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The Gifts that Keep on Giving:

San Jose graduates share stories of campus ministries

With thousands of students graduating from high schools and universities in June, it's a time of celebrating the contributions that these young people will make to our world. They will "go forth to love and serve," and the campus ministries at San Jose State University, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Santa Cruz, CSU Monterey Bay and others have contributed to the success of many graduates.

The Rev. Kathey Crowe, Chaplain at SJSU, followed an inspiration to create a student residence for students who are the most vulnerable and who struggle to pay for books, fees and tuition while not being able to pay the high cost of housing in the Bay Area. The following graduate recently shared a moving testimony about their student residence experience:

"My experience at the Episcopal Student Residence was one of the best opportunities I could have received while I was a student at SJSU. For the year I was at the residence, I was provided snacks, and most importantly a place to rest and sleep in the days I had back-to-back classes, both morning and night sessions. Because of the time of my classes, commuting back and forth to Modesto was during the heaviest part of the commute traffic, about five hours from my home to SJSU and return. Staying at the residence greatly reduced my stress, not to mention the increased risk of a car accident because I was often so tired.

My college experience went so much more smoothly than it did before Student Affairs told me about the Episcopal Chaplain and her ministry outreach. I really thank and appreciate all Chaplain Crowe did for me and everyone who was involved. I was also impressed that the chaplain lived her faith doing what she believed in and not forcing it on us – powerful. Again, thank you Chaplain for making a place for me so that I could achieve my dream of graduating from college. I wish you and the program success and growth! You can't imagine what good you are doing for students like me.”



The above student asked to remain anonymous but gave Kathey a card and small stuffed beagle with a mortar board (*left*) that will remind her of why she loves this ministry. The spiritual rewards of the weekly chapel that Kathey offers at Spartan Memorial are shared in another testimony from a graduate student, Gianna Bibb, affectionately known as Clemy (*right*):

“I met Chaplain Kathey during a very difficult time in my life, while I was a student at San Jose State University. I had to cope with the feeling of guilt that I could not travel back to Europe to help my parents in the last year of my father’s life. I guess it was God who led me to the Spartan Memorial Chapel, and to Rev. Crowe. She not only helped me deal with the grief but also helped me get closer to God, and better understand that grief is a natural feeling, and that death is part of our Earthly journey. For the next three years, I met with Kathey almost every week and we prayed together. She became my guide and encouragement, and taught me more about what it means to live a Christian life.

Furthermore, this encounter led to my involvement in the Canterbury Bridge ministry, in which I assisted Kathey in reaching out to more students and giving them support and encouragement during their college years. I am especially happy that I could help during the final exams sessions, when Canterbury Bridge reached the students studying in the library, and in the Student Union with small personal care and treats packages. Just the smallest amount of encouraging words can make a huge difference for the students dealing with the stress of finals. Now that I have received my graduate degree and have my first job, I intend to keep in contact with Kathey and help the ministry flourish in any way I can.”

Both the basic and spiritual needs of students are met through our campus ministries. Investing in them, we invest in our future. *“All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.”*