



**Mennonite  
Mission  
Network**

The mission agency of  
Mennonite Church USA

MAY 2014

# Beyond OURSELVES

## Christian Service

Fertile ground for growing  
faith, character and skills  
for the future



## Social servants

Service made worthwhile by human connections

By Sara Alvarez



Serving fellow humans is a social activity. Whether it's conversing in the cafeteria of a food pantry while prepping the food in the kitchen, or outside harvesting vegetables from a garden, at the very least, a volunteer has to communicate with a supervisor who gives instructions for the project.

The experience of serving expands our perspectives because, whether we're serving in our communities or in a new one, we often have to interact with new people and new surroundings. These people share their stories and teach us different ways of living.

Marion and Jane Beyeler mention in their reflection that it was an eye-opening experience for them to be house parents at the Frontier Boys Village as part of their Mennonite Voluntary Service placement. The Beyelers quickly learned how to care for the boys, who looked up to the couple for support.

Regardless of who is doing the serving or who benefits from the service, everyone needs water on a hot day and everyone gets tired after a long day of work.

When we think about voluntary service from this perspective, we see how Jesus is the bedrock for service. Jesus compels us to get involved in the positive change of our communities through his example of going out of his way to interact with people outside of his usual circle.

Through service, we set an example to those around us to extend Jesus' message of love into our world.



Photo by Isaac Fast

Dr. Mark Brown (right) is pictured with Rochester (N.Y.) MVSer Arturo Martinez. Martinez volunteers at Jefferson Family Medicine, a clinic that provides care to Rochester's underserved community.

Are you inspired to sign up for Christian Service or would you like to hear more? Contact Graham Unruh at [GrahamU@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:GrahamU@MennoniteMission.net). To get someone from Mennonite Mission Network to speak about Christian Service program opportunities to your church or youth group, e-mail [Speakers@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:Speakers@MennoniteMission.net).

### Web videos

- Brent Davis participates in DOOR Dwell Hollywood. He talked to DOOR Discover participants about their experience with DOOR. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=np\\_JZfxfg38](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np_JZfxfg38)
- Brian Krehbiel lives in the Albuquerque Service Adventure unit. He created this short film about how Service Adventure has impacted the people in his unit. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGeCB3hcCRs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGeCB3hcCRs)

### Feedback

▶ Let us know what you think of this issue. What inspires you? Engages you? Infuriates you? [www.BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:www.BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net)

## NAZARETH VILLAGE

### Vacation Bible school giving project

This summer, combine MennoMedia's VBS materials with Mennonite Mission Network's mission bank tools, and teach children the Bible from an Anabaptist perspective!

[www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank)



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COVER: Katie Jantzen helps grow organic food in a residential plot in Elkhart, Ind., near her service placement at Church Community Services. The effort was in partnership with Seed to Feed. Photo by Isaac Fast.



# Service by Jesus' example

Transformation through serving

**M**ennonite Mission Network seeks to recruit people of all ages across the church to serve in the way of Jesus. I am thrilled that we are able to do this. I have no doubt that this is what Jesus calls us to be about—to serve others.

I am, however, fully in touch with the challenge that agencies like ours face as we seek to attract participation in our service programs.

To attract applicants we must catalog the gains that might accrue to participants as a result of their service:

- Build networks and connections with individuals in your chosen field.
- Explore options for what you would like to do in your education or professional career.
- Build your resumé or portfolio through experiences and skills.

And, there is gain—don't get me wrong. But I do sometimes wonder whether service is devalued when

personal, material or career gains are held up as the foremost reasons to serve.

Whatever the initial motivation, I am heartened by testimonies from service participants who speak to the

numerous intangible benefits that often surface as a result of service. Here are a few:

- We expand our perspectives by working with and learning from people of different races, cultures, ages, and life experiences.
- We learn to live, and experience new things, outside of our comfort zones.
- We broaden our horizons and learn new things that are of interest to us personally or professionally.
- We make new friends and have fun while helping the communities where we serve.
- We can focus on the practical application of our education (both theoretical and experiential).
- We develop creativity in solving or addressing a social issue that impacts the community where we serve.

Again, these are wonderful enrichments to our lives as a result of serving. Yet, however laudable and worthy these reasons are for serving, they, too, cannot be the primary reason for service.

Simply put, we serve because Jesus, whom we follow, served others and invites us to serve as well. We serve for the privilege of glimpsing the possibilities that come from following Jesus' example. He offers us this insight into service in Luke 22:24-27:

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? **But I am among you as one who serves.**"

We serve for the satisfaction that comes from knowing that as we serve, we:

- Allow our lives to be shaped by the example of Jesus.
- Contribute to making a difference for healing and hope in the lives of others.
- Leave the world a better place than we found it.
- Share a common humanity with every member of the human family, because our destinies are bound.

It is because of reasons like these that our service becomes transformative for ourselves and, hopefully, for that little corner of the world we serve. Perhaps, also, in the mystery of God's grace, the kingdom is advanced.

