

December brought many opportunities for me to become more involved in my community here in Atlanta. On our community days we have started spending the afternoons volunteering at an after school program. We take turns leading devotion, help the kids with their homework and then join them for enrichment time. During enrichment the kids have activities that are often not offered during the regular school day, such as art, music and even a magic show. We also had a chance to meet our neighbors of a different generation while volunteering at the Christmas party for the participants in the Adopt-A-Grandparent program.

Both the church that I attend, Georgia Avenue Church, and the church where I work, Central Presbyterian Church, have been bustling with holiday activities. Advent began with a morning of hanging fresh greens in the historic sanctuary on Georgia Avenue. This was followed by the Advent Happening at Central the next day. At Central one of my housemates and I rolled beeswax candles and made an Advent wreath, which served for a time as our house's only Christmas decoration. One of the members of Georgia Avenue was able to get enough free tickets to the Atlanta Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker* that most of the small congregation and a few of my housemates were able to go. One of the other YAVs and I have gotten involved in the Young Adult Group at Central. We went to their monthly dinner and discussion where Georgia State professor and Atlanta historian, Dr. Harvey Newman, spoke about the race riots that took place in Atlanta in 1906 and which played a significant part in shaping the city. We were so interested by his talk that we convinced the rest of the YAVs to spend a community day at the 1906 Race Riot exhibit at the MLK, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

On another community day we went to LaGrange, GA with one of DOOR's board members to get a glimpse of what life is like for undocumented immigrants. Many of them face unique challenges such as being able to rent a house, but not being able to have the water turned on or being able to get car tags and insurance, but not a driver's license. Most of them live in constant fear being arrested and deported for minor infractions. We had dinner with one family whose son is excelling academically and has been named his school's Outstanding Citizen four years in a row, but is ironically not an American citizen.

The new year will bring exciting changes at the Outreach and Advocacy Center. The Board has recently hired a new Executive Director who will start working in January. This will most directly affect my daily work by affording me more opportunities to do broader advocacy.

Other highlights of the month included ice skating for the first time and going to a production of *The Wiz* with kids in a mentoring program coordinated by one of the other YAVs.

I am continually grateful for your support which has allowed me to have this opportunity. I would love to hear from any of you at aliciabwilson@gmail.com or 683 Grant St. SE, Atlanta, GA 30315 (I love mail!).

Peace,
Alicia