

## Mission Reflection

Hannah McCorry

Before the trip to Leech Lake Reservation I was kind of nervous about going. I didn't know many people and had never been in a car for so long, but I am very glad I went. Traveling to a poor community is sure to open your eyes. I had never seen poverty like that, all the communities around Orland are well off, but until you go and see it for yourself, you can't truly comprehend just how blessed we really are. We have so much that we take for granted every day.

Working with the kids really opened my eyes up to what we take for granted. As I sat with them at lunch, the food they were eating would not be my first choice but for some it might have been their only choice. They always had a smile on their face every day. All they wanted to do was play and have fun, like every other kid. These kids were really the symbol for God's love. They were kind, and caring, with innocence and love in their harsh, uncaring lives. Many of them faced hardships everyday but they came with smiles on their faces, and enthusiasm for Jesus. I think that kids camp was my favorite part of the week, many of them seemed uneager to leave everyday just like we were uneager to leave. I hope that Youthworks continues to make the kids of Leech Lake reservation have a fun filled summer.

My worksite project was painting a woman's home. Working at the site made me realize that wanting to do something like change the color of my house would not be a huge financial burden to me, but for many others it is hard to come up with that spare cash when you live paycheck to paycheck. Doing this simple chore for someone less fortunate than me has humbled me in so many ways. It has made me more generous and thankful for the things I have in my life. The appreciation and thank you's I received showed how I can really make an impact on someone by doing something as simple as painting her front porch. The Lord filled me up with happiness and satisfaction the last day of worksite by serving others instead of myself for a change. I want to continue doing things for others.

I had a great time getting to know my Mission mates from St. Julie more. Many of these kids go to Andrew and I only see them at TNT meetings. I'm much more comfortable around everyone now that I've spent a week working and having fun with them! The kids from St. Mary's were really nice! I got phone numbers for many of them and we all plan on getting together soon.

All in all I think that my mission to Leech Lake helped me spiritually, emotionally, and socially. All the friends I made will last a lifetime. I can't wait to go again next year.

Colin Gallagher

### Mission Trip Reflection

When I first heard that we were going to Cass Lake I did not know what to expect. I have never been to Minnesota before, so I was also very excited. I had no idea what kind of work I would be doing, what the people would be like, and how the children would act since Cass Lake is on an Indian reservation. I wondered if serving on an Indian reservation would make this mission trip any different from the past two that I have been on. Before the trip, I thought about what to expect and realized that every trip is going to be unique and different no matter what. I decided to just leave as I am going on a mission trip, and I am going to serve God's people.

The trip did not start on a high note because of the late departure, but in my opinion it was fine and was just some extra time to know the other people that were going along. Normally the relationships are built on the way there in the vans, but with the delay they were made at St. Julie's. When the vans were finally ready to be picked up and brought back to church we loaded up and we were off on our journey. I heard we were going to stay at a school so I expected a small, run down, and old school, mostly everyone did. We were all wrong. The school we arrived at was big, new, and nice looking inside and out. A few others and I thought the nice living conditions killed the mission trip mood, but then we all agreed that a mission trip is still a mission trip. The Youth Works staff was up and ready to help us get situated even though it was really late when we arrived.

The following morning was really overwhelming with the combination of lack of sleep and being slightly rushed because we missed last night's orientation. The day continued as usual with finding out our groups and getting to work. The first two days I was put into Kid's Club. I was really looking forward with doing Kid's Club because I missed it last year. I found it interesting that we had Kid's Club right after we ate breakfast and that it was off site. All of us grew really good relationships with all of the kids. We also ate our lunches with the kids which helped build the relationships even more. Getting to know the kids is my favorite part about Kid's Club. All of the kids have a really good time and have smiles on their faces despite all the things that have happened in their lives in at such a young age. The kids really help me look at the positives in my life and realize how lucky I actually am back at home.

The next two days I was at a work site. At the work site, my group had to finish staining a deck and ramp that another group had started earlier in the week. It was really fun because I like painting, and I made friendships better with the others in my group. The home owner was very nice and made us lemonade that tasted amazing. Every so often, people around town would come by and say how good of people we were and how great of a job we were doing. That really made me, and I am sure everyone else, feel special and that the community is noticing and greatly appreciating our work. Our mission every year is to give the community hope and when we were thanked I knew we completed our objective. We could all go back home comfortably knowing that we all made a difference.

## Cass Lake – 2013

This Mission Trip was just as amazing as the other mission trips I've been on. This was the first year that I did Outrageous Sports Camp. OSC was awesome, we were able to go out to a work site in the morning and come back at around noon to run the camp. I did OSC with my two cousins Josh and Ben, but I also got to know the people from the other church. OSC made this mission trip very unique.

The other big thing about this mission trip was learning about the culture of the Native Americans who lived there. The people there have a way of living that is very unlike what we are used to. I feel that I became closer with God on this trip. I also connected with the many of the other people on this trip. Overall I thought this was an incredible trip and I look forward to going next year.



brother was killed by three young men directly across the street from this home. He was lacking skin pigments, known as albino who only went out at night as sunlight bothered his eyes. One night a group of teens thought it would be fun to pick on someone less fortunate. They beat him resulting in his death. In spite of this tragedy, mother and daughter found a willingness to trust in youth. Our youth. The kids gave of themselves and while the caulking may not have been perfect or the painting the best, they gave what they could. It was their time, their talent, their best effort.