*Stanley W. Green*

Stanley W. Green  
Executive Director

**We serve because Jesus, whom we follow, served others and invites us to serve as well.**

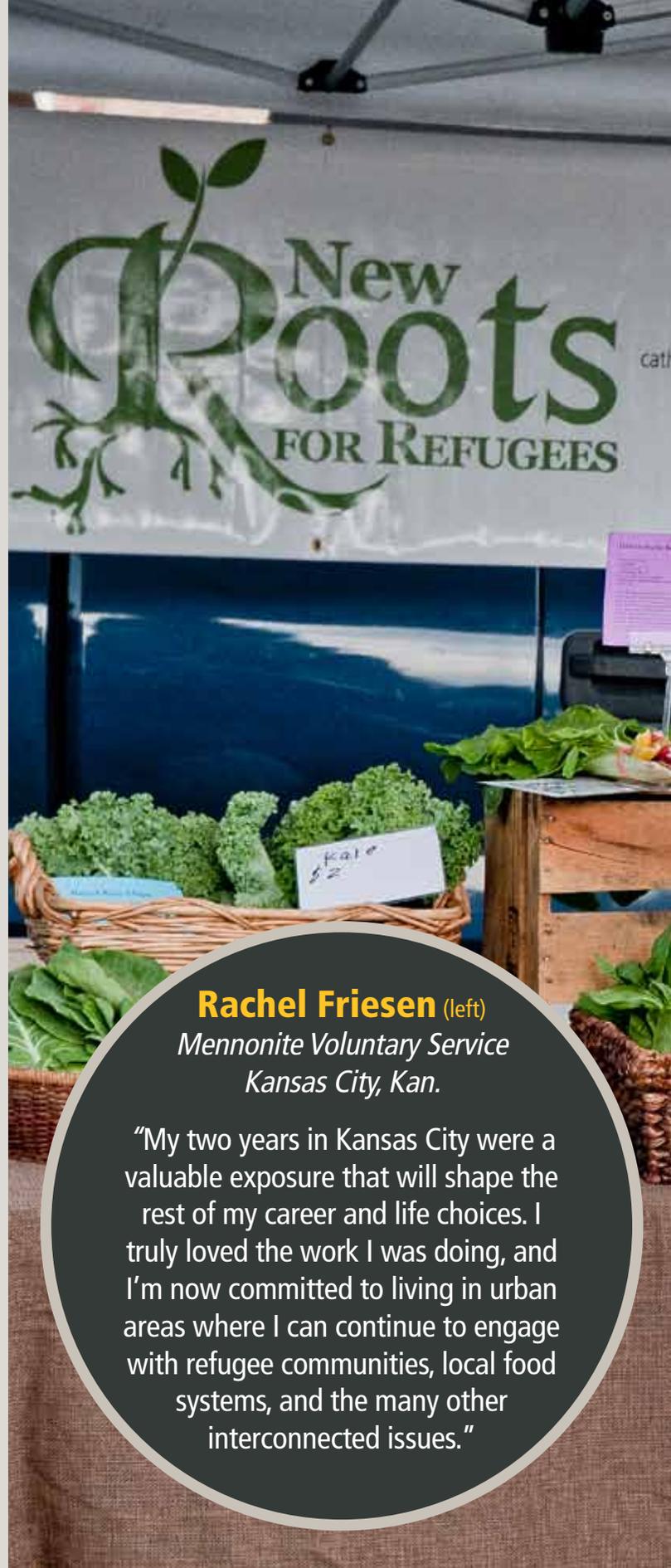
# Altered lives

Service is a practical way for people to get involved in God's mission. Through Mennonite Mission Network, a person can volunteer near their home community or in another country. There are opportunities for a person to serve whether they're young or old, single or with a group, for a week or for a year.

The following reflections are of people's experiences in our service programs. Erika Alvarez decided to do something meaningful with her summer and signed up to serve with DOOR Chicago. Marion and Jane Beyeler have served throughout their lives, starting with Mennonite Voluntary Service, and now serving in different communities of the United States with another Mission Network program, SOOP.

We have also included photos and short snippets from recent participants who shared about their experience in service.

Together, these reflections show the effects that service has on people's lives. What effect will service have on your life? ■



**Rachel Friesen** (left)  
*Mennonite Voluntary Service  
Kansas City, Kan.*

"My two years in Kansas City were a valuable exposure that will shape the rest of my career and life choices. I truly loved the work I was doing, and I'm now committed to living in urban areas where I can continue to engage with refugee communities, local food systems, and the many other interconnected issues."



Rachel Friesen (left) and Ku Meh, a Karenni refugee from Burma, sell Ku's locally-grown organic produce at a farmers' market in Kansas City, Kan.



Photo provided

# Summer vacation with a purpose

Q&A with Erika Alvarez

*Erika Alvarez first served with DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) in Chicago the summer before her first year of high school. Every summer since then, she returns as summer staff and helps lead the groups that come to DOOR Discover. She takes the groups around the city to the nonprofit organizations where they serve and learn about that agency and the community issues they face.*

**Beyond Ourselves: What made you want to serve with the DOOR program?**

**Alvarez:** Summer vacation is supposed to be fun, enjoyable, exciting! But for me, summer meant TV time 24/7 until school started again. The summer before high school, I decided that instead of wasting my life in front of a television screen, I could be out somewhere helping people who need a hand.

Now when school's over, I actually look forward to the summer. I even e-mail Krista Dutt, the DOOR Chicago city director, around January asking when I should turn in my application!

