



## The Peace, Justice, and Human Rights (PJHR) Program at John Carroll University

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### From the Director's Desk

I've been thinking a lot about refugees lately, as I'm a descendant of a Syrian Lebanese refugee, and cast back to a recent trip I took back to San Diego. Nearly forty years ago, in June 1975, my family and I walked along the dusty road filled with barracks and tents, to meet our new family. My mom and dad participated in a project to "sponsor" a refugee family from Viet Nam. My father had served in that war as a military

adviser, and both my parents wanted to do something. The Nguyen family fled from Vietnam in the waning days of the war, and were in the camp awaiting a new life, a life they could not even imagine. They'd lost everything but the clothes on their body, their belongings in transit, and Hoa, the matriarch, would have her four children and mother hold onto a string as they walked in the camps in Guam and Philippines, so they wouldn't get separated. My parents welcomed them into our home, and then helped them begin their American life—finding an apartment despite racist landlords, helping them with work and social services, and the rest.

A year ago, going back to San Diego, I took my wife and kids to meet Ba and Hoa again, and two of their kids, and their three grandkids. They are all thriving as proud Vietnamese Americans, patriotic citizens of their adoptive nation.

But what Ba and Hoa wanted to share with me had to do with the past that drew us together. That my parents extended themselves to help them get settled, when they were scared and couldn't speak any English.

"Big heart," Ba said, "your parents have big heart."

"We tell you this," Hoa said, "so that you can help someone also."

I share this story not only because of the great challenges that face our country and our world today, but also because I've been struck, in my first year directing the PJHR program,

by the open-heartedness and courage of John Carroll students, who go into the broken world with a longing to bring some measure of relief to the hurting, justice to the oppressed, and love to the hated. I'm honored to play some minor role in helping students bring that change.

This year, PJHR students won a number of awards (both prestigious university awards and national awards), showing their leadership and courage and hope. One of our majors, Ryley Conway, is actually presently in Jordan, studying and working on refugee issues with refugee communities there. We sponsored numerous events, which I'm grateful to say were packed events—from events around our Ireland peacebuilding program to events related to refugees and immigrants, to a talk featuring social entrepreneur and dancer Rebecca Davis of MindLeaps. All in all, it was a busy and rich year of encounter. Read more below!

**Feel free to forward this email along to people who might want to read it. Also, I welcome any student, faculty, or staff-members who have projects, speakers, or issues related to PJHR that they would like to bring to John Carroll. Drop me an email ([pmetres@jcu.edu](mailto:pmetres@jcu.edu)) or come by to O'Malley 219. Let's make this campus, and our world, a place of hope. *Love. Study. Struggle.***

Philip Metres

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## PJHR Graduate Spotlight

PJHR alumna **Abbey Vogel** (2016) completed a year of as a FranciscanCommon Venture volunteer, living and working at Centro Arte para la Paz in Suchitoto, El Salvador. Vogel reports: "Though I was only in Suchitoto for ten months, the FCV program allowed me to contribute my passion and expertise to help the mission of Centro Arte para la Paz, using artistic expression as a vehicle for peacebuilding and social change in a country that is still recovering from a 12-year Civil War, and is now being ravaged by gang violence. The study of peacebuilding at John Carroll prepared me well for the position, but I know that my education as a PJHR student would have been incomplete without long-term, international placement; my degree from Carroll, paired with my experience in Salvador, have prepared me to enter an MA program in International Human Rights at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies, and have prepared me for future international placements, language learning, and nonprofit coalition building in the majority world."



And also: "I have discovered the work of peacebuilding to be more akin to the slow process of planting, weeding, and watering seeds, than initiating a giant, fearsome wave of change. I had tasted the happiness that solidarity work can bring before, but living in El Salvador has shown justice work to be the most beautiful, worthwhile type of labor. I feel ready to dedicate my life to the pursuit of justice; I feel committed to having my perspectives changed and bettered by encounters with peacebuilders across cultures and borders. Though I have seen more of the world's ugliness, I have had the opportunity to also see the power of human kindness and unity to transform even the most seemingly inhuman, hopeless situations. I know that I have become more fully myself, more fully my neighbor's, and, therefore, more fully God's." Thanks, Abbey!