I was amazed and humbled by this experience. These people were genuinely happy without many of the 'luxuries' that we take for granted. I believe that our kids saw that they have so much compared to the little that was seen in Cass Lake. I hope that they take the experience to heart and relish what they have thanking God for the abundance that they have been given.

The smiles on the little children sparkled. The adults were thrilled by a bunch of teens cleaning their yard and slopping paint on their home. There was gratitude in all that we did. It was refreshing. It was amazing.

Mr. Mike Rubino

The old man who did not turn left....

I had no idea of what to expect in the North Woods in June but my experience was one of marvel and awe at the goodness of the people we were there to serve.

The journey began with a late start and an even later arrival which only heightened my anticipation. After 12 hours of driving we arrived in darkness. I had no idea where I was as the final two hours I was in the hands of my navigator who drove as I slipped in and out of sleep.

No two of these trips are alike and this one was not like my last.

My first two days were with the children at Kids Camp. I drove the van into the neighborhood as I have in the past to gather the children.

There was a splendor to the magnificent landscape, the bright blue sky, the forested areas and the abundant wildlife, all testaments to the natural beauty of the land. This being in stark contrast to the disheveled dwellings, the run down trailers with the broken doors, shattered windows and junked cars that lined every street.

My first stop was a home where I gathered 6-7 children ranging from ages 6 – 14. They were happy, cheerful and quite sassy. We were warned that the children could be rude, that they would be bossy, outspoken telling you where to turn and how to drive. It was all true! As I maneuver towards the first intersection from the middle row of seats an eight year old yells, "Turn left old man!" I guess that was the indicator that I was not considered equipped to complete this procedure on my own.

We read to some of the kids under a tree and one young guy, Dominic wants to read to us. We played duck-duck-goose, painted shirts with fabric paints, played basketball and colored on large sheets of paper. Being with these happy children was the antithesis of where I just picked them up. Their lack of nice homes and fancy clothes had nothing to do with their jealous spirit. The little ones played with us as if we were their best friends forever.

My next two days were spent at a worksite. We were sent to a single family dwelling in the heart of town. We started by cleaning the patio. There was garbage strewn all over. There was an old toilet, sink, and plumbing equipment, scraps of wood and bags of garbage. This was the culture as it was the same sight at many homes with garbage strewn in side yards and refuse tossed everywhere. We were warned about 'res' dogs, a term used for dogs on the reservation that roamed freely. We were told to avoid them at all costs as they carried diseases and would seek food from just about any source. It was a full day simply preparing for our second day at the site.

The next day was spent scraping, caulking and painting this home. It was a overwhelming experience as the homeowner and her mother made sure from their meager income that there was bottled water, sodas, cookies and two homemade cakes for us. Their story was heart-wrenching as their son and

## Cass Lake Minnesota

The mission trip to Cass Lake Minnesota was my third mission trip I have been on. There were many things I found rewarding about this trip. I loved working with the community, learning their way of life and building stronger relationships with everyone in our church group, as well as the people in the other church group. This experience also brought me close to God and his work.

My favorite part of this mission trip was the community picnic. It was really cool how the community openly shared their music and dance with all of us. I also enjoyed learning about their clothing and way of life. Kids club was also a lot of fun, as usual. All of the kids are so sweet and fun to get to know. It's awesome how they can talk to you and tell you their life story as if you have been around them your whole life. That's another thing I love about their community, you barely know them and they have complete trust in you.

Overall, I really enjoy this mission trip and had a lot of fun having god pursue me. I can't wait until next year's mission trip!

# Cass Lake 2013

Since this was my first mission trip I did not know what to expect, but my brother has told me a lot of stories and he made it sound like it was awesome and he was 100% right. What also convinced me into going was that my cousins were going to be there. The trip was a really good experience for me because now I have a different view on life; how good we have it and how bad other people have it.

To sum up my entire trip, I think it was great that I went. I met a lot of new people and made many good friends with unbreakable bonds. My brother and I got a lot closer. I helped to give many kids hope again and the feeling of love all because I went on this trip. I think I'm going to keep going on mission trips so I can continue to help more kids and help rebuild the houses for people that need the help.

Matthew Kruse

This year's mission trip was better than I expected. This was my second and sadly last mission trip I can go on now which I wish I started early like some of my friends. But that's beside the point I got more out of this trip than last year because I was able to go to the work site and help out with kids club. At the work site the people I talked to were nice and friendly. Even the owners of the house even if I didn't talk to them that much which I wish I did but the time I talked to them was great. When the vans pulled into Cass Lake I personally didn't think it was that bad until we pulled into the work site area. I saw houses without doors some of them didn't have windows and I saw little kids running around by themselves. After the two days of helping working on the house it looked much better and I feel like the group we had did a lot of work in a little amount of time. The next two days we went to kids club and all the little kids wanted shoulder ride which me and a couple of guys and girls gave them. I feel like I was able to connect to a couple of kids. But I remember this one kid he was four years old and on the second day he wanted me to come back tomorrow and go to his house to play which I couldn't do sadly. But I was able to walk him home with a couple of other people in our church and the other one and when we left he went in and came out and gave every one an animal cracker that he had for lunch which was one of the best moments of that week for me because how nice he was even if he didn't have stuff we had. One thing I wish I could change is that I went on more than two mission trips because you get so much out of them and the experience is so much fun.



