Young Adult Volunteers

Fundraising Tool Kit

"Building Relationships, Sharing the Vision, Serving Together"

Young Adult Volunteers
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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OVERVIEW

Building Relationships, Sharing the Vision, Serving Together

Fundraising is about creating a community of support. Although it can cause anxiety, it is a great way to invite others into your journey.

Fundraising is also about building relationships. Fundraising provides an opportunity to connect with people and invite them to invest their resources, prayers and interest in your experience; and they can connect you to other potential supporters, grant opportunities and organizations as well- all of which YAV encourages.

We welcome you to this new and exciting experience and offer the assurance that the YAV staff is ready to assist you.

Specifically invite others to support you in a variety of ways:

- **Prayers**: Prayers for you, the communities willing to welcome you, and the work you're invited to partner in this year.
- **Financial gifts:** Invite home communities to invest monies into your YAV year and help you be accountable towards your financial commitment.
- **Interest in your year of service**: Invite others to follow your experience by reading your blog, sending encouraging messages, and providing a time and space for you to speak at church or other regional church bodies (for example, a presbytery).

Individual Fundraising Goal

Funding for the Young Adult Volunteer program is shared by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and your fundraising efforts. The actual total cost for your term of service varies according to your site placement and can range from $22,000 to $26,000.

Regardless of the specific cost of your placement, each international YAV is responsible for raising a total of $5,000. To ensure a smooth start to your YAV year, please:

→ Raise $2,500 by July 1, 2026
→ Raise $5,000 by January 1, 2027

You'll find tips for success, important reminders, and extra details in this sidebar throughout this Tool Kit.

It's never too early to start fundraising!

Team Fundraising Goal

While $5,000 is the minimum amount we require for fundraising, the actual costs of your YAV year are significantly higher (again, averaging about $24,000). Please aim to raise additional funds as you're able. This will strengthen the YAV program and make it sustainable for future participants.

For each site, we encourage reaching the **team fundraising goal** in addition to your **individual fundraising commitment**. The team goal is an additional $5,000 per YAV. For instance, if there are 5 YAVs in Scotland, multiply 5 by $5,000, for a team fundraising goal of $25,000. The YAV group can then work together in raising their team goal.

For questions about your individual fundraising goal or the team fundraising goal, email champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org.

How Do Donors Give?

Each YAV has been provided an ECO (Extra Commitment Opportunity) account number. Each YAV is also given a corresponding profile page for online giving *after* submitting their profile information (Visit youngadultvolunteers.org, click on "Meet Current YAVs" on the right-side of the page, find your name listed under your YAV site).

To ensure all donations made on your behalf are properly credited, donors should *always* include both your name and ECO account number in the *Comments* section online or in the *Memo* section of a check.

Donors giving online are able to make a one-time donation or self-select for monthly giving at a $10/per month minimum.

NOTE: If you, for any reason, are unable to complete your year of service, the YAV program cannot return the funds you have raised. This is due to regulations the program must uphold as a non-profit organization.

Responsibilities for Communicating with Supporters

We *encourage* each YAV to write quarterly newsletters to supporting churches, individuals and home communities. We *require* all YAVs to create and maintain a blog site to share your experiences, growth and prayer requests. A healthy measure is to post once-a-month with updates to your experience, and

It can be helpful to share the average total cost of a YAV year with potential supporters, so that they have context for your goal.

It is important for your supporters to be aware that any funds you raise beyond the required $5,000 will be used to support you and other YAV.

Additional monies raised are not used for unrestricted funds by the YAV program.

at least one in-depth reflection every three months.

The program will link your blog on the YAV website so others can follow your year and make a financial gift. These are great ways to keep your home communities informed and interested in your year of service.

As you share your journey with your supporters, remember that you'll not always feel positive and upbeat about your experience as this is an intentional year in new contexts. Many of these challenges are a natural part of your experience. What is important is *how* you struggle with the challenges, what you're learning from the experience, and how you would you like your readers and supporters to walk alongside you.

With that in mind, ***it is never, ever appropriate to speak negatively against the site partners, site coordinator, YAV community, host family or your host placement in your letters or blogs.*** There will be times when you disagree with your placement coordinator, site partner, or the surrounding culture in general. The YAV program strongly promotes healthy and direct communication in those circumstances.

Begin with Prayer

Ephesians 3:20 is a profound reminder that God, by the power at work within us "is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine." With those words in mind, we encourage you to begin this process with prayer, trusting God to help you in many ways:

- Help you overcome any reluctance or fears you may have about asking for support,
- Guide you in knowing who to approach, how and when,
- Help you find the language to tell your story, and
- Bless those who are listening with the ability to hear God calling them to partnership and to respond with their gifts, prayers and interest.

As you begin, recognize that fundraising is part of your faith journey. Jesus encouraged sharing resources in holy community throughout his entire ministry here on earth.

Working Within the Connectional Church

The best place to begin your efforts is with your home church.

