



# Office of Public Witness

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness

Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry

Raising a Prophetic Voice through the Social Justice Policy of Presbyterians since 1946

## Young Adult Engagement Report, 2012-2015

*I will set up my covenant with you and your descendants after you in every generation as an enduring covenant. I will be your God and your descendants' God after you.*

-- Genesis 17:7 (CEB)

### A Commitment to Young Adult Engagement

At the beginning of 2012, the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, PC(USA) Director for Public Witness identified two significant challenges for the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness (OPW). The first aimed to show what this ministry does. That is, the OPW seeks to serve the whole church, not just a self-selected affinity group. The second was how to balance the richness of our past with the promise of our future. Nelson wrote, "It is clear to me that outreach to, and service with, young adults is essential to meeting both challenges."

At the same time, the Presbyterian Mission Agency identified Young Adults as one of the directional goals in the Mission Work Plan, and aimed to "Inspire, equip, and connect the church to: Engage and join with young adults in reforming the church for Christ's mission."

Indeed, the Office of Public Witness believes that the formation of servant leaders and advocates is vital to the public witness of the PC(USA). Through a variety of programs, from Serving Learning Opportunities (Internships and Fellowships), to specialized programming and seminars for youth and visiting college groups, to intentional outreach to and scholarships for young adults to attend major events like CPJ Training Day and Ecumenical Advocacy Days, the OPW has made service to and with young adults a central focus of Public Witness ministry.

In 2012, the Reverend Nelson stated the Office of Public Witness' new commitment to ministry to and with young adults, God blessed the OPW with the amazing gift of the new and young colleagues who joined us over the next few years. We give thanks to God for this ministry and, in accordance with the Mission Work Plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, renew this intentional ministry to and with young adults. It is crucial to our ministry.

*The Office of Public Witness is the public policy, information and advocacy office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Our mission is to represent the social witness policy of the General Assembly in Washington and to equip Presbyterians for effective advocacy.*

April 2, 2015

## A Justice Model for Service Learning

The church believes that formation of servant leaders and advocates is vital to the public witness ministry of the PC(USA). The service learning opportunities we offer seek to provide substantive, formative work and guidance for persons seeking experiential learning and vocational discernment where the church meets the public square. Each intern and fellow receives a broad experience of the ministry of Public Witness and has the opportunity to explore the connections among their own faith journey, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s social justice teachings, and political and social realities in the United States and the world today through:

- Advocacy
- Training and workshops (as participant and presenter)
- Ecumenical and Inter-religious Coalition work
- Writing, blogging and social media engagement
- Protests and vigils
- Meetings with government and religious leaders

The OPW offers two programs:

**Summer Fellowship:** Summer Fellows engage in the ministry of public witness, experiencing all the tools in the advocate's toolbox, through an assigned issue or portfolio of issues. During this program, the Fellows serve full-time for a set period of ten weeks.

**Internship:** this is an ideal opportunity for undergraduates or seminary students seeking academic credit for their service. Interns may serve during the fall, spring, or full academic year, but no less than ten weeks. The internship is flexible and can be structured to accommodate candidates' schedules and unique learning goals.

The Office of Public Witness also participates with partner organizations that place young adults in service learning situations, including the DC site of the PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer Program, the Congressional Hunger Center's Bill Emerson Hunger Fellowship, the American Studies Program of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, and other institutions of higher education. Interns and Fellows have received academic or field education credit for their service in the OPW from Wesley Theological Seminary, Princeton Seminary, Candler School of Theology, Vanderbilt Divinity School, the Ohio State University, Gordon College, Hastings College, and Maryville College Bonner Scholars Program.

One significant challenge that these programs continue to face is recruitment. We are experiencing a notable lack diversity in applications -- racial/ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic diversity. Despite having increased the Summer Fellowship living expense stipend in an effort to make this opportunity more widely available, we have not seen the increase in diversity that we are seeking. This challenge will become a new focus of recruitment efforts, seeking to meet students and other young adults, from a variety of backgrounds, where they are. We also call on the Church to help identify these future leaders and prophets of the church, by inviting young adults of color, both men and women, and those who have or are experiencing poverty, to consider these programs as opportunities for professional development and discernment.



Daniel Williams, Summer Fellow '12, preaches in Simpson Memorial Chapel, United Methodist Building

*See Appendix A for bios of  
OPW Interns and Fellows 2012-2015*

*We seek to challenge the dominant paradigm of internships as a source of labor. In offering Internships and Fellowships in the OPW, we are not seeking a source of “cheap labor,” or even an extra pair of hands, but rather we are working to provide real opportunities for experiential learning, growth, and discernment.*

## Challenging the Dominant Internship Paradigm

Washington, DC, is a town that runs on unpaid or grossly underpaid labor. People from all over the country flock to our nation’s capital in search of knowledge and experience. And while the goals are lofty, the practice falls far short of the mark, as many are pulled into unpaid junior staff positions (not experiential learning situations) where they have great responsibility and no power.

In the Office of Public Witness, we seek to challenge the dominant paradigm of internships as a source of labor. In offering Internships and Fellowships in the OPW, we are not seeking a source of “cheap labor,” or even an extra pair of hands, but rather we are working to provide real opportunities for experiential learning, growth, and discernment.



AmyBeth Willis and Jenny Hyde, 2014-15 Young Adult Volunteers, with OPW’s Leslie Woods at National Capital Presbytery meeting

Our interns and fellows are empowered with responsibility for ministry in this office, and are supported by our staff with the resources they need to accomplish their learning goals. Our interns experience both responsibility and power.