Every night we would gather with the other church that was working with us at Club. That was a nice time to reflect on our day and feel a connection with Jesus. The other church with us was St. Mary's. They were all so nice and I feel like we all worked very well together. I'm so thankful that they were there because I made lifelong friends that I know I will keep in touch with.

Over all this Mission Trip was the best thing that's happened to me this summer. I'm so thankful I got this opportunity because I feel closer with myself and my faith. I now know the little things you do can really impact others and how good it feels just to show kids love and attention that might not get it at home.

AMC (2)

### Cass Lake Mission Trip 2013

When I heard about the mission trip for this year I was really excited and knew I wanted to go right away. I was a little nervous but I knew it would be worth it. Going on this year's Mission Trip to Cass Lake, Minnesota was the best decision I've made all summer!

The first two days of the trip I was working at kids club. I loved the experience. The memories I made with the kids will stick with me for the rest of my life. Just watching the different kid's reactions and talking with them and hearing where they all come from really made me feel appreciated. The first little boy I sat with was named Ezra. He wouldn't talk at all for the first hour or so. I kept asking him questions and talking with him but he was very shy. All it took was giving him a shoulder ride and he opened right up. It made me realize the simple things you do can do to really make the kids smile. Just watching their faces change and see what they liked to do amazed me. I was talking to another girl and she was seven years old. She told me all about her home life and how she lived with all her brothers and sisters and cousins all in one house. She told me about how they would argue and fight. After she told me about her family I really wanted to just make her smile and have a good day at kids club. Kids club really opened my eyes to see that all the kids need is love and if you give it to them they will love you right back.

The rest of the week my team worked at Grace and Charlie's house. We were staining their deck and just cleaning up the outside of their house. I was surprised how welcoming they were and how Grace knew exactly what she wanted done. Grace was so nice to all of us and she was really nice to talk to during our breaks. Every day when we ate lunch she would make us lemon aid which was delicious. She didn't have to make it for us, but she did which was a nice gesture. As we were working someone drove by and honked and gave us a thumbs up. I really enjoyed working on their house because I felt like I was impacting the community in a different way. It was nice to know that just doing simple things can really impact the community and have the other community members notice what you're doing and be thankful even if it's not directly impacting them.

she wanted to get done and that was eye opening. I don't know if I would've been as welcoming to strangers as she was. During those two days I realized that I can make a difference in the community and it doesn't even have to be a big change. Something small can mean the world to one person.

The other church that came was from St. Mary's. They were all very welcoming. I made new friends with all the people there. I am very glad that they were the other group because the friendships I made will last me a long time and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Looking back to the first time I heard about mission I can't help but laugh at the fact that I thought I wouldn't fit in there. Everyone was so accepting and nice. Mission was definitely the best decision and best thing I will do all summer. I don't regret any of it and would go again in a heartbeat. I cannot wait for the next 4 years I can go on mission.

Mary Kate Donegan

### Cass Lake Mission Trip 2013

The first time I heard about mission I brushed it off like it was nothing because I felt like I wouldn't fit in. Then I heard it again and decided maybe I would give it a try. That turned out to be my best decision all summer.

The first two days I was at Kids Club. The workers told us many times that these kids came from rough homes and just needed a place to be for a little while. I talked to a few kids and they told me their stories and it was just heartbreaking. A few times I found myself close to tears but I held it in because if a stranger couldn't be strong for them how could I expect them to be strong? The two days I worked at Kids Club I realized that we have it really good here in Orland Park and Oak Forest. We may complain but it's only because we have different conditions. Someone here can complain about missing their fries while these kids are upset because they can't eat at all. The YouthWorks volunteers showed me their dedication all week. It must be hard for them to give up their whole summer and deal with new groups each week and kids that don't want to behave but they do it all with a smile.

The next two days I worked at Grace and Charlie's house. We stained their deck and did whatever else they needed us too. The whole time Grace was being very hospitable to us. Every day when we would sit down for lunch she would come out with lemonade and give it to us. She knew exactly what

Mission trip 2013. It was almost indescribable, almost. I has been on one Breakaway retreat before this and it was great, but there was something about THIS trip that brought me closer to God.

I don't know if it was the kids who greeted me with a smile, a hug, and a request for a piggy back ride. The huge amount appreciation and thanks I received from people in the community for what (in my opinion) seemed like only a small amount of work. Or maybe it was the amazing feeling of being surrounded by people that I love and who love the Lord that made my relationship with God stronger.

Honestly, I think it was a combination of them all. That week not only brought me closer to God and my TNT family, but taught me about a way of life that was new to me and different from my own. The Ojibwe people have an admirable respect for the Earth and all that comes from it. That resonated with me and now reminds me to respect the Earth and be thankful for what God allows it to provide.

