Eighteen-year-old Gabrielle Stuckey learned valuable skills this summer working as a pastor’s assistant and church secretary at her home congregation of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill.

Stuckey served through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Summer Service program. This short-term program supports young people of color throughout the U.S. in their development of leadership skills through working with local churches, summer camps and health care facilities.

In her role, Stuckey participated in all church affiliated meetings. This included the leadership team meetings where she was invited to give her input, particularly sharing her ideas for getting youth more involved in the church. Through her interactions with Pastor Cyneatha Millsaps, and with the church elders, Stuckey became more confident in sharing her ideas while learning from their examples of what it takes to be a good leader.

“This summer I learned the definition of patience as I watched my pastor handle different situations and balance her day to day life,” said Stuckey. “A big part of a leader includes being selfless, but never leaving your stand on what you believe in.”

Although initially outside of her comfort zone, her responsibilities necessitated Stuckey to practice public speaking. She acknowledges that this is a skill that will be very useful to her in the future, and she is glad to have had the chance to become more comfortable with speaking in groups.

As she begins her first year at Roosevelt University, Stuckey recognizes that this summer was also useful in her faith formation. “This experience has not only given me some great new skills, but I have taken an even stronger interest in the Bible,” she said. “I used to listen to the words and get a little at a time but actually paying attention to the stories now has opened my eyes to something new that I never even knew was there.”

Stuckey was one of eight participants from the Great Lakes region in the program this summer. There were 36 young adults total involved in the Summer Service program across the U.S.

Director’s Corner

The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

- 1 Corinthians 3:8-9 (NIV)

Part of MCC’s mission is sustainable community development, with the hope that those who are helped will in turn also help others. To that end, MCC has developed Summer Service, a short term program that supports young people of color in their development of leadership skills through working with their local churches or comminutes.

Through the years, we have witnessed some remarkable results from the program. One past participant is now leading major MCC U.S. immigration advocacy work. Another is executive director of a church supported organization, while another is a school teacher. I am confident that each of this year’s eight Great Lakes participants will be responsible citizens who support themselves and others in their communities.

Zenebe Abebe,
MCC Great Lakes Exec. Director

Contact us
MCC Great Lakes staff are available to speak to your congregation, Sunday School class or other group. Contact us at GreatLakesOffice@mcc.org or 574.534.4133.
Great Lakes stories
FALL 2014/WINTER 2015

Prayer Concerns

Ongoing support in Gaza
MCC is providing food baskets, hygiene supplies, blankets and school kits for Gazan families, who are piecing their lives together in the midst of the devastation left by the Israel-Hamas conflict in July and August. Through Al Najd Development Forum, a long-time MCC partner and community-based organization that provides programs and services for Gazan women and their families, MCC is providing monthly food baskets for 460 families through March 2015. MCC invites your prayers for these families; see mcc.org/stories/ongoing-support-needed-gaza for more information, how to donate and advocacy suggestions.

Rebuilding in Philippines
One year after Typhoon Haiyan devastated large swaths of central Philippines, donations to MCC’s disaster response have supported the rebuilding of more than 4,000 homes, training and payment in food or cash of construction workers and laborers, and training of pastors to deal with future disasters. Renovation of damaged schools is also scheduled. Please pray for the partners MCC continues to work with in Philippines, as well as those rebuilding their lives. For more stories from MCC’s ongoing efforts, visit mcc.org/learn/more/typhoon-haiyan.

More than a fashion blog
by Jennifer Steiner

A blog about fashion might not be the first place one would imagine seeing photos of MCC school kits, but The Coral Court isn’t your typical fashion blog. Kristi Stalter, from Bloomington, Ill., started the blog about a year ago, and it has blossomed into a popular lifestyle blog with close ties to MCC.

The Coral Court, which has about 45,000 followers combining Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, still centers on fashion and showcases photos of latest trends. But Stalter also uses it as a platform to share things close to her heart, including MCC. “It is important to me that my readers see me as more than someone that blogs about materialistic items,” said Stalter.

A teacher herself, Stalter feels closely connected to MCC’s education projects including school kits and the Global Family program. In fact, she dedicated one of her blog posts to MCC school kits. She wrote, “Since I am an elementary teacher and see how excited students get when they get out their new school supplies on the first day of school, this project hit close to home.”

Stalter teaches second grade in a classroom that integrates special education students. Her students primarily come from low income families, so Stalter does what many teachers do – she buys school supplies for her students who can’t afford them. While she shops for supplies for students in Bloomington, she also picks up supplies to make MCC school kits for children around the world.

“My grandmother has made school kits for as long as I can remember,” she said. “I have always been connect-ed with MCC since I was a little girl.”

As a young adult with lots of choices of organizations to support, these family ties, along with attending Goshen College, have kept her closely connected to MCC. “I find that there are not many charities that make much of an effort to solicit young adults,” she said. “I think that the reason is not just that they may not have the funds to [give], but they may also have not found a cause that they are passionate about.”