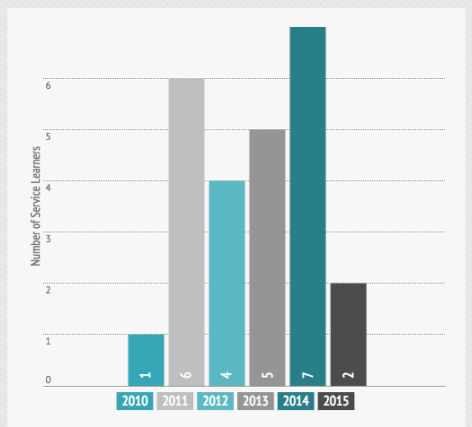
We believe we are partners with our interns in their learning experiences. We seek to leave doors open, providing a wide array of experiences, responsibilities, and opportunities for discernment and growth, so that when interns and fellows leave the Office of Public Witness, they can truly say, “I have learned something new; I have gained new skills; I have continued to discern God’s call for my life.” We give

thanks to God for the tremendous joy and responsibility that comes with the opportunity to guide and teach interns and fellows. The gift of working with them enriches our experience of ministry.

Since the beginning of 2012, we have increased our commitment to service learning. A total of **18 young adults**, three of whom have been people of color, have served as Summer Fellows, Interns, Emerson Hunger Fellows, or Young Adult Volunteers (some of them serving over two calendar years). Among them, they have served for a total of **8,618 hours** in the course of three years and three months. Of the 18 participants in our programs, **eight received academic credit** for their service. Many have finished college and gone on to seminary or jobs. Some have finished seminary and been ordained. Several are currently applying to attend seminary or graduate school in the 2015-16 school year. They are members of the church and clergy, they are students and professionals, they are tremendous colleagues and partners in ministry.

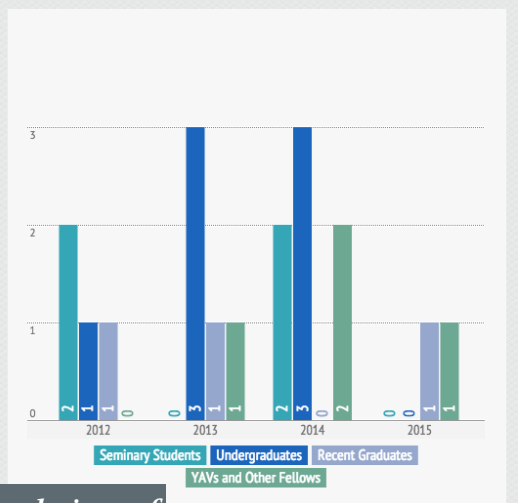
*Young Adult Engagement Report*

### SERVICE LEARNERS IN OPW JANUARY 2010-APRIL 2015



### WHO SERVES IN THE OPW?\*

\*2012-13 Seminary Intern and 2014-15 Young Adult Volunteers are counted in the year their service began



*For larger renderings of these charts, see Appendix C*

“I was the Summer Fellow for International Issues at the OPW during the summer of 2011. My experience at OPW has been incredibly formative both for my faith journey and for the shape my professional vocation has taken. I served my fellowship with OPW right after my first year of seminary. I had not even been back in the U.S. a year after serving in Peru as a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer (YAV). My life-changing experience in Peru had changed the way I understood the world, God, and my call within God's world. I was seriously questioning whether or not I was called to professional ministry, a call about which I had been convinced for many years.

“However, my work at OPW advocating for justice and human rights introduced me to a new type of ministry that really resonated with the broader understanding of God I gained in Peru. This ministry of public witness, of raising your voice for those whose voices are not heard, of speaking the truth of God's love and liberation to those who might otherwise oppress, was exactly what I needed.

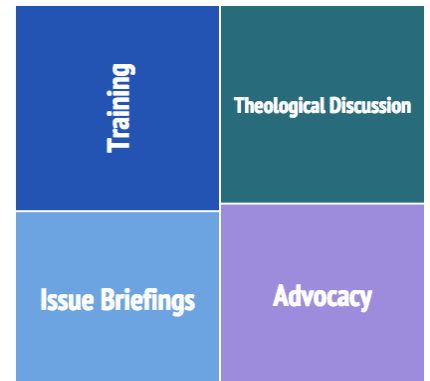


Ginna Bairby  
(formerly Ginna Irby)

“I returned to seminary with a newly invigorated call to ministry and a broader understanding of what "ministry" is. Now, I have graduated from Seminary with renewed conviction in my call, been ordained as a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery of the James and begun my first call as the Managing Editor of *Justice Unbound* and the Associate for Young Adult Social Witness at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, KY. I continue to give thanks for how my fellowship at the OPW redefined my understanding of ministry and showed me ways in which I can engage my experience and my passions in service to the Church.

## Seminars to Build Advocates for Justice

Through intentional partnerships with organizations such as the Pilgrimage, of Church of the Pilgrims, Washington, DC, as well as in response to special requests from visiting church or college/seminary campus groups, the Office of Public Witness provides tailored programs that include issue briefings, theological discussions, training, and advocacy.



These presentations can be tailored based on the interest of the group, their availability, their context (i.e.