All of this has opened my mind and together created an amazing environment and made me feel at home in Cass Lake even though I was there for only a few days. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything.

-Sam O'Sullivan-

Well, since I'm typing this inside a Panera near my grandma's house I'm not sure how spiritually reflective this will be... But here goes nothing.

This could have been the best mission trip I have been on so far. The Youth Works people were awesome. They tried to make an attempt to know all of the kids and find some connection or similarity with them. This was a big reason why this trip was so great.

For some reason I felt like I had a bigger impact on the community on this mission trip. I had a closer relationship with the kids at the Sports Camp, whether it was giving the girls piggy-back rides while they called me "blue eyes" or having fun but seemingly endless games of lightning/knock out.

In one week we grew so close to the kids that one of them gave me his good luck bracelet that I'm still wearing right now, and then one of the girls also called me her best friend she has ever had. Sports Camp was great because not only did it give me a chance to teach the kids but it allowed me to learn from them. I also became a lot better friends with all the people that went on the trip and I met a lot of great people as well.

Initially I was a little hesitant about even going because I would have to fly by myself and then on the mission trip there would be more people I didn't know than I already knew. It turned out great because like I said earlier, I made a lot of new friends and became even closer to the ones I knew. Overall, this will always be a mission trip to remember. Depending on where I go to college this could be my last mission trip so if it is, these were some great four years and trips that were life changing. Hopefully I'll be able to go next year and have another great trip in Cairo!

Ben Warpinski

My mission trip to Cass Lake, Minnesota has changed my life spiritually and mentally. It has changed my understanding of God and the view of poverty and of the world. Along the way, I also found out a lot more about myself and the way that God sees me and everyone else in the community.

The mission trip to Cass Lake was my first mission trip and I didn't really know what to expect going into it. But, on the mission trip, I learned so much more about God like how he thinks everyone, including me, are desirable and worth "saving" from sin. Also, I found that the people in this poverty-stricken have incredible amounts of hope and perseverance and I found that to be unbelievably inspiring to me to help and love these people and the community. I also found out so much about how lucky I am to have all of the stuff that have like simple electronics and other items.

On the mission trip, I met so many amazing people, not just in the community but also in my church group and I made so many great friendships. The thing I enjoyed most is talking and getting to know everyone I met in my church group and in the community. After the mission trip, I feel more influenced by God and to follow his ways of kindness and selflessness. I definitely want to go to plenty more mission trips and I hope to feel the same amazing experiences I did on this trip in my future ones.

Katie Ruane

Another year, another mission trip. Every year I embark on a car ride full of teens that have the same goals as me: help at the mission sites and kids club and have fun doing. This year's goals weren't any different, but what I brought home from the trip was. Rather than bringing home the satisfaction of helping the community of Cass Lake and going back to my normal life, I've been able to keep these experiences with me when I make the decisions in my day-to-day life.

The scenery in Minnesota reminds me that although I may not think I have everything, some communities have less than I do. However, it's not just the scenery that makes it so; it is the people. To learn of their stories and see their unwavering love for each other, our mission group and Christ showed me the power of not only our God, but also the soul of a human.

### **How do I begin to explain the things I have seen?**

How do I begin to tell others about the joy on the children's faces when we showed up at Kid's Club? Many had such big smiles on their faces and felt so happy just to be hugged, and to be loved by anyone who would give such attention that may be lacking at home. It always amazes me to see how such simple acts, like making bracelets or eating lunch next to the kids, can mean the world to at least one of those kids. The smiles and laughter our TNT group is able to bring to these children's faces brings an indescribable happiness to us as well.

How do I begin to tell others about the happiness displayed by the community when we painted Dream Catcher Park? Little children would come up to us, just to thank us for fixing the park they've grown up going to daily. It's honestly an eye-opening experience to see how a park—something we all take for granted—fills the children of Cass Lake with so much happiness. The heat, lack of paint and excessive sweat are ultimately nothing compared to the joy we were able to provide the community for helping fix their beloved park.

How do I begin to tell others about the open arms the community offers? The opportunities to learn a traditional native dance, the openness of the community members on the history of their lives and the life of Cass Lake, and the love and joy portrayed through the community's actions all helped our mission group to feel welcome in their home. It amazes me every year to see how much people can give despite how much they have themselves. It doesn't seem fair that I have a nice house, nice playground and nice things when I don't have nearly as much to give to others as the people of Cass Lake can give.

I am no longer sheltered. I am no longer the kid who just goes back to their normal life after a mission trip. The Lord brought me hundreds of miles from my home to show me this as if to say, "Look, learn, and now go tell others." And I have and I will continue to do so for the rest of my life. I was created to show compassion, to champion for those less fortunate, and most of all, to bring the love of Christ to those who feel they are not loved.

Cass Lake. I will never be the same. For I was shown that God is good, ALL the time.



James Kut

## 2013 Mission Trip Reflection

This mission trip has changed my understanding of God because I was able to witness firsthand how he works through people to do his work on earth. The trip has also changed my view on the world because I can see the struggles that so many families are having and that it's not always "the people in Africa" that need our help its people on our back doors too. This mission has changed my understanding of myself because I have realized that God wants me to play a larger role in his works than I thought I could have ever received.

