



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 2021 with 14 volunteers:

- who served in 5 countries: El Salvador, Japan, Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the U.S.;
- placed in 11 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.;
- 26 volunteers served throughout the year.



Unit 328, Winter 2021, volunteer group photo taken over Zoom (left), and Unit 329, Summer 2021, at Camp Inspiration Hills

In 2021:

- BVS hosted two orientation units. The winter unit was held virtually due to COVID-19. The summer unit was held at Camp Inspiration Hills in Burbank, Ohio.

Partners in Service Award

The World Friendship Center in Hiroshima, Japan, is the recipient of BVS's 2022 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.

The World Friendship Center has been serving and advocating for peace since 1965 and has been a BVS project since 1982. BVSers have been serving as co-directors, managing and operating international guest services since 1982. English classes are taught and peace is promoted through a variety of community based peace activities, classes, and stories from Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors). Through their efforts, peace is encouraged and bridges of international understanding are built. BVS is proud to recognize the World Friendship Center for its non-wavering commitment to peace.

The Partners in Service Award will be presented on July 11 at the Annual Conference Brethren Volunteer Service Luncheon in Omaha, Nebraska.



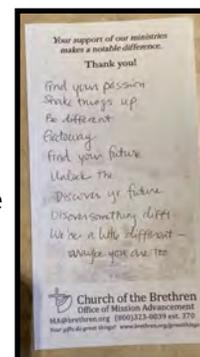
From left to right: Malachi Nelson (Unit 329), Kathy Edmark (Unit 319), Roger Edmark (Unit 319), and Matthew Bateman (Unit 328) at the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima, Japan. Photo courtesy of World Friendship Center.

New BVS promotion campaign: 'We're a little different. Maybe you are too.'



Soon after I came back to the BVS office as the interim director, I was asked if BVS wanted to place an ad in the church's monthly magazine, *Messenger*. I didn't have much time to make a decision nor come up with an ad. So, one Monday I texted my daughter (a former BVSer), her friend, and my wife. Could they put their heads together and help me out? They started with a phrase I gave them, "Find your passion." Then came a progression of their thinking. My wife took notes and kept the paper (right). And finally, "We're a little different. Maybe you are too." This all happened in 10 minutes.

The BVS team has become captivated by this phrase. Right away it seemed to fit and its simplicity tells the BVS experience. We in BVS are a little different. We always have been. Is what you gain from your volunteer experience unique to BVS? No. Many others gain the same thing from their service years. And yet, the Church of the Brethren, who forms the foundation of BVS, and following Jesus, the reason we do what we do... yes, we're a little different. Maybe you know of others who are different too. Invite them to join us. —Dan McFadden



BVS Update: Coming Back from COVID

For the past two years, BVS has been in a constant state of transition. During 2020, BVS had to transition from doing in-person orientations to virtual orientations. After a virtual orientation for Unit 328 in January, 2021 saw BVS switching back to an in-person orientation for Unit 329 in July. Changes were made to the orientation to reflect the changing times, and the numbers were much smaller, but the spirit of BVS remained strong. Our successful return to in-person orientation bodes well for the future.

The pandemic forced BVS to make creative changes, some that will continue through the near future and some that have inspired other ideas. For orientation, speakers are now invited from all across the country and the world to lead sessions virtually. This allows for more variety and diversity in the orientation session topics. With the first virtual unit came monthly group support calls on Zoom. It gives all the volunteers a chance to strengthen their BVS identity while getting to know volunteers from outside their unit on a regular basis. These changes have given BVS the ability to move into the modern era and improve connection with a wider range of people.

BVS does not look the same as it did back in 1948. Then again, neither does the world. Change is part of nature. Despite all the transitions BVS goes through, its simple goal will remain: "Sharing God's love through acts of service." Whether virtual, in person, or a mixture of both, BVS will continue to strive toward this goal. These times of change have proven that nothing can stop BVS.



Claire Horrell (Unit 328) with her second photography seminar at El Centro Arte para la Paz in Suchitoto, El Salvador (left), and Erika Clary (Unit 329) posing with her National Youth Conference mailing at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Illinois (right).

FaithX Update

"Step Out: Seeking New Paths," based on Isaiah 43:19, was the 2021 FaithX season theme. This theme encourages participants to seek new paths in their faith and step out into their own faith journey. Eighty-six youth and adults participated in 7 workcamps around the country during the 2021 summer months. As they studied this theme, they were able to have fun, make friendships and memories, and serve their local communities in a new and meaningful way. Due to the unique challenges of COVID, these participants served in areas closer to their homes, allowing them to step out in their own communities and find new and exciting ways to serve in their own backyards. These trips were coordinated by BVS assistant coordinators, Chad Whitzel and Alton Hipps. Zech Houser is currently working on summer 2022 programs with the theme "Boundless Faith," empowering participants to go beyond the easy answers and see their faith as a bold adventure into the unknown.



Alton Hipps (Unit 325) and Chad Whitzel (Unit 325) with FaithX participants in Susquehanna Valley, Pennsylvania.

FaithX Welcomes Zech Houser!



BVS welcomed one new staff person after the resignation of Hannah Shultz. Zechariah Houser was named coordinator of short-term service, and his role includes BVS

recruitment and coordination of the FaithX ministry (formerly workcamps). Zech began on August 9, 2021, and since then has become a valuable member of the BVS team. BVS is very grateful to have Zech on board as he plans the 2022 FaithX program.

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BVS is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren