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Lilly Summer Discernment Institute
Executive Summary

This summer, I worked with Twin City Mission in College Station, Texas. The organization has a number of branches and services ranging from domestic violence shelters to thrift and resale shops, but the branch I was primarily working in was the Youth and Family Services STAR Program. In addition, I traveled to different locations in Brazos, Milam, and Washington Counties.

I worked with a number of people over the course of the summer: Kathy Chapman, director of the TCMYFS STAR Program; Erica Farmer, the counselor supervisor; Lisa McWilliams, the office manager; and a number of other counselors and graduate interns including Beatriz Lloret, Christy Robbins, Meryl Bond, Martha Gonzales and Mark Gherardi. The clients I interacted with were typically youth, ages 6-17.

The work I did with the organization varied in scale. I gathered information about the needs of local children by conducting interviews at recreation centers, trailer parks, and locations where daycare was provided for children. Using this information I created a number of curricula for summer groups, developing programs centered on the specific needs of the children who would be involved in each group. Topics in these groups were usually issues such as making and keeping friends, increasing self-awareness, and being more receptive and appreciative of diversity. I also helped to develop bullying and parenting courses for use at the Brazos Housing Authority alongside other counselors.

My other major project was the production of a talk on Gender and Sexual Diversity (GSDiversity, or LGBTQQIAAP) issues. This presentation covered basic terminology as well as modern notions of queer theory and emphasized the importance of being sensitive to the individual experiences of clients rather than attempting to label their experiences with any specific terminology.

Through the work I did this summer, my sense of vocation was shaken and reconstructed into something slightly different. I must now consider whether I am called to heal those who have been hurt by injustice, or be an advocate and stop injustice before those same people can be harmed.