Larchmont Avenue Presbyterian Church visit to OPW in 2014

mission trip, urban ministry or poverty education, course credit), or other factors. The Office of Public Witness works with the group's leader, or their organizer through the Pilgrimage, to identify an issue of interest (i.e. poverty, hunger, homelessness, mass incarceration, etc.), gauge the group's familiarity with civic participation, and design a seminar that will meet the group's needs and provide a good overview of public witness ministry, as well as responsible and effective civic engagement.

These visits are a great way to invite the church into the vision of Micah 6:8, where we are called to “do

justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.” When groups are visiting DC through the Pilgrimage or other urban ministry immersion programs, they experience “loving mercy” through direct service projects in the city. They meet with people who are or have experienced the injustices under discussion (e.g. homelessness) and learn that poverty and injustice are systemic problems and not the linear result of poor decision-making.

micah.  
sixtyeight.  
**DO JUSTICE**  
love mercy  
walk humbly!

We make every effort to schedule these seminars in the Office of Public Witness for the end of the group’s time in DC, so as to hear from them about their experiences in the city and to use that knowledge as an



Westminster Presbyterian Church, West Chester, PA, inter-generational Mission Trip to Washington, DC

opening invitation to asking the deeper “justice” question of “why?” Why are people hungry, homeless, trapped in cycles of violence or incarceration? After an introduction to public witness ministry, a briefing on an issue, and advocacy training, the visiting groups usually conclude their seminar with a meeting or meetings with their Congressman and/or Senators’ offices. In structuring the seminars in this way, we help to demystify the process of civic engagement and help the group bring their trip full circle – from meeting immediate need to seeking to

change the system that creates need.

*A sample agenda from such a seminar is attached in Appendix B*

In addition to providing this service to churches and campus groups, one benefit of these seminars is the tremendous opportunity to invite young adults into public witness ministry and recruit for the Summer Fellowship and Internship programs. We have found that these visiting groups are an ideal place to introduce our ministry to young adults who become excited about and seek further experience and learning.

15 GROUPS

11 STATES REPRESENTED (+ DC AND CUBA)

207 TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

## Conferences and Outreach

Office of Public Witness staff members take the opportunity to accept invitations at conferences, presbyteries, and churches where we have the opportunity to interact with and serve youth and young adults. In particular, as Director for Public Witness, Reverend Nelson has preached the Montreat youth and collegiate conferences in 2012 and 2013, with plans to return again in 2015. He also participated in the training of the Young Adult Volunteers in 2014 and led programming for young adults at Big Tent conferences and presbytery retreats. In the course of these three years, the Director for Public Witness has visited with 70 presbyteries and met with their youth in many instances. Office of Public Witness staff members also make it a point to attend NEXT Church conferences to connect with young adult pastors and church workers.



J. Herbert Nelson, Director for Public Witness, keynotes at Ecumenical Advocacy Days

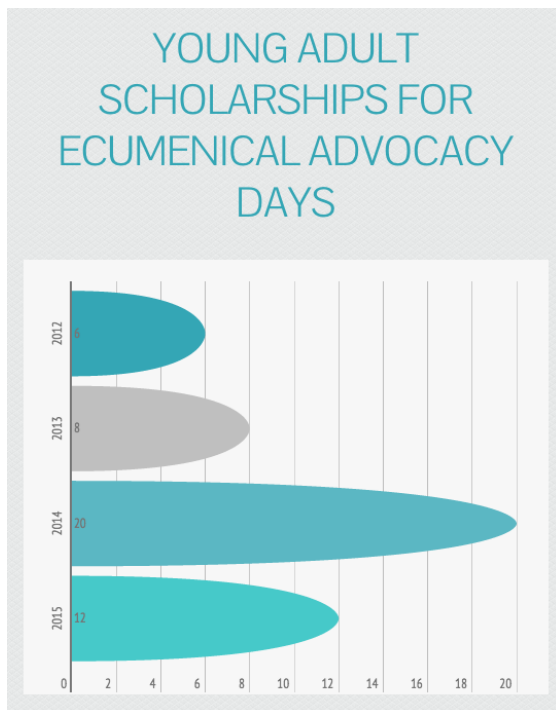
In December 2012, the Office of Public Witness, at the direction of the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010), joined with Johnson C. Smith Seminary to host a conference on “Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church.” The OPW provided scholarships for 40 seminary and college students to attend this special event.



Seminary Students Attend HIV/AIDS conference in Dec. 2012

In addition, the OPW shares in sponsoring Compassion, Peace, and Justice Training Day and Ecumenical Advocacy Days. OPW’s budget includes a modest amount for scholarships for young adults and students. For the last three years, scholarships to cover registration fees to Ecumenical Advocacy Days have been awarded to 46 young adults (see graph).

In all, during the period of January 2012 to April 2015, the Office of Public Witness interacted with 4,822 youth and young adults through conferences and other events where OPW staff went out to them.



## Renewal of Commitment

The commitment to ministry to and with youth and young adults has been a blessing to the Office of Public Witness. Indeed, our ministry has been made richer by the contributions of our young adult interns and fellows, by the opportunity to meet with youth and students as they undergo formative experiences of mission and urban poverty education, and by the intentional outreach to communities where youth and young adults gather as the body of Christ. In all, the concerted outreach effort has resulted in connections with just over 5,000 youth and young adults.



