



COLUMBUS SITS ON OUR DOORSTEP... AND WE'VE ALREADY STARTED MOVING IN

by **Vicki Sairs**
with reporting by **Tonya Slaubaugh**

▲ The Columbus apartment complex that is home to the Bridge interns, reflected in Bridge Director Andrew Sauder's eye.

All photo credits go to Tonya Slaubaugh

This year, twelve RBC Bridge interns are doing what our interns do: combining study and reflection with ministry and vocational exploration. Happily, five of them are living in Columbus.

Bridge Director Andrew Sauder is pleased about that. "The Mennonite community has long been a rural community and Rosedale has epitomized that ever since its beginnings 60 plus years ago," he says. "But our youth are moving to the cities more than before, and they are not necessarily equipped to deal with the challenges they will face there."

Andrew believes Rosedale needs "to fully embrace the challenge of exposing youth" to the most difficult issues the church will face in the 21st century while they are in their preparation stage at Bible college.

These challenges include how to respond redemptively

to an array of social issues: homelessness, racism, violence, and broken families, for example. Andrew also points out that the majority of the unchurched populations of America (immigrants and refugees from unreached areas of the world, atheists, agnostics, etc.) are living in our cities. One of the biggest challenges the Mennonite church has faced recently, he adds, is how to respond to same-sex and gender issues. Columbus is a very gay-friendly city.

“If we are to be a center for the advancement of Anabaptism, we must position ourselves in the best place to prepare the next generation of leaders to deal with the issues and challenges that the cities present,” says Andrew.

“Columbus sits on our door step and we’ve already started moving in.”

We have to allow young people to taste the pain that these issues cause, he says. Bridge “creates a space for people to put a face with the issues instead of just hearing about them as a distant reality.”

Through Bridge, RBC has an opportunity to walk with interns while they experience these realities and disciple them throughout the process. “Our initiatives in Columbus will enable the next generation of leaders to wrestle with issues practically and realistically and not just theoretically.”

How is this year different?

The first year Bridge tried housing students in Columbus, only two interns were able to participate. “The experience had some challenges, and we learned a lot in the process,” says Andrew. The Columbus interns felt a bit isolated from the student body, and Andrew had to direct Bridge cohorts on and off campus while living in Columbus.

It’s better this year. A Bridge RD is living with three interns in the women’s apartment, and Andrew is living with two interns in the men’s. They eat some meals together and are working on building a sense of community, which relieves some of the isolation interns experienced in the first year.

Having more people in Columbus has also led to a wider variety of internships. “We’ve got interns working with international students, with urban children and family ministry, with a crisis pregnancy center, with immigrants, and in journalism,” says Andrew.

This group of people encounters an entirely different RBC experience, which has really enriched the entire campus community, he says. “These interns are on campus for classes and have made friends in Columbus and at the RBC campus. They are able to bring their new experiences back to campus with them in a way that bursts the RBC bubble in healthy ways.”

A word or two from our Columbus interns

We asked our Columbus interns to talk to us about what surprises and challenges they’ve encountered, what they love about their internship, what a typical day is like for them, and how they see this internship helping them in the future. Here are some of their responses.

Cana Gingerich

Cana grew up in the Philippines and has an associate degree in science. Someday, she hopes to serve as an OB/GYN in areas that need a woman doctor. Her interest in working with

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women started when she was little and went with her mom to work at a birthing clinic in the Philippines.

Cana is volunteering with a women’s pregnancy center in Columbus. “I’ve wanted to serve women for as long as I can remember, so this is a dream come true. I’m sure I’ll gain valuable insight in learning how to navigate complicated pregnancies. I think I’ll also just learn a lot about the different needs that are present for women in a city like Columbus.”

What she loves about her internship: “I get to offer women hope, or at least be a part of the process in some small way. Women come here who have no idea what to do. They feel like they have no options, and they are lost and confused. I love being able to give them answers and let them know that they have choices, and that there is hope.”

A typical day at her internship: “Well, honestly, a lot of it is sitting around and waiting. But when a woman does come in, I get to be the face that greets her and I ask how I can help her. Sometimes this woman is looking for Planned Parenthood, sometimes she is needing STD testing, sometimes she is needing a pregnancy test verification, and sometimes she just doesn’t know what to do about the baby growing inside of her.”

