

2026 Volunteer Awards



Marianist Social Justice Collaborative

A VOICE OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

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A Note From the Director of Mission

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe another year has passed and we are again taking the time to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our amazing volunteers. Every year this nomination and selection process is incredibly difficult, as the wealth and scope of talent runs so deep within the individuals who dedicate their time and energy volunteering with our organization. These awards honor longtime volunteers whose shoulders we all stand on and new volunteers who are already leaving an indelible mark on our organization with their innovation. Below you'll read about MSJC volunteers whose passion moves mountains. Their willingness to say "yes" never fails. And their belief that our world can and will be a more loving and just place never falters. I hope you are as inspired by them as I have been. I invite you to join us in celebrating their hard work and the profound impact they make on our organization, Church and world.

It is with great pride that I announce the recipients of this year's MSJC Volunteer Awards.

With Gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Erin Anderson-White Face".

**ERIN ANDERSON-
WHITE FACE**

Director of Mission
Marianist Social Justice Collaborative

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MSJC LEGACY AWARD

MSJC's Legacy Award is presented to a long-standing MSJC volunteer whose dedication and impact have left a lasting mark on our organization. This year's award goes to:

Brian Halderman

Brian recently completed his term as chair of MSJC's LGBTQ+ Initiative. He has been active with the team since 2017. Prior to serving the LGBTQ+ Initiative he was a founding member of the Death Penalty Abolition and Restorative Justice Team. Serving as chair of that team for a period of time where he initiated partnerships with Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing and Catholic Mobilizing Network.

He was part of the planning team for the Exaltation of Voices event held at St. Mary's University in 2002 which brought together Marianist students and LIFE groups from throughout the country to focus on the call to social justice.



Additionally, in that same year he helped plan an Ohio speaking tour of Bill Pelke from Journey of Hope. Pelke spoke about alternatives to the death penalty and his personal story of being a murder victim's family member to at least 8 schools, parishes, and Catholic organizations. Brian also supported the initial gatherings of the Adele Social Justice Project that engaged young adults in immersion weekends in Cincinnati and Indianapolis. He has served in the past as an instructor of the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation course on Marianist Social Justice created in 2007. During Brian's tenure as chair of the LGBTQ+ Initiative he continued to support the retreat ministry of that team, the formation of a Trans Advocacy subcommittee, which led to the first public statement of the Marianist Family on support of Trans individuals, and was instrumental in bringing to life the Imago Dei assembly during the summer of 2024.

Brian was introduced to the Marianist charism as a student at the University of Dayton ('99) and was quickly captivated by the family spirit. As a lay Marianist and former religious brother, he continues to be active in the Marianist Family. He was instrumental in the formation of the Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland in early 2000s and a past board member of Pride Center San Antonio. He is a current board member of Fortunate Families and serves as the appointed District 8 representative to the City of San Antonio's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board. He holds a Masters in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis and resides in San Antonio, Texas with his husband Omar and their fur babies Charlie, Chloe and Ruby.

Brian is not only a visionary, but one of those rare individuals who is also willing to put in the work to see a dream become reality.

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

MSJC's Community Impact Award is presented to the volunteer most dedicated to their cause outside of MSJC. This year's award goes to:

A Pollicino

A Pollicino is a nonbinary, trans educator and artist from NY. A is working on a PhD focused on how cisnormative schools can become more inclusive environments for trans students and faculty. A grew up attending retreats at the Marianist Family Retreat Center in Cape May, NJ. They are a proud member of MSJC's LGBTQ+ Initiative Team, and the Chair of the Trans Advocacy Committee. This sub-committee of the LGBTQ+ Initiative is comprised of trans Catholics and allies building affirming community and creating programming aimed towards trans inclusion in the Church.



A is passionate about education that spurs necessary dialogue and art as a form of advocacy. One of their recent works, a banner entitled *Our Lady of Inclusion*, was donated to the UD Marian Library. The banner is an example of A's effort to encourage visible witness to some of the most pressing justice issues of our time (racial justice, LGBTQ+ Inclusion, and calling for an end to the genocide in Palestine). A has been advocating and creating programming around trans inclusion in the Marianist Family for years, and they do so much work for the trans community outside of MSJC as well. A is always advocating for change, supporting mutual aid programs, and challenging the status quo on in their personal and online life. They are also an ardent peacemaker, calling for an end to global conflict and genocide. They have a deep understanding of liberation work, center the most marginalized across the world in their work, and push the communities they are a part of to always do more and to do better.

HEART IN ACTION AWARD

MSJC's Heart In Action Award is presented to a team or individual that went above and beyond in mission work, engagement, and impact during the past year. This year's award goes to:

Anthony (Tony) Mercogliano

Tony first met the Marianists in 1960 as a high school student at Chaminade High School in Mineola, NY. The one extra-curricular activity from his high school days which has carried over through his entire life was membership in the Sodality of Our Lady of the Pillar Marianist Lay Community.

Tony's career in the US Navy allowed him to live both in Philadelphia, PA and Washington, DC where he is a member of the Maranatha and Metro Marianist Lay Communities.



Tony began volunteering at the Marianist Center in Folsom, PA in the late 1970's (serving as it's Accountant from 1977 to 1979 and its first Lay Director from 1987 to 1992) and at the Marianist Family Retreat Center in Cape May Point, NJ in the mid 1980's (where he's still active as a volunteer).

