



CVSA Takes the Lead Bringing the SDGs to Communities in the U.S.

Report to the 2016 UN High Level Political Forum Accepted and Posted

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) participated in the 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, held at UN headquarters in New York, July 11 to July 20. This was the first quadrennial HLPF session since the unanimous adoption in September 2015 by all nations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The HLPF was established in 2012 at the Rio+20 Conference to coordinate drafting the Sustainable Development Goals, building upon what was gained from the Millennium Development Goals to establish a new set of universal goals, applicable to all nations, that would address root causes of poverty and integrate the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development.

With the Goals now agreed to by all member nations of the UN, the HLPF has the mandate from the General Assembly as the UN's coordinating body for sustainable development to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the 2030 Agenda's implementation and follow-up; track the progress of the SDGs; inspire coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences; as well as address new and emerging issues.

As an NGO with Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the UN, CVSA attended the 2016 HLPF to bring the concerns and needs of CVSA's member

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See centerfold on page 10 and 11 for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

CVSA Contributes to International Volunteer Group Effort

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) Executive Director Susan Angus spoke on July 15 as part of a panel of the Volunteer Groups Alliance (VGA) side-event to the 2016 High Level Political Forum at the United Nations titled "Mobilizing Volunteers to Ensure We Leave No One Behind." In attendance were other NGOs, UN agency staff and representatives of UN member states. CVSA joined VGA earlier this year.

VGA was formed in 2012 by a small group of international volunteer service agencies under the name Post-2015 Volunteer Working Group, for the purpose of advocating for language to be included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development specifically recognizing the role of volunteer groups in planning, implementation and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. The group was successful in this first objective.

Following the official adoption by all nations in the UN of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, the Volunteer Working Group changed its name to Volunteer Groups Alliance, with

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Photo: Volunteer Groups Alliance

Susan Angus, Executive Director of CVSA, made a presentation at the Volunteer Groups Alliance side event at the 2016 HLPF about the importance of volunteerism and non-government organizations to provide leaders in the implementation of the 2030 SDGs in the United States.

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ITEMS is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**, the consultative and coordinating body of more than 200 nongovernment, voluntary service organizations based in North America that support or place volunteers with projects and programs serving people in the U.S. and internationally. **CVSA** seeks to interpret, extend, promote and support the world of voluntary service and involvement programs, and maintain and expand the ability and right of individuals to donate their time and services to persons, groupings and communities of people in need, free of government restraint.

ITEMS is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members represented in **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**. **ITEMS** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

Many volunteers and volunteer organizations learn the hard way: through their own experiences, using trial and error. We find that wasteful and contrary to the basic principle of organization: that an organization is stronger than an individual. Collective experience is therefore also more powerful than that of a single individual, or, for that matter, a single organization.

Your submissions to **ITEMS** of information, news, advice, photographs and graphics depicting your work or simply your comments and concerns are instrumental to the process of growth and advancement of voluntary service as a whole. We always look forward to receiving them.

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ITEMS is free to **CVSA** members. **Subscription** rate for U.S. residents is \$15/year. Canadians and those abroad please add \$10 for additional mailing costs. Send your order and submissions of articles for publication to **CVSA**.

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**Editorial**

Something We Must Unite Around: The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals tie together the most pressing worldwide contradictions and solutions. They are comprehensive, systemic and totally interrelated — and we need them, now. Our nation's goal must be to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S. by the year 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 100% consistent with the demands and concerns clearly expressed by the people of the U.S. over the last year: End poverty, reduce inequality, ensure healthy lives for all at all ages, end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture, build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and economic growth, make our cities safe and resilient, ensure equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, empower all women and girls, ensure access to affordable, reliable and modern energy for all, ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all, provide access to justice for all, build effective and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and do all this in the spirit of global solidarity, in particular, solidarity with the poorest and with people in vulnerable situations — to leave no one behind.

This is all included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted just over one year ago in September 2015 as a plan of action for each nation to adapt and implement by 2030.

These Sustainable Development Goals have already been debated and negotiated and agreed upon by every nation. These Goals have been broken down into 169 measurable and time-framed targets. All 193 countries in the UN agreed that these Goals must become the priorities for each nation, in each nation. Millions of people participated in these debates, negotiations, consultations and surveys held over the three years that led up to that unanimous vote in September 2015. Now it is past time to take action towards implementation.

The SDGs are universal in that they were designed for the industrialized developed countries as well as poorer developing countries, and those in between. Everyone agreed our world will be unlivable in fifteen years if these 17 Goals are not achieved.

Over 55 countries have made public their detailed five- and ten-year plans towards achieving these Goals. Unfortunately, here in the U.S., the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, the government has not even publicized the 17 Goals, much less implemented a plan to achieve them. There has been no official public education campaign, no official call for involvement from community groups to participate in planning or making proposals.

All 17 Goals are interrelated; they all need to be achieved or none will be achieved for very long. They are transformational. Achieving these Goals requires systemic, comprehensive change in each nation.

Every nonprofit organization serving people in need, each community-based organization fighting for economic justice, faith-based organizations advocating for social well-being and inclusion, volunteer groups representing those with no voice — must work together to keep the government accountable to their pledge “to work tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030...”

This will only come about if you and all of us already engaged in the work and struggle to end poverty, hunger, oppression, environmental destruction and war — each take the initiative to provide the needed leadership from below. Working together through CVSA we can demonstrate how these Goals can and must be achieved.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are something we can unite around.

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CVSA Brings SDGs to U.S. Communities

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organizations throughout the U.S. to Forum discussions; learn what other countries are doing to carry out the Goals; and meet other NGOs in the U.S. and around the world who are organizing at the community level to involve the people most affected by the lack of accomplishment of these goals in planning and monitoring their implementation.

CVSA also filed a report to the HLPF on CVSA's contributions to the achievement of the goals in the U.S., which included reports on actual conditions of people in the U.S. in relation to poverty, access to health care, clean water, legal justice, affordable housing, employment and healthy food. Seven CVSA member organizations contributed information for the report: Big Creek People in Action in McDowell County, West Virginia; Coalition of Concerned Legal Professionals in New York, New York; CUMAC/ ECHO in Paterson, New Jersey; East Michigan Environmental Action Council in Detroit, Michigan; Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals in Brooklyn, New York; Eastern Service Workers Association in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Remote Area Medical, based in Rockford, Tennessee.

