


The Broad Street Journal

Volume 5, Issue 6

November 20, 2006



There are few spots on Temple's campus that one would label private. Whether it's making a late night trip to 7-11 or trying to find a computer in the Tech Center in the middle of the afternoon, the lack of solitude is apparent.

There is one spot however that holds a glimmer of hope for the introvert in all of us. It's the Owl Statue off of Liacouras Walk. When you stand directly in the center of the monument and allow words to come out of your mouth, the spot is perfectly acoustically tuned so that your own echo surrounds you. After you speak, you will swing back towards your friends and say "Did you hear that?!" "No," they'll respond laughing, because only standing in the dead center can you hear the echoes of your voice.

At first glance, the concept may seem a bit lonely and less enjoyable, because if others can't hear what you hear, then what is the point of saying anything?

Well, after living in Philadelphia, this question has grown on me and I have slowly begun to understand and cherish this concept of individualism and hearing the echo of your own voice and experience.

Studying at the Philly campus is just like speaking into the Owl Statue monument. Your friends can travel with you there and even stand beside you through the process. But, to get the full desired result, sometimes you

need to have your back facing towards others and stand alone, letting your thoughts resound and penetrate.

In the end, only you will hear the echo of your experience, your trials and your lessons on life in this environment. You can swing around and exclaim to onlookers of how wonderful and rewarding living in North Philadelphia is, but no one is *really* going to understand until they stand in the spot themselves and allow words to seep out of their mouths and reveal things about themselves that they never knew before.

That is what this last issue of the Broad Street Journal is all about. It's about hearing other people's voices and the echoes they have heard from their individual experiences in North Philadelphia. And although we can't live each experience for ourselves, sometimes the echo is just as beautiful.

"What I will cherish most are the cheap concerts, priceless times with friends, and Fairmount Park at night. What I will wish I could forget is the horrible parking."

-Matt Wells

"If living in a city like Philly has taught me anything, it's that the city is a dynamic place of dynamic growth and relationships; as such, it requires dynamic action from people like us-- people like me-- to help it flourish. If we-- if I-- ever want to see the difference I want to see in the city, I have to learn to BE the difference (at least part of it) I want to see in the city, be it through painting a mural or praying ceaselessly for a change."

-Khara House

Community



Emily Decker participated in field work by volunteering at the Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Originally, I was going to take a quote from Emily's statement of experience, however her words were too moving and inspirational to condense.

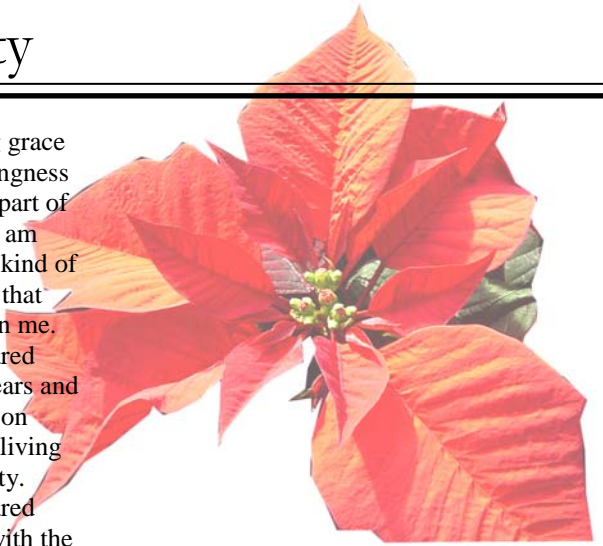
If someone were to ask me to explain my experience at the Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired I would have trouble stating it simply. There are so many stories to tell, scenarios to explain, logistics to sort out—I have seen first hand at the ASB the trials of the human spirit and I have seen these amazing people rise above the odds. I went into the ASB my first day, feeling alone in this city, far from home and anything familiar, uncomfortable with the idea of working with people who were different. I am leaving with an entirely new family, made up of all different colors and shapes. I am leaving a daughter, a granddaughter, a girlfriend, a friend, and a sister. I am amazed by these people that I have met, by their