**Beyond Ourselves: What organizations did you work with while you were serving with DOOR?**

**Alvarez:** There were so many work sites that I did with DOOR! I will name a few where I would ask the city director to please, please, please send me.

- Cornerstone Community Outreach's soup kitchen. I loved working with the awesome chefs! I enjoyed catching up with people who would eat at the soup kitchen. I'd ask how their week was going, about the new shoes that they got from the free thrift store, and so on.
- It was such an inspiration to work with Ellen in community gardens. She's about three times my age and has more energy than you and me put together. She could garden in 90-degree weather in July! She's an expert! Up until this day I still wonder how she does it.

- It was rewarding to put together hundreds and hundreds of food boxes at Mother and Child for people who needed it more than anyone. I remember this one time we did about 800 food boxes in five hours! It was an amazing day for everyone.

**Beyond Ourselves: Tell me about an experience you had during your service that changed you.**

**Alvarez:** While volunteering over at Cornerstone's soup kitchen, I encountered a man named Antonio. He would talk to me about his life: how his sons abandoned him because he was old (which he isn't; he's probably in his early 50s). When I looked into his eyes, I could see he was sad and tired of how people treated him.

And then with honesty and sincerity he grabbed my hand and said, "Thank you. I've been waiting for this moment for a long time. I wanted someone to hear my cry and not judge me." It was a very touching moment that I will never forget. It taught me that sometimes people don't really need advice; they just want to be heard.

**Beyond Ourselves: Where did you see the face of God in Chicago?**

**Alvarez:** I saw God every day, everywhere, and in everyone. I would see God in the youth who would come from Oklahoma, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, North Dakota, New York, Colorado, Canada, Italy, you name it. I would see God in the food we served in the soup kitchen, in the eyes of the people who would eat it. I would see God in the people

who worked at Ada Niles Senior Center, because they work with such passion and love. I would see God when the groups arrived Sunday evening during praise and worship time.

**Beyond Ourselves: What are you up to these days?**

**Alvarez:** As of right now, I'm a few credits away from becoming a junior at Triton College in River Grove, Ill. Because of the experiences I've had with the DOOR program and seeing the amount of people who are screaming their lungs out for help, I decided to major in the human services field. I will get my bachelor's degree in social work and ultimately want to become a caseworker. People need others to walk alongside them through difficult times, and I'll be there throughout the whole process.

Once I get my bachelor's degree, I will immediately start to work. I went to school so my knowledge can expand and I can reach out for the people who need someone, who need hope, and who need to hear, "It'll be OK; we will get through this together."

**Beyond Ourselves: Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience serving with DOOR?**

**Alvarez:** Over the years, DOOR has changed me mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It brought me closer to God and now makes me think and feel differently. I make wiser choices, have a more open mind, and open up my eyes and see the wonders of God and how he has worked in each and every one of us. ■

# We came to serve

## Pastor's heart for ministry revealed through community

By Anita Kehr



In November 1985, my husband, 11-month-old daughter, Hannah, and I left Goshen, Ind., for San Antonio, Texas, to begin

our Mennonite Voluntary Service term with Mennonite Mission Network.

Bryan and I were unit coordinators half-time, and then each of us was placed as a volunteer in two different community organizations for the other half of our time.

My placement was with San Antonio Urban Ministries, an umbrella organization for other nonprofit service organizations, where I did general office work, including accidentally erasing two days of data from the computer's hard drive in my first month there (fortunately, they were forgiving). Bryan volunteered with Inner City Development, a community center in the west side of the city.

Our experience during almost two years of MVS encompassed much more than our placements. It included relocation to a vibrant and ethnically diverse city. It introduced us to the gifts and challenges of involvement in a small urban congregation.

It taught us to live in community. It gave us opportunities for spiritual reflection and growth. It opened doors for us to stay eight years after our term finished.

It was exciting to experience San Antonio and learn its history, neighborhoods and cultures, as well as the resources that a large city offers. We loved it and developed our own traditions that wove in the Mexican-American culture that characterizes San Antonio.

The people of the congregation that we attended, San Antonio Mennonite Church, became our family. In the small and diverse congregation, we learned about conflict and

discernment, about variety and flexibility in worship, and about the depth of relationship that can be nourished in the church.

I was given many opportunities to participate and lead in the congregation. I gradually realized that I was most "at home" participating in the whole range of tasks within the church.

In MVS, we lived in community with people whom we ourselves did not choose. In that setting we learned about the real joy and challenges that arise in community life.

We took turns with our household chores, ate together, played together, and hosted together (in one six-month period, we hosted nearly 100 people in the unit house). Our daughter was nourished with love and attention and patience.

We also learned to work through the ups and downs that come with living together. I am grateful for the people we came to know and for what we learned as we lived with them.

Finally, the MVS framework provided resources for spiritual growth and learning.

During our first year, each MVSer received a devotional book, *Disciplines of the Inner Life*. That book was foundational then and continues to be a resource as I continue the journey of faith and discipleship.

Our life in San Antonio—in the unit and the church—were undergirded and surrounded by the recognition of the presence of God at work. For that, I am grateful.

