

Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Spring 2016
VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1



Multiplication is the intended result of mission



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multiplication PAGE 4



● Long roads to
leadership PAGE 6



**Virginia
Mennonite
Missions**

Called. Sent. Transformed.

● Editorial

Kingdom multiplication

BY AARON KAUFFMAN
PRESIDENT



In the world of Christian mission, the term *multiplication* is often associated with the numerical growth of the church. The basics of biology teach us that healthy organisms multiply. If the church is healthy, we should see an increase both in the number of believers and the number of believing communities. That's a constant refrain we hear in the book of Acts: "Then the church ... increased in numbers" (9:31, *NIV*).

Sometimes, however, multiplication gets reduced to a business model. If we get more people gathered into more churches, we'll have more money for the religious

goods and services we hope to provide. I am certainly in favor of increasing our membership rolls. But church growth is not the primary aim of God's multiplying mission.

God's first command to human beings is this: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28, *NLT*). The point is not simply to encourage biological reproduction (as if that needs a lot of encouragement!). The Creator goes on to say, "Fill the earth and *govern* it. *Reign over* the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground" (*italics mine*). In other words, God has crafted a marvelous planet teeming with life, and God wants us—human partners created in God's own image—to help take care of it all. Multiplication is about the proliferation of God's reign on earth.

Of course, sin enters the picture through Adam and Eve's disobedience, and it soon infects the whole world. Instead of ever-widening circles of God's shalom, we see a downward spiral of violence, domination and death. The rest of the Old Testament narrates God's patient and often painful partnership with Israel to restore our damaged planet. The image of God is not lost in humanity, but because it is marred by sin, we catch only glimpses of God's glory.

Enter Jesus into this story. As the Son of God, Jesus flawlessly displays God's character as "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being" (Heb. 1:3, *NRSV*). Yet as the son of Mary he shares perfectly in our humanity as "one who was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin" (Heb. 4:15, *CEB*).

Ironically, as a single man Jesus becomes the most fruitful human being in history. From his mouth flow words of healing, forgiveness and liberation. In his hands, a basket of fish and bread becomes a meal for thousands. In his broken body, the curse of sin is finally undone. And with the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit, he sends a band of ordinary disciples to spark a movement that continues to change the world today.

In Jesus, God's kingdom of life and peace invades the world once and for all. It spreads not through force, but through lives surrendered to the Lord and communities committed to worship, friendship and outreach. Of course, not everyone has yielded to God's reign yet, and not all of our efforts succeed. "But we do see Jesus" (Heb. 2:9, *NIV*), risen and soon to return, and because of him, we know the end of the story. May Christ use our lives and our churches to multiply his reign on earth!

Aaron M. Kauffman

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Financial Report

Reporting: 9/1/15 to 03/31/16

Special Projects \$676,007	Special Projects \$540,579
Mission Fund \$383,670	Mission Fund \$384,741
Income Total \$1,059,677	Expenses Total \$925,320

Mission Fund: undesignated giving by households and churches, **Special Projects:** giving to specific workers or ministries

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● News+Events

Mission Service

Allen Umble completing 15 years of service



Allen Umble is concluding his long time of service in Albania with Virginia Mennonite Missions this winter. He served 1996-2005 and 2008-2015, first in Lezhe, then in Lushnje. Most recently, he has been the executive director of the Albanian Mennonite Mission (AMM) Foundation and team leader for the AMM Team. His other roles have included discipleship formation, leading Bible studies, and teaching English.

Prayer Partners

VMissions launches regular prayer bulletin



In addition to our monthly Mission Prayer Calendar, we have launched another way to engage in prayer more deeply for the people and ministries of VMissions. Subscribe to become a Prayer Partner and receive regular email prayers and updates/answers to prayer. Subscribe at vmmissions.org/who-we-are/publications/email-list-signup/ under Prayer Partners mailing list.

Website

Redesigned VMissions website launched



VMissions launched its redesigned website in March, replacing a six-year-old site design. As users access the website in increasing numbers from a variety of devices and screen sizes, the new site at vmmissions.org is responsive (mobile and tablet friendly) as well as reconfigured to be more orderly and user-friendly.

tranSend

tranSend commissioning service is July 14

Join a special time of sending and celebrating God's call in the lives of the 2016 class of tranSend at a commissioning service on July 14, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Hershberger Barn, 5647 Wengers Mill Road, Linville, Va. The commissioning service is the capstone event of the class' ten-day orientation and training for service at VMissions. Workers' friends, families, congregations and Ministry Support Teams will surround them with singing, prayer and blessings as they begin terms of service.

