

Student Lasallian Commencement Address
May 2015
Presented by: Theresa Marten

their own conclusions. These two retreats were foundational and helped me become involved with various service and ministry opportunities throughout the rest of my time at Lewis.

One of the most profound experiences I've had, happened this past spring break. I lead a group on a service trip to Cleveland, Ohio. We served at Maggie's Place where housing is provided for expectant and new mothers. During the week, we organized, cooked, and even cleaned the bathrooms, but primarily our job was just to be with the moms. We ate, slept, and talked with the moms and staff. Although it was intimidating at first, we developed relationships with the women. Sharing stories and apple recipes, we bonded and celebrated together, especially when a mom started a new job. As college students, we didn't have money or advice on being new a mother, but that wasn't what was required. Our job was to be present, to intentionally and genuinely pay attention, and have real conversations. When we showed interest in their lives and cared, we recognized their dignity and human worth. We became ministers of presence and I learned what it meant to be Lasallian.

All of us at Lewis can understand how effective presence can be, if we just look at our very own, Br. James. Every sports game, play, awards ceremony, or ice cream social, Br. James is there. Can you think of a time when Br. James wasn't at a campus event? His consistent presence and acknowledgement of students, faculty, and staff has been the catalyst of this loving community.