



Esprit de Corps

LUTHERAN VOLUNTEER CORPS NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2011

Volunteers Share Hopes

By Sue Gaeta, Development Director

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*The winning tattoo design in a fund raiser contest for All People's will earn a spot on **Andy Graves's** already well-inked body — now that's commitment!*

As the 2010-2011 program year winds down and we prepare for a new year of LVC to begin in August, I spent some time listening LVC's impact on our Volunteers. I spoke with an incoming Volunteer, Anna Gribble, one who is getting ready to do his second year, Andy Graves, and Marquita Jones, who is finishing up this LVC year. I was curious about the difference that LVC makes in their lives and came away from my conversations with them inspired all over again.

Anna Gribble comes to LVC from North Carolina, where she has lived all of her life. She was raised in the Lutheran church, was involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and worked summers at a Lutheran camp. With such a Lutheran upbringing, she is

looking forward to living with people from other faith backgrounds this year. She named living in community as a highlight of LVC as she puts her academic learning into practice.

Anna will work with adults with developmental disabilities at L'Arche in Washington, DC. In high school she did some work with a similar population so was drawn to this opportunity. In college she learned about oppression and privilege, and now she is looking forward to deepening

her understanding of these issues in real-life ways. LVC's anti-racism training and Journey to Inclusive Community work will be one way for her to do this. She is also excited to put into practice ideas of social justice and simple/sustainable living.

Andy Graves has been working at All People's Church in Milwaukee, WI and will continue there for another year. He has found that he actually gets to do the work he's wanted to do in previous positions, namely, ministry. I asked him how he describes that work and he talked about his involvement with youth programs including Sunday School and afterschool tutoring. He is also in charge of Kids Working To Succeed (KWTS), a program which teaches kids work skills in a ministry setting. He's involved in the

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Marquita Jones at her desk at Luther Place Memorial Church where she serves as Organizer of Community Ministry.

People's. Participants are submitting tattoo designs, and whichever one is voted number one by raising the most money will wind up on Andy's body. Talk about personal commitment!

Marquita Jones is preparing to begin a master's program in Higher Education Administration at George Washington University in the fall,

food pantry ministry as well as worship leadership, including preaching.

Andy came from a mixed bag faith background including Pentecostal, Nazarene, and Methodist churches. In college at Grand View University in Des Moines, IA, Andy became involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry. This year in LVC has given him a chance to "own his vocational call." He wants to do a second year so that he can develop his skills after this first year of exposure and "trial by fire." His time at All People's has been revitalizing for him. It has given him a picture of what church can be when we are involved more deeply in the community. Through this year in LVC he has gained a sense of hope for the church.

This second year of LVC is also about intentional community, living in the Dorothy Day house. Andy describes living in community as somewhat surreal, but it provides a built-in support system as he grows into his adult identity. This has been a year of personal development for Andy and another year of LVC community, while different, will help him grow in new ways. The most visible mark of change for him though will be a new tattoo! He is offering space on his already well-inked body to raise money for All

remaining in Washington, DC, where she is currently serving at Luther Place Memorial Church. She shared that what attracted her to LVC was the fact that we seemed like an organization that is not just talk when it comes to inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression. Marquita is a person of color who has often been in the role of educating white people and pointing out issues of racism. Hers has not always been a welcome voice, but she feels affirmation rather than resistance in LVC when she talks about oppression and racism. She was drawn to a group of people with such a "lofty goal" of becoming an anti-racist organization and looks forward to connecting with alumni in particular to continue the momentum.

While Marquita expected to learn a lot being exposed to the hardships of the "needy" in doing a year of service, she has been surprised by her greatest learning coming from the challenges of living in a diverse household community. She feels that this year has made her more patient and understanding of difference. Beyond her own community and LVC, she has been able to meet volunteers of color for support in other programs. This has led her to reflect on racial dynamics not just between white people and people of color, but also among people of color.

It has opened her eyes to a diversity of experiences.

Marquita also spoke of the value of participating in the Volunteers Exploring Vocation opportunities through LVC. Her vocational discernment has been a long process that also twists and turns along the path of her relationship with the Lutheran church. Her strongest religious ties as a Christian have been with African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion congregations. Yet between attending Lenoir Rhyne, a Lutheran college, being part of LVC and finding a faith community in her work at Luther Place, she knows that the Lutheran church has some role in her life. She's just not sure what yet. One thing she knows is that she is hopeful that LVC and the wider Lutheran community will become communities that become better at embracing a diversity of people so they feel at home.

DESIGNATE YOUR THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a faith-based membership organization called to improve the quality of life of its members, their families, and their communities by providing unparalleled solutions that focus on financial security, wellness and caring for others.

