

Volunteer Ministries



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And We're Off——

UCC Companion Communities: Young Adult Service Communities

UCC Companion Communities are underway. The first Summer Young Adult Service Community was formed with The Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, Arizona. **Kelly Forbush** (Massachusetts) and **Sarah Adamson** (Minnesota) served as volunteers in the UCC Companion Communities program during the summer of 2009.

Hear some of their reflections recorded October 12, 2009 during a Webinar for potential host churches. www.ucc.org/volunteer/companion-communities-2.html at the bottom of the page under "Welcome."

The year-long Companion Communities program at Church of the Beatitudes in Phoenix, Arizona includes **Jack Farrell** (New York), **Emily Fleissner** (Wisconsin), **Elizabeth Koebel** (Michigan), and **Erin O'Keefe** (California).

Members of the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps in Bethesda, Maryland are **Hannah Campbell Gustafson**, **Sarah Adamson**, **Eva Foegeding**, **Kara Johnson**, and **Laura Shatzer**.

Coming Soon
The first ever
National Gathering
of UCC Companion Communities:
Young Adult Service Communities

YASC of Church of the Beatitudes &
WVC of Westmoreland Congregational UCC
January 15-18, 2010
Sahuarita, Arizona



Westmoreland Volunteer Corps 2009-2010

Host Churches provide intentional community settings

Young Adult Volunteers

- Serve in justice advocacy and direct social service.
[Community Organizers -- Case Managers -- Grant Writers]
- Participate in leadership development with local host church.
- Form intentional community with other volunteers.
- Reflect on your service and engage in faith conversations.

Housing, food stipend, and health insurance provided. Possibility of qualification for a half-time AmeriCorps Education grant during year-long program.

Where will you be a this summer or next year?

**Picture yourself
as a member of a Young Adult Service Community**



Now forming:

Summer Young Adult Service Communities

(June – August, 2010)

An Ecumenical Collaboration of UCC Volunteer Ministries and the Alliance of Baptists
Ages 18-30 years

Application Deadlines: Part I February 1, 2010/Part II February 15, 2010

AND

***United Church of Christ Companion Communities:
Young Adult Service Communities***

(September 2010 – July 2011)

Ages 21-30 years

Application Deadlines: Part I March 1, 2010 / Part II March 15, 2010

Serve in justice advocacy and direct social service.
Community Organizers -- Case Managers -- Grant Writers
Participate in leadership development with local host church.
Form intentional community with other volunteers.

Housing, food stipend, and health insurance provided. Possibility of qualification for a half-time AmeriCorps Education grant during year-long program.

Apply on-line: <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/companion-communities-2.html>
or www.allianceofbaptists.org

Questions? Please call Mary Schaller Blaufuss, Executive for Volunteer Ministries 216-736-3214.



ALONG THE WAY... NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Read more stories of volunteer experiences and reflections at www.ucc.org/volunteer under "Resources."

If you have served with disaster recovery mission trips in Indiana or Iowa since 2008, you probably have met **Pam Small** of Evansville, IN. Pam's friendly voice is on the phone line and her words of encouragement come through on your e-mail. Pam has served in the UCC Partners in Service program as the Volunteer Coordinator/Registrar during 2008–2010 as a "Virtual Volunteer." Pam lives at home and serves through electronic media (in addition to her hallmark handwritten thank you notes). Several times each year, Pam accompanies her husband, **John**, to other disaster recovery programs where he also serves as "Partners in Service" volunteer in the role of construction site coordinator.



Look for other opportunities to be a "Virtual Volunteer" during the com-

Note on Disaster Recovery Mission Trips: To participate as volunteers in long-term disaster recovery from 2008 floods in Indiana and Iowa, the UCC partners with local community-based Long Term Recovery Committees. The UCC Volunteer Ministries Office has been able to connect groups with Long Term Recovery Committees prepared to receive and utilize volunteer groups. A one-stop registration place at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/disaster-recovery-volunteers/disaster-recovery-mission.html> allows us to connect your group with a local volunteer coordinator, project supervisor and host church housing. UCC Volunteer Ministries is recommending Cedar Rapids, IA, Terre Haute, IN, Martinsville, IN, and Munster, IN as disaster recovery mission trip hosts. Register for all these location on-line at the address above.