I learned that by responding to the needs of others I won't always get a "thank you" but I can feel it inside. Putting their needs before your own means a huge difference for them whether they express it or not. By attending this mission trip, I learned that Jesus faced many struggles in helping other people and it has helped me to follow closer in his footsteps to God.

The atmosphere as a whole with all my friends and the new bonds between the two churches is what made the biggest impact on me. Everyone melted together and treated each other like family and it made a huge impact on me spiritually. I was surprised on the lack of poverty at the beginning of the week but closer towards the end when we drove passed the broken down houses is when it hit me on how poor everyone was.

God will use this mission trip as a base line for me to follow so that I can help others in the near future and with other mission trips as well.

I enjoyed bonding with the members of the church. Although I am not from St. Julies parish, I felt like I was at home and everyone was happy to be together. I definitely plan on attending the mission trip next year because of the warm welcome that I thought was there and the great experiences we had.

It feels that I have a softer heart after this mission trip. I used to be hardy and sterner and I guess you could say a little headstrong towards other people. After the trip and having the experiences I had with kids club has changed me greatly in ways I couldn't have imagined.

### Mission Trip Reflection

I never realized how much my actions can impact a person. Whether at worksites or kids club, I could feel that I was really making a difference to someone. I never really thought that I was making a huge impact in kids club until some of the kids said that they remembered kids from last year. I could see that they really loved kids club. I would have never thought that a simple game of tag could make a kid so happy and could distract them from anything else they had going on at home. Knowing that I could bring a smile to their face and make them happy by doing some of the littlest things genuinely made me happy. Not only did I make a difference in their lives, but they also changed mine. I never realized how fortunate I really was. There are so many things that I have that I take for granted. I see how lucky I am and am truly thankful.

Kayla Wyleta

Mission trip has changed my understanding of God so much. No matter how bad family or poverty got the community was happy and God definitely helped with that. I feel my view of the world has changed so much, because everyone in Cass Lake was so kind. I think God can now see me as a stronger and wiser person as I can now see myself.

Learning that the needs of others are more important than mine was the best thing I could ask for. I think the kids made the biggest impact on me. No matter what was going on all the kids stayed positive. What surprised me most was the amount we got done. I had no clue we could get so much in so little time. I enjoyed everything! Even during work I made great friends and got to help the community. Also just having an hour of free time was great, because we got to connect with people out of our groups! I feel like going on mission changed my heart a lot yet I can't explain. Cass Lake MN, 2013 Mission Trip was the best thing I could've asked for this summer.

Today was an especially beautiful morning in Cass Lake and I had just told Alex, one of our Youth Works Leaders, that I really hoped to see Jesus today. This was my third day on the mission trip and although I knew I was helping out and doing good things, I just wasn't being filled up inside spiritually. We were going to worksite today to scrape and paint the home of a lady who lived in town. So I prayed.

When we arrived at her home, we found out her name was Roxanne and that Youth Works was doing work on her mother's home as well. Roxanne was divorced, but they didn't know anything else about her. She just needed help. Our wonderful crew of teens from both St. Julie's and St. Mary's of Milwaukee worked so well together and got straight to work. It was truly a sight to see! High school youth laughing and talking together and having a wonderful time all while scraping paint from a house in the high heat of the day!

Shortly before lunch, Roxanne came home and introduced herself to us. She was such a nice lady. She brought cases of pop and bottled water, several bags of various chips, cookies, and her mother baked the most delicious tray of cakes for us! They were so happy to have us there and wanted to take care of us, but we were there to take care of them!

We had a question for Roxanne, so I went inside the house to find her. She and I started talking and she began to tell me how grateful she was for the help and why. Roxanne told me she has a tumor on her lower spine that causes a great deal of pain and even daily tasks seem monumental at times. She has a daughter she is raising, so surgery is terrifying to her. She wants to do what she can to make sure she is always there for her. I told her about my car accident of 1994 and about all of my surgeries to try to alleviate some of her fears of surgery and that she would know when and if it would be the right choice for her. I also told her praying about it always helps. She cried and I just held her. She went on to tell me that a few years back her older brother who was a near blind albino was walking out in front of the house across the street at night. He could only go out at night because the sun really irritated him. While he was walking, three men came up and randomly beat him to death. I held Roxanne as she cried.

The next day at Roxanne's house when we were finished painting we were taking some group pictures. Roxanne came up to me to tell me that one of the men was already out of prison after serving only two years. The other two are still serving. I held Roxanne as she talked and cried. I know why I went to Cass Lake. God sent me there not only to serve others, but to meet Roxanne. She needed someone to talk to, someone she could trust that she could open up to and she got that from me. I saw Jesus in Cass Lake.

Mrs. Melissa O'Donnell

July 2014

Mary Kay Junis

## Cass Lake Mission Trip 2013

This past mission trip was an amazing experience for me. This was my first mission trip, and definitely not my last. I enjoyed helping out at the park and at kids club. but this trip wasn't about me, it was about the people in the community.

