

JV Hatgas Twins

Dynamic Duo Tackle Social Justice Issues

From the Field

As twin brothers, Jon and Jeff Hatgas have much in common.

Both attended John Carroll University in Ohio, share similar passions for social justice and have a knack for quoting the original Star Wars trilogy.

They are also Jesuit Volunteers, living on opposite ends of the country and separated for the first time in their lives. Jon works as a youth minister at Dolores Mission Parish in Los Angeles and Jeff works as the after-school program director at Casserly House in Boston. Despite their physical separation this year, their bond has only strengthened.

"We are both rooted in the same values and same mission," Jeff said. "This brings a new dynamic to our relationship because there is so much we can learn through the sharing of this year."

They stay in frequent contact through calls and texts, sharing about their work week and brainstorming new ideas for community and spirituality nights.

"I try to be there for him and ask questions," Jon said. "If I need someone to listen, then he's there for me."

Stepping out of their comfort zone for the first time was one of the initial trials both brothers learned to overcome when they embarked on the experience as Jesuit Volunteers. Previously, the longest Jon and Jeff had been separated was for

two weeks when Jeff participated in an immersion trip in the Dominican Republic.

"This was really the first time I didn't have that quick friend to laugh at some of the same things or corny jokes," Jeff said. "I found comfort knowing that we're both in the same program and going through similar challenges."

Jeff describes the sharing between him, his brother and their communities as a sort of "network" through which they bounce ideas back and forth.

Even though they've remained close throughout the year, both brothers were nervous about reuniting. They carefully saved their \$100 monthly stipends, chose

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to return to their family in Ohio for separate holidays (Jeff for Christmas and Jon for Easter) and split expenses for Jeff to visit Los Angeles in February.

When they finally reunited, all of their uneasiness was put to rest. Jeff shadowed his brother at Dolores Mission for a day, led a spirituality night with the community and assisted Jon with a weekend retreat for families of the parish. It was as if they hadn't been apart.

— Jon

"I was able to share in his experience as a JV and I got to share mine," Jeff said. "The whole experience was just mind-blowing, an absolute blessing."

After Jeff witnessed the joy his brother gets from his work with Dolores Mission, he was convinced that Jon could become a great future campus or family minister.

"Seeing him interact with the families and how his job has brought out that vocation was beautiful," Jeff said.

Beyond their year as Jesuit Volunteers, Jon said their shared experiences will allow them to continue to actively challenge each other to integrate the values of JVC into their lives.

"I have someone who will always understand what the JVC experience is all about," Jon said. "

For Jeff, his intentional community and work experience at Casserly House has given him more understanding about his gifts, talents, and his deep connection to his entire family—especially his twin.

"This year has brought us closer together even though we're so far apart," Jeff said. 🌈

Content contributed by Glenn Oviatt (Phoenix '11, JVC Staff '12-present)

— Jeff

