

# Volunteer Ministries



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## Heart of Mission Award Volunteer Ministries Zayna Thompson McCollum



*Heart of Mission Awards* are presented at the Wider Church Ministries dinner at each General Synod to people involved in ministries of the Wider Church Ministries' Offices of National Disaster, Volunteer, Refugee and Health and Wholeness Ministries. Recipients are those who have gone "above and beyond" in providing support and participation in these ministries and mission.

We are pleased to recognize your commitment to service, Zayna, through your continued participation in UCC Partners in Service opportunities.

**Z**ayna has exhibited commitment to service through multiple

placements through UCC Volunteer Ministries as a *Partners in Service* volunteer and through her encouragement of the participation of other youth and young adults. She has assisted in the on-going ministries of partner organizations, and through relationships nurtured through this service, has recognized her calling to leadership and ministry in the church. In 2005-6 after completing high school, Zayna served with children at the Evangelical Children's Home in St. Louis, Missouri. Evangelical Children's Home offers a wide variety of care for abused, abandoned, or neglected youth and their families. Evangelical Children's Home provides children with growth experiences that prepare them for effective personal, family, community and career interactions. They provide caring, professional services that empower, educate and nurture children, youth and families to become productive, healthy members of the community. During winter break from college, Zayna contacted the Volunteer Ministries Office and was connected with Washington UCC in Cincinnati, Ohio to assist with tasks needed for the on-going functioning of their inner city ministries with tutoring youth and emergency food services. Zayna's current volunteer placement through UCC Volunteer Ministries is as summer facilitator of mission trip groups with Faithful Advocates Serving Together (F.A.S.T.) in Whitesburg, Kentucky. Zayna's leadership in the F.A.S.T. program helps groups participate in housing rehabilitation projects in local communities in the Appalachian region and enables reflection on issues of faith and economic justice. Zayna also has gone "above and beyond" in her commitment to service through continued involvement with the ministries of these host sites after her appointed time of service. She has provided leadership in youth events and other settings in which she has shared her experience and encouraged other youth and young adults to participate.



# Immerse Yourself in Service

## General Synod 27 Grand Rapids, MI 2009

More pictures at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/general-synod-27-service-projects>

How will you and your community continue to immerse in service?

Upload photos & blogs on MyUCC.

Go to [www.MyUCC.org](http://www.MyUCC.org) and search for GS27 Service Projects

OR <http://community.ucc.org/Groups/>

GS27\_Service\_Projects\_2009\_UCC\_GENERAL\_SYNOD



### This Is A Nest Free Zone!

Interning with Volunteer Ministries has reminded me of the old adage, “You can’t stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can stop it from building a nest.” As public servants, we can make the choice to stand on the sidelines or put our faith into action. That’s what the service projects at General Synod were all about. We recognize that there are many circumstances in life we can’t control (*bird flying overhead*), but together, as people of faith, we have the gifts and talents as well as the responsibility to be a positive and global force in our respective ministries (*prevent the bird from building a nest*). Organizations like Pilgrim Manor Retirement Community, Habitat for Humanity and United Church Outreach Ministry have been shooing away nesting birds for years. This summer in Grand Rapids, they joined forces with the United Church of Christ and other non-profit and faith-based organizations to introduce participants to practical ways to serve at home. What was their bottom line? You don’t have to wait until Synod comes around every two years in order to serve. The immersion begins in our classrooms, churches, community organizations and more. Further, we are in partnership with our sisters and brothers across the globe. We are a glocal (*acting locally and globally*) community responding to the United Church of Christ’s charge to “Go forth into the world to let God speak to and through you.” Together with faith, through public service, ecumenical partnerships, and community outreach, we are bringing the scriptures alive. So go ahead and declare your ministry a “Nest Free Zone” and together, let us continue the work of immersing our ministries daily in the sacred, service and stewardship, and something greater than ourselves. It’s been my joy to serve as your intern for Volunteer Ministries this summer and I thank you for allowing me to immerse myself not only in service, but in faith, friends, and fun!

