

## Featured Alumna: Lilli BEAN, Class of 2017



“Social Justice was something I was always very passionate about,” says **Lilli BEAN '17**, who has been working with City Year since she graduated from the University of San Diego in 2021. She holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology with a concentration in social justice and a minor in psychology. City Year is a nonprofit organization that strives for equity in education, and places teachers in underfunded and underserved schools across the country.

Lilli got her top choice placement: her hometown, New Orleans, LA. Lilli’s family relocated to Houston following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and she started at Duchesne the following year. One of her mothers and aunt are both alums. Lilli says her passion for the work she does now started at home, and credits her parents for raising her with a strong emphasis on social equity.

At a charter school in New Orleans’ Mid City neighborhood, Lilli mentors 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the classroom during the school day. She tutors after school, and coaches different sports depending on the season. Currently, it’s basketball, which she began playing at the same age her students are now. She cites her experience with AAU basketball—where her teammates did not all share her private, all-girls day-to-day life—as another key influence on her chosen career path.

Duchesne, of course, influenced her as well. Lilli recalls receiving a merit award in the third grade from her teacher, Mrs. Muñoz: “I don’t remember the exact wording, but I still

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remember it today, and obviously it had a strong impact on me.” The award was for her commitment to Goal III (a social awareness that impels to action), which Lilli continues to embody still, over a decade later: “I always try to stay aware and continue to inform myself.”

### **What do you see as the next steps on your journey after City Year?**

I was accepted into Loyola New Orleans' Dual Graduate Degree program and will be pursuing a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling / Master of Criminology & Justice.

### **Do you see education as the best place to make a difference?**

I don't think there is a "best place" to make a difference; anyone can create positive change anywhere.

### **How did athletics contribute to your desire to make a difference?**

Athletics were, and in a way still are, my everything. I want the children I work with to have the same access and opportunity to fall in love with sports the way I did. Moreover, I want my students to be able to carry the joy and knowledge of fitness and athletics with them always.