

**ITEM C.205
FOR INFORMATION**

YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SUMMARY AND UPDATES

The Young Adult Volunteer program is a year-long faith-based volunteer experience for young adults, age 19-30. These young adults live in intentional Christian community, serve alongside local leaders, and explore their faith and vocation to join in God's work in the world. From a YAV serving last year in Chicago:

"I encountered God's unending, abounding grace in so many ways this year...Because this year was confusing. It was messy. It was painful. It was lonely. It was disappointing. It was hard. It was cold, for most of it. But this year was also transformative. This year was needed. This year was filled with authentic, intentional relationships and joy. This year, living on the west side of Chicago, was undoubtedly holy." Read more on Teresa Larson's blog at <http://chicagowhereyousendme.weebly.com/stories/7-things-what-i-know-for-sure-end-of-the-year-reflections>.

YAVs have indeed found holy spaces where they have encountered what God is doing in our broken world, our fragmented communities, and in our torn hearts.

The 2015/16 YAV class is a strong group – 85 young adults who will be serving in 5 international and 16 national sites. We are excited that this year's group will be the most racially diverse class we have recorded in the YAV program; 21% of participants are people of color. We are very excited about this important sign, and look forward to continuing to grow this opportunity for all young adults.

This new class will be serving in several new sites. Nationally, we are excited to be welcoming a new YAV site in Asheville, North Carolina, where YAVs will be focusing on ministry with persons experiencing homelessness. We are also excited to have YAVs serving in New York City, where we are inviting second year YAVs to serve in a diverse set of ministry contexts across the city. Both of these sites will continue to grow and challenge our young adults, and the YAV program as a whole.

We are also excited to launch a new international site in Glasgow, Scotland, in partnership with the Church of Scotland. This is a great opportunity for our young adults to join in service with the Church of Scotland's Priority Areas Program as they ask a critical question of both of our churches – how do rich-world churches respond to poverty in their midst? We are excited to see what these YAVs will be experiencing in Scotland, and then bringing back with them as they return to ministry in our context.

The YAV program is continuing to grow and expand the Exchange Program we initiated last year. Four Korean young adults will again be serving in the various national YAV sites, and we will also add an exchange with a young adult from Mexico, who will be serving in our bi-national Tucson site on the US/Mexico border. These exchange opportunities have a powerful and challenging effect on all participants in the YAV program – intentionally blurring the traditional boundaries of mission, and opening all of us up to God's new work among us.

In the past year, we launched an intentional effort to build a sustainable long term financial foundation for this program. Linda Carter, the Mission Engagement Advisor for the YAV program, and Blake Collins, the Mission Engagement Specialist (and YAV alum, Peru '13-14) have been working to connect a wide array of Presbyterians and others in their passion for service and desire to build the future church with this growing and dynamic program.

Core tenets of the YAV program (2015-16)

- Intentional Christian Community: YAVs explore what it means to be a Christian community with one another and their neighbors. While some will live in housing together and others spread throughout their country, all YAVs will reflect together on their service and explore their relationship with God, the church, and their ministry in a broken world.
- Simple Living: YAVs are challenged to practice simple living – living an abundant life with less. Living simply pushes YAVs to evaluate their true needs with their lifestyle and beliefs.
- Cross-Cultural Mission: YAVs will intentionally explore the diversity of God’s creation, living and working outside of their comfort zone. YAVs will work to confront the systemic challenges of race, class, gender, and power, while learning to examine their own lives and actions.
- Leadership Development through Faith in Action: YAVs develop their leadership by serving in marginalized communities alongside local people of faith responding to poverty, violence, and injustice in their communities, sharing the gospel through word and deed.
- Vocational Discernment: Through theological reflection and spiritual practices, YAVs will participate in the process of vocational discernment –unearthing God’s desire for each person’s life and work.

YAV Alum impact

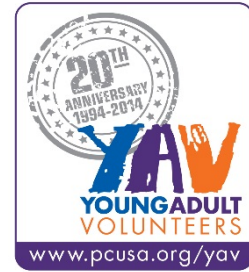
We promote the YAV program as “a year of service for a lifetime of change” - the impact and results of the YAV experience speak for themselves.

- 92 percent of YAV alums say their YAV year directly influenced their current vocation.
- 79 percent of YAV alums now regularly attend worship, and 63 percent report additional participation in congregational life.
- 75 percent say the YAV experience led them to more involvement in the PC(USA).
- 32 percent of YAV alums go on to ordination and pastoral leadership.