If You Are Presbyterian

It is important to understand how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is structured and governed. Each church has a session,

FOR YAVS SERVING MORE THAN ONE YEAR: No extra monies raised during your first year of service can be used to meet your fundraising commitment in your second year. It is your responsibility to communicate this to reoccurring donors as you enter your second YAV year.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

made up of elders who are elected by the congregation to serve and lead. The senior pastor acts as Moderator of the session. There is a Clerk of Session who handles all the correspondence.

Additionally, each local Presbyterian church belongs to a presbytery. A presbytery is a regional collective of churches.

As a courtesy and good practice, it is important to work within the governing structure of your local congregation and presbytery to engage in dialogue with those in leadership. In all cases, you should contact the pastor of your church. Additionally, we recommend reaching out to leaders within your home congregation, including but not limited to the Christian Education director, youth director, Moderator of Presbyterian Women, chair of the Mission Committee or the elder who chairs mission outreach. The pastor will guide you in the process of where to begin. (See Resource Section for **Letter to the Clerk of Session** for you to send together with a sample **Introduction letter**.)

The key in talking to a variety of individuals serving in leadership is to encourage their excitement and sense of participation in your upcoming appointment to mission service. They can also provide insights on how to proceed, identify opportunities, as well as obstacles in your fundraising efforts. They will likely be your greatest advocates and networking body.

Do not hesitate to ask for their help and insights! Your upcoming appointment to volunteer service provides the opportunity for the members, the staff and the church session to be a part of the larger church and to feel connected to the denomination's work in mission.

I'm Not Presbyterian!

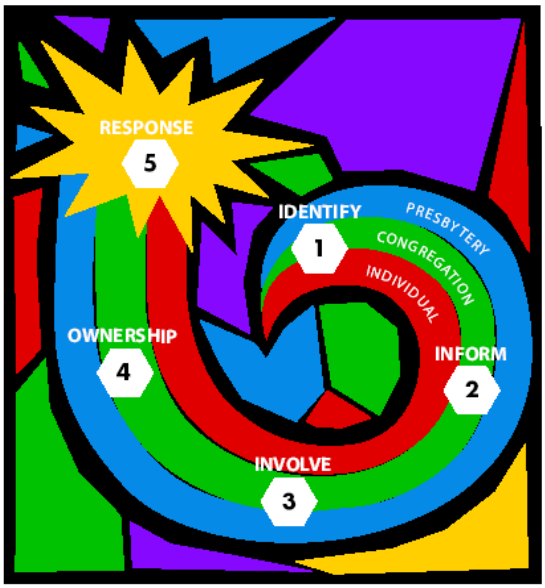
The YAV program is an ecumenical program celebrating peoples' of faith from other Christian traditions participation. YAV encourages you to first ask a home pastor for guidance on how to proceed within your religious affiliation in gift-raising activities. If you would like to be connected to a local Presbyterian church/ presbytery, contact Champaka Srinivasan at champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org.

For assistance, a generic "**To Whom It May Concern"** letter is included in the Resource Section for your use and modification.

The YAV office will send an introductory letter to the Executive Presbyter of your presbytery and to the pastor and/or Clerk of Session of your home church informing them about your acceptance to the YAV program. You will be copied on this message.

NOTE: There may be more than one YAV serving at the same time in your presbytery. Ask the presbytery if they would allow you to address the plenary at a Presbytery meeting to share your story and ask for support, and/or post your bio-page (provided by YAV) with your contact information on the presbytery website. Your home pastor should be able to help guide you and provide you with the presbytery contact information.

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS



Typically, givers start at Step 1 and move through each step sequentially before fulfilling a commitment.

The Five Steps to Success in Fundraising

1. **Identify Potential Supporters** – especially those who have a passion for mission
2. **Inform Potential Supporters** – about yourself, your reasons for accepting the call to serve, where you'll be serving and who you're partnering with (as much as you have available)
3. **Involve Potential Supporters** – helping them to catch the vision of their participation
4. **Build a Sense of Ownership** – showing supporters how they can make a difference through your service
5. **Respond** – supporters respond, providing spiritual and financial support & encouragement

Identify Potential Supporters

You have a larger network than you may realize. Friends, family, church members, advisors, pastors, coaches, mentors, professors, youth directors – the list goes on! And please hear us say, you're providing these individuals with the opportunity to share in your experience, to act on their own faith and to serve with you in ministry through their financial commitment. And people are generous! Especially if they have a personal connection and believe that their support will make a difference.

When you think about people who care about you, who comes to mind? What groups, clubs, organizations, and communities are you part of? Who do you know who has passion for the kind of work you'll be doing as a YAV?