J. Herbert Nelson meets with youth at Presbytery of Genesee Valley

We have noticed a heartening pattern in our outreach and mentoring work – Reverend Nelson or other OPW staff members go out into the church to meet with youth and young adults. Some of these groups are then inspired to come to Washington for experiential learning and mission work. Then many of these folks apply for the Summer Fellowship or Internship and come to serve in the Office of Public Witness. As these new leaders and movers in the church leave our ministry context and move into other and new ministries of their own, we have solid connections in the work and ministry of young and emerging leaders in the church.

In the Reverend Nelson’s “A New Organizing Model for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness: Young adult participation is essential for a new era of political advocacy (2012),” he identified three



2014 Spring Seminary Interns Sabrina Slater and Kyle Cristofalo with Stated Clerk Grady Parsons

conclusions that led to the three-year commitment to this ministry —

- There are Presbyterians in significant numbers who are interested in political advocacy work. They need training to navigate the overcome the confusion created by the present political morass in Washington and across the country.
- Sessions and pastors are often fearful of raising political issues in congregational life. They view political issues as divisive. Consequently, members are left to the form and express their political opinions without the benefit of guidance from their church.
- Young Adults are looking for a new paradigm for engaging their faith and politics. Many young adults are deterred from engaging congregational life, because many local congregations fail to interpret and contextualize biblical scripture to present day political realities.

For these reasons, and in faithfulness to the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Mission Work Plan, the Office of Public Witness recommits to three more years of intentional outreach and ministry with and to youth and young adults.



2012 Summer Fellows



2013 Summer Fellows



2014 Summer Fellows



2014-15 YAVs



2015 Spring Interns

## Stay Informed

The PC(USA) Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC, maintains several online platforms to better serve you.

Website: <http://www.pcusa.org/washington>

Blog: <http://officeofpublicwitness.blogspot.com>

Find your elected officials: <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/dbq/officials>

Social Media:



@PCUSAWashington

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## *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*



**Debbie Dyslin** served as a Summer Fellow in 2012. Since her fellowship, she graduated from Beloit College in May 2013, with a BA in Sociology. She wrote: "My experience last summer as a fellow with the OPW certainly had a formative impact on me spiritually and vocationally. Faith and social justice are two of the most important things to me, and this fellowship helped me to explore how those two passions can be lived out vocationally in faith-based advocacy. After the fellowship, I started considering more seriously going to seminary. Part of my OPW fellowship focused on understanding solitary confinement in U.S. prisons as a form of torture.

My senior year of college, I worked for the Spiritual Life Program and co-led an interfaith student social action campaign about injustices and challenges prisoners and previously incarcerated people face. We found inspiration and support for this campaign through the InterFaith Youth Core (IFYC), founded by Eboo Patel." After her Fellowship, Debbie served for a year in Los Angeles through the Episcopal Service Corps, which is similar to the YAV program. Her fellowship was made possible by gift from the No2Torture movement and the Presbytery of Tropical Florida.

**Blair Moorhead** was a Summer Fellow in 2012. Since her time as a Fellow, Blair finished her final year of a dual Masters of Divinity/Masters of Social Work degree program. In May 2013, she graduated from Howard University's School of Social Work and Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. Over the summer, she served a church in Arlington, VA, as their Interim Director of Children's Ministry. Blair now works as a Case Manager at Community Vision of Interfaith Works, an organization whose goal is to meet the needs of poor and homeless people in Montgomery County, MD. Blair writes, "The OPW Fellowship really influenced my last year of social work school. Instead of speaking vaguely about policy and its impact on ourselves and people we serve, I knew the issues and the players. I also felt increased encouragement working with clients and systems, confident that I was part of a community of faithful people committed to creating meaningful change. This excitement continues on as I begin my career, working at the intersection of faith and social concerns."



**Daniel Williams** was a Summer Fellow in 2012. He is a recent graduate of Hendrix College in Conway, AR, and a member of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque, NM, where he has served on Session. After completing his Summer Fellowship, Daniel returned to his home state to work for the re-election of President Obama with Organizing for America New Mexico and then to build public support for the freedom to marry with the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico and the Why Marriage Matters NM campaign. His organizing work focuses on helping same-sex couples, their families, and their supporters claim their power

by sharing their stories in their communities. "My time with the Office of Public Witness gave me real skills and a new vocabulary to integrate justice-centered advocacy into my life of faith. It confirmed for me what my heart had long known: that advocacy - whether in the form of speaking truth to power on Capitol Hill or grassroots organizing in our communities - offers all of us fresh opportunities to joyfully live into renewed discipleship to Christ." Daniel is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Austin Theological Seminary.



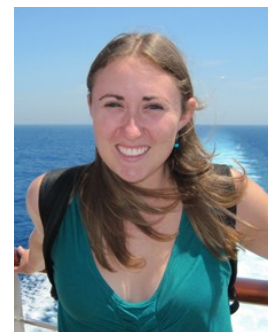
### *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*

**Nelson Cowan** received course credit toward Practice in Ministry and Mission (field education) for his service in the OPW during his second year pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. (2012-2013). His educational background is in International Relations at the University of North Florida and is now pursuing a PhD in Liturgical Studies at Boston University School of Theology. At the Office of Public Witness, Nelson focused on issues of domestic economic inequality, just food systems, and energy reform. In addition to interning at the OPW, Nelson is a church musician and served at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Annandale, VA, as the director of Modern Worship Music. He is an avid reader, blogger, and songwriter.



