

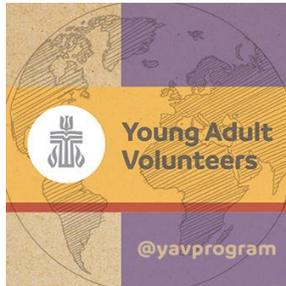
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Applications now open for YAV's 25th annual recruitment season!



Young Adult Volunteers shaping the next generation of faith leaders

Based on a Presbyterian News Service article by Kathy Melvin



LOUISVILLE – Applications are now being accepted for the 2018–2019 [Young Adult Volunteer](#) (YAV) class. This is the 25th anniversary of a program that is helping to shape the next generation of globally aware, faithful and passionate leaders.

About 92 percent of YAV alums say their YAV year directly influenced their current vocation. Seventy-nine percent of alums now regularly attend worship, 63 percent report additional participation in congregational life, and 32 percent go on to ordination or pastoral leadership. To date, there are more than 1,700 alums of the program.

Kim Jurczyk, who recently finished service in rural Zambia said, “I am determined to bring these values with me when I return home and keep them as an important part of my identity.” Many YAVs echo similar sentiments.

Andy Thomas, who recently finished service in the only YAV program in NC – Hands-and-Feet of Asheville, working with “12 Baskets” – quoted Richard Rohr: “What if our changing perception of God changes everything?” Andy, who is in his first year at Louisville Seminary this year, resonates with that quote, saying: “This is my life! ...I’ve gone from not being able to see myself or people like me ANYWHERE in organized religion to realizing that my relationship with the Divine is exactly that, MY relationship.”

He continues: “I believe the Church should be a community where ALL are truly welcome in all of their brokenness. The Church should be a place where radical hospitality and self care are embraced and practiced. I believe God transcends race and gender, I am convinced that Jesus was a non-white rebel who was sick and tired of systemic injustices and fought to put an end to these injustices by radical acts. I believe the Holy Spirit is a communion of faith and of sinners and saints, past, present and future connecting and loving ALL—no exceptions. By being able to redefine my faith in these new ways, I’ve been able to view myself and the world in more life giving, affirming and often challenging ways. And it’s not always pretty and easy. But if everything were pretty and easy, how boring would that be? I don’t know about you but I don’t want my faith journey to be a boring one.

The YAV program is a one-year service opportunity for young adults ages 19–30, offered through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For the YAVs, the benefits include a year of vocational

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discernment, the opportunity to live and work outside their comfort zone with the support of an intentional Christian community, time to explore their relationship with God and to live more simply in response to an unsustainable human demand for natural resources.

In the 2017–18 YAV year, there are four international sites and 15 national sites where young adults walk alongside local people of faith who are confronting root causes of poverty, violence and injustice in their communities and witnessing to the gospel by word and deed. It costs about \$22,000 to fully support a YAV for one year. YAV participants are asked to raise around 20 percent of this cost through their own fundraising efforts, and 80 percent is funded through individual donations and the annual [Pentecost Offering](#).

...The [application](#) requires basic personal and church information, as well as education and employment. Applicants are also asked to answer essay questions that include “why do you think you are a good fit for the YAV program” and “describe an experience you have had with a person or group from another race, religion culture or country and what you learned from that experience.” References are also required.

[Elizabeth Welliver](#), a current YAV serving in [Austin](#), Texas, wrote on her blog:

“As a young adult in the beginning of my career, I chose YAV to learn about the world and my role within it. YAV is a year of immersive education that turns our world upside down and reshapes the people we are becoming. In our retreats and weekly meetings, my housemates and I will challenge and support one another as we develop our understanding of complex issues and examine our core beliefs.”

Along with putting their faith in action, YAVs also learn practical skills like developing healthy habits for budgeting, community living and self-care.

Sherry Ellington is the YAV site coordinator for Zambia. She walked alongside the Zambian YAVs while they struggled, celebrated and grew. “In the end, they look back and realize that they have formed meaningful relationships, forged new levels of personal strength and have experienced Christian life in a setting completely different from how they were raised. Their worldviews have been forever deepened by the experience,” she said.

To learn more about the YAV program or to complete an application, click on youngadultvolunteers.org and follow [@yavprogram](#) on social media.

To learn about the Asheville YAV program (the only one in NC, SC, TN, KY, or VA), click on [handsandfeetavl.org](#) or on the Asheville program site on the YAV page at pcusa.org.

Application dates for 2018/2019 YAV year

- Oct. 1, 2017 – Applications Open
- Jan. 1, 2018 – Round 1 – (All sites available, early placement)
- March 1, 2018 – Round 2 – (Most sites available, final date to apply to international sites)
- June 1, 2018 – Round 3 – (National sites only, limited spots available)