

# Volunteer Ministries



## *What Motivates You to Serve?*

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Sometimes the possibility to serve is all about making the right connections. Here's where each of us become

### **Disciple-Finders....**

Finding host site possibilities and making application as a "Partners in Service" volunteer are now at your fingertips. Matching skills, experience, expectations and availability with opportunities and needs in on-going ministries — I love it. It's a bit like a match-making exercise — disciple-finding — walking beside Jesus as he calls disciples with their various gifts, personalities, and experiences. It is exciting and inspiring to be part of so many on-going social service and justice advocacy ministries that are making a difference in God's world. It is exciting and inspiring to meet and become part of the lives of people willing to commit their lives and live their commitments by offering full-time volunteer service.

UCC Volunteer Ministries offers connections and relationships to get volunteers and organizations connected. YOU are needed as disciple-finders. As you know of people interested in volunteer service, please send them this newsletter. Or send it to your congregation and who knows what may be sparked. Prayerfully consider becoming a UCC "Partners in Service" volunteer yourself. Start the conversation and enter the discernment process by sending us your introductory application on-line. Walk with Jesus in identifying people's talents and connect them with possibilities of service.

Blessings in the Journey  
Mary

I Cor 12: 12 "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ."

# Highlighting Volunteer Site Possibilities



## NEW OPPORTUNITY PEACE BUBBLE VOLUNTEERS

Jerry Leggett has been traveling the country interviewing people involved in building peace. He tells these stories through song and story and the website [www.peacebubble.org](http://www.peacebubble.org)

Now you can join the journey — The Peace Bubble is seeking 1-2 full-time UCC “Partners in Service” volunteers with their own motorhome to serve as an advance team for the up-coming Peace Bubble tour, August 15 — December, 2008

Travel from Portland, OR to Washington, DC . Oh the places you’ll see.... Meet people doing peace. Do peace yourself by setting up and serving as a decent o the portable Peace Bubble museum. Interested? Contact UCC Volunteer Ministries Office for more information or to express interest — 216-736-3214 (866-822-8224 ext. 3214) or [blaufusm@ucc.org](mailto:blaufusm@ucc.org). Send us your introductory application on-line at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/volunteer-on-line-application.html>

## Prison Ministries

**Did you know?** More than 1 in 100 American adults are incarcerated today, according to the Pew Center on the States. The number of adults in prison or jail has tripled since 1987, reaching more than 2.3 million. (See February 2008 study on [www.pewcenteronthestates.org](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org)) Rev. Sala Nolan Gonzales, Minister for Criminal Justice and Human Rights in the UCC national setting’s Justice and Witness Ministries, reports that women are incarcerated at lower rates than men, but their incarcerations are increasing at a faster pace than those of men. The United States imprisons a greater proportion of its population than any other country in the world. (May 2008, Sala Nolan)

**Feel disempowered to do anything?**

**Get involved in a ministry of presence and accompaniment. —Volunteer opportunities available.**

**Alderson Hospitality House, Alderson, WV** provides a place for families to stay when visiting their loved one at the Alderson Women’s Prison. Without this place to stay, many families would be unable to afford the trip to make visits. Urgent need for 2 volunteers to begin October, 2008 for assignment between 6 –12 months. This vital ministry needs YOU.

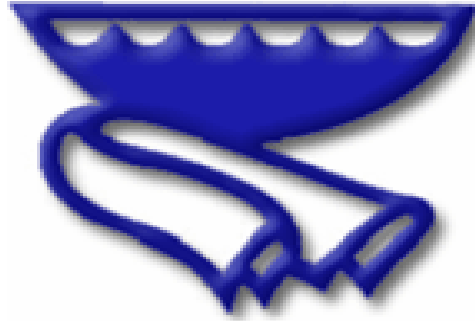
**Can’t re-locate for full-time volunteer service?**

Consider becoming a visitor with the **Prisoner Visitation and Support network**. This is a nationwide alternative ministry to federal and military prisoners. PVS focuses on prisoners who do not ordinarily receive visits from family and friends, want or need supportive human contact, are in solitary confinement or are serving long sentences. PVS visitors offer friendship, encouragement, and a listening ear to help prisoners prepare to assume a useful place in society. Visitors reach out in a spirit of mutual respect, trust and acceptance; visit regularly (about once a month); do not impose their religious or philosophical beliefs on prisoners. Training is part of the PVS program.

