

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Ephesians 2:13

My Virtual Service in Hungary

I am a 21-year-old university student in the U.S., studying public health at Kent State University with a hope to go into ministry with a focus on women’s health next fall. When I found out about the awesome work being done by Global Ministries and the great community partnerships that have developed, I wanted to be involved! In February 2020 I was confirmed to serve as a short-term service volunteer in Budapest, Hungary. I was supposed to serve that summer with Kalunba, the refugee ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary. I was to work with refugees, offering English lessons, women’s health education, and public health education, as well as some ecumenical work with the Reformed Church of Hungary.



CLAIRE WEIHE

Then the COVID-19 pandemic began to sweep across the world, and international travel was not an option. At first, I was sad, but I soon realized that volunteering for Kalunba in some capacity was necessary, because I was to be counted on!

Navigating the time difference was a challenge, as was connecting with others. My colleagues helped by connecting me with students for English lessons or physical exercise through Zoom. I ended up doing weekly yoga and English sessions with a young woman about my own age. We became friends and shared about our lives. It was more than just a tutor/tutee relationship. We did yoga videos, prepared applications for academic opportunities, and kept connected on social media as well.

Although this experience was not what I expected, I have gained valuable skills in communicating through technology with people whose first language is not English and with people that have different backgrounds than my own. In addition, I have seen how ministry goes beyond the “church” setting. I felt the spirit strongly during my time. I am so grateful for the connections with Kalunba and I hope to make it to Budapest soon!

Claire Weihe served as a short-term volunteer with Kalunba, the refugee ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary, during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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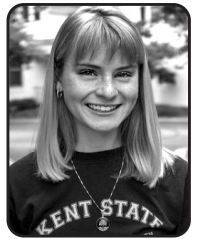
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