Giving back has always been important to their members. In 2010 alone, Thrivent provided \$135 million to help congregations, communities, and non-profit organizations. LVC has received some of that through

Care in Community grants, which match our local fundraising efforts. We have also received a \$100,000 three-year national grant for expansion.

The easiest way LVC can continue to receive support from Thrivent members is through the Choice Dollars program. LVC receives a monthly contribution which helps us carry out our mission. This contribution is based on the number of Thrivent members who have designated their Choice Dollars to LVC.

HERE'S HOW CHOICE DOLLARS WORK:

- Designated Choice Dollars are based on qualifying insurance premiums, qualifying contract values, and Thrivent Financial volunteer leadership.
- Choice Dollars are made available as premiums are paid, contract value is determined, and Thrivent Financial volunteer leadership is identifies.
- Thrivent Members can designate Choice Dollars at Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call **1-800-THRIVENT** (1-800-847-4836) and say "Thrivent Choice."

If you are not a Thrivent Member but are interested in aligning your values and your financial resources to benefit life-changing organizations like LVC, call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836 to find your nearest Financial Representative. Together LVC and Thrivent can make a difference!

LVC Growth Includes Expanding Staff

By Michael D. Wilker, President

This summer LVC will take another step toward sharing our passion for justice, community and sustainability with more people. Lauren Sanders will become a national program director. She has served as the Chicago Milwaukee regional director since 2007.

In her new position, Lauren joins Joanne Otte, who also serves as a national program director. They will co-lead the development of LVC's partnerships with full-time Volunteers, social justice organizations, and local leaders and supporters.

Over the last three years LVC has grown to include Volunteers, placements and supporters in Nebraska, Georgia, and Michigan. It's been a very quick growth spurt. With growth in our existing locations, we've nearly doubled the number of LVC Volunteers and staff. The additional national program director position gives LVC's newest areas added care, guidance, and leadership.

"Although I will miss working with the LVC Volunteers in Chicago and Milwaukee," says Lauren, "I am enthusiastic about supervising the overall LVC program with Joanne. Together, we have exciting ideas to enhance the wonderful work of all the



Joanne Otte (left) and Lauren Sanders will co-lead LVC's work with volunteers.

regional directors. I look forward to the challenges new LVC cities bring, namely sustainable expansion that fits what each city needs, that continues our Journey to Inclusive Community, and that represents LVC well."

Lauren is passionate about social justice and multicultural ministry. She brings pastoral and administrative experience and her excellent communication abilities to this leadership position. Before joining the LVC staff, Lauren served as the VISTA Program Associate at Housing Action of Illinois. Lauren is a graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and William Jewell College in Liberty, MO.

Joanne has served on the LVC staff since 2004. This winter, Wheat Ridge Ministries recognized Joanne's dedication to justice and peace and named her its 2011 Seeds of Hope Emerging Leader. LVC is blessed to have these two leaders caring for our program.

The Rev. Michael D. Wilker, President

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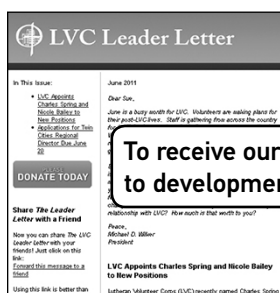
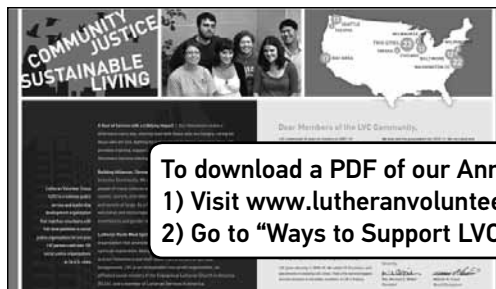
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About Lutheran Volunteer Corps

LVC, a community of faith, unites people to work for peace with justice. We do that by recruiting, placing and supporting year-long, stipended Volunteers to work in non-profit organizations and ministries and living in intentional communities. We are located in 16 cities across the United States and have about 150 Volunteers living in 29 household communities. There are three core spiritual practices that Volunteers learn in their LVC year: building intentional community, living simply and sustainably and working for social justice. LVC unites our Volunteers, supporters, alumni, placement organizations, staff and local leadership on our Journey to an Inclusive Community as we dismantle institutional racism, welcome people of all gender identities and sexual orientation and continue to address all forms of oppression.

Thank you to all who give money to support the LVC mission!

To learn more you, visit our website, read our annual report, and sign up for the monthly *Leader Letter* e-newsletter.



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