CVSA's report makes a clear case that a great deal needs to be done in the U.S. to achieve all of the Goals (see center-fold) of ending poverty, ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives, equitable quality education and availability of clean water and sanitation for all, reducing inequality and combating climate change here in the U.S. The report raises the question: who in the U.S. government is coordinating the planning for the SDGs here and overseeing their implementation?

In its report CVSA calls on the U.S. government to carry out its pledge toward the 2030 Agenda both domestically and internationally by forming a national SDG Coordinating Council. The report further states:

We strongly recommend that State Councils also be set up to oversee data collection, draw up implementation

plans, coordinate policies and monitor the progress of implementation in their state and submit those to the national coordinating body. The process must be made public and open. Members on the councils should include representatives from nongovernmental volunteer organizations and associations, faith-based service organizations, social service administrators, grassroots leaders from minority communities, educators, religious community leaders, labor leaders, poor people's representatives, health advocates, legal justice and environmental specialists, as well as community development credit unions and small community banks, and coalitions of family farms.

We propose that each state in the U.S., or the federal government, begin with the simple step of publicly announcing and making widely available, free of charge, printed copies of 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' to all persons and organizations working in their community to involve people in planning and carrying out these goals.

The full CVSA report to the HLPF is posted on the official 2016 HLPF website, on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. You can find it at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/inputs> and go to 2016 HLPF, Inputs, Major Groups & Other Stakeholders. You can also call CVSA for a copy.

CVSA Community Education Campaign Promotes SDGs at Grassroots Level

CVSA has been leading a nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the U.S. since February of this year. This campaign has engaged community-based volunteer organizations, church congregations, college students and others interested in activities to promote the SDGs at the community level and seeking to participate in the planning that every level of government needed for the successful implementation of the Goals.

Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant, explained at a CVSA staff meeting the week after the HLPF, "In the course



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Delegates of the 193 Member States of the UN attended sessions of the HLPF 2016 July 11 to 19 to exchange information and learn from the experiences of others on how to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Over 1,500 NGO representatives and leaders of Major Groups and other Stakeholder groups attended the 9th Session of HLPF 2016 titled: "From Inspiration to Action: Multi-stakeholder Engagement for Implementation."

of attending seven days of HLPF round-table discussions, panel presentations, plenary sessions and side-events, we found that CVSA was the only U.S.-based nongovernmental organization present that is organizing at the community level to actually bring the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to 'we, the people,' as the 2030 Agenda calls for."

CVSA attended other side-events to the HLPF, bringing CVSA's experience of conducting a nationwide Community Education Campaign for the SDGs in the U.S. into the discussion and calling on others to do the same. At a side event about the Human Right to Water highlighting problems of working and low-income people in the U.S. having their water service shut off, or drinking poisoned water due to negligent management of the system by government agencies, CVSA put out a call for other groups in the U.S. to join CVSA in bringing awareness of the SDGs to the community level and organizing the demand for participation in the planning and implementation of the Goals, so that the serious problems illustrated at this side-event can truly be solved. The moderator, Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social

Affairs responded, "This is music to my ears, this is what we are hoping people will do."

Additionally, CVSA met many representatives of national and international Non-Government Organizations, including Global Campaign for Education, an international membership advocacy group that organizes to put pressure on governments to fulfill their promise of education for all; OO Safewomb International Foundation, an organization based in Abuja, Nigeria working to raise people out of poverty; Peace Boat, an international peace organization based in Japan and the U.S.; Sisters of Charity Federation of North America, with twelve chapters working in areas of poverty across the U.S.; Social Watch, an international network of citizen's organizations, based in Uruguay, which sponsored a side event on "Shadowing SDG Implementation;" Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, based in the U.S., whose Human Rights organizer spoke on a panel about the human right to water; and Zonta International, a U.S. based international organization supporting service and advocacy projects around the world for the advancement of women and girls. During the conference, CVSA met with many of these organizations on the sidelines or in the

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CVSA Brings SDGs to U.S. Communities

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hallways, to learn more about their work and offer to share the method CVSA uses to bring the SDGs to the grassroots level.

CVSA also made copies of the CVSA report to the HLPF available to them and encouraged them to distribute it to their constituencies — whether in the U.S. or in other countries — to build international solidarity for the struggle of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

First Voluntary National Reviews Given by 22 Countries

This 2016 HLPF also provided the first opportunity for UN member states to report on their plans and their progress so far in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. 22 member states signed up to present their Voluntary National Review at the HLPF and two additional nations posted their executive summaries on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

Reviews were presented by: China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Independent State of Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland,

Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Venezuela. The two nations making online submissions were Bolivia and Qatar.

Mr. Li Baodong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, gave a data-laden report on how many of the Millennium Development Goals were achieved in China, and their plans now to achieve the 2030 SDGs. During the 15 years of the Millennium Goals, China raised 600 million people out of poverty. Baodong specified that China's 13th Five Year Plan aims to raise 55 million rural poor and 50 million new urban poor out of poverty and build 20 million housing units. China has established a national coordinating mechanism comprising dozens of government agencies responsible for formulating plans for implementation, along with civil society and non-government bodies, and has established a review process to measure progress.

Mr. Ricardo Jose Menendez, Vice President for Planning and Knowledge and Minister of the Popular Power for Planning of Venezuela, stressed in his presentation the severe economic burden that is being put on his nation by international markets that have lowered the price of oil to unprofitable levels in the past two years. The economy of Venezuela has seen a 77 percent drop in export income, yet the government continues to provide free education and free health care to all people and other social and economic programs that have eliminated extreme poverty and illiteracy in Venezuela. Menendez reported that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros convened the Council of Ministers to start national consultations and planning for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Menendez stated, "We will eliminate poverty and exclusion... We want to satisfy the needs of the people," and pointed to the economic war on their domestic economy being waged by powerful financial interests from the north as their biggest problem.

