



## Student Spotlight: Nancy Dierdorf

Nancy stated, "God's hand is always sure. His guidance in this walk is a gentle touch revealed in hindsight, and an irresistible force into adventure." Nancy came to MissionShift through a series of events. A few years ago, he softened her heart toward her Muslim neighbors and planted her in a place where she could serve as a friend to women with Rajo, and literacy tutor with SALT, both outreach ministries to Somali refugees with Arrive. With Rajo, she considered teaching reading at a day program for older Somali folks. Nancy reflected, "One woman tenaciously wrote her name repeatedly, naming the letters as she wrote. A Somali man about her age not only spoke to her but also shook her hand. When she asked what work he did before he came to Minnesota, he replied, with great pride, "I am a nomad." Astonished, she wondered how she would ever meet a Somali, Muslim nomad, visit with him, and shake his hand except by God's hand. The connections were rich and sure." The Somali ministry did not work out for her, but it allowed her time to tutor a Somali woman named Rahma who welcomed Nancy into her home. Rahma worked very hard and even wanted to learn long division. They became good friends. These were all surprise blessings from a faithful God. Nancy wanted to do more and prayed that God would give her a push in the right direction. Then she found *MissionShift*.

The invitation to join *MissionShift* was in front of her for a few months before she signed on. Her fear of the unknown held her back, but God's hand propelled her into the mix. She felt that learning about different cultures was fascinating and so useful. Nancy is touched with the hardship and horror both immigrants and refugees face coming to the US, and sees that those burdened by addiction, incapacitating mental illness and criminal records need friendship, real help, and God's grace. Nancy feels that *MissionShift* expresses God's particular word of grace and his promise as the beginning and end of all we do. The message taught is a life-changing theme.

Living in the northwestern suburbs, she wasn't sure how to draw her church into this ministry. God took her interest in community gardens and she led church members to begin a garden on their church campus. They partner with a group of folks from Ghana. The produce goes to a food shelf and into homes. It is a beautiful garden, quiet and serene unless a train is thundering by. All are enthusiastic for next year's garden. The church has had the opportunity to invite some Liberian people to join them. Casual friendships have formed and all are blessed. One of their gardeners has become involved with SALT and is taking literacy training. Nancy stated, "So it goes with God. Not our plans, but totally His. I am so blessed with the great foundation and insight formed through *MissionShift*. It is God's gentle touch and an irresistible force to serve and love our neighbors."