Cana helps these women get started, inputting their information in the computer before they meet with a nurse in the consulting room. The nurse talks to them about their situation and gives them all sorts of information on how to proceed.

“We are of course pro-life,” says Cana, “but we are also pro-information, so we won’t withhold any information and will honestly answer any questions.” The center does not “exaggerate or scare in order to make our numbers look good.”

No woman wants to get an abortion, says Cana. “No one

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wants to end their pregnancy, but they feel like they need to” for a number of different reasons. The center is there “to show them that there are viable options and that giving their baby life doesn't have to be the worst decision they could make.”

How this internship might help her: “I think the ability to talk to a woman who is contemplating her choices about pregnancy is going to be such a valuable asset in my future.” Cana hopes to work in the field of women's health in some capacity, and this is an area where women need

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help. “This internship will prepare me for dealing with those women and teach me how to love them and serve them.”

She would also love to go to other countries and find out how to provide women with the information they need. “The model set by PDHC (Pregnancy Decision Health Centers) is wonderful, and I think I would want to do something similar that is, of course, specific to that culture.”

Ked Ebersole

Ked Ebersole is from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and is working with international students at International Friendships, Inc (IFI). Ked loves traveling and feels called to missions, so working with IFI is a good fit.

What has surprised him: “It is amazing to see how God has been working in the lives of internationals here in Columbus. God has been present their whole lives, and, whether or not they realize it yet, He has been drawing them to himself.”

Challenges? “One of the challenges that I am currently facing is the rigorous school schedule that many students maintain. There are many students that are hungry for Truth, but are too busy to meet.”

Building relationships takes a lot of time and effort, says Ked, but the rewards of friendship are great. “The food that our Moroccan neighbors made for us was delicious. Many of these cultures that we are colliding with are very hospitable and open. The Algerian man in the apartment below us calls me by name whenever we see each other. If we would only grow roots and take some time to connect with and love those around us, Christ would become so much more visible in our lives.”

What he loves about his internship: “I love interacting with those around me and helping them to grow deeper in their understanding of who God is. It is great to be a thread in the great tapestry that God is weaving together.”

A typical day in his internship: “In student ministry every day is an adventure in itself. A lot of my internship involves interacting with students—leading Bible studies, meeting them for coffee, playing a game of soccer, or teaching them to drive. I enjoy building relationships with them and getting to know who they are.”

How this internship might help him: “I feel that God is growing me as a leader in many different ways. I am developing skills in Bible studies that can be used and passed on to others.”

Brittany Kuepfer

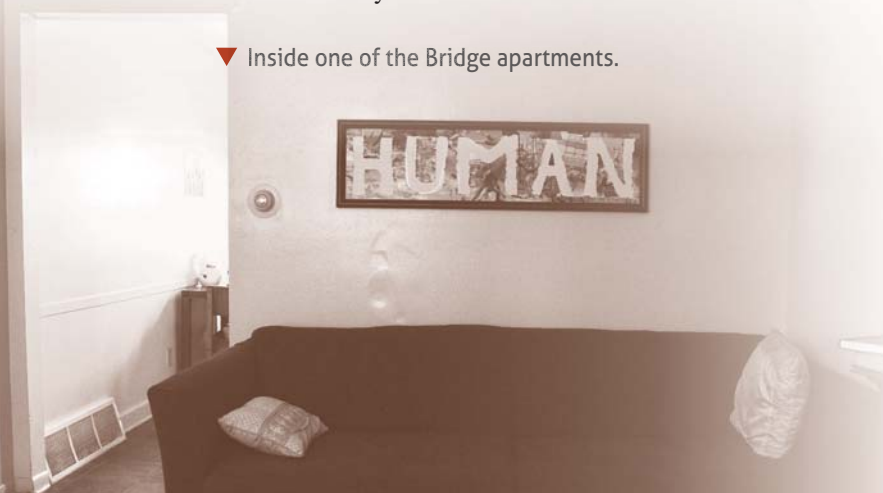
Brittany did one year with YWAM before coming to RBC last year and spent this past summer working with refugees on the island of Lesbos. She loves working with Muslim women. “Right now many Muslims are coming to the United States, leaving their homes and families, and I want to provide a warm welcome to people not accustomed to our country,” she says.