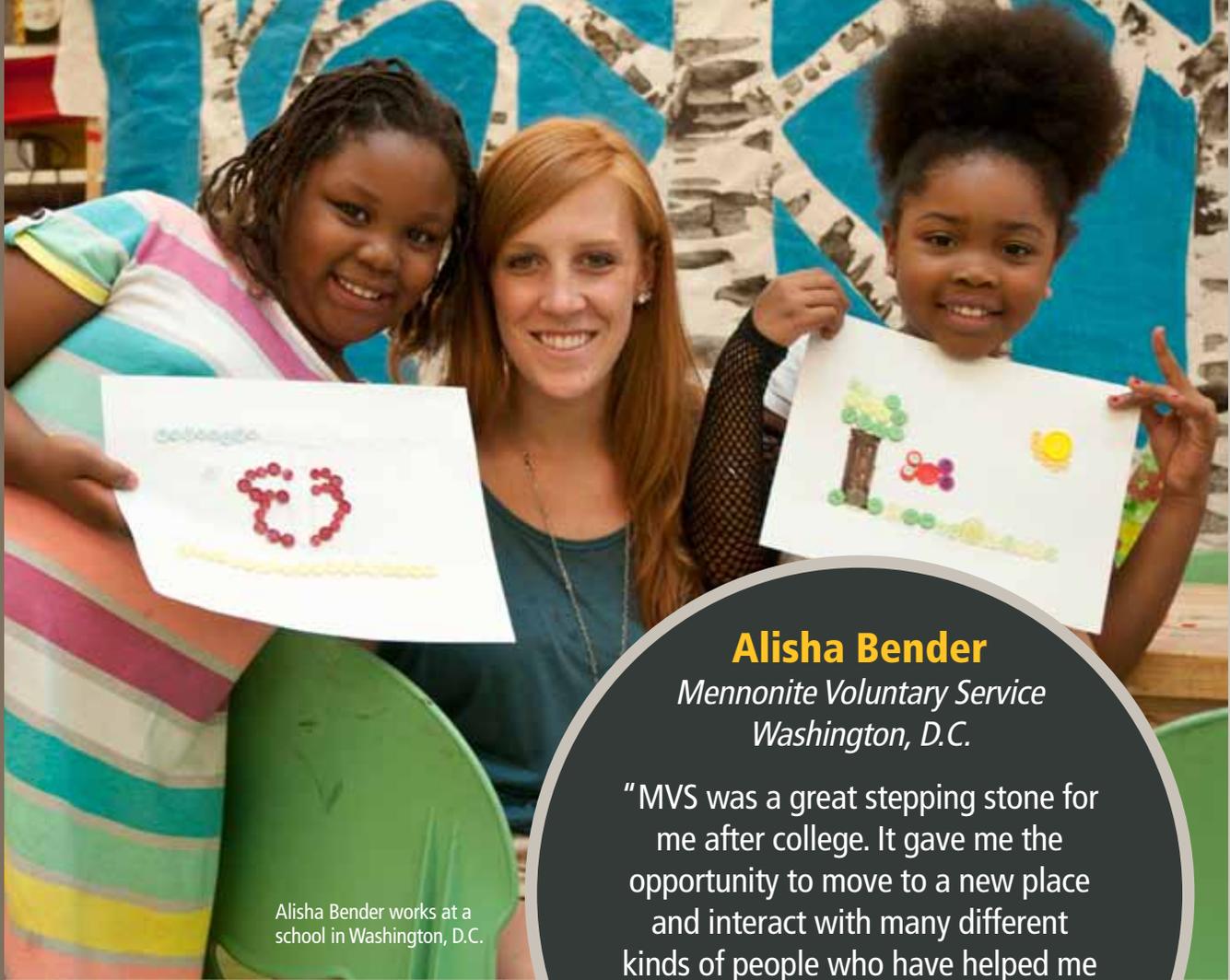
In substantive ways, our adult identities were rooted and formed in that place we were sent to serve and where we received gift upon gift.

When we left San Antonio, it was so that I could attend Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart (Ind.) to prepare for pastoring, building on church leadership skills I learned in the San Antonio congregation. ■

Anita Kehr is a pastor at First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Photo used by permission from Life Touch Church Directories and Portraits

# SERVICE EXPERIENCES



Alisha Bender works at a school in Washington, D.C.

## **Alisha Bender**

*Mennonite Voluntary Service  
Washington, D.C.*

"MVS was a great stepping stone for me after college. It gave me the opportunity to move to a new place and interact with many different kinds of people who have helped me grow in all aspects of life. Also, it provided me with a wonderful community and support system that I still am a part of."

## **Taylor McCabe-Juhnke**

*Mennonite Voluntary Service  
Madison, Wis.*

"Serving with MVS taught me the importance of community, the joy in simplicity, and the courage to overcome life's challenges."

Taylor McCabe-Juhnke maintains the Audubon Society's social media in Madison, Wis.



### **▶ Slideshow online**

Go online to see a slideshow of more Christian Service participants.

