

# Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

Summer 2014

## Sharing God's Love Through Acts of Service



Working for Peace    Caring for Creation  
Advocating Justice    Serving Human Needs

*Here are a few of the exciting things happening in BVS!*

### In 2013:

- BVS hosted four orientation units:
- One in Gotha, Fla., and three in New Windsor, Md.
- 63 new volunteers entered the program
- 149 total volunteers served throughout the year

Chelsea Goss



*The 2013 fall orientation Unit #303 gathers for a picture in New Windsor, Md., after attending Sunday morning worship services at local congregations.*

**Currently, BVS has 80 volunteers...**

- ranging in age from 18 to 77
- placed in 16 different US states and Washington, D.C.
- serving in 12 countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Republic of Ireland, Japan, Northern Ireland, South Sudan, and the USA

### 2014 BVS Partners in Service Award

Each year, BVS presents a Partners in Service Award to an individual, group, or organization that has shown an exceptional commitment to the work of sharing God's love through acts of service. This year's recipient is Walt Wiltschek.

Walt is campus pastor and director of Religious Life and Church Relations at Manchester University in North Manchester, Ind. Previously he served as editor of *Messenger* magazine and director of news services for the Church of the Brethren and as a newspaper sports journalist. Walt has long been a staunch supporter of BVS, and the fruits of his labor have shown in recent years. During his tenure, the university has seen an increase in Manchester students and graduates joining Brethren Volunteer Service. The trend of choosing BVS after completing an undergraduate degree at a Brethren college appears to be gaining some traction. Of the 63 volunteers that began serving BVS this past year, 19 (30%) were graduates of one of the six colleges and universities connected to the Church of the Brethren (Bridgewater, Elizabethtown, Juniata, La Verne, Manchester, and McPherson).



Walt Wiltschek



Walt will receive the award at the BVS Annual Conference luncheon on July 4 in Columbus, Ohio, where he will be the guest speaker.

## Church of the Brethren Workcamps Join the BVS Staff

With the addition of Emily Tyler to our staff, we have welcomed the Brethren Workcamp Ministry to the BVS family. Last year, 2013 was the first full year it was housed and run through the BVS Office. Katie Cummings (Weyers Cave, Va.) and Tricia Ziegler (Sebring, Fla.) served as the assistant coordinators for the 2013 workcamp season, choosing to focus on the theme “Deeply Rooted” in Christ. Some 375 youth and advisors, along with 35 volunteers offering leadership, came together at 23 locations across the country to study this theme, based on Colossians 2:6-7, during their week of service.

Workcamp Office



2014 BRETHREN WORKCAMPS  
Emily Tyler with Jenna Stacy  
(2014 Assistant Workcamp  
Coordinator)

In August 2013, Jenna Stacy (Campobello, S.C.) joined the workcamp staff and began work on the 2014 workcamp season. “Teach With Your Life,” based on 1 Timothy 3:11-16, will guide this season as nearly 150 participants and volunteer leaders gather at 7 locations around the US to serve the community and study the theme. In addition to these 7 locations, a young adult workcamp will be serving in La Tortue, Haiti. This is a smaller number of sites than is typical for a workcamp season as the workcamp ministry is encouraging senior high youth to attend National Youth Conference.

Beginning in August 2014, Hannah Shultz (Lutherville, Md.) and Theresa Ford (Mont Clare, Pa.) will begin their year of BVS service as assistant coordinators for the 2015 workcamp season, which will return to including a full slate of junior high, senior high, young adult, and intergenerational workcamps.



Workcamp Office



Tricia Ziegler & Katie Cummings  
(2013 Assistant Workcamp  
Coordinators)

## Congregations Connecting



In recent years, BVS has had the privilege of partnering with some Church of the Brethren congregations to create and/or support new project placements for volunteers. While the idea is not new, the energy behind it appears to be, judging by the numbers. The following congregations partially or fully support a BVS project and volunteer:

Central (Roanoke, Va.); First Central (Kansas City, Kan.); Lewiston (Lewiston, Maine); Roanoke (Roanoke, La.); San Diego (San Diego, Calif.); Skyridge (Kalamazoo, Mich.)/Camp Brethren Heights; Washington City (Washington, D.C.)

BVS also has more than a dozen projects connected to the three intentional community houses: Cincinnati, Ohio; Elgin, Ill.; and Portland, Ore. To find out how to start or support a project near you, contact a member of the BVS staff.

## Recruitment and BVS Connections Dinners

In January 2014, Ben Bear rejoined BVS for his third year of service. He was a member of Unit #277 and has served in Colorado and Cincinnati as well as lived in the Portland BVS house. His focus during his time of service is recruitment, and he has hit the ground running! He has made it to five of the six Brethren college campuses already and connected with dozens of pastors around the denomination.



BVS supporters at the  
Olympic View dinner.

One new initiative he has begun during his travels is something he's calling a “BVS Connections Dinner.” These are dinners co-sponsored by Brethren Volunteer Service and a local congregation in the area where Ben is traveling. The goal is to gather BVS alumni to share their stories with other alumni, supporters, and potential future volunteers. BVS has partnered with three different hosting congregations so far: Olympic View (Seattle, Wash.); Oak Grove (Roanoke, Va.); and Manassas (Manassas, Va.). Keep an eye on our Facebook page and Newsline for future dinners coming to your area!

If you know of an upcoming event in your area and would like to have BVS present or represented, be in touch. It is always nice to be invited!



Ben Bear

BVS volunteers from the Elgin Intentional Community House (l-r): Katie Cummings, Tim Heishman, Jenna Stacy, Ben Bear, and Sarah Neher.

Brethren Volunteer Service is a ministry  
of the Church of the Brethren  
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