

2007

CASS

LAKE

Mary Benz

Cass Lake Reflection

I had a great experience at Minnesota last year. Seeing the bad conditions that these people lived in made me feel bad, but it felt good knowing that we could help. The mission trip really helped me to realize how much I have. Not only do I have material things, I have a stable family, a good school to go to, a good church to go to, and good friends. I realized how many people don't have that. Although we could not change everything in that town, we made a small dent in it, and I know that trying is so much better than doing nothing at all. We made a difference in the lives of those that we helped. I think that when we go on mission trips like these, we are being good disciples of God.

Tara Stake.

Cass Lake '07.

Day one - (worksite) We went to a woman's house named Julie. Our goal was to paint her house sky blue. When we got there we had to wait for her for a couple of minutes because her boss wouldn't let her leave any earlier. I've never actually seen a house made of nothing but wood. Apparently she couldn't afford anything else. But anyway, when she did get there, she was at a loss of words. All she could think of was thank you & offering us all the food she could. I'm not gonna lie, at first I felt awkward. Well, I just mean because she felt like she owed us something. America has turned into a place where if people do others a favor or service, they expect another favor or reward for doing it. After she left to go back to work, I realized that she was just trying to help us in a small way as we had helped her. That day I didn't take one break. I'll admit it was really hard, and WOO, I slept good that night, but the look on her face afterwards was totally worth it.

Day two - (worksite) When we went to breakfast that morning, I saw an indian boy that went to summer school there sitting alone. I discovered him when I was sitting with my friends. I have to say when I first saw him I felt so

oes. Me and Mrs. Hayes ended up washing her feet. She told me about how her mommy never does that for her or never taught her how to. And when we were washing her feet, she squeezed me because she thought I was gonna put her down.

Day five - (Kid's club) We were supposed to go to kid's club that day, but they decided to have me stay at the high school. I had been getting sicker & sicker & I just finally felt the worst that day. But I still went to Club that day.

Overall all I think that Kid's club had the most effect on me. Kid's club made me really realize how good I had it as a kid & that everyone deserves that.

I also really enjoyed going to the paw wow & seeing Matt Matson.

David Overmyer

I traveled with a group of fifty people, chaperones and peers, up to Cass Lake, Minnesota. Cass Lake, Minnesota is home to an Indian Reservation called Leech Lake Indian Reservation, for the Ojibwe Tribe. This mission trip was an eye-opener for me; before this trip, I knew about poverty and the typical living conditions in an Indian Reservation, but never expected it to be as bad as it was. For instance, a caring woman in her forties could not afford to buy paint for her house, and also paint her house all by herself. So, during my first two days in the reservation, we painted her house Acapulco Blue and Sky Blue. She was so grateful for painting her house that she made a dish native to the area called fried rice, which had venison in it, and she also gave us potato chips. While at the reservation, I had to be aware of not looking a Native American in the eyes and not taking pictures of Native Americans without asking. By learning their culture, the reservation accepted me. Going on the mission trip to this Indian Reservation, has changed my perspective on poverty. Because one of the Youthworks leaders said this quote, "Even if they are poor, it doesn't mean they aren't blessed. Because they are poor they just pray more often." Their praying brought us to Cass Lake, to help them. Before I left on the mission trip, I thought it was just about helping people. At this trip, I learned God wants every person to serve him, and by serving God every person that serves him will join him in the kingdom of heaven. This concept took me a while to grasp because I never thought of this concept before. As I am writing this reflection, I come to realize this is the true reason why God wants us to help others; so we can join him in the kingdom of heaven.

Amy Frazzini

When leaving for Cass Lake, MN I did not know what to expect. I had never gone to an Indian reservation; all I knew was that it was going to be a completely different lifestyle than what I am used to seeing. When we got there, no offense, but I was surprised we were there. All I saw was this small high school, but very nice. The first night we just split up into our groups, I was in the OSC (outrageous sports camp!), and we did team building things just to get to know everyone. Still wondering why we were even there to begin with. They had this brand new high school that was probably nicer than my school, but we still didn't meet any people from the community or see any of the houses. However, I tried to keep an open mind and knew that youth works wouldn't just pick a random place that needed this program; they pick communities that are really struggling as a whole.