Where to Begin with Identifying Supporters:

- ❑ Make a list of members in the communities previously noted who can potentially make a gift and help you network.
- ❑ Work with your pastor and other church leaders to identify groups to approach, such as Presbyterian Women, youth groups, church mission committees, presbytery mission committees, etc.
- ❑ If you're a student, check with your campus chaplain to see if there are special funds or grants available for persons going into faith-based volunteer service.
- ❑ Assess your own finances and make a personal commitment to your fundraising goal. Being able to say that you too are helping to fund your work is important. It is a lot easier to ask folks to "join you in giving" compared to "please give."
- ❑ Keep a record of names, addresses, emails and phone numbers of potential donors. This is helpful also when thanking donors. (See Resources Section for the **Supporter Worksheet**.)
- ❑ Break down the cost of your term of service. For example, making a commitment of $50.00 a month, for 12 months would mean $600 toward meeting your goal. Or $20 a week would result in over $1,000 toward your goal.

NOTE: Do not deny people the opportunity to give because of your perception of their wealth or interest. It is always best to ask!

Inform, Involve, Build Ownership

Share Your Story

Sharing your story is the most important tool you have. Donors want to feel connected to you and the work that you'll be doing. Because of this, donors need to be informed, feel involved, and engage knowing that they can make a difference.

Your job in sharing your story is to do just that, to help them catch the vision.

Share Your Sense of Call and Motivations for Serving

Fundraising is relational. Telling potential supporters about yourself and your sense of call or what led you to want to serve as a YAV will be extremely important.

Below are questions for you to reflect on regarding your personal story. It is important that you're comfortable with

what you share in your story. Also, share in a way that is concise and helps create a personal connection between you and the potential supporters.

Consider the following questions:

- ❑ What is your faith journey? When did it begin? Who or what has influenced you in your faith journey? Where are you now in your faith journey?
- ❑ Where did you go to school? What did you study? Where have you worked? How have these things led to your current vocation?
- ❑ Why did you accept your placement as a YAV?
- ❑ What activities and/or experiences have helped prepare you for this moment?
- ❑ What excites you about this opportunity to serve? How has accepting this opportunity challenged you?
- ❑ How can they pray for you in this year?
- ❑ Is there a particular scripture verse that guides or grounds you?

Know Some Facts

Familiarize yourself with the YAV program, the larger picture of Presbyterian mission and specifics on where you'll be serving. [See **The Presbyterian Primer Section** and the PC(USA) website.]

Involve Potential Supporters & Ask for Their Support

Again, the key to fundraising is personal connection. People give to people. How you approach potential supporters is very important, whether it is through a personal visit, a phone call, a letter or email.

Personal Visits

Personal visits are particularly effective. Making face-to-face contact, sharing your story and your vision for this experience and sharing your excitement is important. Below is a checklist to keep in mind:

- ❑ Make a specific appointment. Let the individuals know why you're coming, that you want to share info about your upcoming volunteer service and ways they can help.
- ❑ When you meet, be sure you cover the basics. If they

Need assistance with language around program basics or values? Visit the YAV website for ideas and examples.

are unfamiliar with the program, begin by sharing that you have an exciting opportunity to participate in a year of service through the Young Adult Volunteer program.

- ❑ Talk about your own faith journey and why you want to serve as a YAV.
- ❑ Tell them what you'll be doing (as much as you know), where you'll be serving, why you feel that this is a good match for you, what may be challenging and what excites you about this opportunity.
- ❑ Tell them the total amount of money you need to raise ($5,000 + team goal). Share with them that you too have made a financial commitment from your own resources. Share your progress to date on raising funds (if known).
- ❑ Explain that your first goal is to raise $2,500 by July 1st
- ❑ Answer any questions they have.
- ❑ Be faithful to the time frame of the meeting!
- ❑ Thank them for meeting with you and let them know how you plan to follow-up.

Telephone contact

When a personal visit is not feasible, you can maximize your time by making an exploratory phone call first to see if financial support might be available and what procedures need to be followed. This is especially helpful when reaching out to organizations.

Telephone contact needs to be brief and to the point. Plan what you're going to say beforehand. For example:

> *"Hello, my name is _____. I have accepted the call to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (placement site) for the next year. I'll be partnering with (brief description of your placement and responsibilities) and would like to speak with you about ways you're able to partner with me on my journey…*
>
> *I have committed to fundraising $5,000 for this experience. I am currently working to raise the necessary funds to help meet my goal. Is this something you would be interested in discussing further? …*

Record any notes from the phone conversation and be prepared to follow up in a timely fashion. Be sure to thank the

If you need additional language to describe the minimum goal plus the team goal, email champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org

It is perfectly fine to admit there are some things you do not know. If any donor would like to be in contact with a YAV staff member, feel free to provide the contact information of a YAV staff member:

Champaka Srinivasan
Mission Associate for Finance, YAV Program
champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org
Phone: 502-569-5164

Destini Hodges
Coordinator, YAV Program
destini.hodges@pcusa.org
Phone: 502-528-5936

individual for their time and help. Ask if they know of any other groups or individuals who might be interested in helping you to serve. **No matter what the response is, remain polite, grateful and always thank them for their time.**

People who you identify as potential supporters may have ideas about other people who would be interested in supporting you. "Is there anyone you know who would want to know about this ministry?" is a great question to ask!