Waltrina N. Middleton, Master of Divinity Candidate  
Chicago Theological Seminary  
Intern, Wider Church Ministries, 2009



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF KENT COUNTY

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PILGRIM MANOR RETIREMENT COMMUNITY OF GRAND RAPIDS



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UNITED CHURCH OUTREACH MINISTRY (UCOM is a UCC affiliated agency)





## ALONG THE WAY... NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS

We're looking for YOUR stories.  
Help inspire others in volunteer service.  
Share your stories through MyUCC.  
<http://community.ucc.org/Groups/UCCVolunteerMinistries/blog>

### Youth Program at General Synod

#### “The Best Party Ever”

220 youth participated in the General Synod Youth Program this summer in Grand Rapids, MI. A major part of that program was the opportunity to serve in the community of Grand Rapids through mission service projects. Youth served with the ministries of local UCC churches, at UCC-related outreach agencies providing emergency food and services, with Habitat for Humanity on several building and maintenance projects. The youth served in the community for 2 1/2 days as well as fully participated in other parts of the Synod experience. During a workshop led by national staff of Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, and Local Church ministries, after this service, youth described the experience as “awesome” “challenging” “the best party ever!”

#### “Going Deep”

The workshop encouraged the youth to go deeper. Youth recognized poverty in their midst in the food pantries and in the substandard housing in the neighborhoods where they were working. They continued to go deeper as they discussed with each other the poverty they encounter or are part of in their home communities and schools. And then the youth gave each other ideas for ways to continue their involvement in poverty alleviation that includes direct service, identifying root causes of poverty, and working to re-shape those structures.

#### Beyond “Being Nice”

Youth considered Scripture passages such as Micah 6:8 and Matthew 22: 36-40 with lenses beyond what those passages speaks to us as individuals and how we try to be “good people” to how God speaks to us as communities and how we can shape the world in which we live to enable all people to live abundant lives.

And, indeed, that IS the “Best Party Ever” — to participate in God’s mission of abundance.

Thank you, youth, for your wonderful service and inspiration to commitment for change.

*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](http://www.ucc.org) under “Buy it” Cost of T-shirt: \$7.00 + Shipping & Handling.*





## ALONG THE WAY... NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Hello Everyone from Tracy Hughes, BorderLinks, Arizona

I just got back from spending the weekend at the No More Deaths desert camp. Wow, the desert is an endless expanse of beauty - mountains, rock formations, cactus, birds, animals, a lot of cows, dry river beds and washes and right now so many green trees and other vegetation. It is hard to see such beauty and know that there are people dying in the same moments you are taking in the beauty of God's creation. Like so many places in the world, such beauty is polluted by human violence and consequently human suffering.

My first morning out I went on a water drop to Josselina's Shrine and 5 miles farther into the desert from there. Josselina was a 14 year old girl whose body was found in February of last year by some No More Deaths (NMD) folks. It turns out she was from El Salvador and came with a group coming north. She got sick or injured and could not go any further. She sent her younger brother with the group with the idea that he could send someone back for help after he reached his destination. People from the area searched for her for two weeks. One day a group from NMDs took a short cut between two migrant trails and came upon her body. She was identified and her family from the USA and some from El Salvador came for her memorial service and to build the altar at the location that her body was found.

I heard of this story on a few different occasions. Last week, with a group of about 30 teens from Phoenix, we made prayer altars out of empty plastic water gallon jugs found in the desert along these trails. We wrote the names of some of the people who have died in the desert since October 2008. Included in the art work of my (and others) altar is a picture of Josselina. It was of her at church in El Salvador. While at her altar, taking a moment to remember her life and to pray, I felt close the 30 teens from Phoenix, so close to Josselina's age, and the altars we made together. I felt close to my nieces and nephews who are also teens and just a bit younger. Finally, I also felt somehow connected to the thousands of people who are fleeing their homes and communities around the world - forced out by war, hunger, disease, and poverty. During the 5 mile hike through the mountainous desert I certainly felt closer to the folks migrating north. We were out in the desert only from 8am until 12 noon putting out water and hiking the migrant trails - yet - It was hot, scorching hot. It was an arduous up and down hike with little shade. I felt exhausted at times and even in pain because of the intense sun and heat and the workout my body was getting. Even with all of this, I know that I have only experienced a drop in the bucket of suffering that women, men and children go through who take on the migrant trails for days on end to get north. Only a drop in the bucket.