She works in a center that helps internationals navigate life in the United States. God, she says, is teaching her a lot about listening and learning from the people who come into the center. “I am seeing more and more of the value of joining people in life rather than ‘helping’ or ‘teaching’ them. The best thing you can do for people is live life with them and be honest!”

Things that have surprised her: “I've found that it's been difficult to transition between the two worlds of Columbus and Rosedale all the time. It's weird to be in one culture and then another culture. I've been working with Muslim women, so it's literally been like living in another country. Every other day I travel to Rosedale's campus, which is a small Bible college out in the middle of cornfields where everyone is just like me. Sometimes I can feel constant culture shock.”

What she loves about her internship: “I love working in another culture and seeing a bit of the bigger world while living in America. It feels like I'm becoming more aware of world situations and actually being involved, rather than simply hearing about them on the news.”

▼ Inside one of the Bridge apartments.





▲ **TOP LEFT** Ked Ebersole leads a Bible study with internationals for IFI. ▲ **BOTTOM LEFT** Cana gives Andrew a haircut. ▲ **RIGHT** A common scene in the Bridge apartments: sharing food, time, and space together. Left to right: Cana Gingerich, Andrew Sauder, Brittany Kuepfer, Lydia Gingerich, and Jared Yoder, an intern who lives on the Rosedale campus.

A typical day in her internship: “Generally I work in an office that is situated right in a community of Arabs, so we provide walk-in help, such as helping fill out forms, finding things on the Internet, etc. Some nights we teach English, and because English is one of the greatest ways we can help Muslim women adjust to American culture, we often do a lot of sitting and sharing about our lives and struggles. It really is a beautiful conglomeration of cultures.”

How this internship might help her: “It’s helping me process life’s larger questions, such as my purpose as a human individual on this earth and how the choices I make affect the larger world, even if it’s in small ways. I’m hoping to continue working internationally and living globally the rest of my life, and this internship is really making me process why and how I want to accomplish that.”

Derek Miller

Derek comes from Hutchinson, Kansas, and is a master of brevity. Here’s his report: “I enjoy living with the other Bridgers. There is a great family atmosphere and there are many opportunities to interact with the neighbors.

“RTNI (Reaching the Nations International) is an inner-city children’s ministry and it provides many opportunities to show God’s love to those around us. My internship with RTNI is helping me to gain experience in specific roles in ministry, as well as general leadership and organizational experience. And I hope to gain a better sense of what God may be calling me to long term.”

Tonya Slaubaugh

Tonya describes herself as a farm girl from North Dakota who “loves Jesus, photography, people, stories, and creating different things.” After high school, she did a certificate in photography at her community college, then went to OneLife, a gap-year Bible-

based college program in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Currently she is interning in journalism with RBC’s staff writer.

“Stories,” says Tonya, “capture the essence of life. The everydayness of life. The injustice of life. The heart of life. With my photography and writing I hope to capture the story, the heart of what it is I am trying to portray.”

Things that have surprised her: “I was not expecting to live in this kind of community, or have this much interaction with the neighbors. Everyone is so friendly here, and even though the language barrier is very frustrating and challenging at times, it still provides unique ways to make friendship work with all of the people we are living with. I was very surprised to have a basement, to have food from the dumpster that was delicious, and to hold a baby from Jordan.”

Challenges? “Some of the challenges I’m facing right now are the language and cultural barriers between the women here and me. They were trying to teach me Arabic the other day, but there are some very difficult sounds in the language, especially for English speakers. I don’t enjoy the traffic, and at times the cement floor and dirty ditches make me long for the open air and green carpet of North Dakota.”

What she loves about her internship: “I love getting to know different people, traveling to different places, and learning about each unique individual’s story.”

A typical day in her internship: “There is no typical day in the life of Tonya. Every day is unique and my hours are different every week. I go where I need to go when I need to go, and I work when I need to get things done. I am expected to do different things, such as take pictures of events or people, ask questions of people, write my own personal blog, update the Instagram, get video footage, and capture the happenings around me.”