Emails

Emails can be a primary means of communication, especially as an introduction. Here are some key points in developing a letter:

- ❑ Confine the message with several breaks in paragraphs (it will have a better chance of being read).
- ❑ **Grammar is very important!** Take time to edit or donors will not take the time to read.
- ❑ Provide the basic information about the program in clear, concise language (youngadultvolunteers.org is a helpful resource)
- ❑ Include a personal statement about why you want to serve, what you hope to accomplish, what excites you.
- ❑ Invite them to participate in this service by supporting you in prayer, following your blog and supporting you financially.
- ❑ Follow up on all visits and telephone contact with email messages.
- ❑ If you're not used to writing professional emails, ask someone to proof read before sending. Email champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org for additional help.

Asking for support

Regardless of how you contact a potential supporter, the following guidelines are important:

- ❑ Know as much as possible about the potential supporter and customize your contact with them based on what their interests are or their involvement in your life.
- ❑ Provide a giving range for supporters to consider; such as $10/week or approximately $40/month will equal a total gift of over $500.
- ❑ Share with them that you too have made a financial commitment from your own resources. Ask the donor to *join* you in giving.

- ❑ Recognize that you're inviting them to participate in your service experience and while they will not be "on site," they will have the opportunity to walk alongside you.
- ❑ Indicate that you'll be sharing your experiences periodically with supporters through newsletters, blog posts, emails and social media.
- ❑ Recall the funding deadlines: $2,500 by July 1st; $5,000 by January 1st
- ❑ Remain gracious, polite and confident in your call and your ask.

Additional Considerations

- ❑ Be prepared to answer basic questions about your assignment/place of service/ site placement.
- ❑ Do not promise more than you can deliver; (Example: promising to send email messages every week may be an unrealistic expectation).
- ❑ **Beware of expectations on the part of some supporters that you'll buy and ship goods for them or arrange a tourist visit for them while you're on assignment. Do not make promises, but indicate that such requests will need to go through those individuals/entities in charge of your placement.**
- ❑ It is okay to say "I don't know – let me find the answer and get back to you."
- ❑ If someone offers to approach others on your behalf, be sure to provide them with support materials, including information about yourself, the YAV program, where you'll be serving, the funds needed, how to make a gift, etc.
- ❑ Whatever means you use to contact prospective supporters, be sure to thank them for their time and consideration regardless of the outcome of the contact.

If the Answer Is "No"

Prepare yourself for refusals. What if you make your best case for supporting your service and someone says "No, thank you"? You are providing others an opportunity to participate in your service. If they say no, they are simply declining that

If you have questions about an interaction you've had with a supporter, or worry that they might have expectations you will not be able to meet, email champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org to talk things over.

opportunity, not rejecting you as a person. It may feel like rejection at the time, but people decline opportunities for many different reasons, so try not to let it discourage you.
Be gracious even when refused; thank the person(s) for taking time to meet with you, allowing you to speak to their group, **ask them if they know others you could approach**, then move on!

A **"no"** can also mean **"not right now."** Always ask permission to continue to be in contact with the person through blogs, newsletters, etc. A "no" to financial partnership does not mean a "no" to partnership. Always ask folks to pray for you, read your reflections and keep you in mind.

Consider practicing with a friend how you might respond to someone who says "no" to your invitation to donate.

Give Thanks!

It is really important that you acknowledge and show your appreciation of the support you receive. This needs to be done:

- Immediately
- Accurately
- Personally

You will receive monthly fundraising reports, email champaka.srinivasan@pcusa.org if you have any questions.

Immediately: As soon as you know that someone has made the decision to support you, thank the person or group. When a gift is actually made, thank the person or group again. Thank you notes do not have to be long, but they do need to be timely, personal and heart-felt.

Writing your thank you notes by hand makes them feel special and allows you to personalize each note.

Accurately: Be sure to acknowledge the amount that they have given (if known) and that you're writing to the correct person. Remind them of what the money will be used towards (for example, "my year of service in Colombia.")

Personally: Be authentic and use your own language. It is *you* and *your* year of service that they are choosing to support. Allow your voice to be present in the letter. Remind them of where you're going and what you know about what you'll be doing. Close by asking for their continuing support through prayers and by keeping in touch with you. Remember- not to promise more correspondence than you'll be able to do.

Thanking donors becomes especially important when asking for funds for a second YAV year. It is a lot easier to ask folks to continue their support if you have done a diligent job of communicating to and thanking supporters.

(See the **sample thank-you letter** in the Resource Section.)

Donors may contribute by check or online. For checks, ask them to write **your name and the ECO number** on the check, made payable to Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.), and mailed to this address:

Presbyterian Church, (USA)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

Additionally, supporters can make a gift online:

http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/yav/support-yavs/

Enter the ECO# and the name of the YAV in the "Comments" section. Donors can also go online to find your name and ECO number by selecting "Support YAVs" on youngadultvolunteers.org.

