

Carrying on in Ukraine | After the earthquakes | Creating and coming together in Syria | Love in action



A Common Place

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‘Feed my lambs’

ANN GRABER HERSHBERGER
MCC U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’”

(John 21:15 NRSV)

During this season of Eastertide, between the resurrection and Pentecost, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” and followed up with, “Feed my lambs.”

“Feed my lambs.” This is love in action – the kind of love that propels Eleonora, who serves displaced Roma families in Ukraine, with a perseverance born of her own suffering.

Or take Rina Maria Garcia Rosa, a young adult who, in working with young Anabaptists in Guatemala, passes on her belief that faith is not only a thing that you have, but a thing that you do.

Recently, I was part of a reunion of Rosedale International voluntary service workers who served in Central and South America in the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s. As we shared stories, a recurring theme was that we were so young and there was so much that we did not know. Still, we were trusted and sent – as young and inexperienced as we were.

Later someone suggested that despite what we did not know how to do, we did know how to “be.” Our families and churches had taught us about community and engaging with others in humility. That made a difference. Lifelong cross-cultural relationships formed, communities changed, churches grew, and we were formed and called for further service.

Through MCC’s International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP), Serving and Learning Together (SALT), Seed and the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN, a joint program of MCC and Mennonite World Conference), the church around the world sends youth to serve in the name of Christ. They form relationships and learn from and serve the communities where they are sent. In turn, they are called for further service.

As you read these pages and take in the images, look for and learn from young adults. May their stories inspire you, as they did me, renewing our energy to respond to Jesus’ call to love him above all else and to feed his lambs.

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Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God’s love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation. mcc.org

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Cover photo: Melad Issa is a participant in an MCC-supported arts initiative in Homs, Syria. (MCC photo/Raymond Salloum)





Rwanda Training for the future

In Rwanda, MCC helps young adults like Damascène Bucyana gain skills they can use to build brighter futures for themselves and their families. Through Mwana Nshuti Vocational Training Center, Bucyana is studying auto mechanics. The center also offers courses in hairdressing, sewing, cooking and construction. Each year, MCC provides funding for school materials and teachers' salaries so that 170 young people can receive scholarships.

From programs like this to peace clubs to opportunities to serve abroad and in Canada and the U.S., MCC is helping young people find new opportunities to grow and practice the skills that they need to thrive.

Bolivia Serving through YAMEN

"I have learned to love the Lord in another church, in a different home and have learned to love myself," says Esther Aguilar of serving in Bolivia. Through YAMEN (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network), a joint service program through MCC and Mennonite World Conference, Aguilar came from Honduras to spend 11 months working with children at Samuelito Daycare, a program of the Bolivian Evangelical Mennonite Church, living with a host family and worshipping in a Bolivian Mennonite congregation in Santa Cruz. Learn more about YAMEN and other opportunities for young adults to serve through MCC at mcc.org/serve.



Climate Action for Peace What you can do now

Climate change is affecting the lives of farmers around the world. And so often, the people who are the most vulnerable are the most affected. This spring, MCC invites you to explore a new campaign, Climate Action for Peace. Go to climateactionforpeace.com to learn more about how climate change is taking a toll on families like Rath Morn and Jhonh Nham in Cambodia.

the school kit CHALLENGE

How many school kits can you collect?

Notebooks and pencils are treasures for families who struggle to afford basic school supplies. Looking for a fun activity to do this summer with your family, Sunday School or VBS students? Take **The School Kit Challenge** and help kids around the world attend school by dropping off your school kits during the month of August.

Contents (NEW items only)

4 spiral or perforated-pages notebooks (8.5 in x 10.5 in and 70 sheets)

8 new unsharpened pencils

1 ruler (flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm; inch markings optional)

12 colored pencils (in packaging)

1 large eraser

4 new black or blue ballpoint pens

1 small all metal pencil sharpener (one or two holes)*

*Plastic case pencil sharpeners are not accepted. Visit mcc.org/school-kits to learn more.

Instructions: School kits are distributed in a useful double drawstring cloth bag (11 3/4 x 16 3/4 in). You may:

- sew the bag yourself
- request bags from an MCC material resources center or
- donate contents that we will place in a bag.