We will hear a testimonial from a recent YAV alum about the impact of their YAV year on their current call in ministry in today’s hurting world.



Please take a moment to think of young adults in your community who may be interested in serving and invite them to visit our website at www.youngadultvolunteers.org. They can contact Rev. Emily Miller (Miami '05-'06), Associate for Recruitment and Relationships, at emily.miller@pcusa.org with any questions.



**YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
REFLECTIONS FROM THE PC(USA)**



As a pastor it has been a great joy to encourage young adults to apply for the program and then see the ways in which **God works in their lives** in their year of service. The program comes at such a pivotal point in a person's life. Young adults aren't just figuring out how to make a living – they are trying to figure out **how to shape a life**. They are figuring out what it means to live in this world God created. The program gives them an opportunity to fall in love with living a life consistent with their deepest values. It gives them an opportunity to fall more deeply in love with God and God's people. The YAV program is the best thing out there that I know of to help young adults ask the right questions at this critical time in their lives.

Rev. Amy Miracle, Pastor, Broad Street Presbyterian Church, Columbus, Ohio



What a joy for Nassau Presbyterian Church to walk alongside Justin Chambers, a YAV in Atlanta for this past year. **Justin's focus is ministry with the imprisoned who are lost in the system**, and Nassau supports two prison related ministries. Our church stayed in touch and then brought Justin to Princeton in March to meet us, to worship with us, and to tell us about his work and how it is shaping his future. Our goal was to **encourage and empower** Justin's advocacy for the imprisoned and the poor – and he also encouraged us! And the partnership began simply as a financial

commitment! Thank you to the YAV program, for this opportunity to follow Christ in partnership and accompaniment of a currently serving YAV.



Justin Chambers, Atlanta YAV and Rev. Dave Davis, Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, NJ

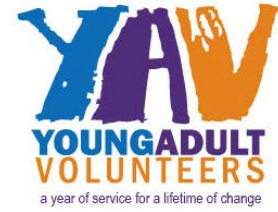


The Young Adult Volunteer Program is one of the things that is **working** in the Presbyterian Church (USA). We have had several young adults participate in the program in recent years, and I have been impressed by the opportunities they have had for **purposeful vocational discernment, spiritual growth, and direct involvement** in ministries of compassion and justice.

Rev. Steve Hancock, Pastor, Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

YAV A YEAR

How can I be a part of this?



In 2014 the Young Adult Volunteer program is celebrating its twentieth anniversary – and we are celebrating by sending our 1,500th YAV into a year of transformative service.

The effect of the YAV experience continues. After their service, YAVs go on to become leaders in our congregations, denomination, service and learning agencies. Each year, a third of YAVs go on to seminary and ordained church leadership; the remaining two thirds continue in ministry through social services, education, non-profits, and much more. It is truly a year of service for a lifetime of change.

What is YAV a Year?

The YAV a Year initiative highlights the ways that each of our Presbyterian congregations can join in the effort to raise and prepare the next generation of missional leaders. Each Presbyterian congregation - by either *sending* or *supporting* a young adult in the YAV program – can make key steps to calling, preparing, and sending the leaders of our church and society.

Sending a YAV

Congregations can join in by inviting young adults – both those in the church walls and those in their communities – to consider the YAV program. Your congregation can begin with young adults you have nurtured in faith – even if they aren’t the Sunday Morning regulars! Invite them to coffee, and ask what they want out of life, and where they are being inspired. Invite them to consider this step of faith.

Quick facts on YAVs:

- Young adults, 19-30 yrs
- Serve for one year in nat’l and int’l sites
- Christian background, but open to all denominations
- Find more at www.pcusa.org/yav

Supporting a YAV

We know that every congregation won’t have a young adult to serve every year – but we do believe every congregation can play a part through their prayers and financial support.

It costs approximately \$22,000 per year to fully support a YAV in service –which include training, travel, a simple living stipend, and health insurance, amongst other costs. While YAVs and their local congregations raise about 25% of the cost - it is our wider church’s responsibility to raise the remaining 75%. Through supporting a YAV, you invite a young adult who doesn’t have a supportive or wealthy congregation behind them, but is hungry to find out where God is calling them



YAV a Year congregations will be:

- *Connected to YAV as they learn and grow and serve over a year*
- *Encouraged to be participating with God in raising up new, strong, and passionate leaders*
- *Deepened and challenged in faith, as you accompany a young adult in spiritual discernment*