

MINUTE FOR MISSION

SURPRISED BY THE SPIRIT IN NEW ORLEANS

Can there be any more inspirational words to hear from a young person these?
“The Holy Spirit took me, and changed me in ways that I wasn’t expecting.”

During Pentecost, we celebrate that the Holy Spirit has opened the doors to faith in Jesus Christ. While serving as a Presbyterian Young Adult Volunteer, or “YAVs” as you often hear us call them, Cherokee Adams was changed in ways she wasn’t expecting.

As a program assistant at Eden House in New Orleans, Cherokee encountered human trafficking survivors seeking a new start in life. Most struggled with a past that includes social ostracism, brushes with the law, and drug addiction. Yet her relationships with the women taught her that each person comes with a unique story. As Cherokee said, “They are someone’s mom; they are someone’s sister; they are someone’s cousin; they are someone’s grandma.”

And Cherokee came to see them as something ... else. Something ... more. She experienced them as vessels of grace.

“The women of Eden House spoke truth to me through love and the healing power of grace and humanity,” Cherokee says.

While a YAV, she sensed that the Holy Spirit was shaping her. “It was kind of like the Pentecost story,” she explains. “The Holy Spirit took me and changed me in ways that I wasn’t expecting.” That’s so beautiful, isn’t it? And not altogether uncommon. Many YAVs tell us that they come away from the experience with a new realization of what their faith truly means.

Cherokee is grateful for the Presbyterians who provide financial support for the YAV program — a year-long program for people between 19 and 30. “Thanks to these gifts,

young people like me can be shaped and changed into better, more socially aware individuals and be affected by the places we serve and the people we meet.”

This churchwide offering opens the doors to children, youth, and young adults so that they grow in the patterns of faith meant to last a lifetime. It gives them a first-hand experience with the difference we can make when we walk through our doors to share Christ’s love. Congregations like ours keep forty percent of the Offering to make an impact of young people lives — not just YAV, but also children at risk who need us, children who are right here in our community. In the past, we have used the Pentecost Offering to support (PROGRAM/MINISTRY). Please give generously. When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

Let us pray,

Holy Spirit, change us

in ways that we do not expect,

through relationships with those in need, and by the example we see

in our young adult volunteers.

Amen.