



July 3, 2025

We will remember last week.

We completed our third year of OVC's full-time program. The Boston and Pittsburgh cohorts met in Western Massachusetts for a week-long final retreat.

We made meals for each other; we played frisbee, pool, and cornhole; we cooled off at a lake. Most importantly, we looked back.

We have a (young) tradition at OVC that during every final retreat every Corps Member shares a Presentation of Learning. They reflect on the year and mine it for meaning. *It is not enough to serve. We must also learn from our service so that we can sustain it over time.*

Every Presentation of Learning was powerful. One person wrote a song. Another collected images from the year. One person began with a definition of service. Another ended by unveiling a gift from a community member. Everyone told a story. **There is not time to share them all. There is time for one.**

George worked with refugees. He met people who faced such hardship at home they were compelled to leave all they knew and flee to a new land. Millions are on the move globally. **Fifty families ended up at a Ramada hotel in Boston. It was the task of George and his colleagues to re-house them.** There were often four people in a room. Some had been there for two years. George spent days calling landlords, asking for openings, citing vouchers to assist. But economics worked against him. Rent is high in Boston and the vouchers had time limits; housing refugees was not lucrative. **After days and then weeks of calls, George said it felt hopeless. But he and his colleagues kept at it, not just for days and weeks, but months.** The OVC full-time program lasts for nearly a year, and we have been working with many placements for multiple years now. That length is deliberate.

God can work miracles in a minute. But often He asks us to labor with him over time to make change. To help neighbors in need, we may need to study policies on poverty, as did one of our Corps Members this year. We may need to gradually increase the number of affordable homes, as did another of our Corps Members. We may need to create better temporary housing options, as did other Corps Members. *And we may need, simply, to keep at it.* That's what George did. **After nearly a year of calls, he and his colleagues found homes for all fifty families. "I see it as a miracle," George told us. It was.**

We finished another year at OVC. We offer immersive, year-long service for young adults in the Orthodox way. Through that, we develop servant leaders for our Church and the world. **We need our whole community to fulfill this mission. Please pray for us. Please support us.**