As I reflect on Josselina's shrine and how bad I felt on my short hike, I continue to pray for the children, women and men in the desert today and who will still be there tomorrow or who are down in Altar, Mexico getting ready to continue their journey to the USA. I pray for Julio, a 15 year old boy from Guatemala whose body was found on July 19, and his family as they grieve their loss. I ask that each of you take a moment of silence to pray for the protection of these travelers in our desert south, and to pray they indeed have water and food and will find more along the trails to alleviate their suffering and possibly aid them in avoiding the harsh death that comes with dehydration and heat stroke in the scorching desert lands: For no one should die for the lack of a cup of water.

Peace,  
Tracy Hughes

*Tracy is Partners in Service volunteer with BorderLinks in Tucson, Arizona. BorderLinks works in cooperation with other organizations working on border and immigration issues such as No More Deaths. Among other things, Tracy helps facilitate learning immersion trips for mission trip groups through the ministries of BorderLinks.*

This and other stories of volunteer experiences and reflections  
at [www.ucc.org/volunteer](http://www.ucc.org/volunteer) under "Resources."

**UCC Companion Communities:  
Young Adult Service  
Communities**



“To Engage young adults with human need &  
Expansion of spiritual reflection, while  
Encompassed in communal living  
Embraced by the church”

**UCC Host Congregations** provide intentional community settings

**Young Adult volunteers** serve in an agency focusing on service/  
justice advocacy

Share in congregational life & leadership

Network with volunteers in UCC Companion Communities  
across the United States

**Congratulations Volunteers!**

Congratulations to our first Companion Communities alumni!

**Sarah Adamson (MN)** and **Kelly Forbush (MA)** were hosted by Church of the Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, Arizona for a 10 week volunteer community experience. They complete their service in August.

Congratulations, Kelly & Sarah! And Thank You!

**Jack Farrell (NY), Emily Fleissner (WI), Anne Jeffrey (CA), and Erin O’Keefe (CA)** begin their 10 month Companion Communities program in September 2009, hosted by Church of the Beatitudes UCC in Phoenix, Arizona. Welcome! We look forward to your service.

**Seeking additional Host Congregations for Companion Communities Program**

**Summer 2010, 10 weeks**

**Sept. 2010-June 2011, 10 months**

**Want to explore what’s involved for your local church to become part of the  
Companion Communities Program?**

**Contact Mary Schaller Blaufuss at 216-736-3214 or [blaufusm@ucc.org](mailto:blaufusm@ucc.org)**

**Coming this October**

**Gathering in Cleveland for congregations exploring these possibilities**

**Get the word out now  
(young adults age 21-30)  
2010 volunteer applications  
Due March 15, 2010  
For more information and stories**

*köszönöm !תודה dēkuji*

*mahalo* 고맙습니다

*thank you*

*merci 谢谢 danke*

*Ευχαριστώ شكرا*

どうもありがとう *gracias*

**Thanks to  
'Partners in Service' Volunteers  
Recently Completing Service  
(April –July, 2009)**

Jared Adams, WI at Religious Coalition, Frederick, MD  
David Baronio, France at Neighborhood Houses, St. Louis, MO  
Ron Borstad, IA at Disaster Recovery in Cedar Falls/Waterloo, IA  
Jim Ditzler, OH at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA  
Kirth & Joan Erickson, MT at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA  
Tom Gorham, SC at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA  
Alexander Koerfer, Germany at Heifer Ranch, Perryville, AR  
John Small, IN at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA  
Balazs Szucs, Hungary at Washington UCC, Cincinnati, OH  
Katrina Waltz, WI at Plymouth House of Healing, Seattle, WA  
Harriet Ziegler, WI at Emmaus Homes, Marthasville, MO

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

John Davis, AZ, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS  
Sarah Fiske-Phillips, CA, at St. Paul's Community UCC  
& InterReligious Task Force on Central America, Cleveland, OH  
Jess Gibly, OR, at JOIN: Connecting the Streets to a Home, Portland, OR  
Zoltan Gyori, Hungary, at Neighborhood Houses, St. Louis, MO  
Tracy Hughes, IL, at BorderLinks, Tucson, AZ  
Zayna Thompson McCollum, IL, at Faithful Advocates Serving Together, Whitesburg, KY  
Jonas Norgaard, Denmark, at Neighborhood Houses, St. Louis, MO  
Rob Swanson, MI, at South Central Conference Disaster Recovery, New Orleans, LA  
Emily Wheelock, AZ, at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS

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*mahalo* 고맙습니다

*thank you*

*merci 谢谢 danke*

*Ευχαριστώ شكرا*

どうもありがとう *gracias*

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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.*

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

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