A Journey from Study to Service Made Possible through Recurring Giving

Steffan Johnson's 27-year search for the "real world" took him from the football field at St. Andrews University to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, where he earned a master's degree in theological studies.

Though seminary was transformative, he realized he needed a more accessible way to connect with everyday people beyond academic theology.

He found that through the PC(USA)'s Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program. Serving in New Orleans, Johnson worked with youth, community ministries and people experiencing homelessness, while living in intentional Christian community with fellow volunteers. The hands-on service helped him bridge the gap between what he had studied and how to live it.

"While in New Orleans, I volunteered as a tutor and conducted a Bible study with young people," Johnson said. "It was great — but it also showed me that I don't always have all the answers. We're all still learning."

Through these experiences, Johnson discovered a growing passion for youth ministry and continued to discern his calling. The YAV program — supported in part by the Christmas Joy Offering and recurring gifts to the Youth & Young Adults PILLARS Impact Fund — offers young adults a year of service, spiritual formation and vocational exploration. Johnson credits the program with helping him grow in every aspect of his life, calling it "a year of service for a lifetime of change."

Read the original story from the Presbyterian News Service: https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/6/3/young-adults-discover-and-transform-world-through-yav-program. *Please note: With the sunsetting of the Pentecost Offering, the PC(USA)'s YAV program is now supported, in part, through the Christmas Joy Offering.*