Go to mcc.org/school-kits to learn more or find drop-off locations. Or contact your nearest MCC office (see p. 2).







Special
focus

Despite frequent cuts to electricity, students in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, remain in class. At left, an MCC comforter keeps Olga and her daughter warm. Full names aren't used for security reasons.

Carrying on in Ukraine

In spite of the disruptions and devastation of war, MCC partners continue to reach out to youth and their families.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY LOEWEN

On a rainy, wintry day in Uzhhorod, a city in the far west of Ukraine, dedicated students sit at their desks, in the dark. The only light in the room is what comes in through the windows.

They wear winter coats and hats, bundled up against the cold. There is no electricity, which means there's also no heat. The temperature outside hovers a little above freezing and the classroom feels cold.

Electricity cuts are an everyday occurrence in Ukraine. The Russian military invasion has caused significant damage to infrastructure, and people are never sure when the power will come or go.

But the room is full, and the students all are engaged with the lesson, responding to the teacher's questions and coming up to the board to show their work.

This perseverance was what I saw over and over in person in a five-day visit to western Ukraine in December 2022—and it's a theme I've witnessed in reports from MCC staff and partners since the conflict began last year.



After the Russian military struck an apartment building in Dnipro in January, within an hour MCC's partner Step with Hope had set up a tent and was providing assistance. (Step with Hope photo/Vladimir Zaikin)

Some of MCC's partners, a year after being displaced from their own homes, continue reaching out to other displaced families.

Others have been able to stay put, providing urgently needed assistance in the midst of horrific destruction. I think of the time in January of this year when a Russian military strike tore into a large apartment building in Dnipro.

Within an hour, MCC partner Step with Hope's team and volunteers were setting up heating centers outside for people who had lost their homes that day and providing emergency supplies like food, water and warm clothes. The team remained on duty day and night in a tent near the apartment building while people were being rescued and in need of care.

Again and again, life is disrupted. And again and again, people find ways to carry on.

Take the two-room school, run by MCC partner Blaho Charitable Fund to provide preschool learning for Roma children and prepare them for formal education.

“Again and again, life is disrupted. And again and again, people find ways to carry on.”

Roma people are an ethnic group living in countries throughout Europe but facing significant discrimination. They also often have lower levels of education, something the founder Eleonora*, a Roma woman herself, wants to change.

“This education is very important for Roma children because if they can read and write, and if a person is educated, he or she is perceived differently,” she says. “Humanitarian aid is needed 100% but it's not the main thing. The most important is to teach them.”

At the beginning of the war, though, the school was temporarily closed to provide shelter for Roma families. They were facing worsening discrimination as they fled the violence and needed a safe place to stay.

But the conflict continued with no end in sight.

Eventually, Blaho Charitable Fund was able to rent a former restaurant and hotel and turn it into a larger shelter that can house about 150 people at a time, both Roma and other Ukrainians.

And the school reopened.

Children and families in the community had been asking Eleonora when they could come back for lessons. And the western part of the country was still relatively safe. “I understood there (are) no missiles coming here or rockets or bombs. And if state-run schools should work, we also should work,” Eleonora says.

So the students press on, learning in the dark. The violence, the closure of the school and the power cuts have all disrupted their lives. But still life carries on.

Near Uzhhorod, in a small church, MCC partner Fire of Prometey hosts gatherings for children and their families. It's a chance for children to spend some fun time together, with songs, games and snacks. Speakers, like psychologists, are brought in to help parents support their children as they live through the conflict.

Natalia*, who fled the fighting in eastern Ukraine and has two children attending the program, says it makes a big difference for them, especially since they had to abruptly leave behind everything they knew.

“[My daughter] doesn't have many friends here yet,” Natalia says. “There she has a place where she can communicate. So it's sort of spiritual support for

Kolya, one of the founders of Fire of Prometey, talks with Ihor at one of the regular events that Fire of Prometey hosts for children.

*Full names not used for security reasons.

her...I think [these kinds] of programs are very important for the children especially when there is war. It's a big psychological support for children."

It's clear to see how much the children enjoy their time with each other, and how much they like Masha* and Kolya*, the couple who founded and run Fire of Prometheus.

“The most important thing is to teach them.”