Missions Festival

Live auction to precede Family Missions Festival to benefit workers

The Auction & Family Missions Festival, May 13-14 at Eastern Mennonite School, will be fun, family-friendly events to celebrate and support the people and ministries of Virginia Mennonite Missions. (See back page.) This year there will be a live auction and a Mennonite Hispanic Initiative dinner plate fundraiser on Friday. On Saturday, the Family Missions Festival will feature many fun events and activities. A tethered hot air balloon will be on site (weather permitting) Friday and Saturday from 7-8 p.m.

Learn more at vmmissions.org/auction-family-missions-festival/ and see the auction items listed. If you would like to donate auction items, contact Steve at steve.leaman@vmmissions.org

Mission Service

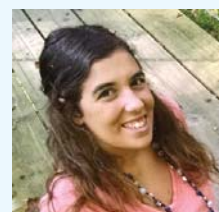
New workers appointed

Two VMissions workers have recently been appointed for service assignments.



Francisco and Juana Machado have been appointed (jointly with Mennonite Mission Network)

to church plant in Spain. They have been invited by *Anabautistas, Menonitas y Hermanos en Cristo – España* following a one-month exploratory visit to Spain in early 2015.



Alisha Brubaker has been appointed to a one-year mission internship in Kenya, focused on spiritual formation and learning,

as well as children's and youth ministry, under the direction of EMM regional directors. She recently completed an eight-month EMM YES assignment in Kenya.

● Seeds of multiplication

Where the Mark and Sarah Schoenhals family serve in the Isaan region of Thailand, seeds of a multiplying church planted over 20 years ago are beginning to sprout.

BY CAROL TOBIN

Throughout the long, dry months when the only rain that can be expected in Northeast Thailand is the gentle sprinkling of the “mango rain,” there is always at least one bulging 50 kilo burlap bag sitting in the corner of the Isaan farmer’s roughhewn stilt house.

It is the rice that will be used for seed. Though it couldn’t possibly look more unremarkable, in it is a staggering capacity for multiplication. It is acre upon acre of luscious green rising out of paddy mud, the most tangible picture of abundance that most of these farmers ever get to experience.

Like these seed bags, our beginnings in Isaan 20 years ago looked quite unremarkable. As a church planting team, we held to a few simple core principles, one of which was to do only what was reproducible. Though we were planting seeds (our DNA), we didn’t really stop to consider the joy we would have in seeing the actual multiplication.

In those early years, Thailand was being ravaged by AIDS. Misinformation abounded and people were scared. Under the tutelage of our own vision statement, we started

to do the smallest, most reproducible thing possible. Skip simply began meeting with the “Sunflower Group,” a poorly funded and understaffed initiative at the local hospital aimed at giving AIDS patients a place to connect and combat misinformation. And, most importantly, he invited a local disciple to come with him.

A seed was planted. Over time, there was a core group of church folks volunteering their time befriending these AIDS patients. Rather than seeing themselves as victims of economic oppression, these poor farmers discovered that they had much to give.

As the years went on, AIDS work became the hottest concern in the world of non-governmental organizations. We mused, “It would be so easy to acquire funding for a project; the present volunteers could become paid staff.” We consulted the church council – all of them uneducated local people who had been disciplined and were making disciples within their own village and family networks.

They came back with an emphatic “No.” Their reason? “We want the initiative to lie within the church; don’t rob us of the blessing of giving and growing this ourselves.”

Fast forward to our recent visit when we were quickly immersed into an unfolding story that began through the ministry of Yutapong and his wife Dukata. Befriended and disciplined by the Sunflower Group volunteers when they were desperately ill and hopeless themselves, they have become faithful leaders of their own village group.

This past year, Dukata met a hardened young woman at the hospital who initially resisted her overtures of care. Her receptivity increased as her health declined. As Mark and Sarah Schoenhals tell the story, Dukata and Yutapong began to visit the family, and the young woman opened her heart to Jesus. When she was baptized at this past Christmas celebration, she



Ying (with praying hands) at her baptism in December.





Mother Mon is baptized by Pastor Joi (at left) in late March, less than two months after her daughter Ying's funeral.

was too weak to climb into the cement water tank, but her joy was evident! In early February she died—blind and broken in body, but with a vision of being dressed in white, welcomed by the Lord, living in her heart.

