

Partners in Service



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What Motivates You to Serve?

Volunteers in the 'Partners in Service' program come from diverse backgrounds with a commitment to serve from various perspectives. I am aware, like the New Testament writer to the Hebrews, that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. (Hebrews 12:1- 2) In this newsletter, I offer words of a few of those witnesses for your reflection on why and how you serve.

	<p>“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.” ~Margaret Mead</p>		<p>“This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.” ~Micah 6:8</p>	
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	<p>“Go to the people. Live among them. Love them. Learn from them. Serve them. Plan with them. Start with what they know. Build on what they have. And when the best leaders leave, the people will say: we have done it ourselves.” ~Lao Tzu</p>	
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Highlighting Volunteer Possibilities

Florida Conference Disaster Ministries

is seeking a volunteer to serve directly with the long-term disaster recovery committee in the central Florida Lake and Sumter counties - LASER

Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

is seeking a 'Partners in Service' volunteer with bookkeeping and accounting skills for a three month period, specifically January-March, 2008.

Welcome New and Returning 'Partners in Service' Volunteers Great to have you as part of the program!



International 'Partners in Service' volunteers:

Deborah Bielefeldt, Evangelical Church of the Rhineland at La Puente Home, Alamosa, CO
Kornelia Both, Hungary at La Puente Home, Alamosa, CO
Keith Bowyer, Time for God, United Kingdom at Plymouth House of Healing, Seattle, WA—2nd year
Timo Bruns, Evangelical Church of the Rhineland at Evangelical Children's Homes, St. Louis, MO
Thomas Helmlinger, France at Religious Coalition, Frederick, MD
Fabian Theymann, Evangelical Church of the Rhineland at Religious Coalition, Frederick, MD

Placed Again 'Partners in Service' volunteers:

Ed Finertie, Nebraska at MultiFaithWorks, Seattle, WA
Mary Ruth, North Carolina at Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC
William Ruth, North Carolina at Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC
Sarah Cooper Searight, Georgia at Old First Reformed UCC, Philadelphia, PA – 2nd year
Susan Sharp, California at Christ House, Washington, DC

New U.S. 'Partners in Service' volunteers:

Elaine Cavanaugh, Massachusetts at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA
Garrett Cavanaugh, Massachusetts at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA
Maggie Miller, Indiana at Brethren Mennonite Council, Minneapolis, MN
Pamela Morgan, North Dakota at Cook School for Christian Leadership, Tempe, AZ
Harriet Ziegler, Wisconsin at Emmaus Homes, Marthasville, MO

Many Thanks to 'Partners in Service' Volunteers Recently Completing their Year-Long Service We Wish you Well



Thierry Lievens, Religious Coalition, Frederick, MD
Sebastian Krautz, Heifer Ranch, Perryville, AR
Wieland Voss, United Church of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC
Christian Kölzer, Religious Coalition, Frederick, MD
Florian Lueke, Evangelical Children's Home, St. Louis, MO
Angelina Moll, La Puente Home, Alamosa, CO
Katie Hochstedler, Brethren Mennonite Council, Minneapolis, MN
Justin Chick, United Church Neighborhood Houses, St. Louis, MO
Jan Lukas Moeller, Justice and Witness Ministries, UCC,
Cleveland OH & Washington DC

Highlighting Volunteer Possibilities “The Blessings of Alderson Hospitality House” An AHH Guest Shares Her Story

Ron and Barb Siney from Tipp City, OH currently serve as house managers, placed through the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). Previous volunteers, David and Becky King and their family are from the Brudhof Community in Pennsylvania. AHH also serves as a host site for UCC Partners in Service volunteers and is seeking new volunteers to serve from June—May, 2008. It is a ministry of hospitality in the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia, offering a place of rest for families visiting loved ones incarcerated at the Alderson Women’s Prison. UCC and Christian Church/Disciples of Christ Mission Trip Groups in the F.A.S.T. program worked on the AHH during the summer of 2006.

My daughter told me about Alderson Hospitality House and sent me a brochure several months before I decided to give it a try. I came to Alderson alone. I had prayed that this ministry would be a help to me, and perhaps I could be a help to it.

I was warmly welcomed and escorted to my room by David King. ...It was a comfort to come back to the house on a cold December night to enjoy freshly baked cookies and warm punch bubbling on the wood stove. I loved how the children played games with the King girls; a little one sat on Becky’s lap.

