

A Whole New World

By John Sacovich



Reasons to visit the Stony Run Trail

- Close to campus
- Beautiful trails
- Natural oasis in city
- Nice way to de-stress

"What trail?" "You went where yesterday?" These are two questions I get all the time from fellow students when I tell them about my visits to the Stony Run Trail right next to Loyola's campus.

Many Loyola students do not realize it, but there is a nature trail complete with a rocky stream and trees just a few feet away from school. The Stony Run Trail provides an escape from college campus life into nature's territory and, despite being located a mere minute's walk east of Newman Towers, has a completely natural feel. When you consider that Loyola is located just a few miles north of downtown Baltimore, one of the more urban cities of America, you might be inclined to think that a rather long trip must be made just to get a break from the busy life. Its close proximity is what makes Stony Run so special. Blogger Vincent Vizachero writes that

"Many residents consider Stony Run Path a secret because there is no official entrance, but this hidden highway connects 15 neighborhoods, five schools, three colleges and three city parks." Stony Run can be a nature haven for Baltimoreans all throughout the city, not just Loyola students, being easily accessible across a three mile long stretch. And if you are looking to meet someone new, you can also do that by exploring Stony Run, for "It is not uncommon to see families out for a stroll, college students going for a jog or nature lovers glimpsing the great blue herons wading in the stream" (Latkins8). There are almost always people on Stony Run whether they are walking their dogs, jogging, or just going for a quiet, early-morning walk. So you are bound to see friendly people who are usually inspired with similar motives of escaping into nature whenever you "hit the trail."

The Stony Run was created actually just a few years ago to connect several walking paths and communities in Baltimore together. According to writers Amy Bonitz and Mary Page Michel, "it provides a non-motorized means of transportation and recreation that links a dozen historic neighborhoods,

two major universities, more than a half dozen K-12 schools, key neighborhood commercial districts and several major parks" (Vizachero). Stony Run also merges with the 8 mile Jones Falls Trail, another longer trail a few miles from Loyola, in case you are looking for a bit more of adventure. As a Loyola student, I know that there are always new parts of these trails to explore, yet it is almost impossible to get lost, since the trail runs vertically north-south. And if I want to find a place along the trail such as Johns Hopkins, I can just follow the trail directly to it and back. In fact, this is how I found Johns Hopkins the first time, but not intentionally. I was just tracing the stream south through a park, a neighborhood, some apartments, and finally Hopkins before I even knew what I was seeing. The Stony Run Trail has been one of the most important tools that has aided me in learning my way around Loyola's proximity. The trail helps any new student get his or her bearings, especially someone like me who is not from around here and thus had trouble finding places at the beginning of the school year. Stony Run is like the spine of the parts of Baltimore that are near Loyola, ever straight and always there.



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So just what makes the Stony Run Trail so exciting and appealing? For me at least, nature has always been calming and provided me with a great means of escape from my ordinary, daily routine. It gives me a sense of adventure that cannot easily be found within a Monday to Friday class schedule, and makes me feel like I am no longer a student, but rather a hiker, exploring uncharted wilderness on my own. And rather than having to get into a motorized vehicle and commute to a far-off location, I can just step out of my dorm and walk to it in a couple minutes. Or when I am overwhelmed with college life and just want to be alone, I can head down to the trail and take in all the beauty that mother nature has to offer. Stony Run's "attractions" include different types of trees like bamboo and evergreens, fish (I've seen several rainbow trout), frogs, running water, beautiful rocks, and even other people's dogs if you want to count that. All of these things, barring maybe the evergreens, are not easily found on campus, but just walk down to the trail and you can always find them waiting. One of my favorite things to do on the trail is walk all the way upstream via the rocks, carefully navigating over the water while trying to maintain my balance and not end up soaked. And to change things up on the way back south, I usually take the path alongside the water, the more easily traversed part of the

trail. Both ways are still exciting and I usually find something new every time, from new critters or flowers to giant log bridges. The Stony Run Trail is easily one of my favorite parts of Loyola, and I would recommend that everyone should check it out.

First year college life at Loyola can be stressful, busy, and hard to get used to. This is why I would advise all Loyola freshmen to set aside some occasion, it does not even have to be a lot of time, to give Stony Run Trail a chance. Stony Run is one of the best and closest escapes from the burdens of college life, and can be very rejuvenating. In addition, it is a helpful tool for students trying to learn their way around the surrounding areas of campus. This is why Stony Run Trail is my go-to place when I need to break my normal school routine and have a bit of adventure.

Latkins8, Mgriffith_tl, and James.Blucher.
"Home." *Maryland Trails | TrailLink.com*. 01 Sept. 1970. Web. 26 Feb. 2017.

Vizachero, Vincent. "Stony Run: The Hidden Path That Connects Us All." *Blue Water Baltimore*. 20 July 2015. Web. 26 Feb. 2017.