See “Partners in Service” booklet for more opportunities. Booklet and on-line application available at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer>. Call United Church of Christ Resources 800-537-3394 for a printed booklet. Call Mary Schaller Blaufuss, Executive for Volunteer Ministries, 866-822-8224 ext. 3214 for more information on volunteer possibilities.



## ALONG THE WAY... NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS



The current edition of *United Church News*, June/July 2008, features stories of “Partners in Service” volunteers

**Maegen Anderson’s** story of serving at Overlook Farm’s Heifer Learning Center in Rutland, MA “It’s our turn to give back”

**Mary and Bill Ruth’s** story of many assignments since 2003, currently with Wider Church Ministries in Cleveland, OH. “Beyond retired, volunteers are ‘refired.’”

**Rev. Doug Moore** is ‘overheard’ on how he is “refreshed” by volunteer service.

**Volunteer News along the way** sometimes comes from sources we don’t expect. Sarah Schlichter, editor of the Independent Traveler web page, served as a week-long volunteer with Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS in April with her parents’ UCC church and other UCC congregations from Frederick, MD. Here’s a link to Sarah’s trip report for the Independent Traveler web site.:

<http://www.independenttraveler.com/tripreports/tripreports.cfm?ID=1568>.

## How Many UCCers Participate in Mission Trips within the United States each year?

In 2007, we received reports of 360 groups with almost 5,000 volunteers participating in week-long mission trips in the United States.

We know there are more. Help us celebrate this ministry.

Click on the UCC Volunteer Ministries webpage and complete the form. Send your stories and reflections too!

<http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/mission-trip-tracking-1.html>

## Thanks to 'Partners in Service' Volunteers Recently Completing Service

Maegen Anderson, California,  
at Heifer International Overlook Farm,  
Rutland, Massachusetts  
Christopher Charney, California,  
at Heifer International Overlook Farm,  
Rutland, Massachusetts  
Joe Conn, Florida,  
at LASER with Florida Conference  
Disaster Ministries, Florida  
Pamela Morgan, North Dakota,  
at Cook School, Arizona  
Emily Nguyen, Oregon,  
at JOIN, Portland, Oregon

## Welcome New & Returning 'Partners in Service' Volunteers

Maureena Burton, California,  
at No More Deaths, Arizona  
Joe Conn, Florida,  
at Silver Lake Camp & Conference Center,  
Connecticut  
Jim Ditzler, Ohio,  
at Back Bay Mission, Mississippi  
Dean Griffith, Ohio,  
at Faithful Advocates Serving Together  
(F.A.S.T.) West Virginia & Tennessee  
Stephanie Larson, California,  
Ryder Hospital, Puerto Rico  
Peggy McLennan, Massachusetts,  
at Back Bay Mission, Mississippi  
Kendra Purscell, Nebraska,  
at Faithful Advocates Serving Together  
(F.A.S.T.) West Virginia & Tennessee  
Amber Romandy, California,  
at South Central Conference  
Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA

## Where Are They Now? Partners in Service Alumni on the Move...

**Lukas Moeller**, Justice and Witness Ministries, Cleveland, OH 2006-7 returned to Germany following his volunteer assignment in the United States. He is at university in Dresden studying international law.

**Christian Kölzer**, Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs, Frederick, MD 2006-7 returned to Germany and is studying English and French at the Gutenberg University of Mainz.

**Jim and Dorothea Bowling**, served at Cook College in Tempe, AZ from March through May, 2001. They now live in Tennessee and are members of the Pleasant Hill Community UCC. The April edition of the church newsletter "The Courier" included some ways in which their volunteer service experience continues to influence the church.

The acolyte at Community UCC wears a cross made with seashells that Jim and Dorothea brought home with them from Cook College. While serving at Cook, they met a group of students and their families from Micronesia who were connected with the United Church of Christ. When asked how they heard about Cook College (connected with the Presbyterian Church) thousands of miles away from their home in the Marshall Islands, the students replied "Oh everybody in Micronesia knows about Cook College." When Jim and Dorothea finished their volunteer assignment at Cook, the students presented Dorothea with a cross made from seashells from their island. This cross is now part of worship each Sunday in Pleasant Hill, TN. (Note: Cook College, later called Cook School for Christian Leadership, has continued to undergo changes and recently has sold the campus and become the Cook School Foundation with the same commitment to facilitating leadership empowerment among Native American congregations.

