



Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action

Parish Teens Give Their Hearts and Hands to Those In Need

It's June at SMMP and our Youth are on the move, engaging in meaningful outreach activities in the form of Mission Trips.

There are two opportunities to make a difference in the lives of people who can use our assistance. Parishioners 18 and older head to Clintwood, VA in the Appalachian Mountains. Sister Jean is the site coordinator and for many years she has invited our students to "come enthusiastically and build relationships with the clients."

Joey Gollinger has made this trip before and he looks forward to returning and visiting with old clients and making new friends with this year's assignments. "Our work projects are mostly cleaning up and painting for people who are just unable to do it for themselves due to illness, being elderly or impaired in some other way," says Joey. "It's sometimes tricky to understand the people of the area who speak English, but with heavy accents, but they are really glad we are there. They even made us dinner at the end of the week. This was the first time I tried chicken dumplings, jardinière, and sauerkraut."

Kathleen Fultz has also been active in the Clintwood Mission Trip and she likes the spiritual growth aspect to the trip. Our young people plan a theme and prepare reflections each evening for others on the trip. Putting her faith to work and sharing it with others is a great motivator for her.

Bob Hanson, an adult volunteer who chaperoned a SMMP group shares this story: "One client lived in a double-wide trailer with her two sons. Because of a local ordinance that requires teens of the opposite sex to have their own bedrooms, this woman had lost her first son to the foster care system and had a second one who was about to come of age. Our Mission volunteers built four walls and a roof on a previously poured slab and created a space where the son who was placed in foster care was able to return to his mother and brother. The gratitude of the family made that trip more meaningful for everyone!" Last year, our high-school aged Peer Group travelled to downtown Chicago to work with Shine Work Camps. Au-

gie and Dawn Leal are the founders of this Catholic group from Tomball, TX that negotiates with communities to identify people who need assistance (again, cleaning, painting, sorting clothing and food for donations, etc.) and puts Catholic youth and their chaperones to work.



Adult chaperone Carol Naughton (left) and teen Vanessa Filey (right) do repairs and painting during a recent mission trip.

SMMP's Bridget Naughton says the family plans the work; "Grandpa and Grandma" prepare the meals and the youth in the family (along with the chaperones) form a music group for inspiration and fellowship at night. "I like interacting with the people we are helping and getting to know them during the week. Plus wearing the paint-stained shirts from the camp are like a badge of honor!"

Joe Kenny is a Peer Minister who liked it so much he will return this year. He wants everyone to know that the school where they are based is NOT air conditioned, so prayers for moderate weather June 25 -30 are very much appreciated!

These fantastic youth volunteers need your help! The two trips are the same week and also conflict with Summer School, so they need more volunteers and more adults to chaperone. To find out more call the Religious Education office at 630-369-0833.

- written by Phil Samuels

Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.