

EXTENDING BEYOND

A windmill becomes a windfall

Photo by Karsten Würth
on Unsplash.

By Zachary Headings



When Lori and Mark Graber sell their yearly harvest, they tell the bookkeepers that a portion of that crop is the property of the Everence Foundation, a faith-based charitable giving service run

by Everence Financial. They give the bookkeepers an account number, and they send a check to Everence.

Once Everence receives the check, the Grabers designate how to allocate it. Mennonite Mission Network is one of the many organizations that they share their harvest income with.

There is an extra step to this process, though. An energy company pays the Grabers annually to keep a windmill and half a mile of transmission lines on their property. They can't give that money directly to Mission Network — their contract with the energy company forbids it. Instead, they designate a portion of their crops to the Everence Foundation. The money from the sale of those crops goes into an account,

and then, from that account, the Grabers give to Mission Network.

If that sounds like a lot of steps, that's because it is. But Mark Graber says it is the best way for them to give. And for the Grabers, that is just the beginning.

"A philosophy that I have is this," Mark said, "your waking hours should be spent thinking of creative ways to give."

The windmill and transmission lines were installed in 2009. The company leases the space on the Grabers' land for 30 years at a time. The company offered to pay with a lump sum, but they turned it down in favor of yearly payments. "The windmill is a windfall," Mark said. "It allows us to give more to the organizations and causes we believe in."

Service is important to the Graber family. Mark and his son, Eli, traveled to Benin in 2001 to help construct Benin Bible Institute's campus. While there, he quickly realized that, even though his work was appreciated, the seminary didn't really need his labor. Instead, they needed the money that was sent with him to pay for

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"Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion."

— 2 Corinthians 9:10-11 (NIV)



TAP a shoulder!

Who and what influences people to serve? Often, it is their pastor, church leader or mentor.

Micah 6:8 reminds leaders that “he has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (NRSV).

A term of service is one way we can live into this biblical concept. **Did you know that more than 600 pastors and church leaders in Anabaptist-affiliated churches have participated in at least one service program through Mennonite Mission Network?**

Mission Network seeks to create an atmosphere of calling within every congregation and encourages people to participate in God’s work of reconciliation. Service programs provide unique opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

Consider your congregation. Who might benefit from the encouragement to venture out and test their abilities in what God is doing in the world?

Contact your constituency representative to learn more, or e-mail ConstituentEngagement@MennoniteMission.net.



Scan the QR code or go to MennoniteMission.net/shouldertapper to see how **shoulder tappers** encourage service.

High school youth/college age

Ages 15-22*

2-3-week terms



Photo provided

2022 Youth Venture borderlands tour group spent time at the border wall in Douglas, Arizona.

Youth Venture

Learn, serve, grow.

Serve and learn — Join with other young people to serve, learn, worship and build relationships in communities around the world.

**Youth Venture leaders must be 24 or older.*

Adults and families

Ages 21+

3-month to 3-year terms



Photo by Linda Sheely

Members of *Comité de Justicia y Paz* (The Justice and Peace Committee) Carmen Chivico, Ian Horne, Bekah York and Sandra Sanchez, pack food to share primarily with Venezuelans in Bogotá, Colombia.

International opportunities

Accompany, reconcile, equip.

Global Anabaptist partnerships — Join God’s work across the world, through education, leadership development, community development and discipleship.

Types of assignments: special assignments, sabbaticals, internships, long-term assignments.

GAP year opportunities

Ages 20+

1-2-year terms



Photo by Liz Breckbill

Current and former MVSErs in Alamosa, Colorado — Liz Breckbill, Roxy Gehring, Erin McWilliams and Jake Myers — share a meal together.

Mennonite Voluntary Service

Faith, community, service.

Serve in community — Practice your faith through placements in education, social services, health services, business, advocacy, law, and environmental and sustainability agencies.

Ages 17-20*

10-month term



Photo provided

Horace McMillon, pastor at Open Door Mennonite Church and Mission Network board member, with 2022 Jackson, Mississippi, Service Adventure participants Jocelyn Baker and Malachi Lind.

Service Adventure

Community, faith formation, service.