[Here's Abbey's PJHR video testimonial](#)

## Congrats and Farewells

Congrats to PJHR major and graduating senior **Karen Posner** ('17) for receiving the first Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter "[Continuing the Dream](#)" award. The award honors a JCU student who is continuing the dream of quality and harmony across racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries while working to foster a nation united in freedom and harmony, with each person being treated with justice and respect. Karen conducted an [art contest and workshop](#) with a focus on indigenous rights.

Karen also created the Pine Ridge Prom Project, gathering nearly 500 prom dresses and tuxes and delivering them to Pine Ridge Reservation this spring break.



Congrats to PJHR minor and graduating senior **Kaylee Quanbeck** ('17) for being a finalist for the 2017 Beaudry Award, which honors an individual who exemplifies the ideal of Jesuit education: a person for others.

Kaylee also won the 2017 Schell Award for service and leadership in Campus Ministry.



Congrats and farewell to Beaudry nominee **Catherine Looby** ('17), whose final project for the PJHR capstone involved a research and reflection essay on the refugee situation in Louisville, inspired by her immersion trip there in the spring of this year.

Catherine will be joining [City Year](#) in Chicago! City Year is a non-profit organization that partners with at-risk schools to help bridge the gap between what their students need and what the schools



are designed to provide.

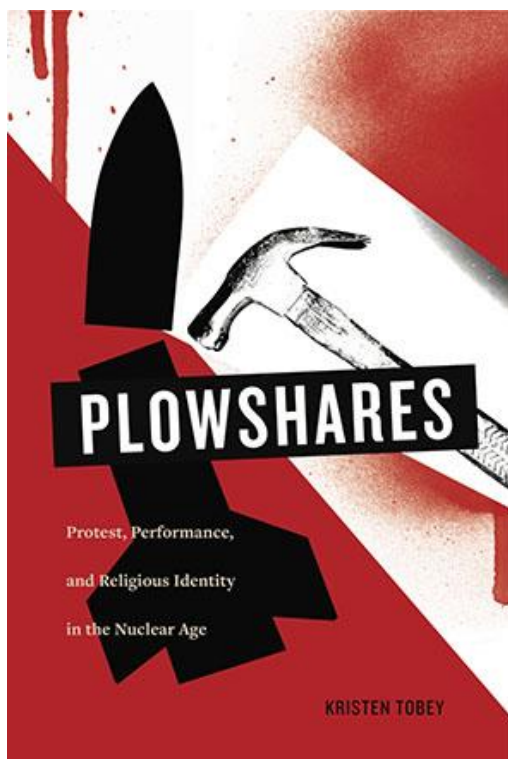
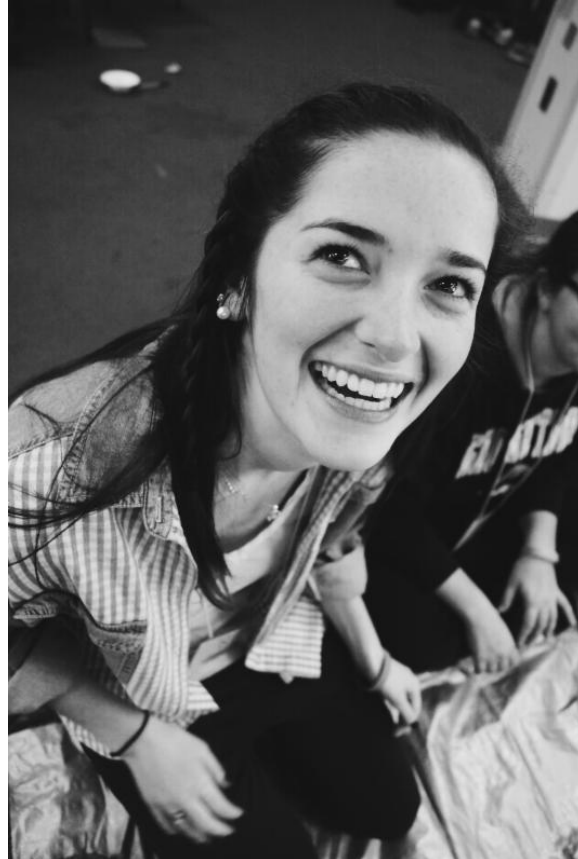
Congrats and farewell to PJHR major **Lauren Blommel** ('17), who now works as a Digital Engagement & Communications intern at the American Prospect, a political magazine. She also volunteers long-distance with the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture as a French translator, translating legal documents for people seeking asylum in the US, and is currently interviewing for jobs, one of which is for a job as a communications officer for the World Affairs Councils of America, which deals with human rights issues.