[www.MennoniteMission.net/  
BeyondOurselves/Serve2014](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/BeyondOurselves/Serve2014)

## Matthew Alwine

*Service Adventure leader  
Johnstown, Pa.*

"Service is a daily choice. Sometimes my cup may feel empty and I can't give anymore, but we're called to serve anyway. In those weak moments, God has the opportunity to use us despite our weakness. [I also learned that] the church needs to be like a small service community. People may do the wrong things, fail, or test our patience, but we need to stay committed to each other on our common ground of faith in Jesus Christ, and work toward loving each other more."



Matt Alwine and Anita Garber, members of the Johnstown, Pa., Service Adventure unit, mash up some apples for apple cider.

Photo by Rob Wolf



Sarah Hofkamp teaches a class at La Amistad School in Asunción, Paraguay.

Photo by Darrell Gascho

## Sarah Hofkamp

*Radical Journey  
Paraguay*

"[I learned that] I'm only one in seven billion, but I have a voice, and many times it's less about singing loudly and more about singing the right song in harmony with others."

# Joyful service

A life of service with MVS, SOOP

By Marion and Jane Beyeler

Growing up in a Mennonite community, we internalized many Bible teachings, personal stories, and service examples. Jane's parents chose Civilian Public Service; several of Marion's siblings joined PAX and Mennonite Voluntary Service.

served at Frontier Boys Village in Larkspur, Colo., through MVS, invited us to join the staff there.

Since some of our peers were giving their all in Vietnam, we considered this may be our way to help bring peace to part of God's family.

As house parents for six boys at Frontier Boys Village, we had some

mountain-top and low valley experiences. It was intensely eye opening, frustrating, and life changing for us.

In that year and a half, we were gifted with new lifelong friends in the other MVS volunteers, while stretching to reach our

potential. We learned, in new and comforting ways, that God is with us and with others through all of life.

Now, at age 67 and in retirement, we are again experiencing new adventure and service opportunities through the SOOP program. Over a year ago, friends Bruce and Anne Hummel, from Millersburg,

Ohio, suggested that we serve for a few weeks at the International Guest House in Washington, D.C.

That experience showed us that it is easy to hear joyful people's experiences from around the world while cleaning and while preparing/serving food.

Last year, we volunteered with SOOP again and experienced the Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz. The raw and beautiful landscape, the warm teachers and staff, and the beauty of the Hopi culture were all part of a life-growing experience for us. Our eyes were again opened to how differences do not diminish us, but add to our strength and understanding of God's grace to all.

February 2014 found us in Brownsville, Texas, at *Iglesia Menonita del Cordero*. SOOP connected us with this Hispanic Mennonite congregation where we were given the opportunity to enjoy a new culture and new friends serving God's creation together.

While in Texas, we received an e-mail from friends we met in MVS about 40 years ago. They invited us to visit them at the International Guest House, D.C., where they are serving a year of SOOP. The joy continues.

We recommend these life-giving service opportunities to each person from age 19 to 91! ■

Marion and Jane Beyeler are members of Orrville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.



Photo by Kevin Kanagy Photography.

Jane and Marion Beyeler

We knew they had chosen this, instead of serving military assignments, as a part of their response to Jesus' example and call. Even while dating, we talked about doing MVS.

In 1969, after we were married, Jane taught second grade in Goshen, Ind., while Marion finished his sociology degree. A Goshen College friend, who



Photo by Susan Nisly

Service Adventurer Leah Swartley helps deliver meals for The Children's Lunchbox.

# Lunch with love

## A letter of appreciation for Service Adventure volunteers

By Linda Kupers

It is my pleasure to share with you how much Service Adventure has benefited our program and impacted an entire community.

The Children's Lunchbox, a program of Bean's Café, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to feeding hungry kids in safe community environments. We have been doing so in Anchorage, Alaska, for 16 years.

Unfortunately, our program has had to grow every year because there are more and more children at risk of going hungry who need our help every day. This year, our school year program provides meals to 19 sites during the week.

We also provide bags of food on the weekends during the school year with our "Just a Little Extra" weekend food program. Currently, we are in six schools and provide 2,200 bags of food every Friday for students to take home so they will have food to eat over the weekend.

We have been blessed to have

Service Adventure volunteers for five years now, and always look forward to the time of having them come and work alongside us. They make a difference in helping us fulfill our mission to feed hungry children in safe community environments.

This year, we have Leah Swartley on our team and, like the other great volunteers, she is a wonderful asset to us. She shows up with a great attitude ready to work.

Carl Snyder, a previous Service Adventure volunteer, is now on staff full-time. The dedication and work ethic of your volunteers is amazing.

We find that Service Adventure volunteers are some of the very best that we have the privilege of working with. We are so appreciative of your program, and hope that your volunteers also grow as they work with us knowing they help to make a difference wherever they are. ■

Linda Kupers is the program manager at The Children's Lunchbox in Anchorage, Alaska.

## Hear the call?

Want to join in God's work around the world? Here is your chance. Listed below are a few openings. Visit our website at [www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve) for more.



### DOOR

DOOR invites those interested in urban ministry to spend time engaging with God's transformative work in the city.

**DOOR Discern**—For ages 18–24.

**DOOR Discover**—For youth groups.

**DOOR Dwell**—For ages 18–30.



### Mennonite Voluntary Service

Community-based service and learning rooted in the vision of local congregations. **For ages 20+.**



### Radical Journey

Intentional faith formation within an Anabaptist perspective in several international locations.