**Irene Romulo** completed the policy portion of her Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship\* through the Congressional Hunger Center by serving in the Office of Public Witness in spring and summer 2013. Originally from Cicero, IL, Irene graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in social policy. As an Emerson Hunger Fellow, Irene has spent the first six months of her fellowship organizing with community members on immigrant rights issues at Causa Justa :: Just Cause in Oakland, CA. She worked closely with Latino communities to inform them about their rights and the services available to them. Irene also helped to document stories of human rights abuses and supported the growth of community leaders to head the immigrant rights campaign. Prior to being a Hunger Fellow, Irene worked with several organizations in Chicago to increase access to legal and support services for low-income victims of domestic violence, to defend laborers' rights, and to address educational disparities. After completing her Bill Emerson Fellowship, Irene is working for an immigrant rights and empowerment organization, Causa Justa, as well as for the School of the Americas Watch.

**Kendra Poole** served as an intern and Summer Fellow 2013. Originally from Albuquerque, NM, she came to the OPW as a senior at George Washington University, where she majored in English and Creative Writing. After her Summer Fellowship, she moved to Tanzania to work as a Project Coordinator for the Magoma Project with the 2Seeds Network. 2Seeds is a non-profit that addresses the urgent need for food and income security in rural Tanzania through incubating small, community-based, agricultural development projects. She worked with students, parents, and community members in two local primary schools. A great deal of her job was to help local partners recognize their own potential and provide a space in which it can be accessed and maximized.



Kendra attributes much of the relationship-building, advocacy, and communication skills required for this position to her experiences in the OPW office. She says, "I have learned that people are best engaged with advocacy through the development of personal relationships, through situating compassion at the axis of how we interact in community, and through sharing stories, prayers, and meditations." After returning to the United States, Kendra returned to Washington, DC, and is currently working as staff in one of her home-state Senator's office.

## *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*



**Anna Leigh Keith** had just graduated from Vanderbilt University, where she double majored in English Literature and Religious Studies with a minor in Spanish, when she came to the OPW as a Summer Fellow in 2013. Before serving in the Office of Public Witness, Anna Leigh was a member of the Vanderbilt varsity women's golf team and has also interned with the Family Equality Council and the ACLU of Tennessee. After her Summer Fellowship, Anna Leigh became a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) at the New Orleans site, working for Project Homecoming where she worked as site coordinator taking volunteer groups to rebuild houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Anna Leigh currently continues in the same work at Project Homecoming through AmeriCorps.

**Will Minter** served as a Summer Fellow in 2013 when he was a rising senior at Sewanee: University of the South in Sewanee, TN, where he was pursuing a degree in American Studies with a minor in Business. Will is originally from Abilene, TX, where he is a fourth generation member of First Central Presbyterian Church. Throughout his life in the church, Will has been an active leader at camps and conferences across Texas and throughout the Synod of the Sun. In 2013, Will served as the Summer Fellow for International issues of peace and justice. Of his time in the office, he says "I am grateful for the opportunity to help forward the mission of the Office of Public Witness, and I have been humbled to serve the church alongside our staff, as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners."



**Edison McDonald** served as a Summer Fellow in 2013 when he was a rising senior at Hastings College, where he was pursuing a double major in Political Science and Religion. He is originally from Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was a Youth Elder at Lincoln Westminster Presbyterian Church. He believes that "the voice of people of faith needs to be heard in the political sphere in order to help the marginalized." He worked previously in the faith community and the political community to ensure that these important ideals are upheld. As a Summer Fellow, his main focus was the Farm Bill's implications for people who are hungry, financially oppressed, geographically limited, as well as the vulnerable environment. He is currently doing outreach

and organizing work in his home state of Nebraska.



*The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program of the Congressional Hunger Center is a social justice program that trains, inspires, and sustains leaders. Fellows gain field experience fighting hunger and poverty through placements in community based organizations across the country, and policy experience through placements in Washington, D.C. The program bridges community-based efforts and national public policy, and fellows develop as effective leaders in the movement to end hunger and poverty. The OPW annually submits a policy placement work plan and has hosted two Fellows in this 3-year period.*

## *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*

**Kyle Cristofalo** is a recent graduate of Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, with a Master of Divinity. He spent his last semester at Candler participating in Wesley Theological Seminary's National Capital Semester and interning with the Office of Public Witness in spring 2014. Upon graduation, Kyle stayed on as a Summer Fellow. With a concentration in Justice, Peacebuilding, and Conflict Transformation, he has spent much of his time thinking through how religious communities can engage in creative practices of peacemaking that work to overcome systems of injustice. After completing his undergraduate degree in Peace and Conflict Studies, Kyle moved to Israel/Palestine, where he spent a year as a service worker with the Mennonite Central Committee. At the Office of Public Witness, Kyle worked primarily on issues relating to Israel/Palestine, as well as immigration. A life-long Presbyterian, with membership at Central Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Atlanta, GA, Kyle hopes to serve the church through work in the non-profit or private sector in organizations committed to peace and justice issues.



Originally from Washington state, **Sabrina Slater** served as an intern in spring 2014 during her second year of pursuing a Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary. She came to DC for the semester through the National Capital Semester for Seminarians program hosted at Wesley Theological Seminary. Sabrina enjoyed a career in higher education before embarking on seminary studies and the ordination process. She is committed to honest dialogue and hearing people's voices and stories. While an intern, her focus included women, relationship violence, human trafficking, domestic poverty, and the relationship between poverty and violence. As a candidate in process under care of Hamblen Park Presbyterian Church (Spokane, Washington) and the Inland Northwest Presbytery, she is excited to see what the PC(USA) is doing in DC and to communicate this important work and opportunities to get involved with Presbyterians in every corner of the world. She is committed to the work believing the divine image to be stamped on all persons!

