

Seven Participants Chosen for Inaugural Urban Teaching Program

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Billiken Teacher Corps Places Graduate Students in Urban Catholic School Classrooms

ST. LOUIS – The Archdiocese of St. Louis and the College of Education and Public Service at Saint Louis University recently named the seven members of the inaugural *Billiken Teacher Corps* program. The service-based program is a collaboration between the Archdiocese of St. Louis and Saint Louis University to place graduate students in urban Catholic school classrooms.

“We are excited about this inaugural class,” said Dr. John James, Director of the Institute for Catholic Education at SLU. “At its heart, the *Billiken Teacher Corps* is about service, but combined with teaching experience, this program will offer a unique opportunity for these faith-driven college graduates to have a transformative impact on Catholic schools in the St. Louis metro area.”

The seven members of the inaugural *Billiken Teacher Corps* are:

Sarah Staten – St. Louis (University of Notre Dame)
Teaching math and religion at St. Louis the King Cathedral School, 6-8th grades

Elise Earley – Ballwin (University of Missouri – Columbia)
Teaching science at St. Cecilia School, 6-8th grades

Jennifer Bruns – Cincinnati, OH (Xavier University)
Teaching science at Christ the Light of Nations, 4-8th grades

Kelsey Kerr – Lisle, IL (Saint Louis University)
Teaching at St. Francis Cabrini, 3rd grade

Michelle Ehrhard – St. Charles (Truman State University)
Teaching at Holy Trinity School, 3-4th grades

Mitch McCurren – Zionsville, IN (Saint Louis University)
Teaching biology and theology at St. Mary’s High School

Marjorie Plurad – Webster Groves (Columbia College – Chicago)
Teaching at Our Lady of Guadalupe, 3rd grade

The program has been in planning and development for a few years and is modeled after programs at other schools, including Notre Dame where the program began. Nationwide, about a dozen other Catholic colleges and universities have similar programs.

In addition to gaining valuable hands-on teaching experience, the *Corps* members will work towards a master’s degree in education during the two-year program. They will live in the former convent at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in South City and begin their teaching assignments in fall 2015.

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