**For ages 18–26.**



### Service Adventure

Community-based service and learning experience that emphasizes faith formation and leadership development. **For ages 17–20.**



### SOOP

Sharing one's life experiences through voluntary service. **This is a multigenerational service experience.**



### Youth Venture

Two-week service and reflection within a team atmosphere. **For ages 14–22.**

## Mary Jane Hooper

SOOP

Kykotsmovi, Ariz., and  
Whitesburg, Ky.

"I love meeting new people with different lifestyles, and hearing their stories of struggle, pain, joy and faith."

# Making a difference

## National recognition for service-learning programs

**M**ennonite Mission Network and DOOR's service-learning programs were named by The Center for Faith and Service and Faith3 as two of 20 faith-based service programs that change the world.

*The Huffington Post* wrote about the list of faith-based service-learning programs that includes a variety of program designs and denominational affiliations, but all are committed to offer year-long service opportunities for young adults to integrate faith, community, and social justice.

According to Wayne Meisel, who initiated the study, the faith-based service-learning programs "have demonstrated a common commitment to invite, welcome, support, train, and launch individuals into the world as community leaders."

Mission Network service-learning programs were highlighted for their commitment to God's work, practical love for people throughout the world, quality local leadership, and faith development. These serving-learning programs

include Mennonite Voluntary Service, Service Adventure, Radical Journey, SOOP, Youth Venture, and DOOR.

"It is rewarding for us to see, year after year, young adults engaging difficult societal problems and, as a faith community, discerning what following Jesus would look like in that context," said Del Hershberger, director of the Christian Service department at Mennonite Mission Network. "We are honored to be recognized by The Center for Faith and Service."



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

Victor UmoAbasi, national president of Mennonite Church Nigeria, describes some of the church's development initiatives to James Krabill, Mennonite Mission Network's senior executive for global ministries.

**A** burning passion to become active in the global Anabaptist community fuels Victor UmoAbasi, national president of Mennonite Church Nigeria, and his high-octane ministry.

"My vision is for a church that anybody in Nigeria can be proud of, a church that sees the dignity of [the human being], a church [of] integrity, a church that makes people feel like they belong. A church like this will go viral," UmoAbasi said.

Signs of growth are evident—a new church headquar-

ters in Ikot Ada Idem with administrative offices and a guest house, a Bible school, renovated church buildings, the Mennonite Star School, a drinking-water bottling project, and various development projects that include life skills and apprenticeships. Perhaps the surest indication of all is a committed and dynamic group of young adults.

UmoAbasi expressed appreciation for his relationship with Mennonite Mission Network personnel, saying they had opened doors to the worldwide church community.



Photo by Linda Stelly

Elena Salas, Ana María Roca, and Basilia Toro Orellana practice making origami animals at the *Equipo Sirviendo a Cristo* workshop in November. They'll later teach origami to children at vacation Bible school.

## From student to teacher

### Teenagers help teach VBS

Nearly 30 neighborhood children gathered for a week in December—a summer month in Bolivia—at Josué Roman Cavero's home where he and his mother organized a vacation Bible school.

In addition to the week-long session at his house, Josué, who is 14, helped lead two other VBS sessions. He traveled as far as 90 minutes by bus each way to help bring Bible lessons to the children.

Josué started as a VBS student at a young age, and last year he decided to take more responsibility and start training to lead the VBS.

Margrit Kipfer Barrón, a mission worker with Mennonite Mission Network and

*Schweizerische Mennonitsche Mission* (Swiss Mennonite Mission), helps organize the youth leadership workshop, *Equipo Sirviendo a Cristo* (Serve Christ Team), and VBS for the Bolivian churches. Mennonite Mission Network helps fund both programs.

At the leadership workshops, youth study Scripture so that they aren't just reciting the curriculum. Then they learn kid-friendly ways to communicate the message.

Forty youth trained to teach VBS at the workshop in November. Thirty of these youth later helped during at least one session of VBS; some helped in four sessions. In December, 13 VBS sessions reached about 700 children.

## A place to belong

Miracles enable a high school student to pursue her dreams

Mawuli\* was 8 when she was brought to *La Casa Grande* (The Big House) in Benin. Both her father and mother had died, and her maternal family refused to take her due to a family feud.

La Casa Grande is an organization that cares for children in difficult circumstances. Mennonite Mission Network has walked alongside the organization from its conception.

Mawuli needed a birth certificate to start her last year of high school. The staff at La Casa Grande backed her dream of becoming a journalist or lawyer, and initiated a search for her family.

They found her maternal grandmother, who was still angry, even after 20 years, and refused to help. But as she ranted, she accidentally revealed the paternal family name and village.

The paternal family was happy to find Mawuli because they had been searching for her.

Soon, both families were summoned to a court appearance to help create a birth certificate. They unexpectedly met along the journey and reconciled.

A third miracle happened when the birth certificate, which usually takes three months to finish, was ready in three days!

*\*Name changed to protect identity*



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

## A heart for service

God's love demonstrated to those around us

By Ervin Stutzman



**M**y life has been indelibly shaped by my experience of Christian service in a volunteer setting. Just a couple of weeks after I got married to Bonnie Haldeman, the two of us began a stint of several years of voluntary service in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Since both of us had grown up in the country, it promised to be an adventure in urban living. It was also an exercise in communal living, especially when we opened the household to covenant membership beyond the volunteer staff.