And congrats to PJHR major **KTB English** ('18) who was named the winner of the Ohio Campus Compact 2017 Charles Ping Student Award in recognition of her exceptional dedication to efforts on behalf of the hungry.

We're looking forward to having KTB around for her senior year at John Carroll!





## The Events!

On January 29th, **Kristen Tobey** presented a compelling talk about the Plowshares movement, a Catholic and radical pacifist community dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons through symbolic actions of destruction. While Tobey was careful neither to admonish nor to praise the organization for its acts of nonviolence, she provided the context to help understand the theological underpinnings of the actions and how the activists themselves justified them. Congrats to Dr. Tobey for joining the TRS department on the tenure track!

In addition to co-sponsoring a talk on February 23rd by Dr. Tim White, on theories of International Relations and the peace process in Northern Ireland, PJHR also co-sponsored a number of talks and roundtables, including a roundtable on immigration on April 14th.

On March 15th, celebrated Irish poet **Sinead Morrissey** visited classes and talked about growing up during the Troubles in a communist family; she later read her poetry to a full house of 100 people in Rodman Hall. [Her talk is available online here.](#)

Later that month, on March 29th, **Father Oliver Rafferty, S.J.**, read an erudite and



complex paper on the religious responses to the Irish potato famine, which laid bare the dark side of the Providentialist thinking of the 19th century—basically arguing that God was punishing the Irish for their sins. Rafferty held thrall over a huge Rodman audience—the biggest I've ever seen in the old Jesuit dining hall—140 people packed in. [His talk is available online here.](#)

Rafferty, a native of Belfast, also shared that he was in a high school class with a funny guy who, ten years later, would die as a hunger striker during the IRA hunger strike of 1981. He reminded us that it was common that normal people got swept up into the violence all around, but that his faith life and his commitment to a nuanced view of history preserved him from getting swept into paramilitary actions.



On April 14th, **Rebecca Davis**, a social entrepreneur and dancer who founded MindLeaps, an international organization working in post-conflict countries.

*MindLeaps* is an international NGO that uses kinesthetic learning to help street children and out-of-school youth. Working in post-conflict countries, including Rwanda & Bosnia, *MindLeaps* transitions children from the street to formal education. Davis spoke to an audience of 50 about her unconventional journey building a field model that produces results, bringing kids back into school for a better future. She also got the audience to stand up and do a series of dance moves, to demonstrate the skills that kids learn through dancing.



I personally learned a ton about social entrepreneurship as a way of engineering social change. Plans are afoot for a potential partnership with MindLeaps and Cleveland!



Our final public event of the year is a reading by Irish poet **Paul Muldoon** on April 24th at 7pm in Donohue Auditorium. He is often praised as the best poet of his generation and the inheritor of the tradition of Heaney and Yeats. Plus, he's a huge fan of American rock and roll, and plays in a band called Rackett. Should be fun.

The PJHR program will celebrate together for our **year-end barbecue** with students and faculty at Dr. Paul Lauritzen's lakeside house on May 5th at 5pm. Enjoy the food. Stay for the sunset!





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