Of course, give donors the instructions that you think will be easiest for them to give.

Presbyterian Mission: Serving in Partnership[1]

This section is background information so that you may more effectively and accurately talk about your service within context of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with other North American denominations, has been on a journey for the past 80 years with our neighbors in Christ to re-define our relationships, particularly our mission relationships. The idea of "doing mission in partnership" or "accompanying" churches and local people of faith has a long history of development away from the dominating and colonial patterns of traditional missionary work.

While some churches in other countries were "daughter" churches of those in the West, now they are independent, self-governing churches. As early as 1928, the word *partnership* emerged at a meeting in Jerusalem of the International Missionary Council, largely as a reaction against the dominance of Western churches. With decolonization around the world after World War II, the call for partnership among church bodies became more urgent. Over the years, various councils have taken up the issue and further elaborated its biblical and theological bases as well as trying to sort through the tangle of issues that interfere with the practice of partnership.

In the 1970s, *mutuality in mission* was emphasized, suggesting a giving-and-receiving, respectful relationship of equals. *Accompaniment* also became a popular concept, focusing on encouragement and sharing of experiences. *Solidarity* also came into vogue in the 1980s, particularly as churches in the West began to stand *with* churches and peoples who were

[1] Adapted from Philip L. Wickeri, *Partnership, Solidarity, and Friendship: Transforming Structures in Mission*, Louisville, KY, 2003, pp. 2 – 11.

living under oppressive regimes in Central and South America and in South Africa, in particular, some oppressive regimes having the support of the United States government. *"Being partners with those so treated"* has been offered as a possible definition of *solidarity*. It is a witnessing and sharing in the suffering and marginalization of others. Some churches in this epoch imposed a moratorium on the receiving of foreign (Western) missionaries until greater equality in the relationships could be lived out. More recently, churches around the world re-discovered and re-claimed the idea that mission is *God's mission* (*Missio Dei)* into which all are called to participate and to discern *together* what God is already doing in the world.

The 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a policy statement, *Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership,* to affirm what has been "the goal of ecumenical mission practice for at least fifty years" (p. 3). This statement focuses on five principles of partnership: 1) our shared grace and thanksgiving as joint heirs of Christ; 2) mutuality and interdependence; 3) recognition and respect; 4) open dialogue and transparency; and 5) the sharing of resources (human, cultural, financial and spiritual).

"Partnership in mission" is a work-in-progress. Of particular importance and difficulty today is the vast inequality of resources that exist between churches in North America and Western Europe and those in other lands. How can we truly be "partners," be in mutually caring and beneficial relationships, when such disparity exists? The 2004 meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), of which the PC(USA) is a part, called for an urgent focus on the effects of economic globalization on the poor and marginalized of the world.

You can read the full *Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership* policy here. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/presbyterians-do-mission-partnership/)

Serving in Partnership as it Applies to the YAV Experience

Being and Doing

In any type of mission experience, there is a healthy tension between being and doing. **Embracing both aspects of ministry is a key part of a successful YAV experience**. In North American culture, much value is placed upon what we do and achieve. If we cannot show that we are "usefully" occupied or point to the evidence of our work, we can feel a sense of failure or a lack of purpose. We often see the act of just "being present" as wasted time or leisure.

As a YAV you'll enter into different cultures, both nationally and internationally, where doing and being are valued differently. You'll also enter places where your ability to "do"

or "be" is different from your life in your home culture. Try your best to recognize and take advantage of your opportunities as a YAV for "being." Some of the highlights of your YAV experience could be as simple as washing the dishes with your host mother (or housemates) because that is when she shares with you most openly, or listening to the older man who spends his days sitting at the park because he can tell you what it was like to grow up in his neighborhood and the current history, or walking to church because that is when you visit with the people in your community and learn the realities of life in your new place, or journaling at night before you fall asleep because it is the only time of day when you're not with others. Allow God to use you whether you're being or doing. Oftentimes one leads richly to the other.

Initiative and Acceptance

Another tension you'll probably experience as a YAV is when to accept a situation or whether you should take some initiative to try to change your circumstances. The YAV program is not about sending you to change the world. All YAVs encounter the challenge of living within social, cultural and religious norms that can be very different from their own. Learning how to live within these local standards can feel limiting and contrary to what you think is right.

In the course of your YAV year, you'll spend energy and creativity trying to be faithful to your beliefs while respectfully living within the confines of someone else's. You'll have to recognize and accept what is beyond your ability to change. However, there are some times when your personal initiative as a YAV will be crucial. For example, if you discover that the job you and your site coordinator thought you would do is no longer relevant, you'll want to use initiative to jump in and find a way to interact in your placement regardless of what you originally expected. Unless you want the unexpected to stump your experience, you'll have to take initiative to find another way to engage with the people around you. Finding your way into a new community is not easy and cannot be arranged by others.