overwhelming grace and their willingness to let me be a part of their lives and am amazed at the kind of faith and trust that they all have in me. They have shared openly their fears and their thoughts on blindness and living with a disability. They have shared their qualms with the city, and their secret

family recipes. I've laughed with them, raged with them, sang with them, ate with them, and painted with them. I've experienced this city through their stories and learned so much by lending a friendly ear. They have brought many things to my attention that I would never have considered prior, like buffets and how lucky I am that I can see to fill my plate or shopping, or flirting... both things that visually I take for granted. I've been hugged by them and hassled by them. I've loved every minute of it and it has truly opened my eyes to the strength of human will and what we are all capable of if the need be. I used to walk into a room where a class was taking place and say "Hey Everyone!" and people would look up and ask "Who's there?" and I would answer "It's Emily!" Now I walk into a room and I see physical change in these people at the sound of my voice "Oh Emily! How you doing baby girl?" It's amazing. I have never felt so loved by a group of people in my entire life.

This morning I was reminded of the blessings that come along with sight. I awoke to the sun wrapping around the trunks of a tree outside casting playful shadows on our closed blinds, the trees leaves danced like insects attempting to pollinate the swaggering black trunk. I closed my eyes and still the warm glow penetrated their lids, I squeezed them tighter feeling the muscles in my face constrict around the round socket, the light couldn't get in, I had created my

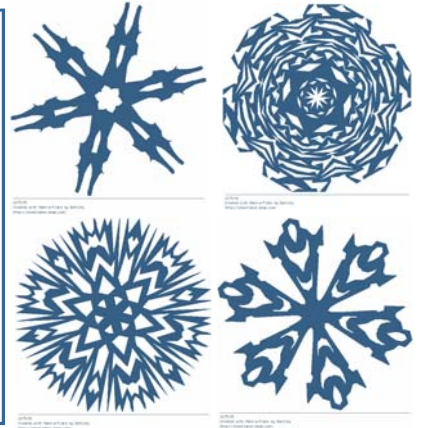


own dark morning. I opened my eyes slowly and the trunk was still there, the glow from the window on my skin and across my room full of sleepers. I am thankful for this rare greeting, most days sleep keeps me from seeing. I relished the morning, enjoying the solitude, and reminded myself that I am blessed. I thank God that this morning when I awoke that my eyes opened and I could see to get to the bathroom, could see to turn on the water, could see to accept the stream into my hands and splash it onto my face, could see to watch the dancing of the sun. I don't know if four months ago I would have been thankful for this morning in the same way. I took my sight for granted, and even to some extent felt that it was owed to me, that somehow I deserved it, through my work at the ASB I have come to realize that the ability to see is a sacred gift that each day we should thank the Lord for and that the love and generosity of strangers is also an enormous blessing.

I will never forget my time spent there, or the people I have come in contact with. I am having trouble describing the warm feeling I have when I talk about these people. They have become so familiar to and with me that I carry them in my heart. I have loved every minute of my time at the ASB, I have even loved every minute spent filing, sorting, and calling random businesses to see if they would deliver groceries. I feel hugged. I feel whole. I have seen love, I have felt it, I have observed kindness and generosity and I am so very thankful.

Events

Make-A-Snowflake website is the best waste of your time since solitaire and minesweeper. Simply go to **snowflakes.lookandfeel.com** or enter "snowflake" in Google and it will be the first result. You click on "Make Your Own Snowflake" and you get cyber scissors and paper and cut away. The snowflakes to the right were flakes that I made on the site while I should have been studying for finals.



*Christmas
Gift Ideas*

Don't underestimate the power of a gift basket. Friends or family that are fans of organic food are great candidates for this kind of gift. You can simply go to Trader Joes on 22nd Street which sells baskets right at the entrance for under \$10. Then, go through the aisles and pick out anything from dried fruit to organic chocolate to trail mix. To satisfy their finer organic fixings, DiBruno Brothers is a gourmet grocery store that specializes in fine cheeses, carries over 700 types of cheese from all over the world. Mix and match these products and you'll be sure to score some points for creativity at the holiday.