**Anne Fyffe** hails from Dayton, OH, and finished her OPW Summer Fellowship in 2014 just in time to return home and graduate from Ohio State University with a degree in Public Affairs, with a specialization in Community Organization and Civic Engagement. Anne's Summer Fellowship was the capstone project for her Public Affairs major. While in the OPW, Anne was particularly interested in issues surrounding poverty and inequality, including hunger, housing and homelessness, incarceration and recidivism, and education. During her time in the office, she worked primarily on domestic policy issues with a special focus on childhood hunger. She says, "I am thrilled to have had this experience to combine my faith and my passion for public policy. I have so enjoyed learning more about how the faith community advocates for change in Washington, DC, and how the PC(USA) is part of that." Since her Fellowship, she has begun the ordination discernment process and plans to enroll in seminary this year.



## *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*



Originally from Neenah, WI, when **Alissa Rashid** served as a Summer Fellow in 2014, she was entering in her third year at Vanderbilt University, pursuing a major in Cognitive Studies. A senior this year, Alissa is very involved in campus life serving on UKIRK council (Presbyterian campus ministry), Alternative Winter and Spring Breaks, Alternative Gift Fair, and is looking forward to serving as Head Resident of a first-year residence house. Alissa was led to OPW thanks to the encouragement of Alan Bancroft, her UKIRK campus minister at Vanderbilt. During her Summer Fellowship, Alissa primarily worked on environmental and immigration issues while continuing to learn about the magnitude of work and issues the OPW covers. Alissa wrote that she was extremely grateful for this opportunity to work and learn alongside the OPW staff this summer and for opening her eyes to honestly speaking truth in love to power.

A native of Louisville, KY, **David Clifford** was entering in his third year at Maryville College in Maryville, TN, when he served as a Summer Fellow in 2014. He is a Political Science major with a History minor. David also plays baseball for Maryville and is a Bonner Scholar, a service-based scholarship. David met OPW Director J. Herbert Nelson when he came to speak at Maryville, inspiring him to pursue a Summer Fellowship with the OPW. Service in the OPW helped him fulfill commitments to his Bonner Scholarship. While at the Office of Public Witness, David worked on the issues of disability, labor rights, campaign finance reform, and immigration, gaining valuable experience as well as exposure to all that the OPW does to advocate on behalf of the PC(USA) and speak truth in love to power.



**AmyBeth Willis** is currently serving as a PC(USA)'s Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) through the National Capital Presbytery's DC YAV site (2014-2015). She grew up in Murfreesboro, TN, and graduated May 2013 from Emory University in Atlanta, GA, where she studied Sociology, Religion, and Spanish. She spent the 2013-14 year as a YAV in the desert of Tucson, AZ, working at Southside Presbyterian Church. She is passionate about the connection between faith and justice work, especially in the realm of immigration, advocacy, and education. In the Office of Public Witness, she focuses primarily on issues of immigration reform, hunger and poverty, money in politics, and mass incarceration.

Of her choice to pursue a second YAV year at the DC site, she said, "After a year of providing 'direct services' to people with immediate needs, I wanted an opportunity to engage in policy work and understand how policy impacts the day-to-day lives of people. How do we move from mercy to justice ministries? Here, I have learned about the amazing justice-driven and prophetic work of this office and our ecumenical partners. Our power is in our faith, the mobilization of people, and our commitment to do justice. The voice for justice and righteousness on the Hill would be so much smaller without people of faith. I have learned that this work is an uphill battle but is worth the climb. It was hard for me to leave Tucson, but I knew this was an important next step for me. I have felt affirmed that God is calling me to this work as I discern where God is calling me next. I don't know how this will manifest itself, although I could see myself doing more community organizing."

### *Interns and Fellows for Public Witness*

**Jenny Hyde** currently serves as a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) through the National Capital Presbytery's DC YAV site (2014-2015). Jenny Hyde hails from Massachusetts and is a recent graduate of Gordon College with a degree in International Affairs with a concentration in International Development. She is a member of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Easton, MA, and was a Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the 2010 General Assembly. At college, she was very involved in Gordon's Residence Life program and the college's Model United Nation's team. In the OPW, she works on international issues, primarily focused on trade policy. When asked what led her to serve at the Office of Public Witness, she responded that she was "intentional in seeking a ministry in a new context, to see how the church wrestles with public policy issues and advocacy. I feel very blessed to be here."



**Nora Leccese** is currently (2015) serving the policy placement portion of a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship\* through the Congressional Hunger Center. Originally from Boulder, CO, Nora graduated from the University of Colorado in 2014 with a degree in economics and a minor in ethnic studies with a focus on community leadership. Nora helped found Boulder Food Rescue, a national organization that uses bicycle power to redistribute produce that would otherwise go to waste from grocery stores to homeless, food insecure, and low income individuals. She has conducted research on worker owned cooperatives in Argentina and was a lead organizer in a campaign to divest Colorado University from the fossil fuel industry.

In her capacity as an Emerson Hunger Fellow, she served the first part of her Fellowship in a field placement at the Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick, VT, where she assessed how local food infrastructure, such as cold storage and processing facilities, might better serve the needs of emergency food organizations (e.g. food banks, pantries, and congregate meal sites), with the goal of increasing access to fresh food for low-income Vermonters. In the OPW she is working to increase awareness of the root causes of poverty and to provide resources to congregations who want to deepen their knowledge about access to education, mass incarceration, and economic inequality.