Part of the YAV program is learning how to work within the structure (or lack of structure) that you may find, not what you necessarily expected. There will be plenty that you'll just have to accept, but how you respond to the need to accept is dependent upon your initiative to engage regardless of your initial expectations. Even though the YAV program emphasizes flexibility and acceptance, you may also be faced with situations that are unacceptable by any standard. Determining the difference between what you can stretch yourself to accept

What connections do you see between the core tenets you're committed to living out as a YAV and the ideals of serving in partnership?

Core Tenets:

- Cross-cultural mission
- Vocational discernment
- Leadership development through faith in action
- Intentional Christian community
- Simple living

and what you should not try to accept is challenging, particularly when you're living in a different context. When you face such a question, take the initiative to seek the counsel of your fellow YAVs and your site coordinator.

Commitment

Responding to the challenges of your YAV year will require a high level of commitment on the part of many – not just your commitment to the YAV program, but commitment from those that send you and support you, and those that open themselves to receive you. As you commit yourself to God's call for you, remember that the whole of the PC(USA) and others close to you commit to support you in this call.

Remember also the people that commit themselves to receive you also risk opening their lives to your presence and whatever blessings and challenges you may face together. So you as the YAV, those who send you, and those who receive you all enter a mutual trust. If any part of this three-way commitment falters, it deeply affects the other two parts.

The Power of Language[2]

Language has power. It transmits not only facts and ideas, but emotions and values. Skillful writers and speakers have always had the power to affect people's attitudes, influence their actions and shape their inner views of the world and its peoples.

Words expose our deepest beliefs and attitudes. Words also tend to create the reality they describe. We seek to communicate respect and create respect for people of other cultures and nations. That means examining our language and listening to what our words reveal. It means using words that affirm peoples, churches and the values of other cultures and nations.

As Christians who share in the mission of Christ with other churches, we strive to use appropriate language, words that affirm global churches as fully autonomous, and that communicate respect for peoples and cultures that are different from us. Try to avoid words that might sound paternalistic or condescending toward another church or culture. Below are some common examples:

[2] Adapted from *Having An Excellent Adventure: A Handbook for Responsible Travel*, Friendship Press, New York, 1992, pp. 46-47.

Instead of	Use
mission fields	partner churches, country of service, host country or church
"going to the mission field"	"going into mission service"
mission *to*	mission *with*

Many areas once called "mission fields" are now independent, self-governing church bodies. It is no longer appropriate to call these churches "mission fields." Also, "mission fields" gives the idea that the U.S. is not a mission field, which is far from the truth! The whole earth is subject to God's mission activity in the world. Partnership and accompaniment understandings emphasize mission *with* others, not something that is done *to* another.

Instead of	Use
mission station	town, city, or specific non-profit name

Most stations set up by early missionaries have now become towns, villages, or cities.

Instead of	Use
Pagan, primitive, heathen	persons of other faiths or names of specific religions (Muslim, Hindu, indigenous beliefs, etc.)
African	Namibian, Tanzanian, Ethiopian
Asian	Chinese, Philippine, Thai, Korean

Whenever possible, identify people by their country. Avoid generalizing, as though all persons of a certain continental region are the same.

Instead of	Use
Americans	United States citizens, Canadians, North Americans, Central Americans, South Americans, Latin America

Popular usage, even outside the United States, often refers to citizens of the United States as "Americans." But United States citizens are not the only Americans. It is better to say "people of the United States" than to claim the whole territory of the Americas, or North America.

Instead of	Use
Third World, underdeveloped or developing countries	Global majority

"Third World" has had a variety of meanings. In early usage, it referred to politically non-aligned countries. (First World meant the United States and allies; Second World referred to the Soviet Union and "eastern bloc" nations). Current usage implies non-industrialized or economically poor by Western economic standards.

Terms such as "underdeveloped" or "developing" oversimplify a nation's status based on economic or material terms. Nations are measured by purely Western standards and other dimensions tend to be overlooked. For instance, a question might be raised about the moral health or the cultural and social development of rich or powerful nations of the West or North. A search for alternatives to "third world" and "developing" may help us examine attitudes and values we take for granted, but which may need to be challenged.

Instead of	Use
down to…	to…

One does not live "down in Brazil" or "down" in any other country of the southern hemisphere. Simply say that you're going "to Colombia," not "down to Colombia." Up-down terminology is a matter of perspective, given the vastness of the cosmos. Up-down language carries hierarchical overtones we should avoid.

Any building that people live in should be called a house or a home, not a hut.

Instead of	Use
witchcraft, superstition, values, witch doctors	traditional medicine, cultural rituals and traditional healers

These practices still exist in some cultures, but North Americans are often overly preoccupied with questions about

these practices. Do not assume that all traditional medicine, cultural rituals or beliefs in the spirit world are primitive or bad. Living in the culture and coming to know the people will help you to discern about these practices in the specific place.

