



# Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

## Sharing God's Love Through Acts of Service

*Working for Peace  
Advocating Justice*

*Caring for Creation  
Serving Human Needs*

### Currently, BVS has 57 volunteers...

- serving in 10 countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Republic of Ireland, Japan, Northern Ireland, and the USA
- placed in 11 different U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Eric Landram

*Some of the current and former BVsers that attended National Young Adult Conference Memorial Day weekend gathered for a picture in the Jo Young Switzer Center at Manchester University.*

### In 2015:

- BVS hosted four orientation units: one at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, FL, one at Camp Mardela in Denton, MD, and two at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, MD.
- 93 total volunteers served throughout the year

### 2015 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. The four communities of L'Arche Ireland and Northern Ireland will share the award for 2016.

L'Arche is the French word for "the ark" and is an international movement of almost 150 communities in 35 countries where people with and without intellectual disabilities share life together. L'Arche fosters an environment to celebrate the unique value of each and every person in those communities and recognizes our need of one another. L'Arche Ireland and Northern Ireland have invited 27 BVS volunteers since 1997 to live and work with core members and other volunteers in the four communities in Co. Kilkenny, Dublin, Cork, and Belfast. The Partners in Service Award will be presented to L'Arche Ireland and Northern Ireland at the BVS Annual Conference Luncheon on July 1 in Greensboro, NC.

*L'Arche Co. Kilkenny Core Member, Paddy, and BVSer Joe Pitocco (2012)*



Kristin Flory

*L'Arche Belfast Core Member, Larry, and BVSer Hannah Monroe (2014)*



Kristin Flory

*L'Arche Belfast Core Member, Thomas, and BVSer Andrew Miller (2016)*



Kristin Flory



### Project Spotlight: L'Arche, Co. Kilkenny

Established in 1978, the L'Arche community in Callan, County Kilkenny, Republic of Ireland was the first L'Arche community in Ireland.

BVS sent Megan Blinn as its first volunteer to this community in 1997. Megan later went on to help start the L'Arche community in Belfast. Since sending the first BVSer, there have been 13 other volunteers who have served in this L'Arche

community and more than 30 total volunteers who have served at L'Arche communities around the world through BVS.

Elizabeth Batten, a recent BVSer at L'Arche Co. Kilkenny, says, "The people here foster community through love and caring, a sense of belonging and acceptance, and a drive to ensure the greatest quality of life that enables each person to achieve their full potential."

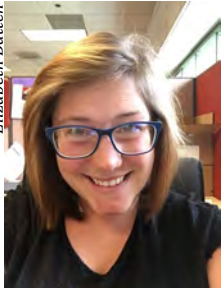
Assistants in this community are invited to share life with people with intellectual disabilities, building a community where everyone is valued regardless of ability, creed, or culture. Volunteers in this community have to be open to living with people of varying abilities in a community where God is recognized as the source of life and where difference is seen as a gift.



Kristin Flory

### The L'Arche Prayer

Father, through Jesus our Lord and our brother, we ask you to bless us. Grant that L'Arche be a true home, where the poor in spirit may find life, where those who suffer may find hope. Keep in your loving care all those who come. Spirit of God, give us greatness of heart that we may welcome all those you send. Make us compassionate that we may heal and bring peace. Help us to see, to serve, and to love. O Lord, through the hands of your little ones, bless us; through the eyes of those who are rejected, smile upon us. O Lord, grant freedom fellowship, and unity to all your people and welcome everyone into your kingdom. Amen.



### BVS Recruitment Volunteer: Elizabeth Batten

In November 2015, BVS welcomed Elizabeth to the team in Elgin as the Recruitment Volunteer.

Elizabeth is from Mendon, MI. She attended Grand Valley State University and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies and Women and Gender Studies.

Elizabeth began her time in BVS at the summer 2014 orientation at Camp Mardela in Denton, Maryland. Before joining the BVS team in

November, she spent her first year in BVS with the L'Arche community in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, Republic of Ireland. "Sharing my life with the people I lived and worked at with was a magnificent gift."

Since coming to Elgin, Elizabeth has been traveling to various conferences, colleges, and churches sharing about BVS and her BVS story. She is excited to help lead the summer 2016 orientation in New Windsor, Maryland. "I loved my orientation and I can't wait to share in orientation excitement with the volunteers."

Elizabeth (pictured middle) with her drop-off day group at orientation



BVS staff

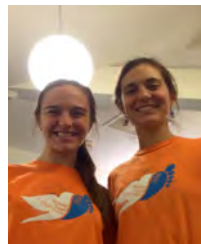
### Top Ten Reasons to Volunteer

10. Follow Jesus
9. Make new friends
8. Learn & strengthen skills
7. Discover new passions
6. Become a leader
5. New experiences that will change your life
4. Get involved in the world
3. Grow in your faith
2. Because you CAN make a difference
1. Because volunteering is AWESOME!



### Workcamp Update

Deanna Beckner (left) and Amanda McLearn-Montz are serving as assistant workcamp coordinators. The 2016 theme is "Blazing with Holiness".



BVS staff

### Brethren Volunteer Service

1451 Dundee Ave.  
Elgin, IL 60120

[www.brethenvolunteerservice.org](http://www.brethenvolunteerservice.org)  
[bvs@brethren.org](mailto:bvs@brethren.org)  
847-742-5100