**Salome Boyd** joined the OPW staff in January 2015 as an intern after completing studies in Regional Development and Innovation from Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. She came to D.C. with "the hope of learning more about how civil society can influence U.S. policies, and the approach the PC(USA) takes to achieve such social change. After only a week, I caught myself wishing my internship were longer than four months!" During her time in the OPW, Salome is focusing on issues of economic justice and is currently working with *Publish What You Pay*, as they research and push for the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to implement a strong regulation for transparency within extractive industries. Next year, Salome will start a Master's program in Public Administration in the Netherlands, after which she hopes to support grassroots movements to promote economic justice and increase corporate responsibility around the globe.



# Appendix B

## *Sample Agenda from OPW Seminar*

Advocacy Day in PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

100 Maryland Ave. NE, Ste. 410

Washington, DC 20002

### Agenda

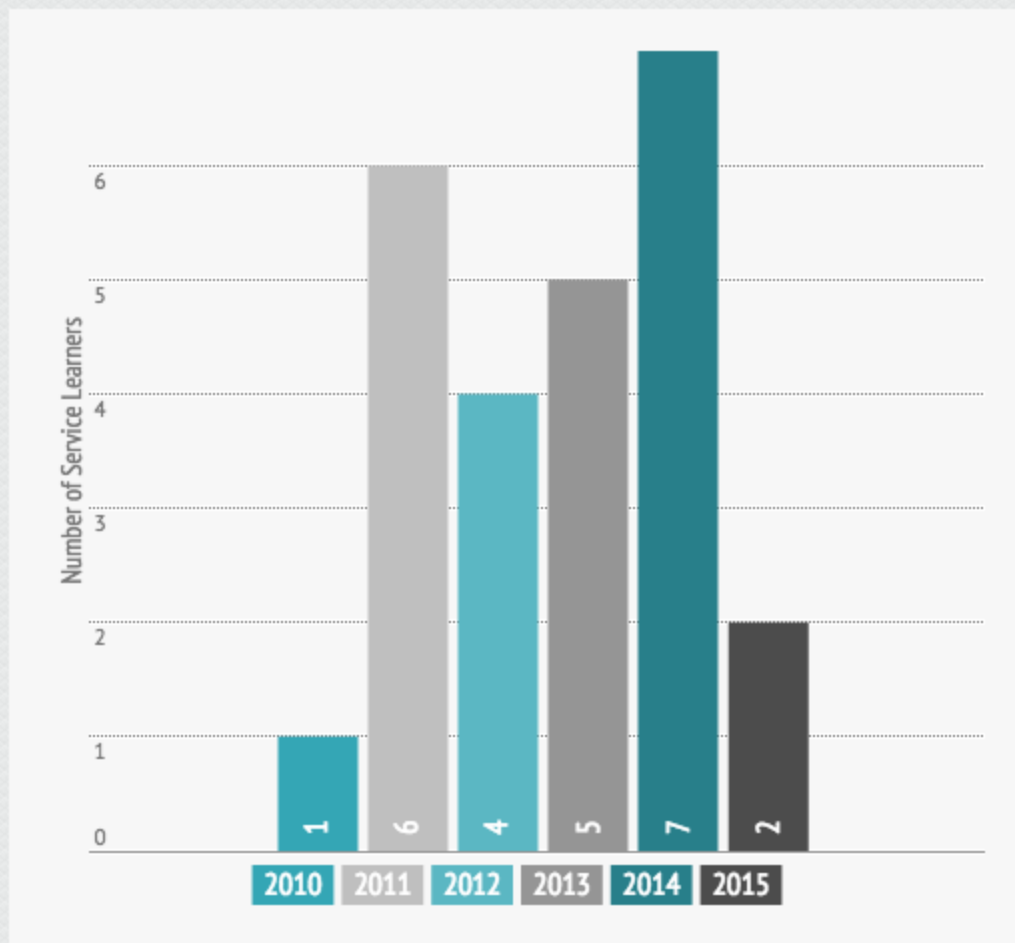
9:30-9:45	Arrive at Office of Public Witness and Gather
9:45-10:45am	<b>The Church's Public Witness Ministry</b> A Discussion with Office of Public Witness staff <b>J. Herbert Nelson</b> , PC(USA) Director for Public Witness <b>Catherine Gordon</b> , PC(USA) Rep. for International Issues <b>Leslie Woods</b> , PC(USA) Rep. for Domestic Poverty & Environmental Issues
10:45-11:00am	Break
11:00-11:45am	<b>Intersections of Race, Gender, and Poverty</b> A Briefing on Mass Incarceration and the Smarter Sentencing Act
11:45am-12:30pm	<b>Advocacy Training</b>
12:30-1:30pm	Lunch (please bring your own)
1:30-2:00pm	Walk to Congressional Office Buildings
2:00-4:00pm	<b>Meetings with Elected Officials and staff*</b>

*\* these meetings are arranged by OPW staff based on voting address information provided by participants, so that visitors to the OPW have the opportunity to meet with their own Representative and/or Senators.*