The report given by Sierra Leone illustrated clearly the progress they had achieved rebuilding post the decade long civil war (1991-2001) and in achieving the MDGs, up to the point they were hit with the Ebola outbreak, which has again devastated the economy of the country. However, with strong government leadership and planning, they are clear on what they need to do, and what assistance they need, to achieve the SDGs by 2030 for all their people.



Photo: UN Media Library

Photo: UN Media Library

Mr. Li Baodong (left), Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, and Mr. Ricardo Jose Menendez (right), Vice President for Planning and Knowledge and Minister of the Popular Power for Planning of Venezuela, presenting their Voluntary National Reviews to the 2016 HLPF on July 20.

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Limited Participation from the U.S. Government

The U.S. government did not participate in giving a National Report, and was not present to listen to the reports given by other countries. However, CVSA organizers heard the U.S. Ambassador to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Sarah Mendelson, make a two-minute intervention at the 9th round-table of the HLPF on July 15th themed “Inspiration to action: Multi-stakeholder engagement of implementation,” in the Trusteeship Council.

Mendelson began her statement by saying, “I begin from a position of humility. This is new for the United States and we are very much in the learning mode.” She said, “To be frank, there is an enormous need to raise awareness of the SDGs for the American population... We’re actively trying to build partnerships that help bring the private sector in the United States along as a partner...”

Mendelson specified particular targets within three of the Goals that the United States government is interested in, rather than speaking to the overall interrelatedness of all the Goals and how they all need to be achieved in the U.S. She cited targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2 which each have to do with trafficking, enslavement, sexual exploitation, violence against and forced labor of women and children. She referred to the existence of government plans to engage the private sector (corporations) in partnerships to promote these specific targets. (Please see the full “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” document posted on CVSA’s website www.cvsa-investyourself.org for full text and the 169 targets.)

Mendelson concluded by stating “So I think over the next couple of years we need to *watch* for the learning that goes on in the United States and we’ll be learning from all of you.”

CVSA’s Call for “We, the People...” to Get Organized!

After the HLPF Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, reported on Mendelson’s statements to CVSA volunteers at a staff meeting and said, “As we see it, that was an irresponsible and disingenuous stance for leaders of a great nation like the U.S. to take. The U.S. was a participant in the three years of debates and negotiations that drafted the SDGs, voted for them on September 25, 2015, and has been part of the global discussion about sustainable development, poverty and climate change that have been going on for decades now. There is no excuse for their lack of action in promoting these Goals to the American public and calling on all stakeholders to participate in the planning and monitoring, and getting serious about implementing them.”

The HLPF will be held every year in July until 2030 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. CVSA has already begun preparing for the next report to submit to the 2017 HLPF on conditions in the U.S. in relation to the 17 Goals and what CVSA and CVSA member organizations are doing to promote the SDGs and to seek direct involvement in the planning and monitoring of their achievement.



Photo: CVSA

CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus (right) and Administrative Assistant Yael Alonso (3rd from right) visit St. Francis Community Garden in North Bellmore, NY, run by the St. Francis Episcopal Church to introduce CVSA’s Community Education Campaign for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Oct. 22. (L to R) Members of the church: Susan, Food Manager; Camille, volunteer; Janet, volunteer; and Rev. Mark Genszler, Church Pastor.

The member states of the UN are only asked to make reports on their progress every four years, and those reports are voluntary. However the following countries have already registered to make volunteer reports at the 2017 HLPF in July: Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand and Uruguay. The U.S. has not.

Join CVSA’s Campaign

CVSA’s Nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the SDGs in the U.S. needs more volunteers and resources to be able to reach nonprofit, nongovernmental, volunteer and faith-based organizations as well as schools and colleges across the country.

Angus explained, “They all need to know about the SDGs and be given the tools needed to seek participation in the government’s planning for implementation, at all levels, and the monitoring of their achievements. Because in the meantime, in the absence of the maximum involvement of people who most need these goals achieved, the most powerful corporate interests are already redefining the Goals in terms of expanding their markets and profit margins versus actually getting to the root of these problems to insure no one is left behind.”

On-the-job training is provided to volunteers on all of CVSA’s activities, and those who already have any of the skills or experience needed can assist in training others. Volunteering with CVSA on this campaign does not require being in New York City. Call us from wherever you are located to work out a plan and become part of this effort for a better world!

To schedule a date for CVSA volunteers to make a presentation about this historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to your organization, school or congregation, call Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant at (718) 482-8724. ☺



Unite Around the 2030 SDGs

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It is the people who volunteer with and run the thousands of organizations in communities across the U.S. that materially tend to the otherwise unmet needs of people who have the direct knowledge of the untenable consequences of not achieving these Goals. It is the people whose voices are heard through those organizations that must have a say in the planning and implementation.

Each of us working for the betterment of others and for our working and low-income communities have the direct experience from which to provide the much needed leadership to make these 2030 Goals a reality in the U.S. It is time we “up our game,” coordinate, share tools and information, take ownership of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as ours.

The process of convening the world leaders, the NGOs and all the other stakeholders together to construct the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was coordinated by the United Nations. However, these Goals will not be carried out by the UN; it is not a UN program. It is a program every government agreed to carry out in its own country and in cooperation with all the other countries and that the people of each nation are to be mobilized around for their participation and monitoring.

We need these Goals to become the basis of U.S. domestic policy priorities and the framework for U.S. foreign policy rather than continue regressive tax and spend policies that bankrupt at home and abroad except for an elite few. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a roadmap for

building a healthy, educated, prosperous, more equal society that is capable of living in peace and cooperation with the rest of the world.

But, the U.S. government will not act on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals if we don't demand it.

You and all of the volunteer service organizations, faith-based congregations and committees, all the nonprofit service and community organizing groups who devote themselves to addressing otherwise unmet needs of people and to protecting the planet — together we can force the fate of this transformational change by promoting the SDGs; put them on the agenda at every level of government, speak about them in your schools and places of worship, and demonstrate through the work you already do how they can and must be achieved.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are something we must unite around.