Back to Andrew, Bridge Director

Andrew likes to think ahead about what might happen in Columbus in the coming years. "Moving forward," he says, "I'd love to see multiple cohorts form in Columbus. We could have an international cohort that lives in immigrant communities. We could have an urban cohort that lives in an inner city neighborhood. We could have a church planting cohort that works with CMC church planting initiatives. The possibilities are endless."

Each cohort could have a specific emphasis for contextual, incarnational outreach. "The vision for the Bridge program, to equip young adults for God's call on their lives through exploration and training, could be accomplished with even more precision and excellence."

► Cana Gingerich, right, and Lydia Gingerich, Bridge RD, prepare food for a meal with other interns. The men and women share meal responsibilities.



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR BRIDGE INTERNSHIPS:

Visit our website or write to Andrew at asauder@rosedale.edu.



Join us February 10-12, 2017, for the 2nd annual Ride For Missions Florida. Come support missions while enjoying the fun and fellowship of riding your bike down the sunny west coast of Central Florida.

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CHURCH LIFE

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Mast, Mitchell and Sara (McWilliams), Grantsville, Maryland: Malachi Wayne on August 4, 2016; first son, first child.

MARRIAGES

Atsidi Smith of Calvary Christian Baptist Church, Cumberland, Maryland, and **Derrick Maust** of Cherry Glade Mennonite Church, Accident, Maryland, on July 30, 2016 at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church by Barry Maust and Harold Smith.

Clarissa Orendorf and **Anthony Yoder**, both of Maple Glen Mennonite Church, Grantsville, Maryland on June 18, 2016 at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church, Accident, Maryland by Tim Yoder.

DEATHS

Bertha S. Peachey (81) of Belleville, Pennsylvania died September 5, 2016 at her home.

Born on Jan. 27, 1935, in Elverson, Lancaster County, she

was a daughter of the late Isaiah K. Stoltzfus and Katie L. (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus.

She is survived by her husband, Caleb J. Peachey, whom she married on Oct. 6, 1956, and who resides at their home. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her children, Emerson (Sandy) Peachey of Reedsville, Charlene (Chuck) Brawley of State College, Viola (Gerry) Monaghan of Ithaca, New York, Virgil Peachey of Portland, Oregon, Cecilia (George) Cressent of Tarrytown, New York, and Elliot (Jessica) Peachey of Harrisonburg, Virginia; twelve grandchildren; and brothers and sisters, Rebecca Petersheim, Sylvia Stoltzfus, Edna Lewis, Alvin Stoltzfus, Jonas Stoltzfus, Fran Stoltzfus, Barbara Stoltzfus, Amos Stoltzfus, Isaiah Stoltzfus Jr., Elam Stoltzfus, John Stoltzfus, Miriam Thompson, Lee Stoltzfus, Harry Stoltzfus, and Ernest Stoltzfus.

She was preceded in death by a stillborn daughter Darlene Peachey; a daughter-in-law Dana Peachey; and two granddaughters Erin Peachey and Corey Tindall.

Bertha was a wonderful wife, mother, and homemaker. She served as head cook for a number of years at Belleville Mennonite School. She and her husband then opened the Hickory Grove Bed and Breakfast at their home, which they operated for sixteen years. Many of their guests have become lifelong friends.

She was a member of Allensville Mennonite Church, where she served as an encourager and a prayer warrior. Bertha was an avid reader and writer and loved cooking. She co-authored and published a cookbook with her daughter, Charlene.

Her memorial service was held September 10, 2016 at Allensville Mennonite Church with Pastors Sherman Stoltzfus and Bob Zook officiating. Burial was private at Locust Grove Cemetery.

BAPTISMS AND/OR NEW MEMBERS

London Christian Fellowship, London, Ohio: Zach Freer, Justin Scheffel, Kelly Ward

UPCOMING EVENTS

Conservative Menn. Conference

Irwin, OH

Annual Pastors Conference

February 13-16, 2017
Sarasota, FL

BOOST Retreat

March 2-4, 2017
Hartsville, OH

Annual Conference 2017

July 27-30, 2017
Central Chr. School
Kidron, Ohio

Rosedale Menn. Missions

Ride for Missions Florida
February 10-12, 2017; Florida

Rosedale Bible College

Irwin, Ohio

Fall Semester

September 10-December 9, 2016

Winter Term

January 3-February 10, 2017

Spring Semester

February 20-May 20, 2017