Instead of	Use
tribes, tribal	people, nations, ethnic groups

Many people groups in Africa are sensitive about being identified along tribal lines. South Africans and Namibians especially are insulted to be asked their tribe, since this is one way the white government attempts or had attempted to demean them and create divisions among black Africans. The word "tribe" also carries connotations of primitiveness. Identify a person by their nationality or, in some circumstances, by their ethnic group or language-but not by tribe- unless requested as the way they would like to be identified. It is important to allow each person the autonomy to claim what about their own identity is important- and this varies from person to person! Regional differences exist, but avoid the adjective "tribal" until you're more familiar with the peoples' own practice in this regard.

Acronyms & Terms You May Need to Know

PC(USA) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Session The governing body of each congregation comprised of ordained elders elected by the congregation to serve 3-year terms. The senior pastor serves as Moderator of Session. There is a Clerk of Session as well.

Presbytery District governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) comprised of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and elders representing each congregation within the presbytery.

Synod Regional governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) made up of representation from the presbyteries.

GA General Assembly: highest governing body of the PC(USA). Made up of elected representatives from presbyteries, the General Assembly meets every two years.

OGA Office of the General Assembly: responsible for meetings and business of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk is the elected officer who oversees OGA. Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II is the current Stated Clerk. The Moderator is elected at GA and serves a two-year term.

PMA Board Presbyterian Mission Agency Board: elected officials who oversee implementation of GA policies and actions and are accountable to the General Assembly. The PMA Board meets three times a year.

PMA Staff Presbyterian Mission Agency Staff: the support staff who carry out the policies and work mandated by the General Assembly, from sending mission personnel, to developing curricula, to disaster relief and social justice and witness to name just a few. The denominational offices are located in Louisville, Kentucky.

Some Presbyterian Mission Agency terms

PWM Presbyterian World Mission: the division of the PMA staff responsible for the selection, sending and support of mission personnel and for relating to partner churches and institutions around the world. YAV program is housed in World Mission.

YAV Young Adult Volunteers: opportunities in Christian service and learning for young adults (19 to 30 years of age.) The YAV Program has sites in the United States and abroad, and requires a commitment of one academic year.

ECO Extra Commitment Opportunity: mechanism for fund raising and funds transfers. Funding support for YAVs is made through ECO accounts.

RESOURCE SECTION

Letter sent by World Mission to home congregation & presbytery

(date)
(name and address)

Dear Pastor _____,

I am pleased to inform you that (YAV) from church name has accepted the call from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (YAV)will be serving with the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program in site during the upcoming YAV year (August '__ – July '__.)

The Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program is an ecumenical, faith-based year of service in sites around the world and across the United States. YAVs accompany local agencies working to address root causes of poverty and reconciliation while exploring the meaning and motivation of their faith in community with peers and mentors.

Each YAV commits to sharing their experience through an online blog which can be accessed by clicking the Meet Current YAVs tab to the right of our homepage, youngadultvolunteers.org. We are excited for (YAV's) development and your community to walk beside them.

Funding during the year of service is shared by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and work placements, as well as the home community of the YAV; this includes family, friends, congregations and presbyteries. The appointment as a Young Adult Volunteer is considered a full-time position and volunteers are not allowed to secure other employment while they are serving. Each YAV receives a stipend to cover their basic living expenses. With the approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, YAVs are asked raise funds.

Our program believes deeply that fundraising is about claiming God's call in one's life and asking others to join-in on the journey as a promising community.

While each YAV is asked to raise a portion of their costs (currently $5,000), it is our wider church's commitment to cover the full cost of a YAV year (approximately $24,000.) Please also consider future support of the YAV program to help create a sustainable model for one of the best ways our denomination invests in the faith-development of young people.

Please also consider additional ways you're able to support and encourage (YAV) during their YAV experience. If you have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact me by email at destini.hodges@pcusa.org or by phone at 502-528-5936.

Blessings in your work and ministries and thank you for your partnership,

-Destini

Destini Hodges

Coordinator, Young Adult Volunteers Program

www.youngadultvolunteers.org @yavprogram

Cc: (presbytery name)

Help Support a Young Adult Volunteer (YAV)

A Program of Presbyterian World Mission, Presbyterian Mission Agency

Type in Your Name

Young Adult Volunteer, Site/City or Country

ECO #

Education (Optional)
Class Year
University/College
Majoring/majored in

Church Affiliation
Name of Church
City & State

Your photo

Contact Information
Email address
Phone Number

Why I Want to Serve as a YAV…
Provide one short paragraph on your reasons for accepting the call to serve as a YAV – what led you to this decision and/or influenced you, what are your expectations and what do you hope will be accomplished.

If you have a favorite scripture or are able to express how serving as a YAV is (or will be) part of your personal faith journey, it would be good to include that here. (Total word count about 100 words. Keep this flyer to one page, back and front!)

How Can You Support Me?

