

Lasallian Institute for the Formation of Teachers: Answering the Call for Education in the City of Brotherly Love

Cohort II of the **Lasallian Institute for the Formation of Teachers (LIFT)** spent time living, learning and teaching in Philadelphia, from October 3-23.

For three weeks, LIFTers Diego Escarfuller and DeWayne Mason stepped into classrooms, lead prayer and served neighbors in need, all within one of the oldest and deepest Lasallian communities in North America.

The visit was more than a stop on the itinerary. It showed a living picture of how the mission of Saint John Baptist de La Salle continues to shape students, teachers and neighborhoods across the Philadelphia region.

A city shaped by the Brothers

Few places tell the Lasallian story like Philadelphia. For generations, the De La Salle Christian Brothers and their Partners have educated young people here from elementary school through university.

The Lasallian network in Philadelphia includes **La Salle Academy**, in Olde Kensington; **La Salle College High School** in Wyndmoor; **West Catholic Preparatory High School** in West Philadelphia; and **La Salle University** in the city's Logan/Olney area.

Together, these schools form a pathway where a student can be taught, mentored and formed by Lasallian educators at every stage. For LIFT participants, that pathway offers a clear view of the vocation they are preparing to join.

In the classroom at La Salle Academy

Most of the cohort's days begin at La Salle Academy, where both LIFTers work alongside classroom teachers.

Diego quickly became a fixture in the 3rd-grade room, where students ranked him as the second most popular adult, just behind their teacher, Mr. Rodriguez. He also taught students some new computer skills.

DeWayne brought a science lesson to life, teaching 6th-grade students to use microscopes after learning the technique from Brother Tom Sullivan, FSC, at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee.

The cohort also joined in the school's community life, from meeting the 2026-2027 student council to celebrating Founders Day with Sister Margaret and her students.

Service beyond the classroom

Lasallian formation did not stop at the school door. On a fall Saturday, the LIFTers joined Brother Ed to pack and deliver food to a local organization serving men in need.

The work reflected a core Lasallian value: concern for the poor and social justice. It also echoed service the cohort has done earlier in the year, including meal service in New York and Memphis.

Five months into the program, both LIFTers described Philadelphia as a place where the idea of teaching became real. "Some of my favorite moments have been working with students, especially working with the 3rd graders in Philly." — Diego Escarfuller. "By the time we began our field placements, where we traveled mattered far less to me than who we would meet." — DeWayne Mason

Both men pointed to a personal invitation as the reason they said yes to LIFT. DeWayne, a computer science graduate, credited Brother Danny for first asking whether he had considered teaching. That theme of invitation runs through the whole program, and through Philadelphia's Lasallian community.

What's next for LIFT

- **October 24 - November 13:** Narragansett, Rhode Island
- **November 19-21:** Meet and greet with Team LIFT at the Huether Lasallian Conference in Minneapolis

Know a future teacher? LIFT is now recruiting for Cohort III. The one-year

*immersive program prepares young men to teach, mentor and coach in the Lasallian tradition, with 31 university credits at no cost. To learn more, email **lift@cbmidwest.org** or follow LIFT on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **TikTok**.*

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