Allianz, one of the world's largest asset management and insurance companies, published a report in Sept 2015 stating that America is the richest and the most unequal country in the world. It calculated that there is a total of \$153.2 trillion in personal wealth in the world (which is enough to pay three times the world's sovereign debt, the debts of each nation) and \$63.5 trillion of that wealth is owned by a privileged few in the U.S. In other words, the U.S. has 41.6% of the world's wealth, although the U.S. only has approximately 7% of the world's population. And that wealth in the U.S. is owned and controlled by a very small minority of the people, while 48% of the people live below, in or near poverty.

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Volunteer Groups Alliance

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the primary objective now to “enable organizations to collaborate, share and influence collectively the national, regional and international levels for sustainable development.” Today, VGA is a loose collaboration of 27 volunteer-sending or -involving government and non-government organizations based around the world that work toward ending poverty, saving the environment, building social justice and sustainable development. VGA is recognized as a grouping within the “Major Groups and other Stakeholders” by the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development. Major Groups and other Stakeholders was formalized out of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 — known as the Earth Summit — as a recognition that achieving sustainable development would require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people.

At the side event, Angus spoke of the collective experience of the community-based non-government organizations listed in *INVEST YOURSELF* that work for better lives for low-income, marginalized and exploited communities and people, primarily throughout the U.S.

Angus began her presentation by explaining, “CVSA stands on the principle that those who are suffering from the lack of solutions to their problems — be it income, health, environment, justice, food, housing, etc. — know best what the solutions need to be. They must be part of the decision-making about solutions and have access to the resources needed to carry out those solutions. Organization is necessary to have that voice and gain that position, and the most significant organizations in the history of social change in the U.S. and around the world have been independent, volunteer-driven organizations rooted in the communities they represent.” Angus emphasized that if minority forces waited for government funding or worked solely within the strictures of grant cycles, there would never be change, and the creativity that volunteer organizations of the type CVSA works with, that you find in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue, is exactly what is needed to achieve the SDGs — particularly in the U.S.

“This directly relates to the question of how to leave no one behind. If government wants to make sure to leave no one behind, then they must relate in a positive manner to the grassroots organizations who are in those communities already where the people have already been left behind and are being left behind in larger and larger numbers,” she stated.

Angus was the last speaker and put out a call for others to join CVSA in bringing the SDGs to these organizations throughout the U.S. at the community level that have yet to hear about the SDGs, so they can seek their rightful participation in the process of planning, implementing and monitoring their achievement.

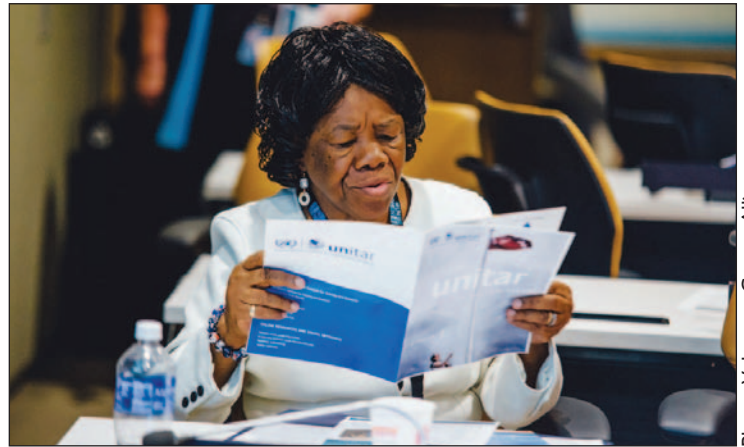


Photo: Volunteer Groups Alliance

Justina Okogun, founder of Safewomb OO Foundation in Nigeria, reading over material distributed at the event. Okogun later met with CVSA for advice on how to involve volunteers in her program in Nigeria.



Photo: Volunteer Groups Alliance

Peseta Simi, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa, (far right corner) speaking about how her government is trying different models by which to build programs for volunteer involvement in development projects in the Independent State of Samoa.

The panel discussion was moderated by Evelyne Guindon, CEO of CUSO International (a Canadian nonprofit development organization). The other speakers were Olivier Brochenin, Sub-Director of Development Policies, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development; Reinhard Krapp, Minister, Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN; Peseta Simi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa; Alok Roth, VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas, based in the United Kingdom) Country Director in Uganda and South Sudan; Arash Hashemi, a Uniterra Returned Volunteer (Canadian-based organization) who worked in Malawi and Tanzania.

Mr. Brochenin stressed the importance of civil society and volunteerism as an important layer at the base of the pyramid of society, especially for marginalized and disadvantaged populations and underlined that mobilizing volunteers is an efficient and flexible means to gather data from remote areas that can be used to report on SDGs implementation progress.

Mr. Krapp highlighted that volunteer-involving organizations can help increase citizens' ability to keep the government accountable and promote their active participation in the implementation of the new set of goals throughout the world. He underlined that it is hard to find any SDGs which would not

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Transforming Our World:

On September 25, 2015, all 193 member nations of the UN, including the United States, voted unanimously to strive for the achievement of these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in every country — developing and developed — as national domestic and international policy priority, stating: “On behalf of the peoples we serve, we have adopted a historic decision on a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative Goals and targets. We commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030...”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Preamble

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

A Call for Action

Seventy years ago, an earlier generation of world leaders came together to create the United Nations. From the ashes of war and division they fashioned this Organization and the values of peace, dialogue and international cooperation which underpin it. The supreme embodiment of those values is the Charter of the United Nations.

Today we are also taking a decision of great historic significance. We resolve to build a better future for all people, including the millions who have been denied the chance to lead decent, dignified and rewarding lives and to achieve their full human potential. We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet. The world will be a better place in 2030 if we succeed in our objectives.

What we are announcing today — an Agenda for global action for the next 15 years — is a charter for people and planet in the twenty-first century. Children and young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world.

“We the peoples” are the celebrated opening words of the Charter of the United Nations. It is “we the peoples” who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community — and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people — and this, we believe, will ensure its success.

To read the whole 35-page document titled *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, go to: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.



The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 1. End Poverty in all its forms everywhere



Goal 2. End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Goal 15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for Sustainable Development



Join CVSA's nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda here in the U.S. as well as around the world.

Call CVSA about bringing the Campaign for the SDGs to your community, school, place of worship or organization.

