Ruthellyn Musil sees ‘providence’ at JFRC

Ruthellyn and Ron Musil are two of the John Felice Rome Center’s most enthusiastic advocates. With both their time and treasure, the Musils help to ensure not only that more students have the opportunity to study at the JFRC, but also that those students have a vibrant experience while in Rome.

We asked the Musils to tell their story: why they think the JFRC is important and how they stay involved.

In a recent homily at Chicago’s Holy Name Cathedral, Pastor Dan Mayall, a member of Loyola’s Board of Regents, made the distinction between “providence” and “luck.” He gave us a homework assignment—find an example of “providence” in our lives. For my husband, Ron, and me, that example is our relationship with the John Felice Rome Center. We believe providence played a key role in connecting us to this treasure that we believe is the premier study-abroad program among U.S. universities.

In today’s world, true cultural understanding requires more than just visiting a foreign country; it requires “living the life.” This means attempting to speak the language. It means being open to different political opinions. It means learning about civilizations that predate American history by thousands of years. It means the John Felice Rome Center.

Our connection to the JFRC is multifaceted. Ron’s Italian heritage and our interest in the food and wine of Italy have motivated us to purchase a home in Tuscany. For me, as a member of Loyola’s Board of Trustees, it was natural to want to learn more about the JFRC. Last spring, we met the JFRC’s charismatic leaders, Emilio Iodice and Susana Cavallo, along with its long-serving leadership team, truly the backbone of the center. A special privilege was an introduction to Kate Felice, whose husband John had the vision and the dedication to create the center that is now named in his honor.

This introduction to the JFRC—our personal example of “providence”—has resulted in actions that we hope will inspire others.

As strong believers in “living the life,” we wanted to help organize the JFRC’s Tuscan Experience last fall. From learning the history of early Etruscan settlers to picking olives and pressing oil to touring the ancient hill towns of Castellina, Radda, and Volpaia, 22 students enjoyed experiences seldom available to the average visitor, all led by local Italians.

Finally, the launch of Loyola’s capital campaign has presented an opportunity for us to create a lasting gift to the JFRC. Our endowment will support scholarships and stipends for experiential learning at the JFRC and give students who would otherwise not be able to study abroad the opportunity of a lifetime.

To create a JFRC scholarship, sponsor a program, or make a bequest gift, please contact Elaine Kreuz at 312.915.7652 or ekreuz@luc.edu.

Ron and Ruthellyn Musil, far right, hosted JFRC students as part of last fall’s Tuscan Experience.
Greetings from Emilio

Dear JFRC Alumni & Friends,

I am so pleased to write to you as we wrap up another successful year at the JFRC, and am grateful that we are able to carry out our important mission that began 47 years ago this semester.

While we continue to make progress and offer the life-changing experiences from which so many of you benefited, I am focused on the challenges our students and center face in these uncertain economic times. We are seeing the impact of job losses among our students’ families, financial hardships, and general worry, and are working extremely hard to respond with creative solutions. I want to take the time to extend a very heartfelt “thank you” to everyone who has contributed to the JFRC in some way. Now more than ever, we and our students need your support, generous donations, and prayers. Every gift that goes to a JFRC fund is being utilized to help ensure our students are eternally grateful!

In recent decades, the Mediterranean region has undergone a great population shift as the area has changed from a source of emigrants to a destination for immigrants. Even as many Mediterranean countries have recently struggled with poverty and unemployment, large populations fleeing persecution and ethnic strife have arrived on their shores. This April, the John Felice Rome Center will host “The Changing Face of the Mediterranean: Migrant Women’s Creativity and Constraints,” an international conference that will discuss migrant women’s challenges and contributions in the new Mediterranean world. The conference, which will feature speakers from around the globe, will have five main components: women on the move, faith and tradition, politics and human rights, media and arts, and Mediterranean feminism. The highlights of the conference will be the inaugural address by noted Egyptian writer, political activist, and activist Nawal Al Saadawi, Cosby Chair, Spelman College; the keynote presentation by the Honorable Emma Bonino, Cosby Chair, Spelman College; the keynote presentation by the Honorable Emma Bonino, Italian senator, her dialogue, which will close the second night’s events.

