

6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

PRESBYTERIAN YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER SAW LIVES RENEWED IN PERU

One day at lunch, 14-year-old Teresa pointed to the camera of Presbyterian Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Kristen Young and called it Kristen's "treasure."

"I tried to tell her that it wasn't my camera that I treasured, but rather the people and moments I could capture with it," Kristen says.

Kristen served in Peru at a shelter for young survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence, where Teresa was a resident. Kristen's responsibilities included helping to promote the shelter's work to supporters, so she spent much of her time taking pictures.

The images she captured through her camera lens are etched in her mind. She remembers the face of Diana who came to the shelter scared and refusing to smile. As the days passed, Diana's somber countenance began to brighten as she experienced the warmth and acceptance of the shelter staff. Kristen was especially moved when she saw the delight Diana took in her newborn son.

"It was really a transformative moment to see how she came to feel about herself and her baby," Kristen says. It was a moment that gave witness to the opening words of a song frequently sung at the shelter: "The Spirit of God is in this place; the Spirit of God moves in this place."

She saw the Spirit move when teen moms who were raised in abusive homes learned to be caring and conscientious parents. She saw God at work as shelter residents graduated high school, went on to further study, and took steps toward independent living.

Kristen completed her year of YAV service in 2017, but she continues to see the Spirit move back home in Hawaii. Thanks to a grant from the Presbytery of the Pacific, Kristen is involved in a 10-month internship working with Micronesian youth at Lāna'i Union Church in Lanai City, Hawaii.

In her ministry, she is inspired by what she learned in Peru. "God is not just in church," she says. "Much of the time, we find God outside the church." She stresses the need to work for the kind of world God wants and urges the youth to nurture their relationships with God and others.

"I am so grateful for all of the support, encouragement, and generosity that made it possible for me to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer," Kristen says.

Through your gifts to the Pentecost Offering, you support Young Adult Volunteers who experience God's Spirit in new ways and who return home ready to serve. You are helping to change lives and prepare leaders. Sixty percent of the Offering goes to the national offices to support the YAV program, ministries with youth, and the needs of children at risk. Forty percent is retained by our congregation for local ministries that empower individuals in this crucial first third of life.

Please give generously to this offering and support the future of our young people.

Let us pray ~

*Transforming God, We give you thanks
that your Spirit is at work all around us.*

*We celebrate that lives are changed and
hope is renewed by your hand.*

*Gives us eyes to see the work of your Spirit
and hearts to follow your Spirit's call.*

Amen

To learn more about Kristen, go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/yav/yav-new/kristen-young/>