



Alumni Reflection – Anastasia Friesen (2024–25)

At the beginning of OVC last year, we wrote letters to our future-selves – our alumni-selves. I ended my letter saying, “I hope you keep this transformational experience going,” and 12 months later I can confidently say that I am.

Pre-OVC Anastasia would be shocked to hear that I accepted a job offer to continue on at my placement after my year of service. I took a brief break this summer and then started back at Catholic Charities as a Case Manager in September. Now being on staff, I can retrospectively see just how much OVC prepared me for my vocational endeavors. Last year, I built both relational and tactical skills to manage client relationships, my professional scope was broadened, and I learned how to approach service sustainably. OVC was the perfect platform to reach outside my comfort zone because when I inevitably tripped and fell, I was caught by my mentors, friends, and community. Those were the moments that I learned the most from and carry with me today.

Since rejoining the Catholic Charities team, I have taken on a new role focusing on crisis pregnancies and serving mothers at risk of homelessness. This work is an extension of what I did last year, though it is more urgent and has higher stakes. I am grateful for my time in OVC because it prepared me to care for these vulnerable mothers and children, to be part of the community that catches them and helps them back to their feet. Long-term, I hope to be a physician who is sensitive to low-income and vulnerable families like the people I serve now. OVC has been instrumental to my preparation for that work, and has prepared me for many years of service to come.

To anyone considering OVC, I pray you embark on this transformational experience so you too can be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support to serve. May your journey be blessed and the Lord guide your path – if He leads you across a Pittsburgh bridge, I'll be waiting on the other side excited to meet you :)

