



My Story

How a retiree from Annville COB found her way to serve as a BVS volunteer with Brethren Disaster Ministries

The year was 1964 and I was looking forward to graduating from Palmyra High School in Palmyra, Pennsylvania. I was active in my youth group at Palmyra COB but did not have a definite plan for my life. I thought about Brethren Volunteer Service and considered applying. Two things stopped me at the time. First my father did not want me to go (I believe he thought I was not ready for that challenge) and second, I had met a young man who would become the love of my life.

Fast forward 56 years, three children, two dairy farms, multiple moves, and nursing career of 28 years-- the year now was 2021 and I survived the most difficult year of my life with too many challenges to share in this short story. The most significant happening was the discovering that my husband had terminal liver cancer and died on June 26, 2021, three weeks after his diagnosis. We were fortunate to have him at home with family present when he died.

I stumbled through the next six months and somewhere about Christmas time the idea of Brethren Volunteer Service came

back to me. I looked BVS up online and sometime in January I applied but did not tell anyone until I knew if I would be accepted. After my acceptance letter arrived, I did start telling people who gave some different reactions. I knew my age would be a factor at some point. At 75, I was fairly sure I would be the oldest person in my unit which was not a big problem for me. The other issue was, did I have the stamina to complete the year commitment I had in mind. I had been a farmer's wife and a nurse for many years and was still doing some farm work at home. I did not know for sure but I would give it my best.

On August 8th I left for BVS orientation in New Meadows, Idaho and Camp Wilbur Stover. A three



staff group led by Dan McFadden pulled the 11 new BVS'ers into unit #331. Eight days later I was on my way to New Windsor, MD for more orientation with Jenn Dorsch-Messler and staff. Three days later I landed in Waverly, Tennessee and Brethren Disaster Ministries where I chose to serve for one year.

How did I choose BDM? I had looked at other projects that did not work out—the Good Lord leads—and I had spent some time with our local church, Annville COB on many weekly, summer work projects that I enjoyed and the decision came in May when I called Dan and said this is where I want to go. I am here in Waverly—a beautiful little town that suffered a terrible tragedy, and I have met some wonderful people already. I look forward to making the lives of these warm, sweet people and others better and be a blessing in their lives.

By Martie (Martha) Hummer—BVS/
BDM