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Stephanie Birmingham : Young Alumni Award

St. Norbert College

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2014 Young Alumni Award



Stephanie Birmingham '09

When we consider the profound need and want that surrounds us in the world, we often feel overwhelmed. Faced with challenges so great, we despair of our ability to make a difference, and we quail at the potential cost to our own comfort. Many of us simply throw up our hands.

But some of us instead roll up our sleeves; Stephanie Birmingham is one of those.

Stephanie's activism and dynamism were on ample display during her St. Norbert years. As an undergraduate, she engaged deeply in social justice work, volunteering three times for the

college's TRIPS alternative break program – first as a participant, then as a co-leader, serving in domestic violence centers, homeless shelters and soup kitchens.

Stephanie volunteered at a Green Bay homeless shelter, interned for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and lobbied on behalf of Friends for Wheels, an organization she co-founded to raise disability awareness in the college community. Academically, she earned a place both on the Dean's List and in the Pi Gamma Mu Honor Society. She received the college's Student Life Award, as well.

Today, she continues her studies, pursuing a Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola of Chicago. And outside the classroom, Stephanie continues to distinguish herself through her compassionate service to those most in need.

Before moving to Chicago, she spent nearly two years as a Norbertine Volunteer Community member and full-time chaplain's assistant at Brown County Jail. Reflecting on that pastoral work, one admiring colleague said, "Stephanie is attuned to the dreams and needs of those on the margins, and does whatever she can to empower people to achieve those dreams and to fulfill those needs." Now, as she pursues her master's, Stephanie does much of her practicum work on the streets of Chicago, and in the city's shelters and hospitals.

Stephanie once wrote of her experiences: "I have realized what it truly means to be present to another human being and what it means to listen with an open heart and mind ... remembering that we are all yearning for acceptance, compassion, someone to hear our small yet important voice."

Her abundant compassion and tireless service have earned Stephanie the college's Young Alumni Award for 2014.

St. Norbert College

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