The people in Cass Lake are in poverty, but that didn't stop them from having a good time. I feel like all of the Youth works volunteers did everything possible to put a smile on those people's faces.

Although all of the sights were amazing opportunities, my favorite work sight would've had to be working at Grace's house. we pulled weeds, washed her windows, stained her porches...and most importantly, talked with her and her husband, Charlie. I think that interacting with the people in the community was the most memorable thing we could've done. it shows that we are not there just to do our job then leave, it shows that we really care... which, we all did.

Not only did I help change people's lives in that reservation, I also met so many new people... and not one of them had a cold heart... they all are there specifically to help out the people. It's amazing that if you try your hardest, you can achieve so much, and that is what they taught me.

I can't wait for next year...

## Mission Trip Reflection

By: Michelle Rubino

June 23<sup>rd</sup> at seven am was the start to our trip. We had some delays but we finally left at noon. Having the loudest van, we didn't sleep much. Mainly partied the way there. We had some storms the way there but most of the time it was clear skies which showed it was going to be a great week. We finally arrived at three in the morning. Most of us went to bed at 4:30 because we had to set up our sleeping areas.

Every morning we woke up at seven depending on which group had breakfast prep. Depending on what group you were in decided what you would do that day. Some groups were on worksite and others at kids club. Then after two days you would switch jobs.

Throughout the week relationships were built as we bonded with each other and the other church there. We became closer together with not only each other but god as well. We prayed before every meal, had devotions in the morning, and club every night. We thanked god for everything he gave us during that week because he gave us so much to be thankful for. He gave us the experience of a lifetime. He allowed us to learn about the community and grow in our faith. He allowed us to meet new people.

That week is one that I will never forget because I became closer with so many people. God allowed me to be free to be who I wanted to be that week. He allowed me the opportunity to have the experience of a lifetime.

learned how to fix our brokenness. We learned how to be desirable. On the last night, we did a very life changing activity. The activity consisted of washing our feet. John:13 talked about how Jesus washed the feet of all of the disciples. He washed their feet to show how important they truly are. This experience made my faith even stronger. I've learned that so many people care for one another even when they have their own brokenness. I've also learned that we are all desirable in God's eyes. I will never forget my experience at Cass Lake. I am so thankful to have learned the things I have learned from that week. I am also very grateful for the friendships I have made that week.

## Mission Trip Reflection

The mission trip to Cass Lake, Minnesota was my first ever mission trip. I have learned so much from this trip. From this trip I have gained more knowledge about the community and my faith. I've also learned new traits from this trip. In the beginning of the week, we learned about brokenness. I knew I had brokenness in my life but I didn't know how to fix it. I saw brokenness in myself and the community. By helping the community, I learned more about other people's lives. I learned their stories and their own brokenness. I learned so much from the kid's camp that I helped work. The children there have gone through so much at such a young age. All though they have been through such terrible times, they always keep their faith. One of the little girls, Aubrey, was telling me about her family. She told who lived in her house. The home consisted of her mother and father, her three older sisters, her niece, and Jesus. I found this so amazing. At the age of six, she truly understood that there was Christ. I also learned from the teens that went on the trip. They've taught me more about my faith. I also was able to gain more friendships from these amazing people. The counselors shared their stories about their own brokenness. They were all so brave to share their deepest and darkest secrets. By the end of the week we all



Kara Kennedy

Over the course of the mission trip, I learned new things about myself, as well as, others. The mission trip has changed my view of the world because I got to see how communities that aren't as privileged as Tinley Park live. They don't have all the luxuries that we do, yet they still go through life with a smile. They don't need all the expensive technology or the nicest houses; all they need is each other. At the community cookout, I saw the community come together and rejoice over the changes being made to their town. I believe that the people in the town made the biggest impact on the trip for me. The children at kids club, as well as, at the cookout made the trip worthwhile. All they wanted was someone to hug them and tell them everything was going to be okay. They were all so loving and they were appreciative of everything that we did. Spending the days, laughing and playing with the children was the best part of the mission trip for me. They changed my life in so many ways. They taught me to appreciate everything I have. They taught me that you don't need the nicest things to be happy. There was no better feeling at the end of the day, then when you know you made your "little buddy" smile. Hearing the little girls tell me that I was there favorite buddy or that they are going to miss me so much made me feel like I got the most out of the mission trip that I could. I made a difference in their life and gave them a bit of hope that things could get better. However, they impacted my life more. I saw that we both needed and wanted the same things. Even though they were six and I'm sixteen, we still desired the same thing. We wanted to be accepted. As the trip ended, both of us realized that our desire was a reality.

This wasn't my first mission trip, so I thought I had a very vague idea of how things would go. I knew I would have, in some order, kids club and a worksite. I knew about things like club, devos, and the nightly smallgroups. I did not, however, know that we would get there in the wee hours of the morning due to a minor fiasco with the van company. I also didn't expect to be waiting at the church for hours because of the same fiasco.

Although it's not necessarily a pleasant example, that van delay shows that, despite some things being largely similar for each trip, they are still all unique. These differences help keep the trips interesting. If we just kept going to the same place to work with the same kids and do the same worksites with the same other church, these trips would be 90% first timers. I love going on these largely because I get to see different communities and meet different people. The variability is a huge part of why I kept going on these.

