

Dear Friends,

Lily Tomlin once quipped: "I always prayed to be somebody. I should have been more specific." But isn't it funny how we start out with an idea or plan, then life happens and we go in an altogether unexpected direction. It happens all the time around here.

School Workshops: Social and Emotional Education for Students

For some years, Casa Romero has been involved in developing and giving one day retreats to middle school students in our Catholic grade schools. Recently Valencia Lynch, our Youth Coordinator, began breaking down these retreats into smaller thematic segments suitable for public school classroom use. This has widened our reach into the local public school population. Here Valencia relates a recent workshop's results:



Last Tuesday, Mia, our Carmen High School intern, and I went to Vieau School to lead a workshop for their 8th grade Gear Up students. This workshop was called Social Media and Staying Safe on the Internet. The students who participated were given a clear insight into the gifts that the internet brings us but also the dangers such as cyberbullying, hacking, and the theft of pictures and personal information. Students heard an interview of a 14 year old girl whose images were stolen and went viral on the internet. She suffered depression, bullying, and even violent threats. The students also engaged in cooperative group work, brainstorming their tips and warnings for students their age on social media. Other small groups were able to create their own social media site and develop a mission for it. Mia and I were able to facilitate this workshop with students for the monolingual (English) class and the bilingual (English and Spanish) class across the hall. Overall, we had an excellent morning at Vieau School.

We are looking to assemble a number of themes for public school workshops that we can offer as a program package next year.

Resident Artist



Last fall, our Urban Plunge Coordinator, Mary Pimmel, was recognized for her painting. Her evocative rendering of the six Jesuit and two laywomen martyrs of El Salvador were featured in posters and banners as the University of Central America celebrated the 25th anniversary of these killings. Now, she is part of Marquette University's 2015 Mission Week celebration:

I'll be doing an Artist in Residence at Marquette University the first week of February. For the residence, I'll be painting a portrait of James Foley, the American journalist who was beheaded by ISIS last fall. I'll be painting the portrait in Marquette's library lobby, available for questions about my painting process and (limited) questions about James Foley. I'm definitely not an expert on him! This will be part of Marquette's mission week.



We are very proud of our staff here at Casa Romero. They certainly embody the words and sentiments which Pope Francis gave to the youth gathered in Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day: "Be creative. Be audacious. Do not be afraid. *Avanti!*"

Many blessings on you and yours as we move into our Lenten and Easter seasons!