Masha and Kolya, like the children, left their home behind, fleeing Donetsk, where they were bringing children together after families were displaced when Russian military forces invaded the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

That relationship building continues in this new context, bringing children who've been displaced together with others in the community, increasing empathy and understanding. "It's interesting the dynamic between [displaced] children and local chil-



At a school run by Blaho Charitable Fund in Uzhhorod, a teacher works with a student at the board.



Children play at one of the events that Fire of Prometey hosts in a village near Uzhhorod.

dren,” Masha says, “because local children then learn to be compassionate to other children, to help other people.”

Other vital parts of MCC support are the food packages and MCC relief kits and comforters that families receive through partners like the Association of Mennonite Brethren Churches of Ukraine (AMBCU).

After fleeing their home in Kryvyi Rih, closer to the front lines, Olga*, her husband and two children live in one of the shelters that AMBCU supports. In their room, bright MCC comforters are a beautiful contrast to grey shelter walls, and Olga says when the heat is off, they use the comforters to cuddle up together and keep the children warm.

She’s touched that the comforters are handmade. “In my childhood my grandma was doing this patchworking, and it’s so special for me because when I saw that [this blanket] is handmade it was

so dear to my heart.”

The war has caused Olga’s family, and everyone else in Ukraine, to adapt in ways they never expected. The electricity cuts mean she now keeps a gas burner for making coffee or heating milk for the kids. And when the power is on, she has a list of priorities from cooking food to charging devices.

In this new life, she says a lot of their happiness comes from small things they’ve received from others, like the comforters from MCC. “I think life, it will be okay, it will settle down. And thanks to your support you make people a little bit happier.” ■

Emily Loewen is marketing and communications manager for MCC Canada.

“ And thanks to your support you make people a little bit happier.”

Give a gift – Where needed most

MCC and its partners are meeting urgent needs and providing new opportunities for youth and young adults in places like Ukraine, Syria, Guatemala and more. By giving today, you are investing in a brighter future for young people like these. Give in the enclosed envelope, online at donate.mcc.org or by contacting your nearest MCC office (see p. 2).

Eleonora

Overcoming discrimination, Eleonora works to provide support for Roma people in Ukraine and care for those neglected during the conflict.

AS TOLD TO EMILY LOEWEN

I am a Roma woman, and I am the director of Blaho Charitable Fund. We provide educational support for Roma children, and since the war started last year, we have run a shelter for Roma families who have been displaced.

Roma people face a lot of discrimination. I completed my education at what at the time was a Russian school. I was the only Roma girl in the class. All the rest were Ukrainian. I received a full secondary education and I graduated from a vocational technical college, and I could not find any work. I was even looking for work as a cleaner.

There was an advertisement in the paper for a cleaner in a hotel. I rang the landline and asked about it. They said, “Yes, we do need a cleaner, please come by.” But when I got there the director looks me up and down from head to toe, and then very politely asks, “Excuse me, are you a gypsy?” (Roma people also are referred to as gypsies, a term many people see as derogatory.) I said, “Yes, I am a gypsy.”

And she said, “Oh, you know, we’re looking for someone with a higher education. You know, you have to behave in a diplomatic way here.”

And I looked at her and said, “Excuse me, but do I really need a col-

lege degree to mop and sweep floors?” She spoke to me very politely, so at least she was not rude, but this moment is forever imprinted in my head, and it hurt me a great deal.

I have come across this discrimination again and again. I understand that my people are simply a pariah, they are humiliated, they are not accepted at all. I just try to forget about all these burdens and stresses and look to God, who loves and accepts us.

When the invasion started, we noticed that the latent discrimination against Roma became very much open. Nobody wanted to offer the Roma any shelter, and so they simply slept on the bare concrete outside railway stations with little children.

It was a complete nightmare. I came to the station and saw that nobody was taking them in. Some people tried to help, tried to send them somewhere else. But in general, people simply ignored the Roma, which was a terrible shock for me.

We closed the school immediately on the 24th of February (when the Russian military invasion began) because we did not know if bombs were going to be falling in this region.



We created a small shelter at the school. There is no running water here, or heating. The living conditions were hard on both little children

and adults, but they were grateful to have a roof over their heads. We bought mattresses and an electric stove to make tea, but we could not fit many people here.