# Appendix C

## *Service Learning in the Office of Public Witness*

### SERVICE LEARNERS IN OPW JANUARY 2010-APRIL 2015

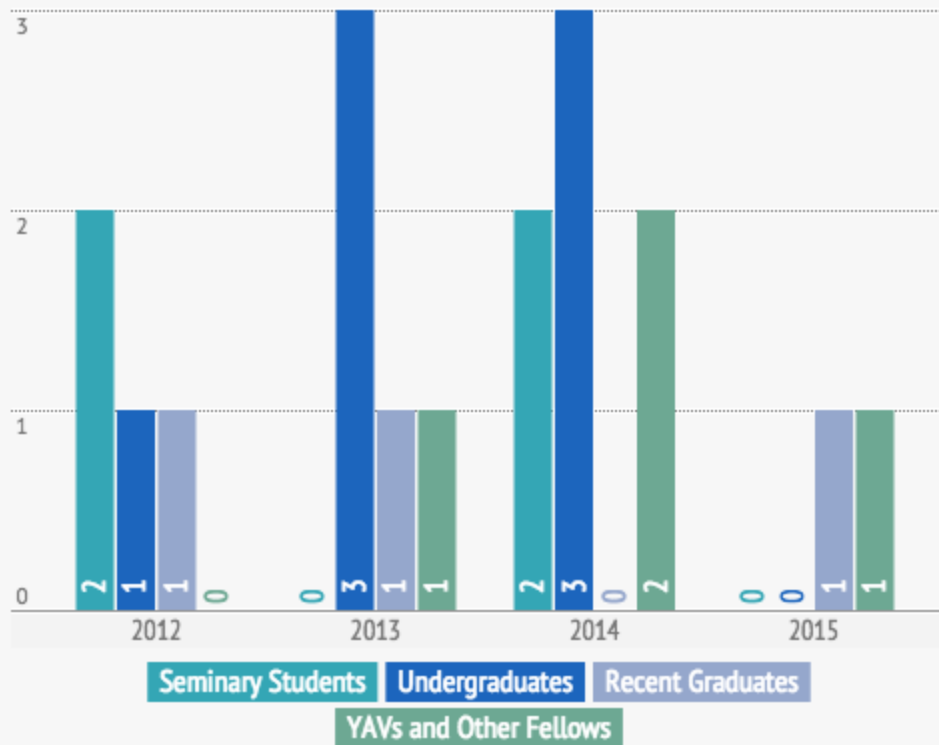


# Appendix C, *continued*

## *Service Learning in the Office of Public Witness*

### WHO SERVES IN THE OPW?\*

\*2012-13 Seminary Intern and 2014-15 Young Adult Volunteers are counted in the year their service began

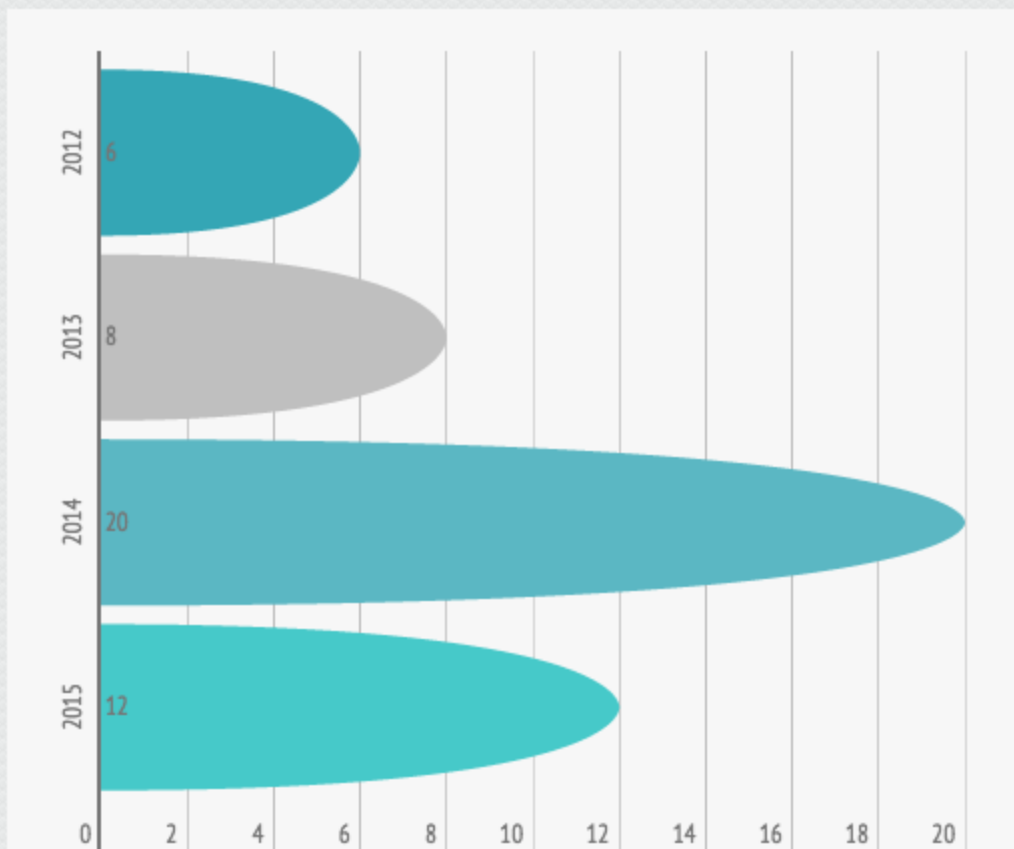




# Appendix C, *continued*

## *Ecumenical Advocacy Days Young Adult Scholarships*

### YOUNG ADULT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS



**Report Produced by**  
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