- **Your Prayers**: Pray for me and for the people with whom I will live and serve this year.
- **Your Interest in My Year of Service**: Follow my experience by reading my blog (give the address). Ask me to speak at your church when I return.
- **Your Financial Gifts**: Give a tax-deductible contribution as a one-time gift or in installments over the course of my year of service. You may give online at www.youngadultvolunteers.org with the link "support a YAV" and include my name in the comments section. Or checks can be sent to the address below. Include on the memo line of the check my name and the ECO#. Make checks out to PC(USA):

  Presbyterian Church (USA)
  Remittance Processing
  P.O. Box 643700
  Pittsburg, PA 15264-3700
  (Please write YAV name and ECO # on the checks.)

Letter to Clerk of Session

TO THE CLERK OF SESSION OF _____:

We are pleased to inform you that the person listed below has been selected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for the term indicated below:

Name: Term: August 20__ to July 20__

This is considered a full-time position, and as such, (YAV's name) will not be allowed to secure other employment during this year. With the approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Young Adult Volunteers are asked to help raise funds to help defray the costs of supporting them and their work while they are at their places of assignment.

Out of courtesy for the church, we ask the Young Adult Volunteer not to raise funds until they have received authorization from the session. Therefore, we request that you provide your prayerful support and assist (YAV's name) in raising funds for this assignment. You may use the authorization form below or generate the documentation required on your own. In any case, we ask that you give the (YAV's name) written approval for the authorization to raise funds.

Thank you for your understanding and assistance to (YAV's name) during their transformational year of service. If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at destini.hodges@pcusa.org or by phone at 502-528-5936. This form is for your records and does not need to be returned to the YAV office.

Sincerely,

Destini Hodges
Young Adult Volunteers Program
Presbyterian Mission Agency

Authorization for Young Adult Volunteer Fundraising:

We, _____, give our prayerful support along with this authorization for the Young Adult Volunteer named above to raise funds in the amount required by and accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Signed _____ Date _____

Title _____

Covenant of Support

By means of this covenant, _____
(Name of organization or individual)

commits to support the following person(s) appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for mission service.

(Young Adult Volunteer Name): **ECO #**

will be serving from August 20__ through the end of July 20__.

In addition to upholding each Young Adult Volunteer in thought and prayer, support will be expressed through a financial pledge to assist in providing for support expenses during this term of service in the amount of $_____. Together we give thanks to God for the opportunity to share and participate in this ministry of service and learning.

Conditions of Covenant (Please Print)

Name of Organization or Individual: _____ Total Amount Pledged:_____
Contact Person (For Organization): _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Amount Pledge will be contributed:

- ❑ Quarterly $ _____ x _____ payments
- ❑ Monthly $ _____ x _____ months
- ❑ Single gift of $ _____

Signature of donor/donor organization: _____ Date: _____
Payments will be sent beginning on the following date: _____
Please make checks payable to *The Presbyterian Church (USA*) and write the volunteer's **name and**
ECO# on the check.

Please mail all checks to our secure lockbox: *Presbyterian Church (USA)* **P.O. Box 643700** **Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700**	Online donations can be made at youngadultvolunteers.org with the link "support a YAV" or with reference to the ECO number listed above.

For additional information, contact Destini Hodges at destini.hodges@pcusa.org or 502-528-5936

Sample Letter of Introduction/Request for Support—one page preferred

Date

Name
Address
City & State

Dear (……),

I am excited to share with you that I have accepted the call to serve for one year as a Young Adult Volunteer in (name the site) during the 20__-20__ season. As part of my commitment, I have committed to raising $5,000 in gifts and pledges for my year of service, and I am hoping that you'll support me in this effort.

Through the Young Adult Volunteer program (YAV), I will be joining other young adults serving at sites both here in the United States and around the world. While I am still learning about my specific responsibilities, I will be working (include facts from the YAV website relevant to your site assignment – to receive this information go to www.youngadultvolunteers.org and click on your specific site page).

This year is intentionally crafted to be life-changing and transformational, both for me and for the communities that will welcome me. It will involve living outside my comfort zone and what is familiar to me. It will involve focusing on others. It will involve journeying in faith and trusting God in new ways.

I hope that you'll consider making a gift or pledge toward my financial support. The timing is urgent as I aim to raise $2,500 by July 1st.

(Optional: I am also including a Covenant of Support Form and ask that you consider making a gift or pledge.)

I look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you for your consideration, prayer and financial support!

Sincerely,

Name

Attachments: Flyer (optional: and Covenant of Support Form)

Sample Thank You Note (Handwritten)

Date

Dear (by name),

Thank you for your (gift/pledge) of $____. Your generous donation will help make it possible for me to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer, and for that, I am so grateful.

Currently, I have received $_____ in gifts and pledges. I will let you know when I reach the fundraising goal of $5,000.

I am so excited about serving as a Young Adult Volunteer and look forward to sharing my experiences with you throughout the year. I ask that in the months ahead, you include me and the work that I'll be doing in your prayers. And please keep up with my experience by reading my blog (provide the address).

Again, I appreciate your generous support and your faith in God's work. Please accept my heartfelt thanks!

Sincerely,