



## Summer Service & Social Action Experiences, 2020

### Network Summer Service Program - Juvenile Justice

By Caroline Krause '21

Participating in the Juvenile Justice Summer Network Program (June 21-27) was such an enriching experience for me. Coming into the program, I did not have a lot of experience with the topic, and I found myself intrigued and inspired during the week. One of the most special aspects of the program was connecting with girls from other Sacred Heart schools across the country. It was so interesting to talk with them about their school and find common traditions and experiences. In addition, the teachers involved were so supportive and helpful throughout the week, and we were all able to make meaningful connections, even through the online format. The speakers provided different perspectives around the topic of juvenile justice and opened our eyes to new ideas and ways to help. Near the end of the week, the group worked together to create a website (link below) as our closing project to show everything we had learned. We split into small groups to collaborate on different pages and articles, and then worked as a large group to put it all together. It was amazing to see how much we accomplished in just a few days. Overall, the program was an amazing opportunity for me to meet new people and learn more about a topic that is very prevalent in our society today.

Our website may be found here: <https://sites.google.com/view/juvenilejusticewebsite/home>

### National Youth Leadership Council Summit on Education Equity

By Rebecca Fite '21

This three-day summit is a true example of the power youth voices have. This was not just an inspiring workshop led by adults for teens. This was an experience led *by* youth, *for* youth. The NYLC mission, "To create a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world with young people, their schools, and communities through service learning," was tangible throughout the event even given the new virtual platform. In this summit I was reminded how important it is to learn by doing. I was introduced to a term called "service leadership", a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations, and ultimately creates a more just and caring world. I was reminded of group norms, such as: enforcing a rule of respect for all members, assuming people have the best intention in mind, to listen with the intent to understand someone else's experiences. This experience allowed me to do

some reflection on my own abilities as a leader and reach out to my friends and ask: “Is there any part of your identity that doesn’t make you feel respected at school?” and receiving some mind-turning responses. This summit has allowed me to further dive into values I want to implement and my responsibility to the students I represent. I learned about education equity, the belief that everyone deserves a safe, quality education, regardless of their race, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or any other trait. I had the opportunity to *listen* to a panel of students and their experiences with education inequity, much different than my story of education. Out of all of this, one statement a student said made me stop and think. They said: “What is said here, stays here and what is learned here, leaves here.” I plan to live out this statement as I work with the ASH Social Action team in order to be the best representative I can be for the Sacred Heart Community.

### **National Youth Leadership Council Summit on Education Equity By Catherine Lehmkuhl '21**

The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)'s Youth Leadership Summit on Education Equity opened my eyes to countless possibilities and the incredible potential of young people like me. The program was run by a group of students and adults working together, which in itself was an innovative idea - one that could be adopted by schools and local communities alike. Over the course of the three days, I learned about myself and what I can contribute, and about other youth and what they have to offer. Although the organization is "national," because the program became virtual with the ever-changing times, I was able to meet students from South Africa, Morocco, Columbia, and other countries, as well as people from across the U.S. Hearing their perspectives on COVID-19 and the issues surrounding education equity and injustice (not only in our country but around the world) was an awesome experience. Just the fact that we were starting this discussion and talking about concrete ways teachers and students can create change in their communities inspired me. As we discussed our identities and leadership styles and how we can apply them to the issues at hand, I came to realize that students are not powerless to make a change. The stories we heard about students who saw an issue and approached it head-on demonstrated that change is possible, whether you are tackling a global issue or one that affects your local community. We talked about how it's important to strengthen youth-adult partnerships and give students more of a voice in our school communities in order to bring about real improvement. We talked about addressing the root of the problems and eventually coming up with specific solutions to better our environment. And, by the end, without even realizing it, I had learned so much about other people and specific actions I can take that I felt ready to apply these new tools to my own community at ASH. Although I felt overwhelmed with the quantity of information I was given, I knew that these tools would be crucial not only to working for change during my high school years, but also for the rest of my life.