

"It is a peace program that works, not in a big sweep, but one small ripple at a time, each ripple enlarging with every expanding circle." ~ Doreen Harms



Coming up:

IVEP Year-end Conference:
July 14—19
Kitchener-Waterloo,
Ontario, Canada

* July 13 U.S. IVEPers fly to Philadelphia/Harrisburg, stay overnight in Akron

* July 14 travel to Ontario

* July 19 all international departures home from Toronto

Traveling together

The International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) is administered by Mennonite Central Committee in Canada and the U.S. This newsletter sets out to connect hosts, partner agencies and IVEPers in the U.S., creating space for the cross pollination of ideas and a greater sense of community.

Articles and new readers are welcome. Please email Helen Yocum at HelenYocum@mcc.org

Staff insights



Juan Raul Junay (09-10), Glenda Hernandez (YAMEN 12-13), Juan Carlos Azurdia (06-07), Lucy Camel (98-99), Monica Figueroa (14-15), Judith Melisa Roman (16-17), Dania Del Valle (03-04)

After a few short flights, I arrived in Guatemala City, ready to meet MCC colleagues. In addition to experiencing the taste of a new culture and country through the markets and central plaza, I was also privileged to meet some new friends. Over a delicious meal of chicken, rice, tortillas, vegetables and blackberry juice, we chatted with IVEP and YAMEN alumni at the MCC Guatemala office. The alumni, and one new IVEP participant for 2016, shared their stories, compared experiences and gave updates about new jobs, children and spouses. People brought the year-book and other special mementos from their exchange year, pointing out those people who they remembered fondly—friends, hosts and coworkers. Who would

have guessed that an act of kindness toward Lucy Camel in 1998 would still be remembered and relived in 2016? Or that hosts from 2003 would be talked about so fondly by Dania del Valk? The friendship of Monica Figueora and Minja Todorovic, of Bosnia, started in 2014, is still going strong two years later thanks to the internet. The small ways we reach out to others now are remembered for years. Thank you, alumni, for reminding me.

Andrea Geiser, IVEP U.S. Coordinator

Participant insights: Jesus was a mediator

Hello, my name is Min Jeong Bae. I'm from South Korea. Last year, I applied for IVEP, and I am staying in Fresno now! The VORP (Victim Offender Reconciliation Program) office is my workplace. We help people who have conflict or break the rules such as fighting or shoplifting. We also lead mediation training for students who want to know how to be a mediator. While spending time at VORP, I have attended lectures about Victimology and Conflict management. And I had mediation training a few times. It will be useful if I become a mediator for family court.



Min Jeong at the office

Who's Who?

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The International
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I have only been here for just a few months, but I already have learned how restorative justice works in another culture. We had a presentation about why we have victim offender mediation in juvenile court. A past offender, a victim, a judge, a probation officer and a district attorney, all shared their experiences about mediation. One girl who was an offender said victim offender mediation was another opportunity to do the right thing, and that facing the victim was so hard but it was meaningful. I think restorative justice is peacemaking for people and the community.

Jesus was a mediator for the broken relationship between God and humanity. I want to follow Him as mediator for our world. I want to be able to put the skills I have learned about restorative justice into practice and apply it to real-life situations. How wonderful!!

Min Jeong Bae—Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, Fresno, California

Partner insights: A year . . . it is such a short time

Phonevilay, or “Kai,” as we know him here at Church Community Services, helps me in the gardens with the Seed to Feed program, which brings fresh produce to families in need. “This is my favorite,” he tells me, smiling and wiping melon juice from his face as he takes a break from picking.

It has been surprising which plants are familiar and which are unfamiliar to Kai here in Indiana, where he joined us in August. “This is our summer,” we told him. “Your summer?” he said, “But it’s so cold.” Being from Laos, many of our seasons are opposite and our ways of doing things can be different. I have learned much from him, like how best to cook a pumpkin, or something as simple as how to neatly wind string.