Long Term Disaster Recovery 2008 Floods in the Midwest USA

First Congregational U.C.C. of Appleton, Wisconsin participated in a disaster recovery mission trip in Cedar Rapids, Iowa helping people reclaim their homes and lives after floods of 2008. Deb Burich, leader of Appleton group wrote a note to Pam Small, Volunteer Registrar for UCC participation in Midwest 2008 Flood Recovery. Pam herself is serving as a *Partners in Service* volunteer. [See article to left] They gave me permission to share their correspondence.

Pam,
Just got back from Iowa late last night. We had 9 folks and had a wonderful experience. Some did sheetrock, some taped and mudded, some mudded walls, some painted walls And most had little experience prior but jumped right in and were amazed at themselves! They also all took time to get to know other folks – VISTA workers, other volunteers, the homeowner.

Hope UCC [host congregation in Hiawatha near Cedar Rapids] was very welcoming and we really appreciated them spending time with us on Sunday eve – have 2 folks tell us of their personal experience with the floods and rebuilding their homes. Our members were very touched by hearing their stories – it connected them personally to the difficulties, the bureaucracy & frustrations as well as the resiliency and courage, the stamina and strength.

There was talk of future trips.

Deb

Good Morning

Deb, How exciting it is to know that your trip went so well. Thank you for your note. ...I am so glad that there was such a good relationship between you all and the folk from that area. It is so interesting to hear of other lives, and to be able to connect with them. You really feel a part of what you are there to do. I always come home and just thank God for my home, family, and all that there is here for us to enjoy. In a moment's notice, it can all be taken away. But, as you said, these people have more FAITH than anyone I have ever seen. God gets them through the tough times, that's for sure.

Pam



And also a Word from a Mission Trip Host Site...

Mission Trips transform lives and make prayers come alive.

Excerpts from the Pastor ...**(Rev. Mary Albert)**
...**"More than we could ask or imagine!"**
The Enlightener Newsletter, Epiphany UCC, St. Louis, MO—host of the Urban Mission Experience...

Summer at Epiphany has been full of life in many ways this year! FULL OF ACTIVITY—Nine youth groups visited from five states to participate in our Urban Mission Experience program. A total of 120 guests made Epiphany their home for up to a week this summer as they brought youthful energy, curiosity and hands-on help with our mission outreach work. We greeted, welcomed, sat at table, learned and 'walked the walk' of urban discipleship together. They shared with us and we with them, and it was a transforming experience for all. It was more than we could ask or imagine...FULL OF BLESSING—yet in the blur of all that has happened within our lives individually and as a congregation in these last two months, there is the imprint of the sacred, signs of the holy presence. Transformation happened among us this summer. A young Urban Mission Experience visitor had an epiphany that direct service, while important, is a temporary band-aid, and that the scope and scale of human suffering is calling him to work for justice and transformation in our world. ...

Transformation happened among the Urban Mission Experience participants as they wrote words of thanks to the congregation at Epiphany.

"Thank you so much for your generous hospitality. The breakfast, orientation session and neighborhood walk were beyond welcoming and also very informative for us —

people living in a totally different culture. Many blessings on your continued ministry to Benton Park and St. Louis **(Rev. Amelie Sell, Pleasantville UCC, Chalfont, PA).**

Thank you so much for opening your church to us...Your facilities and hospitality during our stay were great...The kids really enjoyed attending your Sunday worship service as well. Our youth just had Youth Sunday to present their trip to our congregation and were all positive and still full of excitement. This experience will have a lasting impression on these young people. Thank you again for the service you do for youth and for your community. We are eternally grateful. **(Roxanne Davenport, Youth Director, Solomon's UCC, Chambersburg, PA)**

..."Now that our paths have touched we are linked together forever in ministry and in prayer. We are grateful to have met you and send our love and prayers to you and your worship and work among the people of God ." **(Larchwood UCC Mission Trip Team, Larchwood, IA)..."**

(the Pastor Albert's note continues)... P.S.
"Another gift beyond our imagination this summer came from the youth group from **St. Peter's UCC in Elmhurst, IL.** Not only did they spend two whole days helping us at Epiphany with VBS and helping Joint Neighborhood Ministries (emergency food and clothing ministries) get ready for the Back to School Fair. Not only did they pay to sleep on our floors for a week. Before they left, they left us with a hand-made prayer shawl from their church's prayer ministry and an extra gift of \$1,000—to be shared between us and Joint Neighborhood Ministries—to help us continue our mission. At their church, each year the youth decide how a portion of their mission funds are directed. After they participated in the Urban mission program, they chose to share it with us. More than we could ask, indeed!