Tony became involved with the plight of immigrants to the US in 2007 when his late wife Kay and he helped recently arriving Afghani and Iraqi refugee families get settled in Northern Virginia. Tony was invited to join the MSJC Immigrant Justice Team by Rich Sroczynski in 2023. And in 2025, Fr. Ted Cassidy asked him to succeed him as Co-Chair.

In the past year Tony has led the charge of directly engaging numerous Marianist Lay Communities with the Immigrant Justice Team. The program he has organized educates and inspires individuals and communities to take positive action in the face of unjust and inhumane immigration policies and practices. Tony continues to work tirelessly to make sure these meetings happen, and that Marianists across the US truly confront these issues and work to advance justice. It is his dream that he and the team will present to every single lay community in North America.

All of this work has resulted in not only a stronger MSJC relationship with the Marianist Lay Community of North America (MLC-NA) but also a database of contacts and a programming framework other MSJC Justice Teams can use in the future. Tony's leadership and creativity has been outstanding. His organizational skills are advancing the work of the Immigrant Justice team at an exemplary pace, at a time when the work is so very much needed. Tony embodies and animates everything MSJC stands for as he intentionally leads with a Marianist heart.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CHAMPION AWARD

MSJC's Social Justice Champion Award recognizes an individual who actively advances equity and inclusion through sustained action, advocacy, and leadership. This year's award goes to:

Miranda Melone

Miranda serves professionally as the Program Manager for ACS H.O.P.E. (Health Outreach Program for Equity in Global Surgery) at the American College of Surgeons, where she leads initiatives to improve surgical care in medically underserved communities, both domestically and internationally. At MSJC, Miranda began volunteering as an active member of the Adele Social Justice Project (2021) and is a founding member of MSJC's Antiracism Task Force (2022), a group dedicated to making MSJC a more antiracist organization.



Miranda's work on MSJC's Antiracism Task Force has been incredibly valuable. She organized a 2024 Lenten Antiracism Program, which was a multi-week guided reflection and education series using the stages of confession as a pathway to becoming antiracist. Her work over the past year helped MSJC to hire an outside consulting group, Just Roots, to facilitate a race equity assessment and report of MSJC. She played a big role in taking the assessment report and developing both a document explaining why MSJC is committed to antiracism and an official Race Equity Plan for our organization in the coming years. Miranda's efforts to get MSJC to deeply consider our call to antiracism, and her understanding of the balance between supporting next steps and challenging the status quo are unique gifts she shares generously. MSJC would not be nearly as far along in our antiracist work if not for Miranda's advocacy and commitment.

Miranda lives in the culturally rich Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago with her beloved dog, Rose, and continues to root her professional and personal life in the work of building equity, community, and hope.

RISING STAR AWARD

MSJC's Rising Star Award is presented to a new MSJC volunteer who displays lots of passion. This year's award goes to:

Dick Ullrich

Dick met the Marianist Brothers and Priests in 1952 when he was a teacher and the first lay Vice Principal at Cardinal Gibbons High School in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

In 1967, Brother Bill Abel, SM, asked him to establish the Office of Justice and Peace for the then New York Province of the Society of Mary. At that time the Office of Justice and Peace primarily advocated by using the Province's stock holdings to change unjust or harmful corporate practices. Through the sharing of mutual ideas, concerns and social programs of the Lay Communities, the Marianist Sisters, the Cincinnati, St Louis and Pacific provinces of the Society of Mary, together initiated the beginning of the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative in 1998 (MSJC). Dick served as our organization's very first director!



He then rejoined MSJC in 2024 and has continued to increase his commitment to our justice work. Dick currently attends team meetings for the following Justice Teams: Death Penalty Abolition and Restorative Justice, Immigrant Justice, Integral Ecology, LGBTQ+ Initiative, and Women & Justice. It is Dick's desire to be involved as much as possible with the work of our organization. He makes a concerted effort to assist with projects across the teams he is involved with, including multiple liturgical events for the LGBTQ+ Initiative. Dick also does a ton of advocacy work on his own time. He uses his ability to work remotely to make our world a more just and welcoming place.

DEDICATION AWARD

MSJC's Dedication Award is presented to the volunteer with the most logged volunteer hours each year. This year's award goes to:

Bro. Steve O'Neil, SM

Bro. Steve volunteered 141 hours this year as a member of MSJC's Steering Committee (representative of the Society of Mary) and an active volunteer on MSJC's Integral Ecology Team and Antiracism Task Force.

He has been a Marianist Brother since 1987 and is currently the director at the Marianist Care Center in Cupertino, California. During this Provincial Administration, he also serves as Province Coordinator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.



Bro. Steve was the first Assistant Director of the Marianist Environmental Education Center in the early 1990s. He was the Marianist NGO representative at the United Nations for 11 years during the early part of this millennium. He has been the province representative with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) for many years.

Bro. Steve was part of the founding meeting for MSJC in Cupertino in 1998. Early on, he was part of one of MSJC's original teams, the Anti-Sweatshop Team, which later morphed into the Global Economics Team.

Bro. Steve's thoughtful and steady presence has helped guide our organization since its inception.

**Thank you and CONGRATULATIONS
to all of our
2026 Volunteer Awardees!**