Let's make these goals a reality.

Call CVSA (718) 482-8724

The 2017 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will be held July 10 to 19 at UN Headquarters in New York.

Help prepare CVSA's 2017 report to the HLPF on conditions in the U.S. in relation to the 17 Goals, and your proposals for government action and change needed

to make these Goals a reality.

Call CVSA (718) 482-8724



Unite Around the 2030 SDGs

Continued from page 8

Other studies of the last several years have told us that 60% of all jobs created between 2008 and 2012 paid minimum wage, and 3.5 million people in the U.S. experience homelessness each year while 14 million U.S. homes stand vacant and 6.4 million of youth age 16 to 24 in the U.S. are neither working nor in school. We know these facts not from mainstream news coverage; we know them from our work day-to-day dealing directly with the people the statistics tell about.

This is not a sustainable system and the only “development” going on benefits only a small minority of our population at the expense of everyone else. We’ve been calling it “reverse development.” Working people in the U.S. have been getting poorer each year over the last four decades, while the wealth for a few has skyrocketed.

Sustainable development is the criterion for achieving social and economic progress in ways that will not exhaust the earth’s finite natural resources nor exploit or impoverish one grouping of people for the enrichment of another, but create a prosperous life for all, as defined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Attaining that transformative change defined by the 17 Goals, requires a fight, a process, many processes and requires determined and steadfast leadership, which clearly needs to come from below, from us, from our communities and organizations.

To firmly advocate to our government, at all levels — municipal, county, state and federal — to take these Goals seriously, we need to organize our constituencies. We must set our demands, determine our strategy and join forces with others in our communities. Through the programs and systems we build in our communities, such as the many examples described in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue, we must show what sustainable development is and can be. Call CVSA today. Invest yourself in the Sustainable Development Goals. Only together can we win.



Volunteer Groups Alliance

Continued from page 9

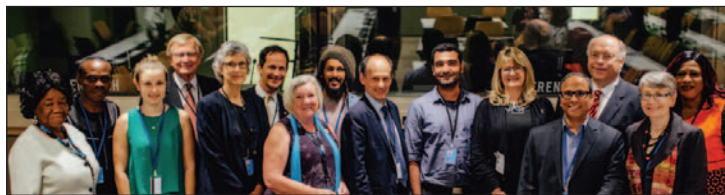


Photo:VGA

The panelists and some attendees of the Volunteer Groups Alliance side-event at HLPF 2016 on July 15th titled: “Mobilizing Volunteers to Ensure We Leave No One Behind.”

involve the engagement of volunteers and the important role played by volunteers in the implementation of the 2030 agenda, particularly when it comes to the empowerment of those most vulnerable people. Giving the example of the refugee crises, he stressed that without the help of thousands of volunteers in Germany, the influx of one million refugees and migrants last year could not have been managed.

Ms. Simi of Samoa underscored that Samoa has worked with a wide variety of volunteer organizations and recognized the important role they play in the development of her country. She stated that Samoa is working towards the meaningful engagement of volunteers, not just in service delivery, but to also contribute to policy and program as facilitating an active participation of people that is required for this new agenda to keep governments accountable.

Alok Roth, VSO Country Director for Uganda and South Sudan spoke about his vision of how volunteers deliver transformational change that is key to empowering marginalized people who themselves become the change makers — which inherently brings to life the “leave no one behind” goal. He stressed that the transformational potential of volunteering can’t happen without support; organizations need resources to accomplish their goals.

Adjmal Dulloo, coordinator of the VGA, who played a large role in organizing this side-event to the 2016 HLPF, said “the main goal of the Alliance is to act as a coalition to advocate for the SDG’s at the national and international levels to get governments to meaningfully involve volunteers in this effort.”

Adjmal Dulloo, who is from Mauritius, has carried the role of the group’s coordinator and liaison to the UN since 2014 and has been the main driver toward building up its membership and creating arenas, in coordination of the Division of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), for volunteer organizations to give input to the implementation of the SDG’s. As of September 21, 2016 Adjmal Dulloo has now passed this role on to James O’Brien from VSO, coming to New York for the role from Ireland. Dulloo will continue to participate as a member from his new role with International Red Cross Federation in Geneva, Switzerland.



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Seeing the Country Through the Eyes of Those Changing It (Part 2)



Photo: Ed Kimes

by Faith Waters

Editor's Note: Faith Waters and her husband, Reverend Ed Kimes, both CVSA volunteers who helped produce the current edition of INVEST YOURSELF with their copy editing and Photoshop skills, traveled cross country and back by car from January through May of this year, and visited organizations that are featured in

INVEST YOURSELF along the way. This is part two of the article begun in the Spring 2016 issue of ITEMS.

As we headed up the coast of California in late March, we were looking forward to making more visits to members of the CVSA network. After spending the weekend in San Francisco connecting with homeless ministries, we traveled up to Portland, Oregon to spend a day with Friends of Seasonal and Service Workers (FSSW), a nongovernmental organization dedicated to providing support services and advocacy for groups that organize for better living and working conditions and the rights of seasonal and service industry workers in the region. They accept no government funds for their organizing outreach but are supported by the concern and generosity of their volunteers and community supporters.

We began our time at the administrative office of FSSW learning about their mission and core values, as well as their daily activities. FSSW was founded in 1982 to collectivize support for membership organizations of low-income workers, which began with running food and clothing drives. While they have continued to collect and deliver such supplies, they now also organize medical and dental professionals to volunteer their services to aid these workers who have no such benefits on their jobs as well as supplies for seasonal needs like back-to-school clothing and supplies and holiday toy collections.

It is fortunate that Parker Berger, the full-time volunteer Operations Manager, and the other staff we met are all infused with passion and energy because the organization's office is open from 9 am to 9 pm seven days a week all year long! The full-time volunteer staff and the part-time volunteers don't do the work alone though, because the cornerstone of the organization's value system is the commitment to make it possible for everyone to contribute in some way. Decisions are made by consensus and the workers FSSW assists have a voice through delegates that represent various groups who may attend FSSW's staff meetings.