Funerals are of supreme concern to Thai people. They are seen as a final verdict of either shame or honor. For this family, the shame was already intense, beyond fixing. The church folks went to talk with the family who remarkably agreed to release the proceedings to them, in line with their daughter's request.

The church made clear the condition that there be none of the gambling and alcohol that are the typical way to circumvent the fear of being in proximity to a dead body. They prepared the body for the cremation over which they would officiate at the local temple.

Yutapong and his wife Dukata minister to AIDS patients and their families with hope and an invitation to connect.



Mother Mon, following her baptism, shares her testimony about coming to faith through her daughter's death.

All photos by Mark & Sarah Schoenhals

Yutapong bought a beautiful white shirt; the women did her make up. Beauty and dignity were restored. Villagers began to gather and then trickle away, certain that with no alcohol or gambling involved, the family would be left alone at this critical time, a final blow of shame.

But then the Christians started showing up. During the two-day event, folks came in force, traveling for miles, with food and joy and good news to share. Some stayed overnight, sleeping on the ground, with nothing to keep them warm. The villagers were amazed and curious. An uncle said, "Based on what I have seen, I'm in, and I'm telling others, too."

Afterwards, the day we showed up for our visit, the church folks were giddy with sleep deprivation and the joy of having lived—as a body—into their Kingdom identity. They hilariously reviewed how some had sung, some had preached and some had snored—but together they knew and we knew that we were looking at a beautiful harvest coming from the smallest, humblest, weakest of beginnings. Multiplication!

Carol Tobin is Asia Regional Director at Virginia Mennonite Missions and a former mission worker in Thailand.

● Long roads to leadership



Nancy Marshall has discipled several potential leaders for pastoral ministry and church planting at Jesus' Deaf Church in Belize, with major setbacks along the way.

BY NANCY MARSHALL

The first verse I tacked on my wall here in my house in Belize is Ephesians 3:20 from *The Message*: “God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dream! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us.”

From the beginning my first goal in church planting was to train some potential leaders. My second goal was for our church to plant a satellite congregation in a village about an hour north.

Deep in my heart I knew the tendency for a deaf congregation to become a “club,” a place where people gather to fellowship, which is well and good but not enough. I deeply wanted our church to grasp their missional role, to spread the gospel to the unreached. God can do anything, you know...so I set out fully trusting this vision to come to fruition within about ten years.

This is my eleventh year in Belize and I am still working on training leaders. Though the task is always on-going, I expected to be able to turn the pastoral role over to a Belizean by now. In these eleven years, God has been hard at work to create among us a congregation of about 35 deaf members. Half of them have made goose-bump inspiring confessions of faith and been baptized. God has brought us through some rough times and also many joyous, blessed

moments where we clearly see God's hand at work. But developing leaders has been difficult.

During our first years, all of the members were under the age of 20. They were children. I knew it was inevitable that they would grow up, but I was happy that I was given the opportunity to help mold young pliable lives and guide them in discipleship.

One boy from that group who was definitely a leader rejoined the Jehovah's Witnesses where he had been before I arrived. At the same time another boy who was only 14, Manuel, began to act like the Lord's hand was on him. He was the first to ask for baptism. He prayed with power that gave me goose bumps. He and I began to study the Word together and I put his photo in my Bible so I would pray for him daily. “Lord,” I asked. “Is this the *one*?”

We met twice a week. On one day we studied a discipleship series. I wanted him to be bathed in God's ways and God's word.

On Thursdays we began to prepare for Sunday's worship. I selected a passage and we discussed it. He would go home to pray on it.

On Sunday he shared what God had taught him. I was stunned! He is functionally illiterate and cannot search the internet to delve into commentary. He simply had God's Spirit to lead him and it was amazing what the Holy Spirit taught through him. He was an awesome communicator. All was appropriate and all pointed to and glorified God. It often made me cry.

It was about our fourth year as a church and we were beginning to add people who were older. These older deaf adults were under-educated. They had never gone to school. They knew nothing from the Bible. And they did not know the sign language used in Belize. Instead they used gestures, body language and a few signs to communicate. Some of the now twenty-somethings were beginning to have children of their own. So our church population began to diversify.

By this time Manuel was 18, a hormonally-charged age. He started sowing his wild oats and felt so guilty he could no longer lead the church. He chose to be “free” and do what he wanted. He still believed in God, he said, but he



The Jesus' Deaf Church members in the early years of Nancy's ministry.



Jesus' Deaf Church in March 2016 with Youth With A Mission visitors. Nancy Marshall (left) has been pastoring the church in Belize since 2005. Along the way, she has discipled several young people for pastoral leadership.