Seed to Feed is a placement that at this time can be difficult for a one year volunteer to fill. We were hoping to get a green house up before the winter, but were unable to do so, rendering my only needs to be administrative. “That’s ok,” he says, “I like working in the food pantry.”

Kai seems to be the type of character to make the best out of any situation, and to do everything well. “If you were here longer, you would be more qualified than me to run the program,” I tell him candidly. “As it is, it’s nice to have you here for a year.”

“A year,” he says, thinking about the gardening seasons I had just told him about, “It is such a short time.”

We are happy to have him nonetheless.

*Natasha Kauffmann, Seed to Feed Co-Coordinator, Church Community Services,
Elkhart, Indiana*

Host insights: Part of our family

Upon receiving the invitation to consider hosting Josiane Amiedo this past summer, it did not take us very long to make a decision on welcoming this Ugandan young lady into our home. Why? We have been recipients of Ugandan hospitality. Another reason was the privilege to care for someone from the region of the world where our son and his family reside. How awesome it is to have a small connection to the nation that our children and grandchildren enjoy!



Phonevilay Khammany with IVEP friends at the “Bean”, Chicago

*“Josiane has a
servant heart”
~ Lloyd and Elaine
Hoover*

As part of our family, we invite Josiane to participate in church, family, and ministry opportunities that we are involved in. We quickly learned that Josiane has a servant heart, a love for the church, a love for our Savior and a love to worship Him.

Sitting beside her in church, it is easy to observe her freedom to worship and quickly learn new songs. Knowing her involvement in choir at her home church in Uganda motivated us to approach our worship leader at Carpenter Community and ask if he would be will-

ing to include her on the worship team. Later, she volunteered to participate in the inter-generational choir during the advent season. It is a joy to welcome Josiane into our lives.



Josiane with the Advent choir, Carpenter Community Church

*Lloyd and Elaine Hoover, Leola, Pennsylvania,
are hosting Josiane Amiedo from Uganda*

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Find us on the web at
ivep.mcc.org

Alumni gathering at Mennonite World Conference

In July 2015, Mennonites from around the world came together at the invitation of Mennonite World Conference for worship and learning at Assembly Gathered—an event that happens once every six years. During that time, alumni from MCC’s Young Adult programs gathered for a reunion, and among them were many IVEPers.



IVEP, SALT, YAMEN alumni with some hosts at MWC Assembly Gathered, July 2015, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

IVEP

Are you in this photo? Email me, helenyocum@mcc.org, by April 15 and tell me who you recognize in this photo. How many IVEPers can you find? The person sending the most names of IVEPers will receive a free MCC t-shirt! Feel free to add names of SALT-ers, YAMENers and hosts if you enjoy a challenge.

IVEPERS in action

Pray for . . .

** strengthening relationships and welcoming connections within the U.S. churches*

** IVEP hosts and partners as they continue to be a welcoming community for IVEPERS*

** all involved in the IVEP network to actively promote international goodwill, understanding and friendship and strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship*

** regional and provincial coordinators conference coming up in early May*

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Yenny Diaz (Colombia) enjoying the snow with her host sister



Alex (Uganda) with one of the engines he is working on at Miller Diesel



Mid-year conference finds Chhengty, Makara, David, Sothea and Samon (all from Cambodia) standing on a frozen lake at Camp Arnes, Manitoba, Canada



Reunions at Winnipeg airport as Wanza (Kenya), Ionka (Manitoba coordinator), Bathabile (Zimbabwe), Lea (Indonesia), Lyzia, (China), Carolyne (Uganda) and Neera (Nepal) arrive for mid-year conference



Magda (Indonesia) and Juan Pablo (Colombia) with the gingerbread house they created



Ennet (Zimbabwe), Victory (Haiti), Bao (Vietnam) and Magda (Indonesia) create sweet harmony



Carolyn (Uganda) at work at Global Gifts



Ankit (India), left, with Matthew Blosser on the MCC meat canner in Hinton, Virginia