



Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

Sharing God's Love Through Acts of Service

Working for Peace

Caring for Creation

Advocating Justice

Serving Human Needs

BVS ended 2019 with 36 volunteers...

- who served in six countries: El Salvador, Nigeria, Republic of Ireland, Japan, Northern Ireland, and the United States.
- placed in 15 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.
- 79 volunteers served throughout the year.



Unit #322, Summer 2019: Volunteers take a group photo in front of Pine Lodge at Inspiration Hills Camp before a work day in the community.

In 2019:

- BVS hosted four orientation units: one at the COB Offices in Elgin, Ill., one at Inspiration Hills Camp in Burbank, Ohio, one in Newmanstown, Pa., and one at Camp Emmaus in Mount Morris, Ill.

Partners in Service Award

Each year, BVS presents a Partners in Service Award to an individual, group, or organization that has shown exceptional commitment to the work of sharing God's love through acts of service. The 2020 award goes to SnowCap Community Charities in Portland, Ore.

SnowCap Food Pantry is a 52-year-old charity providing food and clothing to over 9,000 low-income neighbors each month. With over 1,000 volunteers, SnowCap's roots began in the faith community of Multnomah County. Since 2010, 14 BVSers have volunteered at SnowCap, working either with client services or in the pantry.

The Partners in Service Award is usually presented at the Annual Conference Brethren Volunteer Service Luncheon each July. But in light of COVID-19, BVS and SnowCap will work together at a meaningful way of presenting the award.

Coordinator of Short-term Service

Hannah Shultz joined the BVS staff as coordinator of short-term service on Aug. 5, 2019.



She served as assistant workcamp coordinator for the 2015 summer workcamps, working at the General Offices from 2014-2015 as a volunteer through BVS - unit #307.

Hannah recently earned a master of divinity degree from Emory University, Candler School of Theology. As a 2014 graduate of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., she earned a degree in religious studies and was actively involved in campus ministry. She is originally from the Baltimore, Md., area and is a member of Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.



SnowCap Community Garden, volunteers packing boxes, and current SnowCap BVSer, Alex McBride (Unit #322)

Photos courtesy of Alex McBride



New Director: Emily Tyler

Emily Tyler was called as director of Brethren Volunteer Service and began her new position on Feb. 4, 2019. She has continued to work out of the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, IL, where she was coordinator for BVS recruitment and the Workcamp Ministry for more than seven years, since June 27, 2012.

Emily was part of orientation unit #265 in 2005, and served her BVS year in the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Office as a co-coordinator of National Youth Conference in 2006, and in the same year was coordinator for Young Adult Conference. She was a member of the National Young Adult Steering Committee in 2003-05.

As coordinator of the Workcamp Ministry, she has overseen BVS volunteer assistant coordinators each year as the ministry planned and held dozens of summer workcamps for junior highs, senior highs, young adults, multi-generational groups, and the We Are Able experience. Under her leadership, the Workcamp Ministry has offered young adult events in a wide variety of international locations including this summer's workcamp in an area of China where the Church of the Brethren formerly carried out mission work.

Looking forward, Emily hopes to “embrace and build on the rich history that BVS has with the Church of the Brethren and its many partnerships around the world. With a spirit of curiosity, transparency, and vulnerability, I hope to re-energize this tradition of radical discipleship that has so significantly shaped the Church of the Brethren into who we are today. In the words of Dan West, “The Church of the Brethren should be absolutely fearless, absurdly happy, and always in trouble.”



Emily at the Nepal workcamp in 2017, and Unit #265 workday

Kristin Flory Retires, Brethren Service Office Closes



Kristin Flory, Unit #134

The Brethren Service Office in Geneva, Switzerland closed in December 2019 with the retirement of Kristin Flory, who served as the BVS Europe coordinator for nearly 33 years. The central office in Geneva was established in 1947 by the Brethren Service Commission and in association with the World Council of Churches. The role of the office has shifted over the years; most recently, the work has centered on placing and supervising volunteers in Europe and maintaining relationships with service partners.

Brethren service in Europe has largely focused on peace and reconciliation efforts in places suffering from war and violence. European BVSers have served in Northern Ireland during the “Troubles” and in Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina after the wars in the Balkans. Other BVS Europe projects have included working with children and families and communities with people with disabilities.

Although the office is now closed, BVS will continue to place volunteers with projects in Ireland and Northern Ireland. We are so grateful for Kristin’s contributions to and impact on BVS Europe and for all the volunteers who have served through the Brethren Service Office over the years.



Europe Retreat in Germany, 1988

Workcamp Update

Kara Miller and Liana Smith are serving as the assistant workcamp coordinators in the BVS office. The 2020 theme is “Voices for Peace.”



Liana Smith, Kara Miller



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