This summer brought life to the prayer in Ephesians 3: 14-21 which closes with these words: "Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Mission Trip Follow-Up - Transformation Happens

Mission Trips provide ...

... help to organizations in their ongoing ministries with neighbors.

... a presence with people from the outside so that connections can be formed and encouraged.

... the opportunities for volunteers to be transformed through new experiences and connections and seeing the world with new eyes and getting personally involved.

Studies are showing, however, that the long-term effects of mission trips (the changing the world effects) are in the follow-up to the mission trip - the depth to which people stay connected and involved in the issues they encounter and the long-term commitments that are generated and carried through on. And this can be the most difficult part of the mission trip of all.

Hannah Campbell Gustafson, of Minneapolis, and currently part of the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps of the UCC Companion Communities (see page 4) participated in a mission trip with her congregation during the summer of 2009 to serve with Re-Member near Pine Ridge, SD and the Lakota nation. Hannah's continuing follow-up action illustrate the transformation action possible in a holistic mission trip experience.

"One thing I have already been working on as a part of my continuing advocacy was getting people to write letters to President Obama inviting him to visit Pine Ridge and telling him about our experience there. I worked hard to get people from my trip to write letters, and I think about 10 of the 30 did so, which I actually feel quite good about. While we were on the reservation many people mentioned the changes that happened after president Clinton's visit, so for that reason and others I thought it would be good to encourage Obama to visit. I imagine as part of that I will continue writing letters to him periodically. I am also working at paying close attention to the Re-Member website and to any other piece of news that may affect the people of Pine Ridge. I am working at finding a good email listserv with news that may affect the reservations around this country, which I have not managed to do so as of yet. At the end of the summer I spent 3 weeks at my family's cabin in Northern MN. Our community of cabins is right near a large reservation, and we are working to develop stronger relationships with people of the reservation.

The 2010 UCC Mission Trip

Opportunities includes several resources that can help in the follow-up of your service/immersion experience. www.ucc.org/volunteer/mission-trip-opportunities.

One woman on the reservation told us about a petition to get President Obama to apologize for the boarding schools. So my mom and my aunt and uncle and I wrote a letter in support of this petition, from our community. We have been working on getting people to sign that and to sign the petition, which is a petition that has been circulated on reservations around the country."

You'll see how Hannah's response relates to continuing involvement with people of Pine Ridge and efforts to address the root causes of poverty and relationships between the U.S. and the Lakota nation. She encouraged others in their continuing involvement. Hannah's experience caused her to look at her own community when she returned home to identify people with whom she related differently after her mission trip experience; and how she took their lead in supporting them through her own networks to address issues they identified and in ways that they asked for support.

Thanks, Hannah, for sharing your story. If you have ways that you have continued your mission trip experience in the follow-up - let us know. We can encourage and give one another ideas as we work together to be part of God's mission in the world.

Your special attention to all three stages of mission trip action is vital for transformation.

Preparation – Equip your group to enter more fully into the lives of people you meet and situations you encounter.

On-site service and reflection - Share your gifts and talents with others and experience God's work in the world in new ways.

Follow-up action - Involve yourself and your congregation in justice advocacy that addresses root causes of the justice issues you encountered and motivates you for continued service with God's people.

Partners in Service Alumni on the Move...

Where Are They Now?

Rev. Randy Mayer, Lead Pastor at Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, Arizona

Randy recently responded to an inquiry from Silver Lake Conference Center in Connecticut in their attempt to locate SLCC alumni. Mary Ruth, recently a "Partners in Service" volunteer serving at Silver Lake helped the CT Conference with this project.

Randy replied: "I didn't attend SLCC, but I was on the 1987 and 1990 summer staff as a UCC Voluntary Service Volunteer. They were some of the best years of my life and the greatest training for ministry."

Not incidentally, the Good Shepherd UCC is the site of the first Summer UCC Companion Communities program. Thanks Randy for all your work and example of faith and leadership.