All photos courtesy of Nancy Marshall

assumed that God who loves him very much would forgive him when he eventually decided to come 'home,' like the Father forgave the prodigal son.

In the meantime, I started training another deaf boy. He emerged as one who prayed with the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Edgar was our regular worship leader, baptized and only 16-years-old. I began one-on-one discipleship training with him in my home and tried to help him navigate the difficult road of puberty.

We hobbled along, but I knew he was not yet a leader, just a fabulous pray-er.

"Who, God, can lead us?" I asked. None of the older people were

demonstrating leadership. Many of the women in our church were earning money on the streets as much as I preached and counseled against it. Many of the men were just as guilty as customers.

So we plugged along, growing in numbers and with some of the people temporarily confessing their sins but not changing permanently.

In our eighth year, Edgar developed cancer. When it was diagnosed, it was already Stage 4. He died within a year. His death shocked our small church. It was the first of their true friends to die. Death brings a reality to the concept of eternity.

Manuel returned to the church, not faithfully, but feeling the nudge of the Spirit.

This is now our eleventh year. I still wonder who God has called to lead us. I teach about holiness and how to be God's holy people. I pray for their conviction and faith. I pray they learn to desire God above all else "through His Spirit deeply and gently within us."



Edgar worships with the church toward the end of his life.

Nancy Marshall serves in Orange Walk Town, Belize, as pastor of Jesus' Deaf Church. She serves in partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

264 OSH demonstrates the cycle of discipleship

BY TYLER YODER

Something I have been learning about the past few years is the idea that we are called to make disciples who make disciples: the discipleship cycle. The cycle began with Jesus' ministry, and with the Great Commission: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* —Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

From this Commission, we can see that Christ calls us to make disciples of those people who are right around us, and we are able to learn this cycle from Christ and the way he perfectly embodied it throughout his life.

At Eastside Church, where Kendra and I attend, we have recently been talking about the multiplication of disciples, and I have taken away a little format for how this multiplication looks: invitation, demonstration, participation, teaching, repeat.

As we look at the way Jesus met his disciples and walked with them, we can see that this is the format he used: he calls them and invites them to follow (Mt. 4:18-22), he demonstrates driving out demons, healing, and proclaiming the power of God (Mt. 4:23-25), he sends out the disciples to participate with him in ministry (Mt. 10:1-16, Lk. 10:1-7), and he teaches them in the way of God (Mt. 5).

The great thing about this cycle is that we don't have to teach people everything before they can be disciples, because it is always a learning process!

In January, Kendra and I were able to invite Casey Hurren to live with us (Invitation). We immediately invited her to attend Bible Studies and meals with students and to engage with our ministry as much as she wanted to (Demonstration), and then she started to express interest in co-leading a women's Bible Study with Kendra (Participation).

Throughout this process, we have been exploring questions of the Gospel with her and how we are each being called to live into the Kingdom of God now (Teaching).

Currently, she is beginning to disciple other young women in the way of Christ. It is so exciting to see the

Kingdom of God spreading around us, and each of us can spread it. Each of us can invite, demonstrate, participate, and teach others so they can begin the cycle again.

We are very excited to be engaged in discipleship with college students and neighbors at 264 Old South High St., Harrisonburg, Va., which was donated to be used for outreach at the local universities.



Casey Hurren (center) with Tyler and Kendra Yoder. They serve at 264 OSH, a discipleship and outreach ministry to college students and neighbors.

Photo courtesy of Tyler Yoder

We live in this house, recently named "264 OSH," and use it to host Bible studies, small groups, large group events, and one-on-one discipleship. Although our main focus is college students, we also use the house as a weekday building for Eastside Church events. Our goal is to build relationships with students and help them grow their faith.

I continue to work as an accountant at Interchange Group, Inc., and Kendra is pursuing an art education license through JMU. We are so thankful for this opportunity to open our home as a house of worship and to grow our gifts as we work where we feel God calling us.

Tyler Yoder and his wife Kendra are transSenders serving at 264 OSH, Harrisonburg, Va., in partnership with Eastside Church.

Ambassadors of God to Hispanic neighbors

BY LIZZETTE HERNANDEZ

How much do you get paid for coming here?" It's a frequent question that people at the poultry plant ask Brigido and Fernanda Carbajal. "We are not paid at all," they answer. "We come here because we want to share the good news of God's love with everyone."