Despite my love for the new experiences, I would have trouble doing entirely new things each year. The similarities that come from these all being Youthworks trips are refreshing. It's also fun to see the different ways each site handles the common ground, like Cass Lake's early kids club. I also love having many of the same people going each year, since I got to form strong bonds with these people.

I really enjoyed this mission trip, and it makes me sad to think that this was my last one. I loved getting to meet new people from both groups. I loved getting to play with some of the local kids. I loved helping stain the deck and drinking that famous lemonade. I really enjoyed this last trip and I hope those of you who can go on future trips take advantage of that. My only regret with these trips was that I only went on three, and I hope no one else has to regret not going on enough mission trips.

# Cass Lake

My time on this year's mission trip is one of the things that I shall never forget throughout my life whether it is the friendships and relationships that will last for a life time or doing god's work and showing how amazing he truly is, it has been a week I will never forget. Cass Lake Minnesota got a taste of TNT can do when my small group future did an amazing job painting the fence at a park by the boys and girl club. I believe it was a prime example of how when people team up to achieve a goal it can be done with ease, even if we did almost run out of paint we did get the job done. The second impact that we made on cass lake is kidz club when we brought fun to the kids of cass lake with games and activities like water day which was a lot of fun, with games like drip drip drop or the water balloon toss which soon after turn into a water balloon fight it was of the most amazing trips I have ever taken and cannot wait to go on next year's trip and create an impact on whatever community that TNT travels to.

Zach Helm

# Mission Trip Reflection

## Jimmy McGuire

When I found out that we were going to an indian reservation, I was kind of nervous and didn't know what to expect at all. I had never experienced a mission trip like this before. Cass Lake ended up being my favorite trip out of all 4 mission trips that I have gone on. I can't really explain why but I'll try. The first morning we got there, Chris and I had gone to help with breakfast prep. It was me, him, and about 10 people that we had never even seen before. But we managed to make friends and have a lot of fun. The worksite was very similar for me. There were a lot of people from the other church the second day and we became really close. At the beginning of the trip I was really nervous to be in a leadership position being a senior but I came to thoroughly enjoyed it. After talking to a few of the leaders, I had made the decision that I am going to apply to be a youthworks leader for next summer. I think my experiences these past 4 years have really given me the courage and strength to make this decision. I think it has really strengthened my faith as well. This trip was absolutely amazing and if I get the job next summer I will definitely keep everyone updated and I will try to request to be placed in Cairo so I can see you guys. Thanks for a great experience all 4 years TNT! You are all beautiful shells ☺

## Meg Kline Mission Trip 2013 Reflection

special. This mission trip was an absolutely life changing: I made relationships to last a lifetime, became much more aware of the poverty and how much I can actually make a difference. This was proven to me because one of the relationships I made, with Deborah, is still being continued. She texted me on the way home from Cass Lake, and we have continued to text ever since then. I have her address and she has mine, so we can send each other mail☺ she has completely opened up to me about her life, and she has told me multiple times how much she loves and misses me, only to her back that I love and miss her more. I loved mission trip 2013, and I love all the memories I have for myself, and I've made with the people and town. I love Cass Lake, and I can't even put into words how much I love TNT. It changed me and my outlook on life, and I've never felt better.

CASS LAKE, MINNESOTA<3

The week that I spent in Cass Lake, Minnesota was the one that changed my entire outlook on my life. First, to respect having a bedtime when I was little because sometimes you can't sleep until about 2:30 AM when you finally get to your destination. On a more serious note, I now understand what it means to respect everything that I have. I've been on one other mission trip when I was going into sophomore year, but I feel like I wasn't able to take everything in like I could this year, going into senior year. First, from work project experiences, I learned to respect my family for giving me the home I have, while there are many more that are less fortunate than me. Second, from kids club I learned about so many kids and how to keep a relationship. There was one girl there in particular, Deborah. She helped me realize that I can actually change a life even only with my words. She was one of the first kids I met when I got to kids club. An 11 year old girl, who looks like a sweetheart and wanted to talk to many of the mission kids. I learned to never judge a book by its cover. Deborah ended up having a somewhat mean attitude and a bad mouth. We spent our first day together and I told her that some of the things she was saying weren't exactly the best things to say, like "I hate little kids" and telling a kid he was "fat and ugly". On the second day, she came up to me and told me that she didn't like one of the kids there, but she wasn't going to say anything because I told her it wasn't nice to say mean things to other kids. This showed me that you can change a life even by just showing someone you care and guiding them in the right direction. At the cookout, I spent most of the time with Deborah. I saw all the people from the community there and they were all happy and seemed to be appreciative of how we were helping their community. The cookout was at Dream catcher Park, one of the places we were working on helping out that week for our work projects. It was nice to see everyone there. It's also nice to think that throughout the summer, every Wednesday the community will come together and see the progress made by every group of teens. At our cookout, Deborah taught me how to dance and we danced together at the powwow. She brought me over to a table so I could meet her Grandmother. I thought that was really

children were very smart and seemed to have had others read books to them. Another interesting thing was how well the children knew their geography. We spent each morning and afternoon picking up and dropping off the children. We would invariably lose our way and would have to rely on second or third graders to get us to the next house!