Attila Makszin and Kristen Nicel Makszin
Attila from Hungary was a Partners in Service volunteer with the Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs in Frederick, MD 2004-2006

Word is that Luc Trusnach, from Belgium who served at Emmaus Homes, Marthasville 2004-6 is now engaged to be married to Caroline Masuy. Congratulations!



Welcome New & Returning 'Partners in Service' Volunteers

- Tobias Becker**, Germany, at Every Child's Hope (ECH), St. Louis, MO
- Tobias (Max) Bergmann**, Germany, Church World Service Refugee Resettlement, Lancaster, PA
- Mary Clare Bohnett**, OR, at JOIN: Connecting the Streets to a Home, Portland, OR
- Richard Freridge**, MI, at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA
- Jeremie Fusin**, France, at Every Child's Hope (ECH), St. Louis, MO
- Jo Green**, IA, at UCC/DOC Disaster Recovery, Galveston, TX
- Merlin Green**, IA, at UCC/DOC Disaster Recovery, Galveston, TX
- Chris Hale**, CT, at Old First Reformed UCC, Philadelphia, PA
- Alexander Lipp**, Germany, at Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs, Frederick, MD
- Lukas Moeller**, Germany, at Heifer Ranch, Perryville, AR
- Richard Rhinehart**, FL, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS
- Phyllis Rhinehart**, FL, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS
- Franca Schreiber**, Germany, at La Puente Homes, Alamosa, CO
- Frank Zahn**, IA, at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA



Thanks to 'Partners in Service' Volunteers Recently Completing Service

(August-December, 2009)

Dosia Carlson, AZ at Abernethy Laurels, United Church Homes, Newton, NC

John Davis, NM, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

Sarah Fiske-Phillips, CA, at St. Paul's Community UCC

& InterReligious Task Force on Central America, Cleveland, OH

Richard Freridge, MI, at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA

Carrie Fry-Miller, IN, at Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests, Minneapolis, MN

Jo Green, IA, at UCC/DOC Disaster Recovery, Galveston, TX

Merlin Green, IA, at UCC/DOC Disaster Recovery, Galveston, TX

Kevin Kalfels, Germany, at La Puente Homes, Alamosa, CO

Debora Kovach, Hungary, at Meeting Ground, Elkton, MD

Joshua Lux, Germany, at Heifer Ranch, Perryville, AR

Hannes Mangold, Germany, United Church of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

Nicole Mansfield, KY, Urban Spirit, Louisville, KY

Zayna Thompson McCollum, IL, at Faithful Advocates Serving Together, Whitesburg, KY

Judy Moore, LA, at South Central Conference Disaster Ministries, New Orleans, LA

(Victor) Seungree Nam, Canada, St. Paul's UCC/TEMPCO, Marthasville, MO

Marie Nouis, France, at United Church AIDs Network (UCAN), New York, NY

Darian Packmohr, Germany, at Church World Service Refugee Resettlement, Lancaster, PA

Rafael Palij, Germany, at Every Child's Hope (ECH), St. Louis, MO

Phyllis Rhinehart, FL, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

Richard Rhinehart, FL, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

Mary Ruth, NC, at Silver Lake Conference Center, Silver Lake, CT

William Ruth, NC, at Silver Lake Conference Center, Silver Lake, CT

Sandy Shnay, IL, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

Rob Swanson, MI, at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA

Matthias Vieth, Germany, at Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Need, Frederick, MD

Emily Wheelock, NM, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

Are you planning a disaster recovery mission trip? T-Shirt now available to help identify your group and build awareness. Order from United Church of Christ Resources 1-800-537-3394 or www.ucc.org under "Buy it" Cost of T-shirt: \$7.00 + Shipping & Handling.



UCC VOLUNTEER

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For over 50 years, Volunteer Ministries has provided opportunities for people to share their gifts of service and witness to others. Through the act of foot washing, Jesus makes clear God's call to serve others. We are invited to ministries of service that reflect God's love by responding to the needs of the world and involving ourselves in efforts to challenge injustices. The logo of the towel and basin remind us of God's call to serve.



Always a new look on the website!
<http://www.ucc.org/volunteer>

*MISSION TRIPS
PARTNERS IN SERVICE
UCC COMPANION COMMUNITIES
SERVICE DAYS*