After some negotiation with the owner of a restaurant and hotel that had been closed for nine years, I was able to rent that space to open a bigger shelter. Since then, we have taken in many refugees. We provide hygiene, three meals a day that are supported by MCC, and we have a school program three times per week. We have art therapy for children and adults, a psychologist and a lawyer. Doctors Without Borders comes once a week or every two weeks, whenever they are available. We are constantly looking for help so we are very grateful for the support and assistance we get from MCC. ■

Eleonora (full name not used for security reasons) is director of Blaho Charitable Fund in Ukraine.



Feature
story

After the earthquakes in Syria

MCC responds to the devastation, working to meet immediate needs and plan for longer-term responses.

BY MARLA PIERSON LESTER





From food to diapers to hygiene items, MCC is responding to the urgent needs of families affected by powerful earthquakes in February in Syria and planning for longer-term responses.

“Many of our partners have been involved with relief work for the last 12 years of the Syrian war. This has allowed them to quickly pivot to supporting those who are displaced by the earthquake,” Garry Mayhew shared in the days following the first earthquakes on Feb. 6. He and his wife Kate, based in Beirut, are MCC representatives for Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

But the needs are immense—and exacerbated by all Syria has suffered during years of armed conflict.

In addition to the loss, weariness and trauma that families and communities have experienced over the last 12 years, many buildings had fallen victim to damage or neglect, leaving them more vulnerable to shocks from the earthquakes. Many people who were displaced by conflict were living in unfinished and unsafe buildings that are at higher risk for collapse.

In Aleppo in late February, MCC staff member Petra Antoun, who is based in Syria, shared that she would look above as she walked in the city, checking for anything that might come down.

“They need food. This is the basic, basic need nowadays.”

“Most of the buildings are either destroyed by war and then the earthquake, or they are about to fall. And also there are a lot of buildings that have cracks,” she said.

People remained leery about returning to homes, and children were scared. “They have this trauma, the screams of their mothers, or whatever they have experienced,” she said. “And people are not speaking about the trauma that they have been through.”

Food is an urgent need for so many families.

Economic turmoil and high prices meant that many families were already struggling.

“Before the earthquake, it was difficult for people to get their basic needs (met),” Antoun shared.

And many who were earning income from daily labor don’t have work. “They need food. This is the basic, basic need nowadays. They need food that they can use, like canned food, because many lost their houses so there’s no kitchen.”

In response, MCC is providing approximately 4,000 people with emergency ready-to-eat foods, hygiene items and diapers for babies, as well as planning for longer-term food responses in Aleppo, Latakia and Tartous.

MCC also is urging the lifting of sanctions on Syria to expedite humanitarian assistance after the earthquake and expand relief services to civilians in need.

Even before the earthquakes, MCC’s response to the ongoing conflict in Syria was one of its largest humanitarian responses in a more than 100-year history.

MCC continues to work with churches and partner organizations to provide humanitarian assistance such as food baskets, clothing, hygiene items and winterization supplies.

MCC also supports training in addressing trauma, which is critical to help people affected by more than a decade of violence, as well as education, livelihoods recovery and peace programming with several partners in Syria. ■

Marla Pierson Lester is senior editor for MCC U.S.



Above, this view of collapsed buildings was taken in Aleppo, Syria, after the February earthquakes. At left, MCC partners turned churches, mosques and community centers in temporary shelters after the earthquakes.



Feature
story

Creating and coming together

In Syria, an art project provides space for young adults to reflect and share.

STORY BY MARLA PIERSON LESTER
REPORTING BY PETRA ANTOUN
PHOTOS BY RAYMOND SALLOUM

In a neighborhood of Homs, Syria, known for its history and grandeur—and for the devastation it endured through years of war—Melad Issa gazes into the courtyard at the heart of a large, traditional Arabic house damaged in the war.

He savors the sight of paintings hanging on courtyard walls, the crowd strolling through the opening celebration of an art exhibit by MCC partner Harmony Cultural Forum.

“I felt like there was a candle inside me, and it lit up when I saw that. I felt like a great thing happened in Homs,” the 22-year-old says. “I saw the lights and people coming and going. When I saw that Harmony did that in this place, something inside me lit.”