For Stalter, MCC has provided a way to connect her passion for education with her desire to give. On her blog she links to the MCC website under the How I Give page, encouraging her readers to also consider getting involved. “My roots with MCC have played a major part in my decision,” she said. “I also know that the majority of the donations go to the places that they are intended to go to.”

For information about donating school kits, visit mcc.org/kits/school. To learn about the Global Family program, visit mcc.org/globalfamily.
Zambia: Glimpse into the life of MCC service worker family

Jan Emswiler is serving with MCC in Zambia, along with her spouse, Kajungu Mturi, and their children, Luga (7) and Wakuru-Mae (22 months). They are from Goshen, Ind., where they attend Assembly Mennonite Church.

by Jan Emswiler

We have been living with our family in Zambia and serving with MCC for about a year and half. We’re developing good connections with partners and settling into family life.

My part-time role assisting Compassionate Ministries of the Brethren in Christ (BIC) includes a wide range of responsibilities. I’ve visited a number of communities where BIC has current HIV/AIDS, orphan support, food security, water and sanitation activities. I meet with community members to discuss their participation in the activities and learn about the ministries’ impact on the ground. These “interviews” are turned into stories to share with donors. From increased access to water and subsequent decrease in diarrheal diseases to improved crop yields, many households are being impacted positively by the work of BIC.

I also worked with BIC staff to develop and conduct a baseline survey for their HIV/AIDS work. Again, this involved many interviews and holding focus group discussions trying to assess the current strengths and challenges of a variety of communities in relation to youth health behavior, medication adherence for people living with HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence and orphan support. Hopefully this information will contribute to the ongoing planning for HIV and health related work of the BIC.

As the BIC Church of Zambia Peace Education Coordinator, Kajungu’s official work keeps him very busy. He enjoys the freedom of being his own

Wakuru-Mae (22 months) enjoys exploring her family’s tomato garden in Zambia. Along with her older brother, Luga, she joins her parents, Jan Emswiler and Kajungu Mturi, serving with MCC.

Photo courtesy of Jan Emswiler

“Zambia” continued on page 4

Opportunities for service

Laos Exchange Coordinator
Laos
Begin April 1, 2015 3 years

MCC Representative for Palestine/Israel
Jerusalem, Palestine
Begin July 27, 2015 5 years

Menno Santé Program Coordinator
Kinshasa, DR Congo
Begin January 26, 2015 3 years

Women’s Empowerment Facilitator
Nebaj, Guatemala
Begin April 1, 2015 3 years

More information: serve.mcc.org

Calendar

December 18-20
Meat Canning
Freeport, IL

January 8-10, 12-17
Meat Canning
Goshen, IN

January 20-21
Meat Canning
Montgomery, IN

January 23-24
Meat Canning
Berne, IN

January 27-30
Meat Canning
Berlin, OH

February 2-4
Meat Canning
Spartansburg, PA

March 20-21
Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale
Bloomington, IL

May 1-3
Celebrate MCC Great Lakes Annual Gatherings
Ohio, Indiana, Illinois

SWAP

In 2014, the Sharing With Appalachian People (SWAP) home repair program helped 81 households. SWAP summer staff Ben Nofsinger (left) from Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite in Constantine, Mich., worked with volunteers from Living Hope Fellowship in Forksville, Pa., and Presbytery of Milwaukee-PUSA, Wis., to put a new roof on the home of Marie Hall in Harlan, Ky. For details about volunteering, visit swap.mcc.org.
“Zambia” continued from page 3

“boss” in the realm of scheduling and tries to balance that with all the requests from the church for peace education needs. He can easily have weekdays and weekends packed full. It has been thrilling for him as there is quite a bit of interest from the church and BIC schools in peace and conflict transformation. This past year his main focus has been strengthening peace clubs and helping with trainings on gender-based violence and conflict transformation in the churches.

Peace clubs in the high schools train students on conflict transformation and are slowly becoming a powerful force for positive change in their respective schools and communities. From addressing bullying to tree planting, student led initiatives are materializing on their campuses. Kajungu assists in training teachers and students as well as monitoring and encouraging club activities. He has also worked with BIC school teachers and administrators as they take on the challenge to abolish corporal punishment and implement positive discipline methods in the classroom.

Couples in the churches are open to discuss how culture influences their relationships, particularly how male dominance in decision making and controlling resources affects their marriages. They look at how the Bible emphasizes loving respect, valuing of each partner’s gifts and living in harmony. They then discuss how that could look in BIC Zambian marriages and families.

In addition to our MCC work, I am also homeschooling our seven-year-old son Luga. Together we enjoy learning about local birds, termites and gardening. Wakuru-Mae, our 22-month-old daughter, enjoys singing, dancing and using her growing vocabulary any chance she gets.