Volunteers come from partnerships with the local university, Portland State, as well as local businesses, corporations, churches and the community in general. Specific opportunities to serve in short-term and long-term ways are offered and advertised through media ranging from distribution of FSSW's newsletter *Seasonal Greetings* and a Labor theme calendar which generate donations, to being listed in *INVEST YOURSELF* as well as by ongoing regular community outreach tables at supermarkets, speaking engagements in college classrooms and places of worship.

It wasn't long before we realized that this was going to be a day of activity. We hurried off in the organization's van to collect fresh produce from one of the stores that generously donates healthy foods. We then stopped at a local church to use their space to sort the fresh produce and add staples. Next, we delivered the food to a converted home that serves as a community center and as a service hub located near where many of the workers live. A multi-generational family who all volunteer regularly and have various responsibilities met us there. They explained their history and their current work. The patriarch movingly shared his story of coming to the United States to earn the money needed to bring his family here. Willing to endure hardships in order to provide a better life, he described many of the same challenges and rewards that we heard described by volunteers with the organization in Tucson, Arizona, No More Death, that we visited last January. The whole family is 'paying it forward' now so that others have a way to develop a sustainable, valued life on the West Coast of the United States.

As we headed east, we were now fortified with lots of information about the current status of fair and unfair practices regarding seasonal and service workers. The day changed our

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Photo: Ed Kimes

FSSW Operations Manager Parker Berger (left) and CVSA volunteer Faith Waters (right) bringing a box of donated food items for distribution by members to help service- and farm- workers get back on their feet so that they can organize to change their conditions.



buying practices at our local grocery store as we now make conscious decisions about which brands to support and what ones to boycott. It might have been easy for us to dismiss the power of one voice but hearing the stories of the community at FSSW made us realize that even one action — one voice raised — can make a difference.

We continued our emphasis on the farming world as we visited with John Peck, the part-time Executive Director of Family Farm Defenders (FFD) in Madison, Wisconsin. We were able to come away with a clear picture of the crisis in farming that we had only glimpses of from short news magazine and television segments. We thought we were doing our bit by eating “farm to table” as often as we could and supporting locally sourced goods and products at our local farm market and supermarkets.



Two volunteers, a father and daughter team, who take responsibility each week for helping with a weekly food distribution in Hillsboro, Oregon for farmworkers, seasonal worker and other low-paid workers and their families to which FSSW contributes donated food each week from supporters in Portland.

After hearing about FFD’s mission to “seek ways to bring fair prices back to farmers and ensure safe, sustainably produced food for consumers,” we realized that there was much more each of us can do. Most important is the need to educate ourselves and to gather the information about the myriad of issues that affect all of us. To be truthful, we’ll all need to persevere because once anyone begins to uncover the truth of many large corporation practices, it becomes unsettling. From mozzarella cheese to the struggle over fair dairy prices, the issues are compelling. John shared stories of local farmers whose families have owned small farms for generations. We all know that the work of a farmer is long and hard, filled with struggles with weather and natural obstacles, such as pests, but all of us have created additional challenges because of our desire to have what we want when we want it at the price we want it.



Photo: Ed Kimes

John Peck, Family Farm Defenders (FFD) Executive Director, runs FFD’s program of promoting farmer-controlled and consumer-oriented food system to empower local people.

As small farm owners come together through organizations such as FFD to help educate us, we can adopt new actions and develop a new appreciation for the benefits of smaller family farms that produce fairly priced, healthy food products. John’s passion reminded us of Jilah’s from Community Food Advocates in Nashville and her comment, “There should be no qualifier like ‘natural’ around food, such as ‘real’ food or ‘good’ food ... food should just be food!” Although FFD volun-

teers are dedicated to rigorous advocacy efforts and modeling positive behavior, they also have fun and celebrate successes. Be sure to check out their website familyfarmdefenders.org or their Facebook page to see the smiles of the volunteers as they work together on projects.

Our northern trek across the country had long stretches of rural area with very few pockets of high-density population. We did note, however, the struggles of many in these areas. We did make some visits to groups that CVSA did not know yet, whom we put in touch with CVSA, who are working to make life better for the homeless, the working poor, and the under-represented. It reminded us that a collective voice will serve us better as we address the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Reach out to your partner agencies, share your action ideas and hear theirs. It is critical that you then share with Susan and Yael at CVSA so that your identification of the needs and your innovative ideas for solving problems are voiced. Trust us, we have seen CVSA organizers in action speaking on behalf of the independent, nongovernment volunteer movement, and they are a force to be reckoned with, clearly framing the problems and confronting policymakers about their inaction.

Finally, one of the striking elements for us as we traveled across the country visiting these and other agencies focused on compassion and fairness was the personal stories of those who were leading the agencies that each and every day reach out to make a difference. In every case they embodied the mission of their organization and lived it out in their daily actions. It reminded us that even in this climate of strident political rhetoric, there are dedicated volunteers working to lift up the most vulnerable and provide opportunities for everyone to contribute to building a better world.

Ed and I look forward to our next adventure as we take a different route across our country next January and can report on the work of more volunteer-driven organizations. Follow us on <http://retiredninspired.com> to see more. And we will continue to send these reports to you through *ITEMS*!





CVSA Provides Training to Organization Fighting for Medical Care

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action's (CVSA) Administrative Assistant Yael Alonso visited CVSA member organization Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals (CCMP) for several days this June to not only learn about CCMP's program but also to help provide organizing skills to Agnes Madagaro, a full-time volunteer who came to CCMP from Kenya through the Global Justice Volunteers, a program of the United Methodist Church Board of Global Missions, which is also a program listed in *INVEST YOURSELF*.

Last winter, when Malcolm Frazer, then director of Mission Volunteers programs of the United Methodist Church, asked CVSA for suggestions for health care organizations working in low-income communities in the U.S. who could take on full-time volunteers from their Global Justice program, it was easy to point several out in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue. CCMP turned out to be the perfect match.

with CCMP as it came to an end, "My experience volunteering with CCMP has been invaluable; it has opened up my intellect beyond expectation." She summarized some of the lessons learned:

"America is often portrayed as a rich superpower country, with all of its citizens' needs never neglected. I soon learned that America's gold streets are being paved by those who cannot afford to walk those streets. I have witnessed people living from hand to mouth, being exploited. These people number in the thousands and continue to be ignored. If it were not for the Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church pairing me with CCMP, I may have never been able to peek through this façade. I learned that even those who are lucky to have a so-called well-paying job are also hit hard when they are faced with health issues that their medical insurance refuses to cover."