Every Tuesday afternoon, the Carbajals walk through the facilities of a poultry plant in the outskirts of Harrisonburg, Va., and bring the caring message of Jesus amid the hectic labor of more than 2,000 workers, many of them immigrants from around the world.

As volunteer Chaplains for Industrial and Commercial Ministries in the Shenandoah Valley, they want to be in close connection with people and be sensitive to what God is doing in those workplaces.

Brigido and Fernanda, and their children Rafy (23), David (18), and Elizabeth (14), have lived in the Harrisonburg area for over 24 years after immigrating from Mexico.

They attended a local church for many years and then they both felt compelled to follow God's call to serve and to be trained in their vocation. Seeking a deeper biblical training, they joined the *Instituto Biblico Anabautista* (IBA). It was their first connection with Anabaptism.

The experience was life changing. After five years of study, they received their Theological Studies Diplomas. They never were just students—the Holy Spirit always prompted them into action as ambassadors of God's mission.

With a big smile and outgoing personality, Fernanda finds it easy to get to know and relate to new people. Her work as a Health Educator for Sentara RMH connects her with the diverse community of the Shenandoah Valley and has helped nurture her love and care for others.

Brigido has a pastoral heart. His gentle and warm spirit prompts him to walk alongside people as he shares God's loving mercy and healing. In spite of his busy job at James Madison University's Facilities Maintenance, working for the kingdom of God has always been a priority.

Reaching out for those who don't know Christ has been an ongoing passion for the Carbajals. Being missional has been ingrained in their daily lives and they have taken every opportunity to "go and make disciples."

Fernanda has been visiting the local prison for 14 years. "I feel called to serve as a channel of God's grace to women whose broken stories can be transformed and reconciled with God and others," she said.



Marvin Lorenzana, director of Mennonite Hispanic Initiative (right), prays for Fernanda and Brigido as they are commissioned for leadership at *El Camino Discipular*.

Photo courtesy of Lizzette Hernandez

Brigido also leads a Bible study group of 15 Hispanic inmates. "We love connecting with all kinds of people, from different backgrounds and cultures," Fernanda said.

Hospitality characterizes the Carbajals. They constantly open their home to bear witness of Christ around a steaming pot of Mexican mole or spicy red and green tamales.

That open door of hospitality was exemplified by Fernanda's mother. "I remember that there were always strangers at my mom's table she had invited to eat with us."

Three years ago, Brigido and Fernanda joined a Mennonite Hispanic Initiative church plant called *El Camino Discipular* (The Way of Discipleship), led by Marvin and Mariana Lorenzana. Last December they were invited to become leaders in the church planting effort.

"God called us forth as leaders and we accepted out of thankfulness," says Brigido. "We are so deeply thankful for God's overflowing grace to us." He remembers how God healed Fernanda from Lupus decades ago. "Sixty percent of her body was affected but God performed a miracle and she was totally healed," he said. "We are ready to respond to God's leading, to empower others to be disciples of Christ and cultivate a community of love and unity."

Amid the smells of Mexican hot spices and the sound of a boiling pot of pozole, the Carbajals' table continues to be open for fellowship, sharing burdens, and radiating love as the kingdom of God is made known.

Lizzette Hernandez is the Mennonite Hispanic Initiative Intern at Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Call to Prayer: Multiplied Prayers

BY SARAH SHOWALTER

In May 2015, my husband Austin and I began the journey of parenthood when we learned we were expecting our first child. In September, when abnormalities were found during our 20-week ultrasound, we began the journey of parenting a child with a complex heart defect.

From the very beginning we knew this journey and this child would need to be bathed in prayer, and we desired to have others joining with us. We decided to start a blog, partly as a means to keep people who cared informed about our son's life, but even more so as a means to invite people to join us in prayer.

Beginning with our very first blog post, we began to list ways that others could be in prayer. A couple of months before our son was born, we felt God was asking us to dig even deeper into prayer and to invite others to join us. We invited our families, church, and followers on our blog to join us in a day of prayer and fasting for our son's healing. We were amazed at the outpouring of response. We saw our faith, and the faith of others, strengthened as we joined together in earnest prayer for this child.

On January 20, Andre Linden Showalter was gifted to the world. While Andre did not receive the complete healing we had prayed for, we have seen innumerable answers to prayer. Andre's delivery was complication free. His heart was formed in such a way that the surgeons were able to skip half of the needed repairs in the first open-heart surgery. Andre's recovery from surgery was complication free and he was discharged from the hospital in half the time we had anticipated. When Andre developed an intestinal infection two weeks after being home and needed emergency surgery, God sustained his life (the doctors said this was nothing short of amazing). And these are just a few of the many many ways God has answered our prayers for Andre.