Much of my future was shaped by the interaction with a racially diverse community of young adults all committed to Jesus, but with varying gifts and opinions about life.

The primary focus of the volunteers was to provide daycare services and tell about the love of Christ to our urban neighbors.

But we soon learned that it was just as important to serve one another as it was to serve others.

We learned that in order to love people whom we hardly knew, we needed to demonstrate love to the people that we knew best. This is a lesson that we had started to learn in our nuclear families, but there was so much more to learn.

Sharing mundane tasks while living in close quarters tested our limits as well as our commitments to serve and to be served by others. The service assignments helped to refine our motives for ministry, our assumptions about those who differed from us, and the practical ways to make a difference in the world.

All three of our children have also lived and worked in settings where they served the needs of others, either in distant foreign countries or in unfamiliar settings in the United States.

My experience leads me to cheer on the efforts of Mennonite Mission Network to provide opportunities for Christian workers—regardless of age—to connect with those who can benefit from friendship and love.

That's the primary focus of Christian service—demonstrating God's love to those around us in the name of Christ. Along the way, we may find opportunities to see the world, to experience new adventures, or to gain a vital new perspective in life.

They're like the chocolate chips in Bonnie's best cookies, or the butter on her home-baked bread. You guessed it; she refined those baking skills in a Christian service household, and I'm the primary beneficiary!

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

## New workers enter service

Mission workers beginning assignments between January and April 2014

### DOOR Discover

#### Atlanta unit

**First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, N.C.

**Purdue Timmy Global Health**, West Lafayette, Ind.

**St. Alban's Episcopal Church**, Manchaca, Texas

**St. James United Methodist Church**, Atlanta

**Texas A&M University Corpus Christi** (Texas)

**University of Kentucky Alternative Service Breaks**, Lexington, Ky.

**Widener University**, Chester, Pa.

#### Chicago unit

**Catholic Student Organization**, Memphis, Tenn.

**College Mennonite Church**, Goshen, Ind.

**Corban University**, Salem, Ore.

**First Lutheran Church**, Manitowoc, Wis.

**First Presbyterian Church**, Iowa City, Iowa

**First Presbyterian Church**, Wilmette, Ill.

**Kitchener-Waterloo House Churches**, Waterloo, Ontario

**Mercyhurst University**, Erie, Pa.

**Pepperdine University**, Malibu, Calif.

**St. Matthew's United Methodist Church**, Madison, Miss.

**Valleyview Mennonite Church**, London, Ontario

**Walnut Hill Mennonite Church**, Goshen, Ind.

#### Denver unit

**Collegiate Presbyterian Church**, Ames, Iowa

**St. Andrew Presbyterian Church**, Boulder, Colo.

#### Hollywood unit

**Copper Canyon Academy**, Rimrock, Ariz.

**First Presbyterian Church**, Cedar Falls, Iowa

**Grand Valley State University Campus Ministry**, Allendale, Mich.

**Southside Presbyterian Church**, Tucson, Ariz.

#### Miami unit

**College of Central Florida**, Ocala, Fla.

**First Presbyterian Church**, Katonah, N.Y.

**Hope College**, Holland, Mich.

**St. Peter's United Methodist Church**, Wellington, Fla.

**UNC Lutheran Campus Ministry**, Chapel Hill, N.C.

**Widener University**, Chester, Pa.

#### San Antonio unit

**Marywood University**, Scranton, Pa.

**Middle Tennessee State University**

**Wesley Foundation**, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

**Presbyterian Student Fellowship at Middle Tennessee State University**, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

### International

**Anita and David Breckbill** began a five-month special assignment with Union Biblical Seminary in India, where they will assist the library and church music classes. They are members of

First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Neb.

**Elaine Kauffman** completed a two-month special assignment in Latin America. She provided support to the Ecuador Partnership while on sabbatical in Ecuador, and also visited Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay. She is a member of First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

**Adam and Jeanette Strode** began a two-year assignment as international service workers in Thailand, where they will serve in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Missions. They will be involved in full-time language and culture study in order to participate fully in a missional community in Bangkok. They are members of Peace Mennonite Community Church in Aurora, Colo.

### SOOP

**James and Kay Burkett**, West Liberty, Ohio, Bethel Mennonite Church (West Liberty), served two weeks in Brooksville, Fla.

**Carolyn and Harvey Chupp**, Shipshewana, Ind., Emma Mennonite Church (Topeka, Ind.), served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Lester and Marian Denlinger**, Willow Street, Pa., Rossmere Mennonite Church (Lancaster, Pa.), served two weeks in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

**Roger and Sharon Duarte**, Plano, Texas, Fellowship Bible Church (Richardson, Texas), served two weeks in Tucson, Ariz.

