



Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

Sharing God's Love Through Acts of Service

Working for Peace

Advocating Justice

Caring for Creation

Serving Human Needs

BVS ended 2017 with 45 volunteers...

- who served in eight countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, El Salvador, Honduras, Republic of Ireland, Japan, Northern Ireland, and the United States.
- placed in 14 cities, and in 11 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.



Unit 316, Summer 2017: Volunteers take a group photo in front of the lodge at Camp Colorado before a work day in the community.

In 2017:

- BVS hosted two orientation units: one at Camp Colorado in Sedalia, Colo., and one at Camp Pine Lake in Eldora, Iowa.
- 89 volunteers served throughout the year.

Partners in Service Award

Each year, BVS presents a Partners in Service Award to an individual, group, or organization that has shown exceptional commitment to the work of sharing God's love through acts of service. The 2018 award goes to Quaker Cottage in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Quaker Cottage is a cross-community family support center sponsored by Quaker Service, a charity in Northern Ireland that provides, among other things, day services for disadvantaged and vulnerable families who have experienced trauma or have difficulty coping with daily life and are from the areas affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland. Run by the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, Quaker Service delivers "practical, social and emotional support services that value and empower people just where they are. Simply put, our core purpose is to make love visible." The first BVS volunteer arrived in 1986 at Quaker Cottage — or "Quakers" as they like to call it — and since then 30 BVSers have worked with the children of the families who participate in the Cottage's programs.

The Partners in Service Award will be presented to Quaker Cottage July 5 at the BVS Annual Conference Luncheon in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Former Quaker Cottage volunteers: (L to R) Sam Carwile, Unit 293; Elena Anderson-Williams, Unit 309; Andrew Kurtz, Unit 301; and Becky Snell, Unit 303



Photos courtesy of Kristin Flory



Quaker Cottage: the house on the hill

Quaker Cottage and BVS: A Historic Partnership

Quaker Cottage is a special place. Perched halfway up Black Mountain, with “the best view” overlooking Belfast, the white building is visible from many vantage points in the city. One road leads up to the center from the mainly Protestant areas of west Belfast, and another road leads there from the mainly Catholic sections. Originally a genuine rural cottage where the Ulster Quaker Service Committee (now Quaker Service) brought together children from both faith traditions during the years of the conflict in Northern Ireland known as “the Troubles,” the center was rebuilt in 1991 and the families it now serves participate in a year-long intensive support program in which social workers meet with mixed (Protestant-Catholic) groups of mothers, and childcare staff and volunteers work and play with their children.

“BVS volunteers have been a core element of our team ever since I commenced as project manager at Quaker Cottage in 1989,” says Grant McCullough, “and today they are just as important as ever. In fact, still to this day the influence of the first BVS volunteer that I met, Nance Shallenberger, has an impact on our childcare team with her beautiful use of gentle, guiding language to help our children learn their way through life at Quaker Cottage. The volunteers that followed brought their own distinct styles and models of childcare that have helped mould Quaker Cottage into the special place that it is for so many children in Belfast. Volunteers bring songs, stories and quirky recipes from back home, but our predominant experience of our BVS volunteers has been the combination of a commitment to service and a love for children—and we couldn’t ask for more than that!”



Mural in the teen room at Quakers and current BVSer Maya Davis, Unit 316



Photos courtesy of Kristin Flory

New Project Spotlight: You’ai Care, Pingding, China

BVS has a new project in a place familiar to the Brethren—Pingding, in Shan-xi Prov-ince, China, in the area where some of the first Brethren missionaries settled in 1908.

Ruoxia Li and Eric Miller, Church of the Brethren members who are living in Pinding, China, have been working to provide hospice care, which is foreign to the Chinese culture. “People either go home to die or stay in the hospital receiving more treatment than necessary,” Miller said. Li and Miller chose this unique work in Pinding intentionally, basing it at the site of previous Brethren mission work in China.

BVS is honored to be partnering with Miller and Li, as well as You’ai Care and You’ai Hospital, to provide care for hospice and cancer patients, conduct educational programs related to elder care issues in the community, and host service-learning camps for children and youth. In addition to caring for patients, volunteers may also develop and lead outreach programs, assist with grant-writing, develop promotional materials, and assist with office work. You’ai Care is supported by the Church of the Brethren Global Mission and Service office.



Photos courtesy of You’ai Care



You’ai Care staff with patients

Workcamp Update

Grey Robinson is serving as assistant workcamp coordinator in the BVS office. The 2018 theme is “Loving God, Loving People.”



BVS Staff



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