



# A FOREVER LASALLIAN

## HOW MY SERVICE SHAPED MY LIFE

RACHEL WALETZKO, LV 16-18

My experience as a Lasallian Volunteer taught me what being “forever Lasallian” means. I was first exposed to the Lasallian charism as an education student at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota. This charism, instilled by Saint La Salle, is one of educating without limits, building bridges between differences, and fostering deep relationships. However, I didn’t truly understand what this looked like in action until I taught at De La Salle Elementary School at Blessed Sacrament as a Lasallian Volunteer.



*The Lambert Hall Community at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, during my time as a Lasallian Volunteer. I’m the tall one in the back wearing stripes.*

Teaching in a hub of diversity was unlike anything I had ever done. Every day challenged me with a *simple but difficult* question: How do these students need to be loved? I don’t believe I truly understood what tough, unconditional love and joy was until I had to be the one to give it. The response in the students’ behavior was incredible. They needed to be loved—just as we all do—right where they were amid their lives at home, school and everything in between. **Seeing the fruits of St. La Salle’s charism firsthand, I greatly desired to live out my vocation as a Lasallian educator regardless of where I taught after being an LV.** Today, I bring the charism into my third grade classroom with “Let us remember...” and

St. La Salle’s intercession, showing my students that we all have something to teach one another, and reminding them that they are valued and loved.

A plethora of experiences stick out to me from my time as a Lasallian Volunteer—many with students, others with Jess and Ivette (my community members) and still others with our community of Brothers at Christian Brothers University. Community meals with the Brothers were some of the greatest highlights from

my LV experience. A priceless bit of education wisdom from Brother Mike; talking “smart” with Brother Terence; hearing the latest joke from Brother Joel; being entertained by Brother Dominic and Brother Tom’s banter; and learning what it’s like to live out your Lasallian vocation at all stages of life (to name only a few). And, of course, I cannot forget to mention their wonderful cooks and friends, Maddie and Annette, who made coming together around the table possible. Every week, it was like coming home to a house of 12 grandfathers! These moments are the ones where I fully experienced community and its encouraging and sustaining effects, something I will always carry with me.

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*Rachel Waletzko, LV 16-18, taught reading and religion and helped coordinate the after-school program as an LV at De La Salle Elementary School at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Memphis, Tennessee. She currently teaches third grade at St. Mary Help of Christians School in St. Augusta, Minnesota. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Lasallian Volunteers, this story is one in a series of reflections by LV alums on how the LV experience has impacted their lives. Additional reflections can be found at [www.LasallianVolunteers.org](http://www.LasallianVolunteers.org).*