For our work site we stained a deck. The owners of the home were very friendly and each day would make a gallon of fruit punch or ice tea for us. We found out that the husband was 1/16 Ojibwe and was a retired custodian from the local school. In his free time he played music at local bars and the casino. I was very impressed with how well our group did painting the deck. The owner was very particular about how the work was done and our group impressed her very much. It was wonderful to watch the group work together to remove lattice, nail down the deck, countersink nails and stain the deck neatly and quickly. They really seemed to enjoy each other's company and worked as a team very well.

I felt much more spiritual and in touch with my faith during and after this mission trip. I came to the realization last year that the work is secondary to the relationships between the teens, the adult leaders and the community. Because of that, I was able to not worry about getting things done on the work site and could spend much more time getting to know the Ojibwe tribe, the teens and leaders of our church and perhaps most importantly, myself and my relationship with God.

Mission Trip Reflection  
Carl Evans Jr. (Mr. Evans)  
Cass Lake Minnesota, June 2013

This year's mission trip to Cass Lake Minnesota Native American Reservation was rewarding and a great time. I am glad that I went on the mission trip last year so that I knew what to expect this year. For my first mission trip, I was unaccustomed to the casual approach to work sites and it took me a few days to understand that the relationships with the people on the sites are what are important and not necessarily getting the work done on time. Once I learned that, the trip was much more enjoyable and, more importantly, rewarding spiritually.

Armed with the knowledge I gained last year, I approached this mission trip with a much different attitude. I left on this mission trip with a goal to get to know the Native American culture and its people and to be the 'hands and feet of Christ' on the ground. I am happy to say that I did that to a great extent.

The first thing that struck about Cass Lake Minnesota, much like Logan, West Virginia was the beauty of the area. I still have a difficult time balancing the awe I am in looking at the wonderful natural surroundings with the poverty and suffering that many people live with everyday. Minnesota is filled with lakes, trees and wildlife that brings many sportsmen, tourists and people who enjoy the outdoors. Opposite these people are the Native Americans of the Chippewa tribe, now known as the Ojibwe.

I was very impressed with the Ojibwe and their culture. I enjoyed getting to know some of them and learning about their culture through the community cook-out. Unlike last year's mission trip, the Ojibwe people were quite friendly and I enjoyed speaking with them. One feeling I could not escape was that if my race had suffered what the Ojibwe did at the hands of another race, I would not be so quick to speak with them or be friendly to them. It was this forgiveness and openness that impressed me most. The Ojibwe people that I spoke with were acting much more like Jesus than I expected. Armed with this attitude, I learned about the culture and people and even tried my hand (or feet) at a traditional Native American dance. When I say I wanted to be the 'hands and feet of Christ' on this trip, dancing was not what I had in mind!

Kids Camp was very enjoyable. I spent most of my time reading books to the children. They were very engaged and had an unquenchable desire for the books. Whenever it was time to move on to a new activity, they wanted to continue with reading. Many of the



Normally my favorite part of the trip, the work site. I love to do the work sites because you are able to see all your work at the end. This year we scrapped, power washed, and painted a house. I had a lot of fun. It was hot and sunny out which was a great way to make my pale skin slightly darker. It was a lot of fun at the work site because everyone got along with each other or just be able to joke around (Mr. Rubino). Although we weren't able to finish painting the whole house we got quite a bit of it done, and we were able to see the work and see the homeowners face glow as we left.

Knowing that it was my last mission trip I made sure I would have a great time, and I did. I met new people and became even better friend with people I already knew. I pushed myself to help other and in the end it helped me as well. I will never forget my years being a part of TNT.

C.S. (2)

My fourth and final mission trip being a part of TNT. It is truly crazy to think of it that way, but I could not have asked to spend it with any other group of people. I was worried at first for this mission trip because we left 6 hours passed the time we all thought we were going to leave. I was thinking that was a bad sign, but all it did was help the youth get to hangout with each other a little longer to know each other even more. The ride to Cass Lake was very fun. Most of the people were awake the whole time until the end when it was already passed midnight. When we arrived everyone went to their rooms and just went right to sleep. Earlier in the day before jimmy and I made vow to each other which was to help with breakfast lunch and dinner. So the next morning after only getting 3 hours of sleep jimmy and I woke up and made breakfast with the other church group there. Within minutes of meeting the other church we were already having conversations with each other. It's a challenge to wake up early just to serve other food, but in the end you're able to get something out of it.

My first two day I had kids club. I'm normally not a fan of kids club on mission trips because I don't feel I gain anything from helping them out. Then I realized, I don't go on mission trips just for myself, I am going to help a community out. The first two days Mr. Evans and I went to go get the kids. Those car rides were a lot of fun. The kids were funny and actually helped a lot when it came to finding other kid club participants houses. The first day of kids club went by pretty slow and the kids seemed not to have fun playing the sport games but much rather the crafts. The next day the kids were very active playing basketball and making shirts and just loved it! It was great to just see the kids having a great time.