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Rebecca (Becky) Welch : Young Alumni Award

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2008 Young Alumni Award

Rebecca (Becky) Welch '00

When Becky Welch was a student in Howard Ebert's Introduction to Theology class 12 years ago, she "discovered the joy of studying theology." But could she have imagined then that this experience would eventually lead her full circle in 2006 to her current position as assistant director of St. Norbert's Program of Faith, Learning and Vocation?

While she was a student at St. Norbert College, Becky helped design and plan annual student retreats, as well as lead group sessions. She also planned and led a group of St. Norbert students on a service trip in Minneapolis; co-taught religious education classes for fourth- through sixth-graders at Old St. Joseph Parish; and prepared a fifth-grade class for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Rebecca also participated in service trips, involved herself in Campus Ministry, and sang with St. Norbert's Music Ministry Program. All those activities helped her decide to study theology and pursue a career in ministry.

On to the University of Notre Dame where, two years after graduating from St. Norbert College with a B.A. in religious studies and philosophy (and a 3.98 GPA!), she earned a master's degree in theological studies. While she was at Notre Dame, and as a teaching assistant in a vocation initiative course, she helped prepare undergraduate facilitators for high school faith formation retreats. Becky also served as a teaching assistant for a Catholicism course. As a graduate assistant, she developed a vocation resource collection, wrote biographies of exemplary holy men and women, and created a high school prayer journal.

Now she would begin her life's journey of teaching religion courses, helping students with their own faith pursuits, and working for justice and serving the needy and less fortunate in the world.

For three years after graduating from Notre Dame, Becky was a theology teacher at Mount Alvernia High School in Newton, Mass. Besides teaching Christian Lifestyles, Christian Morality, Hebrew Scriptures, Issues in Social Justice, and World Religions, she directed the school chorus, was assistant director and accompanist for the liturgical choir, was faculty coordinator of World Awareness Day, and was a member of the liturgy planning team.

Her teaching experience, commitment to service and formal education made Becky Welch the perfect "fit" for her present position at her alma mater. Since returning to St. Norbert, she has accompanied students on a service trip to the Dominican Republic. Her work is concentrated, however, on supervising a team of 16 students who serve as peer ministers in the residence halls (the ALIVE team); providing training and support for students in their various ministries and

service activities; planning and presenting workshops on vocation with the program's director; and providing opportunities for students from particular academic areas to explore questions of vocation.

Among Becky's many efforts to help others in need, she has been a volunteer for St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter in Green Bay, volunteered for several weeks with the Christian Appalachian Project in Mississippi helping Hurricane Katrina victims, and worked in Kentucky with a new after-school program for at-risk students.

Perhaps Dr. Paul Wadell best summed up Becky's amazing contributions: "She ... has consistently used her gifts on behalf of others. She has a depth of compassion for others, especially for the poor, for those who are struggling or suffering, that is inspiring and edifying ... she is the kind of person who makes SNC a special place."

St. Norbert College

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