

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Model of Justice Award**  
**Allison Kohne '18**

**Biography**

Allison has been involved with working for justice and giving herself to others even before coming to Ursuline. Allison grew up in a sheltered and somewhat isolated community. From her experience there was very little diversity in Jefferson county, and in her sheltered life, there was even less. Allison went to Our Lady Queen of Peace grade school, and had very little exposure to anything but her own religion, race and socio-economic class. When she was in sixth grade, a priest at her parish started a Saint Vincent de Paul youth group. This was her first experience with social justice. In the group, she talked about the importance of systemic change, in addition to completing acts of service-- like handing out school supplies to children below the poverty line, and delivering school supplies to the chronically homeless in a supported housing program. Then, three years later, she applied to Ursuline, partly because their motto, "Serviam," intrigued her.

She has learned and grown so much in areas of social justice at Ursuline. She participated in the freshman diversity day, which focused on stereotypes and the physical divisions between people. As a result of this she decided to apply to join the Leadership for Diversity team, so she could learn more about social justice. As a member of the team, she has been given many opportunities to grow and learn. Diversity sent her to Miniwanca, Michigan to the American Youth Foundation National Leadership Conference. She met other high school students who shared a passion for leadership. These people came from all different backgrounds, states and countries, races, faiths, and ideologies. Additionally, through Leadership for Diversity, she attended conferences on the topics of racism and other areas of Catholic Social Teaching. Last Spring, the Archdiocese hosted a 'teach-in' for Catholic schools in the area about racism in St. Louis. At this event they discussed recent events in St. Louis, and the different experiences as teenagers in St. Louis. She also attended the first annual Sr. Ebo Conference in September where she attended session on immigration and Islam.

**Profile of Service**

We, as an Ursuline community, are proud to recommend Allison for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Model of Justice Award. When choosing to nominate Allison we thought not only about the many ways she serves her various communities, but we were also so moved by Allison's spirit and compassion. Allison has a spirit about her that is so humble and genuine. Her classmates look to her for guidance and leadership. She quietly moves through the Ursuline community leading the way by her attitude and actions. She has a

moral compass that seems to always point true north. She is grounded in her faith and her commitment to “Serviam” is tremendous.

We feel Allison is a wonderful role model for our Ursuline community. As a member of the Leadership for Diversity team she spent time researching and putting together diversity sessions for our students. As a junior, she co-chaired the Freshman Diversity day which focused on stereotypes and self-love. She also facilitated small group discussions about human sex trafficking during the senior diversity day. This year, Allison is co-chairing the freshman diversity day. In addition, she is also chairing an Issue Seminar for Ursuline which will focus on racism in St. Louis and the recent Stockley verdict.

One topic we learned about at the National Leadership Conference was “divine discontent” or “blessed unrest.” This is feeling inside someone that drives them to do something. It’s an itch that won’t go away until it is addressed or until something is done about it. Throughout my time at Ursuline and in the St. Vincent de Paul youth, social justice has become my blessed unrest. It drives me to continue learning more about problems in my local community, to share what I’ve learned with others, to engage in meaningful service and to advocate for systemic change.

The quote “Preach the gospel always, and if necessary use words” is the perfect phrase to describe Allison. She is a humble leader who is committed to leading by example and serving with her whole heart. Allison brings a loving heart, a determined mind, and a contemplative spirit to everything she does. She has a heart that sees the needs of others and models what it means to live a moral and just life. She is truly a role model for her community. We are honored to nominate Allison Kohne for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Model of Justice Award.

Terri L Rogan  
Director of Mission Effectiveness

Nicole Weston  
Campus Minister