# Action Reconciliation Service for Peace ARSP

“Geh Denken” a play on the words in German for “to Remember” formed the focus of the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the German volunteer organization Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP).

What does Reconciliation mean? In the wake of the Nazi era of German history and the Holocaust, Lothar Kreyszig and other members of the “Confessing Church” of Germany wondered how to reconstruct the church in light of the failure of Christians to effectively resist National Socialism and the complicity of a generation in the genocide of



50th Anniversary ARSP

millions. Kreyszig was moved by the question of whether and how reconciliation is possible in the face of unimaginable suffering—and believed it was bound up with remembrance, responsibility, action and request for forgiveness.

His “Call for Peace” intertwined peace and reconciliation in ways that called for the embodiment of concrete and practical work. A copy of this “Call for Peace” hangs in the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany as a sign of efforts for healing. It shapes ARSP volunteer opportunities today—placing young adult volunteers from Germany and other countries in settings of service to victims of the Nazi era, supporting and working with people in social facilities, with survivors of the Holocaust and minorities. Volunteers and those with him they serve develop personal relationships. They remember, hear and tell stories, and confront reality when much of the rest of the world wants to forget and move on. Erica Brooks, ARSP volunteer from the USA working at the Regional Association of Sinti and Roma in Berlin-Brandenburg and the Jewish Community in Berlin reflects,



The Holocaust, Jewish Museum, Berlin

“Destruction can not always be undone, but relationships can be rebuilt. I believe that is not only true for nations, but also for individuals, and is the only possible foundation for peace.”

The relationships formed through this volunteer service create a space through which there can be forgiveness and new understanding and new relationship. Teddy Kottek, former mayor of Jerusalem, supports the work and vision of ARSP. Mayor Kottek reflects,

“In response to the question of a rabbi to his students, how does one determine the hour when the night ends and the day begins, the rabbi answered: ‘The day begins when you can look into the face of any person and recognize your brother or sister.’ The work of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace surely moves us closer to this moment.”

In 1968, the United Church of Christ, along with the Brethren and Mennonites invited ARSP to send volunteers for our volunteer ministries program. We’ve been hosting ARSP volunteers and participating in ARSP ever since!

\*I was honored to have attended the 50th anniversary celebrations in Berlin in May, 2008.

\*I was inspired while attending a service in the Synagogue in Berlin where we sang together and shared a fellowship meal that included bread and wine.

\*I was humbled to stand in the park on Rosenstrasse in the midst of the a formerly Jewish section of central Berlin where many of ‘mixed’ Jewish/non-Jewish families lived in the early 1940s. On February 27, 1943, factory workers were arrested, detained and deported to Auschwitz. Their wives and mothers assembled on the Rosenstrasse for a spontaneous protest, but after a week they too were deported to the concentration camp, Theresienstadt. Their children watched from the apartment windows surrounding the park.

\*I was moved when I discovered that I was making this stand alongside a woman from the United States whose grandfather and grandmother were those factory workers and wives and whose mother was that child watching from the window.

\*I was heart-broken to stand before the community hall of Sophiensäle that when built in the mid-19th century served as a safe space to speak and retreat from protection in difficult times, but in 1933 was turned into a print shop that published words that called upon people to hate.

\*I was inspired by the jazz band that led the celebration one evening, led by a Holocaust survivor in his mid-80s who had played music to stay alive during his internment in a concentration camp.



“Block of Women” on Rosenstrasse by Ingeborg Hunzinger

\* I was awed by the story of a woman who was a Holocaust survivor, living in the Project Ezra House in NYC in her later years. Project Ezra hosts ARSP volunteers each year. This woman declined a visit from a volunteer at first because it was too painful, but ended up eating a meal in the dining room next to the volunteer a few months later. When this woman died, a picture of that volunteer visiting her was found sitting on her table along with other photos of family and friends.

\*I was invigorated to participate in discussions about what reconciliation means today—worldwide — where that reconciliation is needed and how do we embody it in concrete and active ways.

**Geh denken!**

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# UCC VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES

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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.*

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

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*PARTNERS IN SERVICE*  
*MISSION TRIPS*  
*LEADERSHIP TRAINING*  
*SERVICE DAYS*