For him, it was as if the neighborhood of Al-Hamidia itself was coming back to life.

From its start in 2018, Harmony and the artists who founded it have worked toward rebirth—helping young adults find new energy, skill and expression through art,



and nurturing the connections that bring a community together in new ways.

“Harmony was able to combine all the talents: theater, music, drawing, writing—things we forgot about,” says Evon Hanna Sattah, 23. “It was the place that shed a light on these talents.”

Sattah was 13 when the war started. She fled from Hama governorate to a village near the city of Homs, but the thing that affected her the most is her brothers’ absence.

“They are abroad and I’m here alone,” she says. “If there hadn’t been a war, my brothers wouldn’t have traveled; maybe they would’ve stayed with me.”

That’s a theme that’s reflected in her art. The piece shown above (far right), titled “Fathers,” depicts what “might be a son, a brother, or anyone who feels this drawing. This portrait shows that the son needs feel-

ings from a father or a brother. No matter how strong he is, he still needs someone, and that someone might be present or absent.”

“When I saw that Harmony did that in this place, something inside me lit.”

The effort started small. A group of artists, missing friends who had left Homs and Syria during the war, began searching for a way to gather a crowd of people who loved art.

Needing somewhere to meet, they applied to the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese for funding. They got it and began searching in Al-Hamidia, one of the most damaged areas of the city, eventually renting a large traditional home that was burned and damaged.

“It’s easy to go to any place and work there, but it wouldn’t be special,” says Kamel Awad, one of the founders and current director of Harmony. “I also think it’s a message, we can do something beautiful on top of the rubble.”

In Homs, Syria, an art exhibit gives young adults like, from left, Sundos Zankawan, Aya Abdullah Fadi and Evon Hanna Sattah a chance to create art, reflect on their experiences and come together.



Kamel Awad, one of the founders and current director of Harmony, speaks at the opening of the art exhibit.

The group, only about 15 people early on, began working on the site. Organizers were soon stunned by how many others, both youth and community members, began showing up day by day to help clean and paint the site—and by people’s hunger to reclaim the space and to join the art activities Harmony offers.

“It wasn’t just our need as friends, or as people who lost 50 or 60 friends who could have been here. On the contrary, it was the whole society’s need,” Awad says.

The efforts began with a focus on drawing and sculpting, then added music, writing and theater, says Marina Kasouha, a founder and chief executive officer of Harmony.

But of course, notes Kasouha, “Art isn’t just art, just singing, just drawing.”

As Harmony sees it, she explains, art is a language that can be used for peacebuilding. It’s a way that people can come together across differences, explore who they are and

look to move beyond conflicts caused by years of war.

That’s especially important in Homs and throughout Syria, where war sowed seeds of separation, distance and discrimination, says Father Luka Awad, a priest and general manager of MCC partner Um Al-Zennar Relief and Development Center, part of the Homs Diocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church. “Some people started looking at others in a very negative way.”

Harmony, though, brings youth together across the divides of their backgrounds.

An initiative like this exhibit begins with workshops where

people get to know each other and feel safe, learn about peace and use art for peacebuilding. Then groups move toward planning specific themes for an exhibit, eventually crafting the art that will be shown.

Kasouha notes that the Arabic house has a tradition of gathering all of society’s cultures. And Harmony, too, reaches out to all,

“It wasn’t just our need as friends... it was the whole society’s need.”



Sundos Zankawan, right, talks with guests at the art exhibit opening. Below, Melad Issa performs a monologue as part of the theater portion of the event.



striving to recognize each person’s contribution and individuality.

“They give the feeling that you belong even if you’re an outsider. They never make you feel like a stranger,” Sattah says. “This place and its black stones make you feel cozy, and it makes you express whatever is inside you.”

Take Issa, who wrote and performed a monologue for the theater portion of the exhibit about children’s psychological struggles and how important it is that they have someone to listen to them.

Like others, Issa stressed that Harmony gave him this opportunity to follow the idea he’d crafted, including incorporating dance. It was his first time dancing onstage, and, blindfolded as part of the act, he soared freely.

“It was all about the music and I felt like I was flying,” he says. “The opportunity and the safe space I was given offered a room for my ideas...”

