Dramatizing Our Hidden Heroes
Doris Baizley, Hidden Heroes editor and writer

To tell the stories of the Hidden Heroes awardees in our annual presentation, Judith Royer and I use the process of making “dramatized narratives” that we started in our first “Hidden Heroes – Service to the World” project with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange in 2011 and have been developing in our Voices of Justice class at LMU. We select a group of playwrights to interview the recipients and then write short monologues or scenes from the interview transcriptions to be performed in a public staged reading.

For Hidden Heroes the process is especially challenging because the awardees have been selected as people who work for social justice “under the radar.” Like them—and in the spirit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph who give the awards—their work is quiet, modest and humble; and the award usually comes as a complete surprise. They aren’t looking for recognition, so when our writers first meet with them, they often begin by speaking about all the other people who should be given credit for their work. Soon however, their enthusiasm for their work takes over. From the smallest detail of helping a student gain confidence in school to the overwhelming task of defending the rights of refugees in international courts, we hear passion and dedication. As they describe their experiences, words of wisdom begin to emerge that even the storytellers themselves didn’t recognize as they were speaking them. When these words are put into a script and performed by an actor to an audience, something new is created. The Hidden Hero isn’t a single individual demanding our attention, but becomes part of a larger work of art, a necessary piece in a circle of communication that brings his or her voice to life in a new context with new meaning, value, and power.

“I don’t feel like I do big things. But when I went back and reflected on this…I said…okay…now I feel comfortable accepting this award, because that’s what I do: a lot of little things. Because all those little things you do, can have a big impression on the world.” Elmo Johnson, LMU Events Specialist, Hidden Heroes Award 2013, written and performed by Desean Terry.
In the First Person…

By John Ruffaine

Throughout the past four years at Loyola Marymount University, I had no idea the extent to which the role of immigration would play in my college experience. Whether in my academics or through my extracurricular involvements, immigration suddenly became a pertinent topic on which I found myself becoming increasingly educated. Reflecting upon my past experience, I have become incredibly passionate about immigration and hope to spread that passion to others.

It all began during my sophomore year while helping plan Immigration Awareness Week through Underwings Praxis, a service club on LMU’s campus. I participated in a civil disobedience by helping form a blockade around LMU’s central cafeteria in order to simulate a “border” and the ways that many people do not have access to their basic needs. After learning about different statistics, stereotypes, and issues, I began to become progressively involved with more immigration advocacy on campus. Not only did I discover that many of my close friends were undocumented, but I also began to question how my own family is related to immigration. I became more interested in learning about my roots and my grandparents’ journeys from both Italy and China to the United States.

In my next year at LMU I was presented with the opportunity to take the amazing Voices of Justice class with Sr. Judith Royer, CSJ and Doris Baizley. Through this class I was not only given the task of working with the Coalition of Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) to interview an immigrant family, but also given the opportunity to turn their story into a theater performance. While I was often pushed outside my comfort zone, this class and the individuals with which I worked challenged and inspired me in many different ways as I became connected to the issues surrounding immigration on an even deeper emotional level. I began to realize that everyone has a relationship with an immigrant, whether within a family or among a group of friends.

Around the time I was enrolled in this influential course, I became involved with the Immigration Justice Coalition (IJC), a partnership among different organizations and departments that work to host events to bring awareness and advocacy to LMU’s community. Through both the Voices of Justice performance and work with the IJC, my investment in immigration advocacy efforts heightened dramatically.

Recently, I participated in the Arte sin Fronteras art show hosted by Underwings Praxis as a chance to explore my own relationship to immigration through my artwork. In addition, I was placed on LMU’s Alternative Breaks trip to Tucson, Arizona to learn more about the social justice issues surrounding immigration near the border. As the year continues, I hope to become more educated and take more action to show others that it is important to understand that immigration affects everyone, even loved ones we cherish.

By Lisa Breheve ('15)

Hello. My name is Lisa. I am not an immigrant. I was born in the United States. But I have heard dozens upon dozens of stories from people who have immigrated here. I have undocumented friends and know about important laws in immigration. I’ve read articles and seen documentaries, traveled to the border. So I’m going to share what I know with you: I know nothing.

I am an ally to the undocumented immigrants in the US. Or at least I want to be. This means that I myself am not a direct victim of the US’s harmful immigration policies, but I care about the issue and want to fight with immigrants for change. However, all I’ve done is heard the stories. My friends and my neighbors have lived it. I can read all the statistics I want on poverty and employee exploitation, but I haven’t worked doing manual labor for 16 hours a day. I can know that hundreds of people are dying in the desert and see the little line go up on the graph but I haven’t lost a brother to the heat. I cannot come up here telling you the stories that my friends and neighbors can tell. But I can tell you that I have grown and learned the most when I close my mouth and listen. Because:

When I heard the pain in a student’s voice as he described the terrible day when he came home and with no warning ICE had taken his mother.

