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St. Norbert College

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The Emmaus Center helps students in their life journey. But it’s also a place that offers campus jobs, scholarships and more.

# SNC’s Emmaus Center Provides Lots of Opportunities

While the word “vocation” is often used to indicate a divine call to the religious life, it also means a strong proclivity for a particular career or occupation. Here at St. Norbert, the **Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life and Vocation** expands upon those definitions, considering a vocation to be the place where your gifts and passions meet the world’s needs.

That may sound a bit lofty, but it really isn’t, says Sandy Murphy, Emmaus Center director. “Our gifts and passions are meant to support the world. Our hope is that we’re walking a journey with our students in their questions of vocation and spirituality.”

The Emmaus Center has a wide range of programs, events and resources designed to support students – no matter their religious background – in their life, faith and spirituality. One example: **Agape Latte**, a discussion series during which faculty and staff share personal stories about their own faith and life purpose. The popular program attracts at least 50 students each time a person presents, and the programs are also videotaped so students can view them later if it’s more convenient.

And then there’s the center’s **ALIVE** program, which this year employs 10 students. Six are apprentices, or first-year students, and four hold coordinator positions, which are for older students. The group’s focus is to serve as peer ministers in first-year residential halls.

Each week, the peer ministers offer some kind of program to help the residents build community. These may be fun, activity-based programs or more serious ones that tackle a particular topic. The basic idea is that once students feel comfortable with one another, they can share meaningful conversations about calling, life and faith, says Becky Lahti, Emmaus Center assistant director.

The Emmaus Center works with Admissions each year to find candidates for the ALIVE apprentice positions, recruiting high school seniors who have been admitted to SNC and have similar experience, such as serving in a high school campus ministry or church youth-group program. In addition, the center sends out email blasts to all accepted students, inviting interested parties to apply.

Incoming students who would like to explore questions of faith and spirituality are also eligible to apply for **one-time \$1,000 peer ministry scholarships**. Eight will be awarded for the 2020-2021 academic year, and students of all faith traditions are eligible.

While a campus job at the Emmaus Center means students will be involved with issues of spirituality and faith, these jobs are not just for students looking to go into parish work or youth ministry, says Lahti. For all student employees walk away with real-world skills.

“We have an alum right now working doing event planning,” she says. “She looks at her time with ALIVE as providing her with the skills to put together an event and interact with people. And we often have education majors working with us who use their dorm event-planning skills to help them with lesson plans.”



## College Students Evenly Split

Today’s college students are evenly split when it comes to identifying as religious, secular or spiritual, according to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) series conducted by Trinity College. The **2013 study** was done in conjunction with the Center for Inquiry (CFI).

The survey also revealed that those who identify as spiritual align more with the “religious” group on metaphysical issues, but identify more with the “secular” group on public policy and social issues.

## Also in This Issue

This article first appeared in the December 2019 issue of Parents of St. Norbert College. Other features in this edition included:

**Studying Abroad Has Positive Effect on Students**

**Q&A With New Campus Safety Director**

**Support for First-Generation Students Important**

**SNC’s Emmaus Center Provides Lots of Opportunities**

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Morgan Tollard '20 is an ALIVE coordinator and political science major. She credits her peer ministry job with helping her hone her leadership skills and nudge her outside of her comfort zone. “I’ve always been a pretty shy and quiet kid, but through this position I have been able to work on my discussion and professional skills,” she says.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of the Emmaus Center and its programs, whether your student is an employee or a participant, is that students learn it’s O.K. not to have all the answers. Lahti says more than a few students have noted that after working for or interacting with the Emmaus Center, they’re much more comfortable with change and the unknown, and are not as anxious regarding how their life will unfold.

“To me,” she says, “that’s a huge takeaway.”

*Dec. 13, 2019*

**It’s Quiz Time!**

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