

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS)

Brethren Volunteer Service (www.brethrevolunteerservice.org) was founded in 1948 and has close to 7,000 alumni. BVSers serve in one or two year volunteer assignments with the project site providing housing, food, a small monthly stipend (\$100 for a first year volunteer), and medical insurance if needed. Most volunteers do not know their assignments before attending a three week orientation with BVS. At the orientation the volunteer will work with staff in selecting and getting to an assignment. There are about 100 positions in the United States and around the world.

BVS connects with OMA in many ways and has done so for many years. The most visible is the relationship BVS has with OMA camps as project sites where the Church of the Brethren camp receives volunteers from BVS for one year assignments. Current camps that are project sites include Brethren Woods, Camp Bethel, Camp Mack, Camp Mardela, Camp Myrtlewood, and Camp Swatara. Many other camps have hosted BVSers over the years. In the last 16 years those have included Camp Harmony, Camp Blue Diamond, Camp Ithiel and Camp La Verne. BVS is always open to camps coming on board as projects sites and will work closely with staff in the placement of volunteers.

Over the past 15 years BVS has also invited current volunteers to serve as counselors at summer camps where counselors come in for one week periods of time (not hired for the summer by the camp.) This varies year to year depending on the volunteers interest and availability and the camps need.

In the Church of the Brethren, one of our core values is service. BVS recognizes that young people will often get their first exposure to the outside world at camp. Where it's possible, BVS tries to have information available to campers about BVS. We also hope that camp leaders look at BVS as a step in a person's life as they develop their faith journey.