Opportunity often seems in short supply in Syria these days. In Homs, as elsewhere in the country, the last few years have brought severe downward economic spirals, combined with the weariness, loss and trauma of years of war.

For 26-year-old Sundos Zankawan, whose parents have died and whose three siblings have left for other countries, the situation today feels even worse than when war itself was a more pressing danger. “For me, honestly, I wish I could go back to 2014 rather than live these days I am living now,” she says.

“I feel sad about myself a lot, but I feel more for the younger people who were born in the war,” she says. “They literally were born in a damaged atmosphere with sadness, tiredness, suffering and harm on every level.”

But writing gives her a chance to reflect and explore the reality that she sees in daily life. She points to how many hours she and other artists spend giving time to the projects in Harmony.

“I know that people are hungry and tired. They need home, food and all the life basics,” she says. “But they are finding who they are in this exhibit that is considered to be entertainment in other countries.” ■

Marla Pierson Lester is senior editor for MCC U.S., and Petra Antoun and Raymond Salloum are based in Syria.

During *Semana de Servicio*, a week of service that brings together youth from Mennonite churches in Guatemala and El Salvador, youth play games (right) and (below) paint desks at José María Castilla School in Guatemala City.

Love in action

An MCC youth event in Guatemala models service to others.

STORY BY JASON DUECK
PHOTOS BY MEGHAN MAST

For Rina Maria Garcia Rosal, faith isn't just a thing you have, it's a thing you do.

In Guatemala City last December, Garcia and other young adults in MCC's Seed pro-

gram spent a week sharing that ideal with Anabaptist youth.

Through the MCC-led *Semana de Servicio*, or Week of Service, 40 youth from three Mennonite conferences in Guatemala City, Guatemala's Alta Verapaz region and El Salvador gathered to learn, serve and have fun together.

Garcia managed transportation and logistics for bringing the volunteers to and from three different locations where they served.

Many of the youth, she says, come from churches where expectations can be demotivating.

Garcia hears from youth who feel they're expected to just sit in church





services but who want opportunities to participate in service and to be more actively included, listened to and involved in the decision-making of the church.

The opportunity that expanded her own view of service was spending a year with MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) in 2017-2018, Garcia says.

Her IVEP term found her serving as far from her usual surroundings as she could imagine—teaching grade school students in the Spanish immersion program of Lancaster Mennonite School, then at the Locust Grove Campus in rural Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

“It was so different. At home in the city, all the houses are right next to each other and there’s tons of cars. And there it was just us and the animals,” she says.

She was moved by how she saw service and growth modeled in the school. “I felt teachers were able to help the students develop and grow from their personal experiences, and they looked for ways to teach them through what they were doing,” she remembers.

Returning home to Guatemala, Garcia finished her university education, then applied for Seed, a two-year MCC program with a focus on discipleship through service.

It was with her Seed group that Garcia facilitated Semana de Servicio,

which provides opportunities for youth like Julio Lopez.

Lopez, 16, doesn't look like a typical church-going young man by Guatemalan standards—his hair is half dyed blonde, his ears are pierced and he wears a number of rings and other bits of jewelry. But, he says, finding a church that saw past his appearance to his heart had reinforced to him what Christian love should look like.

Through his congregation, Casa Horeb Iglesia Anabautista Menonita in Guatemala City, “I was taught that God made us in His image and so what I do with my siblings in Christ, I treat them all equally as humans, and I don't judge anybody because who am I to judge?”

His group spent the week at José María Castilla School, repairing and restoring the wood and metal desks that

the students use. School holidays in Guatemala run from October to January, so Lopez and the other Semana de Servicio volunteers gave up some of their own vacation to be here in the name of service.

While he cut new desktops out of plywood, others sanded down the sharp edges, stained the wood or reas-

sembled the desks. Over the week, they transformed dozens of desks from various states of disrepair to like-new.

Garcia's pride in her volunteers is obvious, both for the quality of their work and their dedication to serving others. Even as her term with Seed ended in February, she carries with her the hope to continue sharing with young people how to serve and love like Jesus did.