SUNDAy
Mass at Dahlgren Chapel, Georgetown University
11 a.m.
The oldest Jesuit university in the country welcomes us to their beautiful campus to celebrate Mass in one of the university’s original buildings.

Brunch at Urbano
Hotel Palomar-DC
12:30 p.m.
Urbana, a restaurant and wine bar in energetic Dupont Circle, blends the food culture of the Western Mediterranean with cosmopolitan Washington DC.

$45 per person (alcoholic beverages not included)  
$100 per person for young alumni (attended JFRC in fall 1999 or later)  
$150 per person  
$200 per person for distinguished modern buildings.

Dinner: 7 p.m.
Enjoy a wonderful sit-down dinner under the stars in one of DC’s most distinguished modern buildings. 

Executive King—$189 per night  
Queen Deluxe—$169 per night

Register online at LUC.edu/romereunion or call 877.866.3070. When making phone reservations, ask for the Loyola University Chicago rate.

Are you Class Captain material?
Would you like to reconnect with your classmates from the Rome Center? Would you enjoy helping to organize your class reunion?
If so, please contact Allison Cote in Alumni Relations at 312.915.6742 or acote@luc.edu for more details on how you can become involved by becoming a class captain.

JFRC hosts conference on Mediterranean women

The annual John Felice Rome Center All-Class Reunion will be held in Washington DC on April 18–19, 2009. Party like a diplomat in “DC” with a fun-filled weekend of great food, great spaces, and (fingers crossed) cherry blossoms!

Host Hotel: Hotel Palomar-DC, a 4-star boutique hotel in bustling Dupont Circle
We have reserved two different room styles at very competitive rates:

Executive King—$189 per night  
Queen Deluxe—$169 per night

Register online at LUC.edu/romereunion or call 877.866.3070. When making phone reservations, ask for the Loyola University Chicago rate.

April 18–19
Join your fellow JFRC alumni for a capital weekend!

SATURDAY
Reunion Dinner
The Embassy of Italy  
Cocktails: 6 p.m.  
Dinner: 7 p.m.
Enjoy a wonderful sit-down dinner under the stars in one of DC’s most distinguished modern buildings. 

Executive King—$189 per night  
Queen Deluxe—$169 per night

Register online at LUC.edu/romereunion or call 877.866.3070. When making phone reservations, ask for the Loyola University Chicago rate.

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PARTNER
For more information about the largest campaign in Loyola’s history, please visit LUC.edu/partner.
Greece, Romania, Ireland, and Turkey are just a few of the places John Felice Rome Center students traveled this year thanks to the Forza Roma Travel & Cultural Fund. Forza Roma is funded through donations from JFRC alumni and friends and provides much-needed funds for student travel in Italy and the rest of Europe. In times when the dollar was stronger, more students were able to fund their own travel, and the JFRC was better-equipped to host more trips. In this new economy, studying abroad has become a luxury, and many students cannot even afford to get to Rome, let alone travel outside it. Since its creation, Forza Roma has been able to address the travel and emergency needs of hundreds of students and continues to be a most valuable resource thanks to the many JFRC alumni and friends who contribute to it each year.

Below are two of the thank you letters received from students who have used Forza Roma funds.

Dear Forza Roma Donors,

I want to travel everywhere for helping make my fall break possible. Going to Italy and London has been a dream of mine since childhood, with the National Gallery, the British Museum, and the Louvre being some of the places I’ve always wanted to see. However, traveling is expensive, and I was particularly thrilled to see the Louvre was able to see so many paintings and artifacts.

While I loved London and Paris a lot, my trip and highlight of my trip was my excursion to Oxford, where I visited a friend who is currently a student at Somerville College. I got an insider’s view of Oxford University. There is still so much history at Oxford, but at the same time there is still a lot of youthful energy. So, while it was a beautiful city, there is a sense of vibrancy. As a history major and someone who hopes to get a doctorate one day, this is very appealing to me. Hopefully, I’ll go back to Oxford one day, perhaps as a student or even as a professor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for providing me with a trip that was more than just a trip. It was a trip that I will never forget. Thank you for providing this opportunity to meet Polish students and learn about the culture and history of Poland. It was a wonderful experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn about this beautiful city.