Upon arriving at CCMP, Madagaro accepted the role of CCMP's Volunteers Coordinator for the six weeks of her placement, which is one of the most important jobs in this all-volunteer organization. Alonso provided Madagaro on-the-job training in organizing skills of community outreach and volunteer phoning. He taught her and other volunteers basic outreach skills such as how to recruit new volunteers through direct contact outreach tactics in the community, including tables at supermarkets, on college campuses or after church services and how to call back the new interested contacts right away, to involve them in the many urgently needed CCMP activities where they are most needed. Alonso provided this training

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CVSA Administrative Assistant Yael Alonso (far right) trains CCMP Volunteers Coordinator Agnes Madagaro, (left) at the Rochdale Center Health Fair on how to use an outreach pitch to sign up volunteers interested in investing their time to organize for comprehensive health care for poor and low-income people.

CCMP is an all-volunteer private unincorporated membership association composed of doctors, nurses, other medical professionals as well as individuals and organizations in the community who have joined together to fight for access to comprehensive medical care for poor and low-income people regardless of their ability to pay.

A 29-year old Masters degree candidate at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, Madagaro said of her participation



Agnes Madagaro (center), uses her new organizing skills to sign up students at Kingsborough Community College who are interested in volunteering as advocates for comprehensive healthcare.



WOULD LIKE TO THANK

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action

and the entire CVSA team for their continued
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CVSA Provides Training

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early in Madagaro's stay with CCMP so that she could build on those skills and also pass them on to other volunteers she would be working with during her nine-week visit.

Madagaro said of her first day of on-the-job training in community outreach, "On my first day in New York, I participated at a literature table in Rochdale Village, Queens. Alongside other volunteers we spoke to people going about their day. I met a woman who was an elementary school teacher and had taught for twenty-seven years. Her job was eliminated because the school was being privatized and laying people off. Now she is a substitute teacher reaching out to CCMP because she is underinsured. I also did some medical advocacy with a young woman who requested help with her medical bills. She had no insurance and went to an emergency room to treat her asthma and was given a bill for \$1,354.75. I was a part of the advocacy team that helped to expunge the bill down to \$15."

While working with CCMP, Alonso also had the opportunity to make a presentation about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and CVSA's campaign to mobilize volunteer organizations, nonprofits and community action groups across the country to demand participatory roles in the planning and implementing of the Goals. He learned that CCMP has already begun to promote the SDGs in their publications and outreach work since learning about them from CVSA earlier this year.

CCMP is focusing on Goal #3, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" and stated in their recent newsletter, "Accomplishing these goals is not solely a matter of bringing developing nations up to a parity level set by richer nations. Far from it, fighting for the SDGs is a national priority, looking honestly at the health of our own people and designing ways and means to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.'" CCMP cites the fact that the U.S. spends \$3+ trillion each year in the health care industry, but people's health care costs are sky high and "...our access to health care is reduced each year as deductibles and co-pays increase and our health is in free-fall... as we die younger, live sicker, and bury more young mothers and infants than we have in decades." Alonso said after his time with CCMP, "The whole staff is eager to expand their organizing efforts and fight for the implementation of Goal #3 to enhance what they have already been doing for decades — and most of all they are looking for people who want to join their struggle." For more information on CCMP look them up in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue or contact CCMP at (718) 469-5817. 

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In Memoriam

Sr. Grace Pleiman, SFP

September 9, 1923 – August 21, 2016

Sr. Grace Miriam Pleiman, (nee Patricia Agnes Pleiman), a member of CVSA's Advisory Board since 2001, died at age 78 on August 5th in Cincinnati, Ohio surrounded by her beloved sisters of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (SFP) order and her family. She lived a life in service to people in need for 60 years as a nurse, mental health professional and pastoral care minister. Her ministry was predominantly in New York where she was the Founding Director for Inniss Franciscan House in Brooklyn, a shelter for men; and later in Ohio where she founded and worked as director of Tamar's Place in Cincinnati, a hospitality setting for women living on the streets.

She is survived by her sisters of the SFP order, her nine siblings and numerous nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her parents Margaret Schafer and Edward J. Pleiman, sister Delores (Van Leeuwen) and brother Edward, Jr.

Sr. Grace Miriam had received the unexpected news of a cancer diagnosis in late February of this year. She continued to carry out her ministry at Tamar's Place until a few weeks before her death.

Patricia Agnes Pleiman was born on April 9, 1938, as the seventh child. She grew up on the family farm in Osgood, Ohio and later on her parents dairy farm in Casella, Ohio. As a teenager, Patricia visited St. Clare's Convent and decided to enter the Aspirancy High School at the age of 14. In 1956, Patricia entered the Novitiate and received the name Sr. Grace Miriam.

Sr. Grace received her initial nursing education at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing in Dayton, Ohio and in 1964 obtained a Bachelor in Science in Nursing through the University of Dayton. The Second Vatican Council had a tremendous spiritual impact on the religious life and the personal life of Sr. Grace as she was deeply touched by the challenge of the Council to read the "signs of the times." She became a member of an experimental small intentional community called Hope Community in Cincinnati. The sisters resided in a local neighborhood and handled all their day to day needs; quite a difference from convent life at the time.

In 1973 Sr. Grace accepted an invitation to relocate to New York and become a core member of a similar intentional community called Burning Bush, located in

Brooklyn. While in New York, Sr. Grace extended her education at New York Theological Seminary and obtained in 1981 a Masters in Art in Religion and Psychology.

Sr. Grace undertook a variety of ministries, all with hands-on direct service to people, including: working with homeless women commonly called "bag-ladies" at a shelter called the Dwelling Place in midtown Manhattan near the Port Authority Bus Station, which was patterned after the Catholic Worker model; psychiatric nursing at St. Vincent Hospital in downtown Manhattan; working with youth who came for shelter at Covenant House, and providing detox services to men at the Bowery Mission.