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**Upcoming Events**

**March 5th**

Film Series: Cinema and Sacrament - Sweet Dreams, film viewing at 7:00pm in Ahmanson Auditorium followed by a conversation with Daniel Smith-Christopher and reception at the Marymount Institute, University Hall Suite 3000

**March 19th**

12:10 p.m.

St. Joseph’s Day Liturgy and Luncheon, Eucharist

Sacred Heart Chapel, Lunch will follow in Sculpture Garden and CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice Open House 2:30pm – 5:00 pm

University Hall Suite 2000

**March 21**

time and place TBA

Undergraduate Research Symposium – Voices of Justice Panel Presentation
When I saw scores of young men chained hand and foot in questionably legal mass trials for the crime of wanting something better for their families.

When I held my closest friend at LMU during a trip to Arizona once she realized she couldn’t come visit the US-Mexico Border with the rest of the group because there was a chance she could be arrested on our school trip.

These are moments when I learned the most. As an ally it is my first job to listen, then to care, then to act.

And it is vitally important that US citizens listen, because we are the ones with the privilege - who can vote and run for office and write letters to their representatives. I can speak out about these problems and sadly people might just take me more seriously because I am a white US citizen who speaks English. And most of all if we decide what is best on our own without humbly listening to the people who’s lives we will be changing then we are going to be in trouble.

This isn’t an issue for Latinos, this isn’t just an issue for immigrants to deal with. This is my country and I want to live in a country where wonderful non-criminal people don’t have to be afraid of arrest or deportation. I hope you do too.

Now it’s about time that I practice what I preach. Just for a bit, I’m going to shut my mouth and listen, and let those who usually don’t have a voice speak. I hope you do the same.

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Advent Ladies Retreat and Luncheon
A Wonderful Opportunity

The Advent Ladies Retreat provided a chance for the CSJ Center to be present with some terrific women who enthusiastically support the Loyola Marymount University community. Through an invitation by Joan Pohas, Senior Executive Director of Development, MaryAnne Huepper, CSJ joined Allan Deck, SJ and the women in the Liturgy and the beautifully prepared luncheon. She then provided a meditation at the end of the afternoon in the lovely chapel in the Marymount Institute. Through this invitation, MaryAnne was able to share the mission of the CSJ Center with a vital part of the LMU family, forge new relationships, and rediscover some former ties.

May 30
8:30am – 5:00pm
Pax Christi Southern California Regional Assembly in Ahmanson Auditorium

TBA
CSJ 2015 Fall Symposium

Hidden Heroes Nominee Reception

Hidden Heroes Presentation

Alumni BBQ,
Maryrose Hopke

Hidden Heroes Recipients:
1-10 – Jose Saez,
Nora Goss-Romero, Carlos Rodriguez

Carlos Rodriguez

Students from Voices of Justice

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“The Center gives tangible witness to the presence and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange at Loyola Marymount University and in a wounded world…”

From the Director

By Judith Royer, CSJ

For the CSJ Center, Fall 2014 was marked by many continuing collaborations and some wonderful new partnerships both within the LMU Community and with LA-based advocacy agencies. The annual Artists Speak program, which features student original writing, productions, performances and exhibits related to a social justice theme, joined Ethnic and Intercultural Services and the College of Communication and Fine Arts to produce a three-part Social Justice Series entitled Ripples of Hope, with Artists Speak as one of the three events. The Center is grateful for the visionary leadership, from both EIS and CFA, that enabled this new partnership and the fine series that resulted. We are also delighted with and grateful for a new agency partnership for the Voices of Justice Program. Students from the Voices of Justice courses worked not only with the Daybreak Program (Homeless Services for Women) from OPCC in Santa Monica, but with new friends from The Francisco Homes (a Restorative Justice program which provides transitional living for men). Dramatized narratives, resulting from interviews with clients from these agencies, were performed on campus on February 7 and 8. The Center is proud to support the fine work done by these agencies as well as the LMU students who want to work in these areas of engaged learning and community-based service and action.

Spring 2015 promises additional collaboratively sponsored programs. Spurred on by a suggestion from Dean Stephen Ujlaki from the School of Film and Television, plans have now been finalized for a Spring 2015 Film Series entitled Cinema and Sacrament. The series of three films, which began on February 5, and continues on February 12 and March 5 at 7:00 p.m. in Ahmanson Auditorium, followed by a reception and “conversations with...” in the Marymount Institute, is sponsored by: Casassa Legacy Society, The Center for Religion and Spirituality, College of Communication and Fine Arts, CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice, LMU Heritage Association of Retired Faculty and Staff, The Marymount Institute for Faith, Culture and the Arts, the School of Film and Television, and the Women’s Leadership Council.

Spring 2015 will also be dedicated to planning the annual CSJ Symposium. Currently members of the School of Business Administration, the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, the College of Communication and Fine Arts and LMU students are meeting as part of a planning committee for an October 2015 Symposium on various aspect of business locally and globally.

The CSJ Center is grateful for old friends and new who have joined us over the past few years in helping to forward the mission of the University by providing inspiration and opportunities that help unite us all in an exploration of a faith that does justice.