What is the St. Joseph Worker Program?
The St. Joseph Worker Program is a full-time volunteer program from August-June for women ages 21-35. The program was started by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and reflects their mission of the CSJ. We respond to the needs of society and offer a compassionate presence to the people we serve. The purpose of the program is 3-fold: 1) empower young, lay women to extend the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph 2) support non-profit organizations in their service to people in great need 3) strengthen St. Joseph Workers in the areas of leadership, social justice, community and spirituality (4 core values of the program).

The SJWP started over 15 years ago in St. Paul, MN. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange are starting the third year of the St. Joseph Worker Program (SJWP) in Orange County. Other SJWP locations include Brentwood NY, Philadelphia, PA, and Los Angeles, CA.

Who can be a St. Joseph Worker?
We invite women ages 21-35 who have a passion for service and a willingness to honestly explore the deep questions of life, justice and faith. We look for candidates who have a sense of self-awareness, courage, flexibility and openness. The ability to listen, reflect, empathize and communicate are also essential. Many St. Joseph Workers have recently graduated from college and are looking to expand their professional skills, while developing a stronger foundation of who they are. Some SJWs simply want to serve while discerning their next step in life. Other St. Joseph Workers have had a career for several years and are searching for a new direction. A college degree is not a requirement.

Is the program designed for women to become Sisters?
No. Although SJWs are not Sisters, they are empowered to live lives with similar values, which may be incorporated into the married, single or religious life after their SJW year. Some of these values include living in community, becoming stronger leaders, standing up for the poor and vulnerable within society and loving God and serving neighbor without distinction. Resources are available if someone wants to discern her vocation in the religious life, but that is not the intent of the SJW year.

What do the St. Joseph Workers do?
The SJWs serve full time (36 hours) throughout the week in placements related to social services, education, health care, and advocacy and systemic change. Orange County is known for its wealth, but a substantial population faces poverty, violence and related issues. In addition to working 36 hours a week at a placement site, SJWs spend additional time in weekly and monthly activities to build upon the four core values of the program including social justice events, prayer, reflection and sharing, retreats.
When and how does the program begin and end?
The program starts with an orientation and retreat in August. The program concludes with discernment, reflection on transition and a retreat in June.

How does the SJWP financially support the SJW?
The SJWP provides the SJW with room and board, food, basic health insurance if needed, transportation to and from work, and a monthly stipend of $100-$150 for personal use.

Where do SJWs live?
SJWs live together in a furnished house within reasonable traveling distance to their placement sites. Though they interact with Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters do not live with them.

What options to SJWs have for recreation and leisure?
Recreation and fun are available in Orange County year-round. Most anything is within reasonable travel distance including beaches, parks, hiking trails, etc. There are also several active young adult groups in nearby parishes.

How do you know if you’re called?
Program Director, Sr. Joanna Rosciszewska, CSJ explains, “My favorite passage from the Scripture is 1 Samuel 3:10: Speak, for your servant is listening. In my experiences, a person will enhance the possibility of hearing God's call to service if she has: an open mind, attentive ear, pure heart, and ready feet. She has passion to help others, and enthusiasm and courage to make good changes in her own life.”

How do I apply?
An application and additional information may be found at www.sjworange.org. You are also welcome to contact Sr. Joanna Rosciszewska (Director): RosciszewskaJ1@csjorange.org, 714-515-0471; or Gena Gadient (Program team and former SJW) ggadient@csjorange.org; 714-633-8121 ext 7140.