

2023 AGAPE YOUNG ADULT STAFF

ROSA, 3rd Year

I did not expect to return for a 3rd summer, but I am grateful I did. This summer I grew leadership skills - I led a whole food distribution process and helped youth meet other children weekly. This grace has helped bring communities together and relationships to flourish. Additionally, I was gifted with beautiful relationships. This year, I was able to prosper in my relationships with the migrant families. Through them I experienced immense Agape love. Many families knew my position during food bank days, which was check in. Check in is usually where I register them and ask them questions, but many always made sure to check in with me. I also received love from the children I played with weekly. They always made sure to give me hugs and laughter as we played. This love and growth I have experienced this year has been immense. I wish it was easier to transition out, but it's not, as I remember all the names and faces that brought me joy this summer. I am grateful to God for helping me return and experience His love from so many of His children this summer.

KATERI, 2nd Year

Growth has taken root in the surrender for me. This summer I was able to plant seeds of selflessness in the practice of surrender, learning how to trust in the Creator's abundance. The fruit of that abundance was sown in the complete childlike joy of the migrant camps. Within these moments of encounter, I got to accompany many students in using their gifts to eagerly serve others. One of the most sacred moments was watching a student use her ASL skills to sign out animals during Lotería with Aldair, a joyful 10 year old who often needs more support and care due to his hearing aids. From the door steps of migrant housing during food distribution to the entire food supply at the food bank, students were empowered to be architects of change. Access points lead to action points, and I am beyond grateful to be a part of students' stories in understanding how to live a life for others. These moments of greater purpose will continue to resonate with me and inspire me far beyond this summer.

LIZVETH, 1st Year

This summer, I learned that my Spanish is a gift and to be proud of it, even if it's not perfect. It allows me to communicate and get to know the families we are serving while making them feel comfortable and seen. I am constantly in awe of how much love is shown for one another. A youth named Kurt was pulling carts and helping families bring their food to their cars which is a very demanding job. He expressed that he was tired but kept working because he knew the families coming to our food bank were probably more tired and had been working longer than he had. I experienced love and grace when I was cleaning up lunch one day and Mr. Lopez (a chaperone) asked if I needed help and I said no and kept cleaning. When I looked up he was still there and rephrased his question to "May I help you?" This allowed me to be vulnerable and know that someone cares about me and wants to help me not because I needed help, but simply to not do it alone. I am so thankful for everyone I met this summer and am excited to return next year.

JOSEPH, 1st Year

The openness and joy that I experienced from many of the migrant children proved to be infectious. It definitely helped open my own mind and heart to them further as the summer progressed, instead of merely forming a task-based relationship with them and their families. It amazes me that these children, despite their poverty and lack of stability in life from moving often - thus being 'transplanted' into a new environment away from the people they previously knew - are still not only open but eager to forming news bonds with our groups, despite knowing it will only be for the summer, or just a single week. From a small boy feeling comfortable enough to push me playfully (numerous times!) into the ball pit at our food bank, to a girl named Allison bestowing upon me the honorable title of "bestie". Surely the persistent joy of these, God's own children, proves to us our loving God's fidelity to our life circumstances, namely, that God gives even more grace to those whose lives are harder.

Agape is honored to now be an official summer placement for seminarians of the Archdiocese of Seattle. We were blessed to have Joseph join us in the pilot year. In this mutually beneficial partnership, seminarians gain experience in youth ministry, encountering the farmworker community, & social services while greatly benefiting the Agape staff team & groups.