I addressed and stuffed my Christmas cards; one of the King daughters helped me stamp and seal them. After supper we gathered around the piano and sang Christmas carols. It was a wonderful family atmosphere...On my next visit, the Kings had moved on and Judy Lewallen [member of the local board of directors of AHH] had taken over caring for the house. I deeply appreciate the work and dedication it takes to keep such a welcoming house open to large families, men and women, who like me, come to visit our loved ones. It’s always immaculate.

This summer, new directors have taken the reins. Barbara and Ron Siney have brought their own special decorating skills to make the sitting area even more inviting. It’s such a great place for the men to ‘hang out’ and watch television. The children now have their own area in another room.

I love to hear the children playing outdoors. It’s great to have a place to burn off some of their enormous and endless energy.

My heart goes out to the fathers, grandparents, siblings and friends who are caring for the children while their mothers are incarcerated. I admire the courage of the men who come week after week to visit their wives.

Alderson Hospitality House is a welcoming place with warm hospitality, good food and clean, comfortable accommodations.

What a special place for 30 years! Finding AHH has been a great blessing in my life.

—Leah A.
Lexington, KY

Editor’s note: I had a chance to meet Leah on a recent visit to Alderson. She too is a blessing to the ministry of AHH.

ALONG THE WAY...NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Keith Bowyer at Plymouth House of Healing



Keith Bowyer is a 'Partners in Service' volunteer at the Plymouth House of Healing in Seattle, WA. I had a chance to visit Keith on-site at the Plymouth House of Healing this August and to meet others involved in this ministry. Keith is a relatively soft-spoken person with a big heart. He and 3-4 other volunteer companions provide a community atmosphere in a transitional living house with four mentally ill residents who have recently been discharged from the hospital but are homeless. The staff, volunteer companions and residents work to develop positive and nurturing relationships that promote a safe and stable living environment and help prepare residents for a permanent home. Keith and the other companions share in the responsibilities of daily life at the house, including shopping, meal planning and preparation, cleaning and maintenance. But mostly, he and the others are there to 'be present,' to listen, to support each resident's journey toward healing and wholeness. Keith has taken the opportunity during his year of service to become involved with the local NAMI organization (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) which provides many resources for persons and families living with mental illness and has an advocacy focus. During the coming year, Keith hopes to participate in a program with Rev. Craig Rennebohm of the Mental Health Chaplaincy in Seattle to learn more deeply of Craig's work with homeless persons. Thank you, Keith, for your service!

Plymouth House of Healing is a ministry of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Seattle. Craig Rennebohm as a pastor and psychotherapist, has been instrumental in shaping this companion ministry with persons with mental illness who are discharged from the hospital, but otherwise homeless. The group, Neighbors Acting to End Homelessness (NAEH), describes Craig's ministry as one of presence. "For the past 20 years, in response to the reductions in availability of care and housing for those with mental illness in the state of Washington, Craig has spent his days on the Seattle sidewalks, where he listens, companions, and accompanies people on their spiritual journeys and also to a myriad of appointments in the laborious process of finding needed health care, housing, and other resources. All the while, he provides a ministry of presence and soul-tending for those who make the streets their home. He meets with folks just as they are and where they are, with a gentle respect and an honoring of their journey that embodies his belief that all are held in God's tender and infinite love. "

(Jacqueline Leksens, 'Homecoming,' in *Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*, vol. 13, no. 3, September 2007, 20-27.) *Jacqueline is a former interim house manager for Plymouth House of Healing.*

Telling the Story of UCC 'Partners in Service' Opportunities

People like to hear from those who have 'been there.' Thanks to 'Partners in Service' volunteers and alumni who visit local congregations and groups to share your story.

Here are a couple of the stories we've heard:

Jean Souther, Volunteer alumni of the 'Partners in Service' program in the United States and of Global Ministries volunteering in Turkey stood during a Speak Out on the floor of General Synod 26 in Hartford, CT to ask for invitations to congregations to share her experiences as a UCC volunteer — Way to go Jean! She's now in the midst of making these visits. Thanks for being out there and telling the story.

Grace and John Drescher, upon their return from Puerto Rico, 'made the rounds' with churches and friendship circles they knew. Thanks for telling your story!

How can our office help you in telling this story of volunteer service?

- Let us keep you well supplied with printed and video resources.
- Let us know places you are speaking.
- Collect names and e-mail addresses of those who would like to be added to the e-mail newsletter and send those to us.

UCC VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES

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For the past 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!
New Address too
<http://www.ucc.org/volunteer>

PARTNERS IN SERVICE
MISSION TRIPS
LEADERSHIP TRAINING
SERVICE DAYS