Sincerely,

Anita F. Knauf

During the JFRC’s fall break, 14 JFRC students traveled to Northern Ireland to learn about peace-building and conflict-resolution programs in Belfast and other areas of Northern Ireland affected by the “Troubles.” The first evening was spent in Armagh, a divided town in Northern Ireland with both large Catholic and Protestant populations. The students met with a Jesuit priest, Brian Lennon, S.J., who runs a community dialogue project at a local community center. At the center, the students had the privilege of hearing from Damien, a member of Sinn Féin (a Catholic political party), and Quiryn, a member of the Orange Order (a Protestant fraternal organization). Afterwards, Father Lennon, Damien, and Quiryn joined the students at a local restaurant for Thanksgiving dinner.

The following day, Professor Dermot MacCarter of St. Mary’s College in Belfast explained the history of the “Troubles” and described his own experience growing up in Belfast in the heart of a Catholic neighborhood. A bus tour followed, the highlight of which was the famous political murals that narrate the struggles of Protestants and Catholics in Belfast.

That evening, the students traveled up to Ballycastle, a small town on the North Sea, where they explored the town, took in the breathtaking scenery, and had a nice plate of fish and chips. Many of the students caught an impromptu Irish folk music concert at one of the local pubs. The next morning, the students traveled to the Giant’s Causeway, a rock formation on the North Sea.

The trip, funded in part by the Forza Roma Travel & Cultural Fund, was a huge success with JFRC students, giving them the chance to discuss peace-making face-to-face with participants in the process.

New experiences and new friends in Poland

During the JFRC’s fall break, 14 JFRC students traveled to Warsaw to meet with Polish students and learn about the culture and history of Poland. Accompanied by Todd Walker, associate director for student life, and Carla Mollica, student life assistant, the students briefly toured the capital city of Warsaw before heading off to Torun, a small college town in the north.

In Torun, thanks to JFRC alumnus John Kurowski (JFRC ’73–’74, BA ’75), the students were able to participate in a symposium at Nicolaus Copernicus University, where Kurowski was a visiting professor during the summer of 2005. At NCU, students listened to presentations given by Polish professors on the effects of the Holocaust on the Polish population, health-care issues, and the influence of China on the Western world. During a round-table discussion following each presentation, JFRC and NCU students discussed these issues and compared American and Polish perspectives.

The students spent time together after the symposium touring Torun and eating heartily. The trip ended with a reception in a local pub, where students discussed these issues and compared American and Polish perspectives.

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Sincerely,

Erin Groble

In late November, 20 JFRC students traveled to Northern Ireland to learn about peace-building and conflict-resolution programs in Belfast and other areas of Northern Ireland affected by the “Troubles.” The first evening was spent in Armagh, a divided town in Northern Ireland with both large Catholic and Protestant populations. The students met with a Jesuit priest, Brian Lennon, S.J., who runs a community dialogue project at a local community center. At the center, the students had the privilege of hearing from Damien, a member of Sinn Féin (a Catholic political party), and Quiryn, a member of the Orange Order (a Protestant fraternal organization). Afterwards, Father Lennon, Damien, and Quiryn joined the students at a local restaurant for Thanksgiving dinner.

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Ciao from the Advancement Office

