

# CITY HOUSE



*December 2016*

## *Giving Thanks*

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#### *A Note from the Director:*

Merry Christmas from the City House! This has been a very full and fun semester for us. As it wraps up, the students and I are anxious to head out for the long break. As we reflect on the past four months, we have much to be thankful for.

As always, the year started out in August when 11 students moved into the house to begin a year of Christian community. Fifteen weeks later, they've become like family having endured many dirty dishes, grocery shopping, arranging rides to and from campus, and coming alongside one another in difficult times. Besides some of the challenges of community-living, we've spent a couple weekends together on retreats, hosted a block party, heard from a series of guest speakers, and enjoyed the teasing, laughter and stories that emerge

around the dinner table. It's a real joy and privilege to watch a community of students take shape.

For me, the semester included wedding planning. Chad and I are now engaged and excited for June when we will be married and beginning our life together!

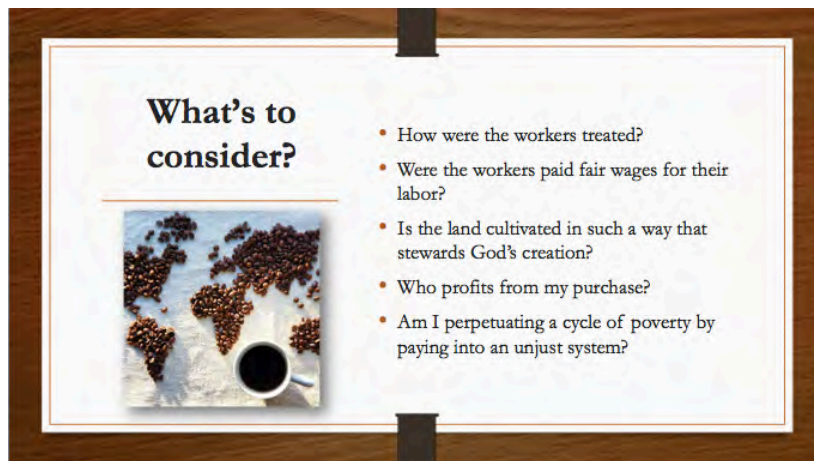
While this past semester is marked by many blessings, we also recognize the difficulties that plague our community, the suffering of friends, and the overwhelming political and economic anxiety felt across the nation and world. We pray for continued hope, that those "who walk in darkness will see the great light" (Isaiah 7:2). May we remember and live in that light everyday. Merry Christmas!

~Wendy Van Wyhe, Director



Madelyn Blosser studied justice issues related to coffee. Madelyn is a Elementary/Special Ed Major from Harrisburg, PA.

On the Right: Excerpts from Madelyn's Justice Week Paper: "The Sanctified Sip"



Justice week, which began November 14<sup>th</sup>, kicked off with a great start. City House students had the opportunity to present their justice projects at the event called "Open Table: An Invitation to Justice Week" on Monday night. The students worked all semester on their projects concerning different topics on everyday justice. The topics included debt, restaurant ethics, clothing, grocery stores, the local economy, food, cars, chocolate, coffee, and trash. Franki Whritenour had an interactive game to help people understand what can and cannot be recycled for her topic on trash. She educated guests on recycling practices and how to reduce the effect of carbon dioxide on the ozone layer. Michelle Cantrell had beautiful poster display about clothing and the apparel industry. She even had an interactive quiz for the audience, highlighting the ethical grades of well-known clothing brands. All the projects were informative and the students learned a great deal about their topics. The aim was to inform others about how we, as consumers, can understand our impact on the lives of workers and the health of our environment and to explore ethical alternatives or even ignite a passion to fight the injustices of this world.

~Karissa Collins, RD

Coffee is easily one of the most popular beverages in our culture, and as such its consumption has led to an incredible demand for coffee bean harvesting and processing around the world. The high demand for coffee combined with the cheap prices for which we can buy large quantities of it is problematic for a few reasons. These include, but are not limited to, ethical treatment of workers and environmental damage. Christians who consume coffee ought to care about the plight of farmers in other countries. As an extension of their desire to love God and neighbor, they can look to buying their coffee from those who farm the land with dignity and treat their workers as image-bearers of the living God.

The high demand for coffee beans previously mentioned often translates into dismal realities hidden from the privileged eyes of American consumers. Many workers in already impoverished countries are expected to farm and process incredible amounts of coffee beans without being paid more than it costs to produce the coffee in the first place...Often, in places like Guatemala or Vietnam, years of economic exploitation have left little to do other than farming on massive plantations owned by large companies. Those who protest their wages or complain about the conditions in which they work could be beaten or their family's safety threatened (Clawson, 2009, et. al). By continuing to buy coffee from sources such as those listed above, Christians willingly buy into a system that perpetuates the cycle of poverty for people and their families the world over...The time and slight difference in pocket change that switching up coffee habits which we in America might "suffer" is hardly a sacrifice, but is a way to love our neighbors even the world over. By pursuing alternate means of purchasing coffee, we create and perpetuate economic systems that show love and respect to others as we are called.

The culminating moment of the semester was when City House students came together to put into practice what they have been learning in our class: "Civic Engagement: Beaver Falls." City House is all about purchasing local foods because it supports the local economy, contributes towards local business's profits, and is often a healthier alternative. For our Thanksgiving meal, students were to make a specific dish with as many ingredients purchased locally as possible. We bought the turkey from Lamppost Farm, a family-owned farm located in Columbiana, Ohio. The two students in charge of cooking the turkey, weighing 27 pounds, decided to deep fry it!

Nate Eason, in charge of making a salad, concocted a homemade salad dressing that was a big hit. The table was set beautifully and



festively by the detail-oriented Michelle Cantrell. We filled our stomachs with delicious locally-grown food and gave thanks for those around the table. After all, we have so much to be thankful for!  
~Karissa Collins, RD

*11<sup>th</sup> Annual Block Party*

Many THANKS to those who were able to attend our annual BLOCK PARTY!...Great weather, good food and a fabulous music group, HARMONY HOT HAUS. We feel so grateful for those who can come to welcome our students and support and celebrate our neighborhood! Thank you, let's do it again next year!





### *Welcome Karissa Collins!*

Please allow me to introduce our newest resident director, Karissa Collins! Karissa is a 2016 graduate of Eastern University, where she studied entrepreneurship and psychology. After college, Karissa moved to Massachusetts and worked at Panera Bread as an assistant manager and the Dane Estate as an event manager. In late September, she dropped everything and moved to Beaver Falls to serve as our RD when our current RD decided not to stay.

When our current RD decided that Geneva College and Beaver Falls were not a good fit for him, we were left scrambling to find someone who could provide leadership and mentorship to the students in the house. Jeremiah, a current student in the house, encouraged his sister to apply and after an online interview, she packed her bags and made the move to Beaver Falls. We are grateful for her willingness to dive in and take on this much-needed role!

Karissa keeps us going. While I (Wendy) have begun teaching more courses at Geneva and directing the CDC (Beaver Falls Community Development Corporation), Karissa takes charge in the house and mentors students. She does everything from creating schedules, budgeting, problem-solving, and especially building relationships with students. With a house of 12, you can image the busy-ness and complexity of her work! She's done a great job this semester and we're grateful for her energy and commitment to our project!

~Wendy Van Wyhe, Director

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