In 1994 Sr. Grace founded and worked full-time as Director of Inniss Franciscan House, a transitional housing setting for men with addictions. She said of her experience on the Bowery, "It was like a revolving door for these homeless men addicted to alcohol. Once we restored their health to somewhat normal and placed them in welfare hotels, we would find them back in our outpatient clinic three or four months later." She was convinced there were better ways to provide supportive community to people forced to live on the outskirts of society, and she proceeded to demonstrate her conviction.

Sr. Grace had decided that Inniss Franciscan House would never take government funds and rely instead on private donations, support from her order and from the broader church in order to have the flexibility needed to run the house according to policies and protocols that government rules would not allow. Eighteen men lived in the house at any



Photo: Franciscan Sisters of the Poor



Sr. Grace with two of the residents of Inniss Franciscan House.

Photo: Franciscan Sisters of the Poor



given time for as long as they needed while working, saving money for their own apartment, sharing fellowship and access to counseling, and contributing to the care and maintenance of the House. Her program was successful for the majority of the men who lived there over the years, but the funding ran out and in 2003 she had to close the House.

CVSA met Sr. Grace in 2000 upon stopping in at Inniss Franciscan House, located in Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn to learn more about its program and their involvement of volunteers. Soon Inniss Franciscan House was included in *INVEST YOURSELF*, and Sr. Grace joined CVSA's Advisory Board.

When Sr. Grace first joined CVSA, she was also starting a quarterly newsletter for Inniss Franciscan House. One of the men living there, Russ Jamison, had graphic design and desktop publishing skills, but they had no computer. She scheduled time for him to come to CVSA's office to use our computers to compose their newsletter, and soon Russ was also helping produce CVSA's newsletter.

Sr. Grace developed a habit of dropping in on CVSA unexpectedly with urgent questions about why the U.S. economy seemed to thrive on creating more and more poverty, and why the U.S. government was continually driven to create war. She wanted to know how to change the system that created so much misery, acknowledging that her work with the people suffering from being its outcasts was needed — she felt it also was not the whole answer, and she wanted the whole answer. She was delighted to sit in on classes with volunteers at CVSA about the history of the U.S. labor movement and how the U.S. economy works — or rather, doesn't — and why.

Sr. Grace was happy to be in the CVSA delegation for the first day of the 54th Annual NGO/DPI Conference at the UN on "NGOs Today: Diversity of the Volunteer Experience" in 2001, the year the UN designated as International Year of Volunteers. The conference was scheduled for September 10-12, but the first day is all that took place because tragic events of 9/11 cancelled the rest.

Sr. Grace was an eager world traveler and internationalist. She traveled to Rome, Italy; Lourdes, France; Delhi, India and to Tanzania. But the time she spent volunteering with the Christian Peace Team in Palestine was the trip she was most passionate about. She made that trip twice in 2005.



Sr. Grace (right) with Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, at the United Nations in September, 2001 for an NGO Conference.

Photo: CVSA

In 2007, Sr. Grace returned to Ohio to be closer to her family, and took up residence and ministry at Grace Place in Cincinnati which was a Catholic Worker House devoted to the care of women in transition.

In 2010, Sr. Grace was asked by the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor to consider a new ministry there, focused on providing welcoming hospitality to women on the streets who live with addiction. This ministry was named Tamar's Place and is situated in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Sr. Grace believed in the goodness of each woman and, over the years, the ministry has witnessed women recover from addiction and get away from prostitution, through the constant attention, advocacy and love of Sr. Grace and her volunteers.

Within the months of her last illness, she celebrated her 60th Jubilee with joy and delight surrounded by Sisters, family and friends.

It was her spiritual devotion to God and all of God's people that filled Sr. Grace with the passion to serve, and it was a strong desire for systemic solutions to the man-made tragedies of poverty and oppression that brought her to CVSA. In her last letter from Ohio, which she sent after reading the recent Spring edition of *ITEMS* about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, she asked if we thought there was any hope that these Goals would be achieved in the U.S. or the rest of the world? We told her as long as there are dedicated people like her and the hundreds of others who are part of CVSA and the people in all the organizations we work with, there absolutely is hope because we will not quit until it is done. Sr. Grace is missed by many, while her spirit and her quest lives on through us.

CVSA NEEDS a BUILDING!

Got a House? Got a Building? CVSA needs a permanent home to accomodate this growing movement of voluntary service and action: Space for volunteers to compile CVSA publications, hold training and education sessions, maintain communications with volunteers and organizations nationwide and internationally.

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Organizing Our Volunteer Power to Build a Better World!

Volunteer with CVSA to strengthen the voluntary service & action movement

CVSA needs volunteers for these areas of work:

Membership Organization Communications, Consultations and Training

Volunteers participate in our site visits, consultations, and training workshops with member organizations of CVSA, help maintain and build more arenas of communication with member organizations around the country and collect news for the newsletter.

INVEST YOURSELF Publications Production

On-the-job training is provided in publication work sessions every Wednesday night, Saturday afternoon and all day Fridays. If you have skills in writing, editing, proofreading, desktop publishing, or photoshop — you can become one of the trainers!

INVEST YOURSELF Distribution and Circulation

Volunteers maintain ongoing contact with public libraries, colleges, universities, faith-based organizations, schools and professional organizations through phoning, mailings and meetings all year round to expand the distribution and use of *INVEST YOURSELF* to increase the flow of volunteers to vital projects.

Volunteer Organizer Training & Education

All CVSA volunteers and staff of CVSA member organizations are welcome to participate in our organizer training programs which include on-the-job practical training as well as classes in history, strategy and methods of organizing and current world affairs.

Volunteer Community Outreach Events

Volunteers help schedule and participate in information tables and speaking engagements. This is CVSA's most valuable means of connecting with people from all walks of life looking for meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Outreach Phoning

Volunteers phone people who give their contact information and express an interest in the current volunteer needs and activities of CVSA, a vital part of keeping the movement growing. We do volunteer phone training on Monday and Wednesday evenings, as well as weekdays.

Call CVSA at (718) 482-8724 to schedule an orientation or time to volunteer.