Andre Showalter, following his first surgery. Photo: Sarah Showalter

Along the way, we've come to view our blog as a place to give testimony and to continue inviting others to pray. We've stood in awe as God has mobilized a community of faith to join together in prayer. To date, our blog has been viewed over 42,000 times by over 14,000 people. We've received comments from people we've never met who are praying for Andre. We could never have imagined the way our prayers would be multiplied in such exponential ways, and we have no doubt that God has worked mightily in Andre's life through these prayers.

There is nothing special about our blog. We haven't tried to write super theological or spiritual posts; rather we share about the day and how we're seeking the Lord and experiencing his provision. We are simply sharing our lives—and many people are watching. This is not our doing. It is the Holy Spirit living in us.

It reminds me of Pastor Joi, from the Life Enrichment Church in Thailand, who has spent his life discipling others. When asked, "What does discipleship look like?" Pastor Joi explains, "Discipleship is sharing your life."

Discipleship and multiplication of disciples is done by sharing your life so that others can see the work of God evidenced in you.

It is our hope and prayer that, in some small way, our lives (and God at work in our lives) can be used to multiply God's kingdom. Because God is a God of multiplication, his kingdom, his love, his followers are not meant to remain stagnant. They are meant to grow, increase, and multiply.

It is in this multiplication of prayers for Andre that we have witnessed the goodness of God, the wideness of his mercy, and the depth of his love.

Editor's note: Shortly after Sarah wrote this article, Andre went on to be with the Lord on Monday, April 11, 2016. Her husband Austin updated their blog the next day with this: "Andre had a big life. He was only 10.5 lbs and with us for 2.5 months, but in that short time Andre's impact on this world was far reaching. There are thousands of people who have been following Andre's journey that Sarah and I have never met. One of our prayers from the beginning was that God's name be glorified. I think it is sufficient to say that God has come through on that prayer."



Joyce Crissman (left) and Casey Hurren work on a Kids Club activity. Joyce serves in partnership with Waynesboro Mennonite Church, working with various outreach ministries. Photo courtesy of Joyce Crissman

Worker profile: **Joyce Crissman**

Home: Eastside Church
(Harrisonburg, VA)

Service program: tranSend

Assignment:

I am serving for one year as an intern partnering with Waynesboro Mennonite Church (WMC). I work in community building within the church and the greater community through Kids Club, Celebrate Recovery (a Christ-centered 12-step program), and other activities.

Biggest joy:

I love watching the faithfulness of God, both in my life and in the lives of the people around me. I see this every week as I cook for Celebrate Recovery, providing the opportunities to build relationships and hearing the stories of God's faithfulness in their lives. I also get to see it in Kids Club as the helpers faithfully play, listen, and walk with kids from our church and com-

munity. I see God's faithfulness in my own life. Moving to Waynesboro about seven months ago, and not knowing anyone, God provided wonderful people and resources. I found an apartment through God's great provision. People lent furniture and threw me a housewarming party. I have been invited into homes and have felt so richly blessed.

Biggest challenge:

Every day brings new challenges, but one of the most difficult ones is the spontaneity or unexpectedness of my day-to-day. I never know who I will meet, or the opportunities that will come. For example, I was recently at the grocery store, running late to get the final pieces for a Celebrate Recovery meal, when I saw two kids from Kids Club with their family. I ended up having a lovely conversation with them, before rushing back to church. Talking with them was not in my plan or on my schedule, but it was in God's.

I need to be open to God's schedule and plan, embracing the spontaneity and looking for new opportunities.

A typical Wednesday:

I work part-time at a local coffee shop from 6 a.m. until noon, so I'm often up around 5 a.m. Then I go home and have some free time. Around 5 p.m., I leave for Kids Club. The leaders meet to plan for the evening, before walking to pick up kids. We play games with them like carpet ball or four-square and have a coloring station set up. We sing and act out the story as a whole group, before dividing into our separate classes. Becky Kiser and I lead the 5th-6th grade group in either a game or craft that corresponds with the story, before we have snack. Our kids are a lot of fun! At about 7 p.m., it is time to go. We collect name tags, send off the walking bus, and clean up from the evening's festivities. Then I go home, have dinner, and read or watch a movie, before devotions and bed.



**Virginia
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“around the world in a big balloon!”

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