“Our youth don't need to be judged,” says Garcia. “They need to be in a place where they can be understood and loved. That's a big challenge to have such big standards, but I want them to understand that, even in the midst of our imperfections, we can be part of building the kingdom of Christ.” ■

Jason Dueck is a communications specialist for MCC Canada. Meghan Mast is a multimedia storyteller for MCC Canada.

“I was taught that God made us in His image...”

Julio Lopez cuts pieces of wood to replace the rotting parts of desks at the school.



On assignment



Photo provided by Katie Janzen

“Everyone has welcomed me into their community and is eager to share their culture with me.”

Serving and Learning Together

Names: Katie Janzen

Hometown: Waterloo, Ontario; WMB (Waterloo Mennonite Brethren) Church

Assignment: Through MCC’s Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program, I work as a capacity building and peace libraries assistant in Kigali, Rwanda, with Transformational Leadership Center, an MCC partner organization.

Typical day: Includes editing reports from the libraries. Some days we have library programs, where a librarian reads to a group and leads a discussion, or peace debates, where students are encouraged to think critically and express their ideas about topics related to peace or reading. Occasionally I travel to peace libraries in other districts of Rwanda to observe their programs.

Joys: Meeting so many new people. Everyone has welcomed me into their community and is eager to share their culture with me. I have also loved traveling around Rwanda and exploring different parts of this country.

Challenges: Adjusting to a new culture. It took time for me to feel comfortable in my new surroundings.

Why I chose SALT: To combine my desire to be an experiential learner and serve a new community. I am working on my bachelor’s degree in peace and conflict studies, and I was ready to experience what I have learned in an international setting.

If you’re considering SALT: Be prepared to learn a lot and grow in many new ways. Your attitude and mindset will shape your experience.

Above, Katie Janzen reads to students in a peace library in Kigali, Rwanda.

salt.mcc.org

FIND YOUR PLACE

MCC has workers in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as in Canada and in the U.S.

Go to mcc.org/serve or [linkedin.com/company/mccpeace](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mccpeace) or contact your nearest MCC office to learn about current MCC service opportunities.

MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and biblical peacemaking.

for children

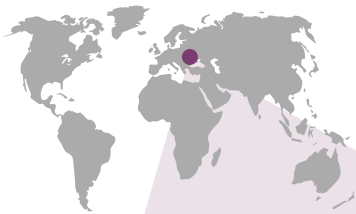
hello

UKRAINE

How can you say hello in Ukrainian?

Pryvit

(Say "pree veet")



War makes it difficult for families and children like you to get everything they need. Here are a few ways that MCC is helping.



When Sonia, 4, needed special medicine for a heart condition, an MCC partner traveled to a bigger city to buy it for her.



After the war began, food got much more expensive. These brothers were excited to receive canned meat from MCC.



Families who have to flee their homes need somewhere to sleep. These children were given a cozy spot in a child-care center that became a shelter.



Karina, 7, and her family left their home for a city called Dnipro, where they received food and warm, colorful MCC comforters.

How can you and your family help people affected by war in Ukraine or other countries?



Makar lives in an area of western Ukraine where many people have come to escape the fighting. He and his mother, Nina, are helping by sharing their home with families who don't have a place to stay.

- Pray
- Raise money (donate.mcc.org)
- Donate supplies (mcc.org/kits)

Use the space below to add more ideas.

*Full names are not used for security reasons.





Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501 U.S.A.



Kigali, Rwanda



Uman, Ukraine



Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

When you support MCC, you support young adults all across the globe.



Mondulkiri, Cambodia



New York, U.S.



Kentucky, U.S

MCC develops young leaders, providing opportunities for young adults to serve. By working with MCC partners, they hone their skills, prepare for their careers and explore their faith.

A gift to MCC supports young adults and a brighter future for our world.

donate.mcc.org



Guatemala City, Guatemala

Katie Janzen
Serving and Learning Together (SALT)

Volunteer (not named for security reasons)
Distribution of MCC canned meat

Bathabile Noubé
International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) alumna

Jacksha Jackson
Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN)

Princess Tshuma; Khine Thet Swe; Yujin Kim
"Peace for the weary" young adult camp

Marissa Hall
Sharing with Appalachian People (SWAP)

Kenny Chavarra
"Semana de Servicio" youth service camp