so much charisma and potential! I was reminded of the necessity to be thankful for what I have when I saw them get so excited about being able to go swimming everyday and how much they enjoyed their crafts. They didn't take anything for granted.

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One of the most important parts of the trip was learning from the Sisters. I met the first principal of All Souls Catholic School here in Denver, Sister Martha Ann. I also talked with many Sisters who had been to all three Loretto schools. I was very interested in Sister Lupe's work with migrant workers and her opinion on immigration. Susan, a co-member, inspired me with her eco-friendly cabin that she'd built herself from recycled materials. A different Susan and I played bingo together in the infirmary and we won! I enjoyed hearing about the history of Loretto from Sister Kathleen. I was inspired when I heard of the Sisters of Loretto in Pakistan. I feel very proud to go to a Loretto school, because now I see how powerful and good were the women who founded our school.

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It was great to hear the stories of these strong women, and I was able to connect with many of them hearing that they had taught at or attended St. Mary's Academy. Also, I was able to connect with the girls from the other schools. It was fun to get to know them all throughout the week, and I feel that I made friendships that will last.

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What I want to bring back to school from my experience at the Motherhouse are the ideas of teamwork and strength within the community. I believe that our school already possesses these ideas and qualities, but when you go to the Motherhouse and see these women who work together and live together and who have these incredible bonds, you realize that we can make that even stronger in our community. The sisters at the Motherhouse are a true family, and they are such welcoming, strong and incredible women. I want to bring back that inspiration and really encourage girls in our school to strive for that exact sense of family and cohesion that cannot be broken or challenged at the Motherhouse.

