



EXTENDING BEYOND

Astrophysics and preschool kids: God's love knows no boundaries

A message from Stanley W. Green



In the Letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul talks of the dilemma of the human condition. If indeed we believe that we are saved by the grace of God and made members of the family of God, then Paul

suggests in Romans 12:1-2 (NRSV) that our need is for transformation: *“I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* Having been controlled by worldly norms and values (like selfishness, greed and hostility) that are contrary to God’s purposes, we need to be transformed so that our lives are shaped by the

culture and values of the new family to which we belong.

I’d like to introduce you to a young man who is experiencing the kind of transformation that Paul invites us to embrace. His name is David Borbely. David, a current participant in our Colorado Springs Service Adventure unit, is a 19-year-old from Siegburg, Germany. He is interested in astrophysics, and in his free time he enjoys coding, and, now and then, teaches his fellow participants about nuclear fission. Next year, David plans to go to university to pursue his interests. In a traditional career path that will evolve if he follows these interests, it is easy to imagine that he will spend endless solitary hours in a lab somewhere engaged in research with sparse human engagement. It is equally easy to imagine that for David things will be different. In his Service Adventure assignment, David currently works at the Westside

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Above: Service Adventure participant David Borbely facilitates an art project at the Westside Community Preschool in Colorado Springs.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

—Romans 12:2

Shaped by service

Something happens when we humble ourselves to lift up others. It doesn't depend on the location or the length of time. It's dependent on our attitude and the condition of our heart. If we're open, we won't be the same person as when we began to serve. In this issue of *Extending Beyond*, we explore how service participants have been shaped by their experiences.

Changed by opportunity

Daniel Morales* was 5 years old when he was abandoned by his parents, and survived by living on the streets. Even at that young age, gangs tried to get him to join.

When he could take the pressure no more, as a teen, Morales traveled on top of trains through Mexico to the United States—a journey many deem too risky. “But he was relentlessly positive,” said Hannah Eash-Gates, his legal representative and an alumna of Mennonite Voluntary Service.

He was also incredibly bright. Even without a formal education, Morales taught himself to read and write.

The two met at the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) in San Antonio. Eash-Gates served at RAICES during her time with MVS and continued there for seven years after her service term ended.

In the two years it took for Eash-Gates to help Morales achieve legal permanent residency status, he made it on the honor roll and learned two languages!

Morales isn't the only one changed by opportunity. Eash-Gates graduated from Goshen College with a double major in Spanish and Peace Justice Conflict Studies. MVS gave her the opportunity to put that into action. “I had absolutely zero interest in the law or legal work, but it sounded interesting to work with Spanish-speaking refugees,” Eash-Gates said. Eventually, her passion outgrew her ability and she decided to go to law school. Eash-Gates is in her second year of law school at Northeastern University in Boston.

“MVS and my subsequent employment at RAICES not only gave me experience that helped me get a full scholarship, but it also made me a better student because I know why I'm there.” ■

*A pseudonym was used to protect his privacy.



Photo by Jonathan Ryan/RAICES

Hannah Eash-Gates stands in the RAICES office holding a poster she used for “Know your rights” presentations to Central American children who had just come across the border. She volunteered with Service Adventure and Mennonite Voluntary Service. Both experiences helped shape her life and choice of career.



To learn more about Mennonite Voluntary Service, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve and click on **MVS**.



Photo provided.

Seth Swartzentruber enjoys supper with his host family at a Javanese restaurant.

Growing in faith

By Seth Swartzentruber

“God is providing for me in many ways, even when I worry, which I shouldn’t. I have been placed in a loving family. I have food on the table for every meal. I am able to spend time with friends at the church, learn new things, and teach new things. I am learning the language fast, and understanding the worship better now. I am growing in my relationship with God as he gives me more grace. Indonesia almost feels like home where I have been placed, and opportunities to talk about Jesus are always opening.

“I’m working in the school four times a week and getting to dig into the Bible every day. Pray for me that I

would continue to have opportunities to praise God, and I would grow in my passion for making him my number one priority in all things, even if it’s just going to the store!” ■

Swartzentruber serves with Journey International at JKI Maranatha Church in Ungaran, Indonesia. He is from Morton, Illinois, and attends First Mennonite Church of Morton.



To learn more about Journey International, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve and click on **Journey International.**

Expanding worldviews

Fun and games are sometimes more than they seem. Two years ago, Kate Cherveney participated in a scavenger hunt contest at the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Kansas City. Thanks to a very generous donor, she won a Youth Venture experience to the place of her choice: India.

This past July, Cherveney traveled with three other young adults and two leaders, John Murray and Kelsey Springer.

In a blog post during the trip, Cherveney said she wanted to find ways to integrate the experience when she returned home. “I pray that we let it reshape our perspectives and views of the ever-changing world around us,” she wrote.

During the trip, the group visited Union Biblical Seminary and Menno-Clinic India, which provides affordable medical, dental and eye care.

“The [Youth Venture] trip helped shape my faith in many ways, and expanded my outlook on the world. I think I learned how to listen better, be more flexible, and



Photo by John Murray.

Youth Venture team to India: John Murray, Kate Cherveney, Mrs. Usha Mohol, Madeline Troyer, Kelsey Springer, Madi Kauffman, and Bethany Perri.

see God in all kinds of ways, in all kinds of places and people,” said Cherveney. ■



To learn more about Youth Venture, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve and click on **Youth Venture.**



2016–2017 Colorado Springs Service Adventure unit. Back row: David Borbely, *Daniel Miller and *Meg Smeltzer Miller. Front row: Kate Unruh, Marle Moellenbruck and Nora Charles. *Unit leaders.

God's love knows no boundaries

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Community Preschool with kids from 3 to 5 years old. In his daily routines he is a constant presence in the lives of these children, doing jobs like cleaning and even a little bit of teaching. David reports that he really appreciates his work “not only because it’s a really great place with nice staff, but also because I get the chance to be part of the kids’ education and can share God’s love with them on a daily basis.” In reflecting on his choice to spend a year in service, he offers that he decided to do this “because I want to experience God in a way I can’t do at home.” Thankfully, his yearning for more of God is being realized and David is being transformed. In talking about his experience thus far, David says, “In the first half of Service Adventure, I learned a lot about God, myself, and what God wants me to do.”

Each year I am profoundly moved as I read reflections by young people who say yes to service and participate in one of our many programs. I was struck by one particular learning: “Through our work we’ve learned that all people are loved and valuable regardless of abilities or resources.”

David may well end up a scientist with professional engagement in astrophysics, computer programming, and coding. I am convinced, however, that he will not fit the stereotype of someone so consumed by his occupation that he has no time for people or sensitivities to their common humanity and the needs and struggles of others. My joy in

my work is derived from knowing that along with David, hundreds of other young adults (and some older ones, too, along with children) are not only making a difference in the lives of those they work with as they share companionship, solidarity, friendship and compassion. My joy is amplified in the awareness that they, too, are being made different—through their counter-cultural choices and engagements, they are being transformed and are becoming agents of transformation, advancing God’s healing and hope in a hurting world. I salute them and so many thousands of alumni who have served God’s purposes in the world. And I salute you. Without your sharing and generosity, these stories of transformation and hope would not have been possible. Thanks! ■

Stanley W. Green
Executive Director

In remembrance

Hannah Hochstetler, Service Adventure leader in Jackson, Mississippi, died Jan. 19, 2017, in a tragic car accident. Her husband, Caleb, was injured in the same accident. Please pray for Caleb, their families and friends, the Jackson service unit, the Open Door Mennonite Church, and the Mission Network community as we mourn this loss.



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