Increasing opportunities, culture at the JFRC

Nearly 47 years ago, the 92 pioneers of the John Felice Rome Center embarked on an adventure of global proportions. Today, more than 300 students each year follow in their footsteps and are offered even more opportunities to make the most of their study abroad experience thanks to the JFRC Director’s Fund and the Forza Roma Travel & Cultural Fund. In recent years, JFRC leadership has invigorated the curriculum and added programs to the center. They are supported in these efforts by gifts from generous JFRC alumni and friends to the JFRC Director’s Fund. Created last year, gifts to this fund support a variety of needs and programs at the JFRC, including outreach and service learning opportunities, campus beautification, and conferences and lecture series. For example, last year the JFRC sponsored its first international conference, “The Cross, the Crescent and the Ballot Box,” a scholarly effort to promote a dialogue between two of the world’s largest religions: Christianity and Islam. This year, in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the JFRC is sponsoring the Lincoln Leadership Lecture Series, which will include lectures and a panel discussion. Ronald White, nationally renowned Lincoln scholar and author of several books on Lincoln, will present two lectures as part of the series. Students at the JFRC are also given the chance to maximize their European experience by traveling to neighboring countries and regions. The Forza Roma Travel & Cultural Fund provides travel assistance and emergency funds to more than 50 students each semester. Once in Rome, many students who thought that exploring Europe’s diverse countries, cultures, and cuisine was just within reach discover that they struggle to afford to travel outside Rome. Forza Roma plays a crucial role in ensuring that all students can maximize their European experience. This year, Forza Roma helped offset the cost of student travel to Greece, Romania, Poland, Prague, Ireland, Finland, Hungary, Spain, Israel, and Istanbul.

Alumni in Rome

Nearly 70 Loyola University Chicago and John Felice Rome Center alumni currently call Rome home. To reach out to these unique alumni, the Loyola Alumni Association is starting an alumni group in Rome. The first event for this group took place on November 10, 2008, when the Caravaggio Gallery opened at the JFRC. Working with the JFRC, the Alumni Association hopes to provide several opportunities each year for the group to gather and meet students. If you would like more information about this new alumni group, please contact Allison Cote at 312.915.6742 or acote@luc.edu.

Caravaggio comes to the JFRC

Once largely barren, many of the rooms and hallways of the JFRC now feature the works of one of Italy’s greatest artists: Caravaggio. Thanks to the generosity of Ruthellyn and Ron Musil, images of 69 of Caravaggio’s 77 known paintings now hang at the JFRC. Using an innovative process, the RAI Corporation of Italy has reproduced the paintings as high-resolution digital photographs. The prints are of astonishing quality and are printed in true-to-original-size format. A continuation of the Impossible Exhibit sponsored by the RAI Corporation in 2005 at the Loyola University Museum of Art in Chicago, the JFRC Caravaggio Gallery was unveiled at a celebration on November 10, 2008. Over 200 guests participated in the inauguration, including students and faculty of the JFRC, executives of the RAI Corporation, representatives of the Vatican press, local law and accounting firms, and other administrators from university programs in Italy. Many local JFRC alumni were also in attendance.

Since the unveiling, the new artwork has enriched the cultural life at the JFRC. “Our students continually stop, gaze at, and reflect on the paintings,” says Emilio Iodice, vice president and director of the JFRC. “Sometimes I even hear them debate his style when he was 22 versus 38.”

The Società di Donatori

Our most generous friends

LEVELS OF GIVING

The Società di Donatori is comprised of alumni and friends who contribute $1000 or more to the JFRC each year. This group has been instrumental in raising funds for students seeking immersion learning, preparing students for our global society, and developing a curriculum that trains tomorrow’s leaders.

To become a member, look for your annual giving letter in the mail in the coming months, or make your annual gift online at LUC.edu/JFRCGiving. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact Robin Miller, annual giving officer, at rmiller1@luc.edu or 312.915.6863.

### Cerchia del Direttore

- $10,000 +

### Illuminati

- $5,000–$9,999

### Inspiratori

- $2,500–$4,999

### Benefattori

- $1,000–$2,499

### Sostenitori

- $500–$999
  - for alumni who graduated in the last 6–15 years

### Amici

- $250–$499
  - for alumni of the five most recent classes

The Cardsharps by Caravaggio currently hangs in the main hallway at the JFRC.
JFRC debuts two new Web sites

JFRC debuts two new Web sites

LUC.edu/rome
Aimed at prospective students, this site is loaded with multimedia components including blogs, photos, and videos. The design of the site is a visual homage to Ancient Rome with elements that evoke the romance of international travel.

LUC.edu/romecenter
This site has been designed as a tool for alumni, current students, faculty, and staff of the JFRC. For alumni, the new Web site offers access to information on the alumni board, upcoming events, and the chance to relive your time in Rome via our student bloggers.

April '09 All-Class Reunion
Washington DC, April 18–19, 2009
Dine at the Embassy of Italy!
For more details, see page 3.