**Jerry Dean and Nancy Friesen**, Albany, Ore., Albany Mennonite

Church, served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Edd and Mary Funk**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

**Jim and Lila Gascho**, Goshen, Ind., Waterford Mennonite Church (Goshen), served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

**Harlen and Luann Goertzen**, Wauseon, Ohio, North Clinton Mennonite Church (Wauseon), served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Cathy and Russ Hochstetler**, Goshen, Ind., Waterford Mennonite Church (Goshen), served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Elaine and Merle Hostetler**, Goshen, Ind., Belmont Mennonite Church (Elkhart, Ind.), served two weeks in San Antonio.

**Marilyn Ruth and Stan Kamp**, Millersburg, Ohio, Orrville (Ohio) Mennonite Church, served one month in Washington, D.C.

**David and LouAnn Kanagy**, Archbold, Ohio, Zion Mennonite Church (Archbold), served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

**Barbara and Byron Kauffman**, West Liberty, Ohio, Bethel Mennonite Church (West Liberty), served one month in Elm Mott, Texas.

**Lila and Ron King**, Harrisonburg, Va., Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Dennis and Joyce Landon**, Ann Arbor, Mich., Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church, served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

## Letting go of the plan

Lessons revealed from a year of Radical Journey

By Dani Klotz



I didn't want to do service. It would mess with my plans, really great plans.

From the time I was a sophomore in high school, I thought I knew what college I would go to. By the time my senior year came, I had my letter of intent signed and ready to mail. Service wasn't a bad thing; it just wasn't going to be my thing.

But the letter just sat on my desk. All I had to do was stick it in the mailbox. But I didn't. I wasn't ready. After 12 years of education, I was exhausted, and the idea of another four years just made me dread the future.

When I finally got the courage to honestly ask myself what I wanted, I realized that my college plans did not appeal to me. This took me a while to admit because I felt as if I should be going to college. It certainly looked like what most of my peers were doing.

I was frightened when I let go of my plan. But it taught me a lesson that I have since learned many times over: Every once in a while, we are presented with alternatives to our plans, and none of the options are bad. When I finally decided to let go and do service, I felt free.

Before I went to Brazil with Radical Journey, I feared that I wouldn't connect with the other three young adults on my team. However, through grace with one another, we came together and they were my greatest support.

They gave me permission to let go of certainty. They taught me that sitting with the difficult questions can be a holy place. Through them, I learned how to love God amidst ambiguity, because until then, even my faith had been full of certainty.

I didn't know that my teammates would have such

a powerful impact on me or that my host families would so profoundly care for me. How could I have known that life lessons hide in everyday interactions?

I didn't see those life lessons when they were happening. Like most things, I have learned from them much later.

Brazil continues to teach me. I walked away having witnessed and experienced different faces of Anabaptism. My Brazilian host families and friends showed me what hospitality can look like in its wide variety of places, faces and dinners. They never hesitated to include me in their community.

Today, from afar, I have the opportunity to rejoice with them as children are born, graduations accomplished, and marriages celebrated. We also mourn together, as dear friends have suffered illness and others have passed away.

Our worlds continue to move forward, and I am honored that I was able to be a part of theirs even for a short while.

It is impossible to sum up in this short piece all of the significant learning and transformation that took place during and because of my time in Brazil.

It is impossible partly because it is still happening. As I move through life, this experience follows me. Lessons once learned are re-learned and they help propel me to continue a lifestyle of service.

The adventure did not end with Brazil, and perhaps this is the lesson I live with daily. Service is a lifestyle. It is a constant choice that can fit into any plan.

Dani Klotz finished an internship with Radical Journey in April and started as a development associate for Mennonite Mission Network in May. She is a member of Olive Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind.

**James and Rachel Metzler**, Philadelphia, Miss., Choctaw Christian Church (Louisville, Miss.), served two weeks in Akron, Pa.

**Burnell and Erma Moyer**, Manheim, Pa., Hernley Mennonite Church (Manheim), served two weeks in Elm Mott, Texas.

**Sue and Wesley Richard**, Goshen, Ind., West Goshen Church of the Brethren, served one month in Americus, Ga.

**Lisa and Paul Schamback**, Lowville, N.Y., Lowville Mennonite Church, served one week in Tucson, Ariz.

**Marlene and Stanley Smucker**, North Newton, Kan., Shalom Mennonite Church (Newton, Kan.), served two weeks in Tucson, Ariz.

**Anita and Andrew Stoner**, Springfield, Ohio, Maplewood Mennonite Church (Fort Wayne, Ind.), served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Ib and June Thomsen**, Newton, Kan., First Mennonite Church (Newton), served one month in Tucson, Ariz.

**Duane and Marlys Tieszen**, Marion, S.D., Salem-Zion Mennonite Church (Freeman, S.D.), served one month in El Dorado, Ark.

**Joann and Robert Weaver**, Goshen, Ind., Pleasant View Mennonite Church (Goshen), served two weeks in Whitesburg, Ky.

**Faith Ann and James Wenger**, Hesston, Kan., Whitestone Mennonite Church (Hesston), served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**John and Virginia Wenger**, Goshen, Ind., Waterford Mennonite Church (Goshen), served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Elaine and Harold Yoder**, Middlebury, Ind., Sugar Grove Church (Goshen, Ind.), served one and a half months in Macon, Miss.



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# Who can serve?

**EVERYONE!** Service participants are between the ages of 9 and 99. They come from the city, from the suburbs, and from the farm. The right service participant is you, **and you, and you...**



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