

TRUE VINE TIMES

Voluntary Service by Robert and Esther Mast

Connecting with the Snyder Family

I spoke with Ron, Cheryl, Chris and Amanda and tonight. All are well and healthy! Some new additions to the Snyder family are on the way. Beth and her husband are expecting and the baby is due early April. Caleb and his wife are also expecting and the baby is due in August. Chris and Amanda now live in the house across from the farm. Amanda continues her work with the kids at Gateway - Longview. Ron and Chris work together, managing the farm. A significant milestone has occurred~ **Ron turns 60 years young today!**



Little Curtis -walking at 9 months!

In 1985 we did our first Volunteer Service in NYS in Syracuse for 6 months, Esther working with the youngest of school children in assisting Salvation Army in their ministry to city children. Robert worked for Habitat for Humanity building the first house for the Syracuse Chapter of Habitat. We ministered under the leadership of Lancaster Mennonite Conference and lodged with other VSers in their VS House. Several times we drove west on the weekend to visit family and attend CCAM.

Now we will briefly list a number of VS experiences we shared in, with others, during the 61 years of our marriage. Before we married, Robert (in 1955) worked for Mennonite Disaster Service in hurricane destruction and rebuilding in Oklahoma. There were 12-15 young men from all over the US, plus 2 from Canada...BIG... BIG loads of hard work and bigger loads of fun.

A number of times in MDS involvement, Robert's 3 sisters, Betty, Laura and Doris and their husbands joined with us for a family group of 8. Twice we worked at Princeville, NC where 2 storms occurred- flooding had badly damaged the same area of this town. One flood caused numerous caskets to come to the surface, some floating from their burial location. Another project took a larger group to Florida where numerous MDS units were gathering to help in a large residential area badly damaged by a hurricane. Our group from Virginia worked for a week leaving numerous additional weeks to finish. Some time later our family group was asked to assist at a site in Virginia with a house that needed numerous repairs. When we arrived, the foreman divided us into 2 groups. Group 1 was our 3 brothers-in-laws. Group 2 was Robert with wife and 3 sisters to install 4'x12' dry wall on all the ceilings of the house. WOW! What a day we had.

We also had 3 enjoyable adventures in early 2000 by taking several of our older grandchildren to Akron, PA to do VS for 2-3 days at the Material Resources Center of MCC. Jason Frey, our 13 year old grandson was with us for this first MCC VS work. Our group of 3 was placed with another older group of 5 for a total of 8, who were to unpack a shipment of household items that were made in countries overseas. We were to inspect them, then price them, then repackage them to be shipped to MCC retail stores all over the US. Profits from these sales are sent to the persons in poor countries

Pastor's Challenge ~

Continue to work at justice

- 1.) Identify your resources - what can you bring to the table?
- 2.) Commit to leveraging your resources towards Justice.
- 3.) Deepen your relationships- Listen to the stories of those being crushed; search for those already doing justice.

Ministry Partner, Peace of the City



~ Restorative Justice,
repairing the harm
caused by often unlawful
or trauma driven behavior.

<https://peaceofthecity.org/about/restorative-justice/>

who manufactured them in the first place.

Esther and Robert were very pleased with the way Jason worked, laughed and talked with the 7 old people, and just as we finished he said, "I don't know who will bring me to do VS for MCC next summer but if there is no other way I will ride my bicycle." The 7 old people laughed.

Now a list of additional VS events:

Twice in Eastern Kentucky with Robert's nephew, who ministered with his wife for MCC in a poor area of the state.

MCC has a traveling meat canner producing thousands of cans each year for the world's poor. For 1 or 2 days per year we have assisted a number of these canning events.

The Brethren in Christ church has a ministry, "Overcomers" located near Farmington, NM, for Navaho men addicted to alcohol. Most of them come from local jails for this 3 month ministry. We were the unit's VS persons in the spring of 2007, willing to do whatever needed to be done. Esther spent most of her time cooking and cleaning. Robert taught a bible class and worked on carpentry projects and building maintenance. Robert's cousin and her husband give leadership to "Overcomers".

MCC made a decision in 1999 to open another of their retail stores in Chesapeake, VA, our home city. We supplied numerous VS hours in helping to get the store set up for business.

Many, many times in the Bible God speaks to us about our responsibility to help poor persons. One example: Isaiah 58:10 "Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day!"