Explore and grow — Invest in faith formation and leadership development, through placements in childcare, community agencies and church ministries.

**Service Adventure leaders must be 24 or older and serve for two year terms.*

Adults, families and groups

Ages 25+

1-2-week trips



Photo by Tonia Martin

Lance Polingyouma, cultural liaison at Peace Academic Center, gives an orientation to a Pleasant View Mennonite Church group and SOOP participants.

Just Peace Pilgrimage

Visit, learn, grow.

Listen and learn — Visit places of historical and contemporary significance. Listen to stories, and learn why our faith calls us to stand with people and stand against injustice. Pilgrimages include themes of civil rights, immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border, and connecting with Indigenous Peoples.

Ages 25+

2-week to 3-month terms



Photo provided

Katrina and Matt Eberly and their family have enjoyed doing SOOP assignments as a family.

SOOP

Service, relationships, learning, flexibility.

Serve in partnership — Individuals, couples and families enjoy the flexibility of serving in a variety of placements in the United States, Canada and abroad.

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construction costs. That experience, coupled with the short period of time that he accompanied Mennonite Board of Missions (a predecessor agency of Mission Network) workers Lynda and Rod Hollinger-Janzen, inspired the Graber family to begin their search for creative ways to support the work of God around the world.

Mark said that he could sell \$5 worth of crops, get taxed for half its value and give the remaining \$2.50 to the church. Or he could give that crop to the Everence Foundation, avoid the taxes and give the entire \$5 to the church. Mark said that when his family first started this process, he thought it was too good to be true.

After a traumatic head injury in 2005, Mark was unable to work the fields on his farm for almost an entire decade. He can now do physical labor again, but he mostly lets his sons do the field work. “[My sons] farm the soil, and I farm

the paper,” Mark said. He does not hold an accounting or business degree, yet he plays with numbers constantly, trying to maximize his farm’s profits, so that he can, in turn, maximize his giving.

“I have a theology of giving in kind,” Mark said. “The painter should paint the church. The plumber should do the church’s plumbing. We all have something in our lives that we can use to give in kind that is not dollars and cents.”

Dwight Mueller, a development representative for Mission Network, stays at the Grabers’ home whenever he visits constituents and donors in central and southern Illinois.

“I love learning from Lori and Mark,” he said. “It is really inspiring to visit with them and see their hearts of generosity.”

The Grabers continue to spend their time thinking of creative ways to give. Mark said that he does not want to “toot his own horn,” but he wants to inspire others to find new and creative ways to give to the causes they support.

“I can’t wait for my next idea,” he said. ■

Consider giving in kind. If you can paint, paint. If you can fix leaky pipes, fix them.
And if you can give, visit [MennoniteMission.net/Donate](https://www.MennoniteMission.net/Donate).

Living out our calling together

A message from Marisa Smucker, Interim Executive Director



At Mennonite Mission Network, we believe that all our activities should be rooted in our shared calling. Engaging with cultures and contexts in a constantly changing world makes us look at how we live, as individuals and as a community, in mission.

Missio Dei #22 — *Walking*

Together in Mission states that our mandate as the church is derived from the calling and sending activity of God:

- God sent the Son, Jesus, into the world.
- Together, they sent the Spirit.

And now, in turn, God sends forth the church, to bear witness to the reconciliation God is making possible through Jesus Christ.

From this reading of God’s word, we understand that the church — the global faith community — is the primary

way God offers grace, joy and peace to the world.

Mission Network’s core purpose is to complement this call. Our organization exists to lead, mobilize and equip congregations to join God’s reconciling work: to share God’s healing and hope throughout the world.

We walk as a mission community, partners, personnel, supporting congregations, donors and prayer partners. Together, we are sharing all of Christ with all of creation. ■

Marisa Smucker

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Interim Executive Director



[MennoniteMission.net/missiodei](https://www.MennoniteMission.net/missiodei)

Thank you for being part of what God is doing! How is God calling you to share in additional ways with Mennonite Mission Network?

www.MennoniteMission.net
Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872

Office locations:
Elkhart, Indiana
Newton, Kansas

