

Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

Summer 2009

Sharing God's Love through Acts of Service

Working for Peace
Advocating Justice

Caring for Creation
Serving Human Needs



Here are a few of the exciting and important things happening in BVS:

In 2008, BVS had...

- 50 new volunteers
- 5 orientation units
- 76 volunteers serving across the world

Currently, BVS has...

- volunteers in 12 different countries
- volunteers in 17 different US states
- volunteers from age 18 to 75



BVSers work hard, but play hard too! BVS Unit 283 after a game of volleyball in the rain.

Photo courtesy of BVS Staff



Photo by Dana McFadden

The "BVS House" in Elgin, IL, has a long history of offering community living. Currently, eight BVSers share the space, living, eating, and working together as volunteers in the Church of the Brethren denominational offices. Pictured here: (left to right, back to front) Matt Witkovsky, Beth Merrill, Dana Cassell, Audrey Hollenberg, Meghan Horne, Emily LaPrade, Bekah Houff, and Sharon Flaten.

BVS Begins Community House Initiatives

BVS is launching a new venture to develop community living opportunities for its volunteers, in partnership with interested congregations.

Congregations will commit to hosting a community house for groups of four to six volunteers who will work at project sites in the area. Volunteers will commit to being active in the congregation. BVS is seeking volunteers and congregations interested in partnering in these community living opportunities.

The new emphasis is part of a partnership that BVS has established with the Volunteers Exploring Vocation program through the Fund for Theological Education (FTE) and a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The vocations program invites volunteers to explore their call to ministry.

Congregations and volunteers interested in these new community houses may contact Dana Cassell, volunteer staff for vocation and community living, at dcassell@brethren.org.

Photo by Sharon Flaten



Current BVSer Don Krieriem, Unit 282, and Alma Long, Unit 1, during the consecration service.

The BVS 60th Anniversary Celebration

During the days of September 26-28, 2008, 337 former volunteers, current volunteers, and friends of BVS came to the New Windsor Conference Center to be a part of the 60th Anniversary Celebration.

Storytelling was the underlying theme for the weekend. Each day had blocks of time for small and large groups to share what they had learned and remembered during their BVS time.



Many former volunteers shared how their experiences gave them insight into life that they had not anticipated. There was an overall feeling that BVS had opened their eyes to issues beyond themselves and their local congregations and hometowns.

On Saturday morning the whole group met to listen to the story of the beginning of BVS at the 1948 Annual Conference, retold as Jim Lehman interviewed Alma Long, part of the group that presented the initial proposal of BVS to the Annual Conference. Three sessions in the late morning showcased Kristin Flory, Tom Benevento, and Dan McFadden telling the story of BVS in Europe, Latin America, and the US respectively. The afternoon was broken into two sessions. Time was spent in groups sharing, by decade, where individuals talked about what they did at their project and what moments were unforgettable and life changing. Ken Kreider also presented on the influence of Brethren Service on BVS.



Photo by Sharon Flaten

Current BVSer Jill Hutton, Unit 282, with Sebastian Eikler, helps with child care.

A simple banquet closed out Saturday evening. By eating a meal of soup and bread, the attendees were able to donate the excess funds, over \$1600, to benefit the Global Food Crisis Fund. The keynote speaker was Jeff Carter, a former volunteer, who addressed the crowd on the life-changing effects of BVS.

The weekend finished with a Sunday morning worship service where the Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger delivered the message, and orientation unit 282 was consecrated for their year of service.

BVS 60th Anniversary Polo Shirts
 have gone on SALE!
Now only \$15
 Plus \$5 for shipping
 To order contact the BVS Office - details at the bottom of this page.
 The shirt is pictured above right being worn by BVSer Jill Hutton.
 Sizes M-XXL available

New projects in BVS over the past year include: Bread of Life in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Hadley Day Care Center in Hutchinson, KS; Root Cellar in Lewiston, ME.

The Outdoor Ministry Association has been named the recipient of BVS's 2009 Partners in Service Award. The award recognizes an individual, project, or congregation that has demonstrated exceptional commitment in partnering with BVS to share God's love through acts of service.

Over the years more than half of the Brethren camps have been BVS projects; since the early 1980s there have been at least 145 volunteers who served at camps and many more in years prior. Currently three camps host BVS volunteers. Additionally, many camps have been involved in hosting orientations; Camp Ithiel has consistently been hosting the winter orientation for the past 15 years.