

OVC| OCTOBER 2024

PROGRESS



Updates on the progress of Orthodox Volunteer Corps



“I found my people.” – OVC Corps Member

We are now over a month into our third year of programming at OVC. How to capture the experience so far? It’s a discovery of connection, finding “my people” in service.

Finding my people means connecting and learning from colleagues at service placements. One Corps Member watches his supervisor, a doctor, not only provide medical care but also visit the home of a patient, dropping off fresh produce from a community garden. Another supervisor models respect for homeless neighbors, listening carefully, offering judiciously, and accepting their offers of assistance.



Finding my people means connecting to community members, and discovering that *they* become *my* people.

One Corps Members, in a new city, met a man at a soup kitchen who came from her hometown. He had been a football coach, a regular member of the community. But his life took an unexpected turn, and he “lost it all.” The two talked, reminiscing about an earlier era when they might have met in very different circumstances. Afterward, he expressed a simple gratitude: “Thanks for giving me the chance to bring back those memories.”

Finding my people also means discovering that connection in service can move to the *joy of communion*.

When asked recently about a joy from the past week, one Corps Member described the opportunity to replace the bandage covering the laceration on the head of man who came into the homeless shelter. Another described a conversation with a woman taking her first steps out of addiction. And still another recalled a meeting with a couple in their 80s. The wife has terminal cancer; the husband was getting her to appointments. But then his health declined and he lost mobility. They are on a fixed income, can’t afford home care, and face an uncertain future. What was the joy? Our Corps Member explained. The couple was willing to share their burdens. The Corps Member was willing to listen. And by being present together in love, there was healing.



Our People in Boston and Pittsburgh



We launched OVC Boston this fall and began our third year of programming in Pittsburgh. We have 14 full-time Corps Members across the two cities. They come from 9 states, are placed at a dozen nonprofits, and have collectively offered over 2,000 hours of service in their first five weeks. We have engaged 10 parishes. We are also running, for a second year, a part-time program in Pittsburgh, OVC Reach; over 25 young adults have registered.





Meet the Pittsburgh House and where they're serving



Nicholas Basile

East Liberty Family
Health Center



Sophia Bushelli

Neighborhood
Resilience Project –
Community Support



Anastasia Friesen

Catholic Charities
Pittsburgh –
Pregnancy & Parenting



**Peter
Kapourales**

Light of Life
Rescue Mission
– Outreach



**Preston
Phillips**

Shepherds Heart –
Homeless
Resource Center



**Justina
Shenouda**

Neighborhood
Resilience Project
– Medical Center



**Elliot
Zuercher**

Light of Life
Rescue Mission
– Facilities



Meet the Boston House and where they're serving



Dino Goodson

Catholic Charities
Boston – Early
Education



George Georges

Catholic Charities
Boston – Immigrant
& Refugee Services



Christina Lavin

NeighborHealth – Let's
Get Movin' Program



**Cecelia
Olson**

Habitat for
Humanity
Greater Boston



**Sophia
Pantzer**

Ellis Early
Learning



**Harry
Parks**

Massachusetts
Law Reform
Institute



**Zoe
Montague**

Catholic
Charities Boston
– St. Ambrose
Family Shelter