After the first day of OSC, I still did not quite understand why we were exactly here. I met some new friends at OSC, but still was convinced that somewhere in the U.S. could be in more need. Also, at this point I was starting to think I may not understand this whole trip, but only because I would only be seeing the kids everyday, not any of the homes I normally would see. With OSC instead of doing two days of kids club and worksite, all four days it was just at OSC, but I was still excited to just do OSC. During the second day, I started to really get close to my friend Katie Dahmen; I even met her sister Emily. Katie loved to play basketball, which was the sport of the week. So, I and Katie just ran around shooting hoops and playing with each other. We finally got a chance to start talking, and I started to realize a little more why we were there. Even though I could not see the homes I kind of got a feel of it through Katie. She was talking to me about her family and problems they had been through. I started to realize why we were there a little bit more.

The third day me and some people from OSC got to experience kids club for a couple hours before OSC had started for the day. Katie and her sister were there, so I played with them and ran around and we made a wooden fish together, we both made one and gave it to each other. Finally, after lunch I met Katie back at OSC to play basketball again. When we were sitting down she started to cry a little bit. I asked her if she was ok thinking maybe she hurt herself, she replied with a no. I asked her if she needed anything and she just looked at me and gave me a hug. She started to talk to me about how her mom and dad are split up and her mom is moving somewhere and she has to go with. She didn't want to go and leave her only life she knew behind. She had moved a couple times, but here she made a few friends and LOVED coming to OSC everyday and seeing high school teens like us. She was old enough to understand her family was in trouble financially. However, she never thought about that and just lived a happy life being as rich as she could. Not rich full of money, but spiritually rich. That is the reason why she started to cry because she had learned to be so happy with what she had and her parents were going to take that all away from her.

So I finally realized that we were there not only because they were suffering financially, but a lot of the families suffered spiritually as well. It is sometimes hard for us to understand because we come from so much. Recently I have been applying to college and getting frustrated because I may have to attend moraine Valley when I would like to go away for school, but when I sit there and think about it, some of those kids will never be able to go to school at all. Since we have been raised in a society to be happy on with money it is hard to realize we do not always need that. However, where we live it

would be very difficult to live without that kind of money. I was so grateful to get to experience in different type of American culture, we even got to attend a POW WOW and dance around, it was a once in a lifetime experience.

Alyssa King
2007 Mission Trip Reflection

This being my first Mission Trip, I had no idea what to expect. Everyone told me about it but I knew I couldn't react until I saw everything myself. When we got there, I was a little surprised how much like home it really was. I thought I would instantly know I left home, but the school we stayed in was much like any other school I've been to. It was almost like we had just spent the last fourteen hours in a car driving to Minnesota and somehow ended up back in Tinley Park. I was, however, proven wrong over the next four days when I went to paint a house and go to Kids Club.

My first two days were spent as Work Project days. I painted a house for a woman named, Julie. Julie was so grateful and loved everything we did. She was so thankful and it made me realize how little she must have, but how much she appreciated everything. She bought us some snacks and even made wild rice for us, which was delicious.

The next two days, I went to Kids Club. I thought the kids were adorable and everything with did with them was great. They loved the crafts we did and the activities we planned. Everywhere I looked, there were kids smiling and then there was us, making them smile. The last day, I dropped kids off at OSC with Mr. Pluchar, and I almost cried. Even if I didn't spend a lot of time with them, they all touched my heart. They had the ability to open up to everyone and the teens helping them changed every few days.

My mission trip experience was amazing and I can't see the future but I think it's going to be my favorite. It was just truly incredible to meet all the adults, teens, and kids. Connecting with each other and growing closer with everyone makes you wish you could do that everyday of your life. And driving away from Heather, Cecka, Phil, Molly, and

Cass Lake – Reflection:

God gave us 2 ears and 1 mouth that we might listen twice as much as we speak. On a trip like this we search for those listening and learning moments wherever we can find them. Trips like these are the opportunities where we hear what God has to say to each of us if we listen. Who would have known those moments would come from 13 year old freshmen and his peers?

I learned what it is like to face life's challenges, all the problems and adversities life can throw at you and still come out ready to take on the world with a smile on your face, willing to speak your mind, and willing to invite me into your circle of friends. He showed me what courage and friendship are all about.

I learned what it's like to take a chance, to be an "outsider" willing to open herself up to share with a group of strangers. To provide us with an insight we would not have experienced or a friendship we would not have know. To develop these new friendships with everyone she met. She showed me what wisdom and openness is all about.

I learned what a true love and concern for the less fortunate looks like, the ability to give of oneself as a disciple of God. The ability to teach without words and share from the heart. She showed me what compassion and servant-leadership is all about.

I learned what leadership looks like, how one leads by example and has the authority and respect of his peers to lead them in service to God. The ability to make the right decision and the confidence to carry it out. The ability to be yourself as you work for God's kingdom. He showed me what being oneself and leadership in God's name is all about.

I learned what an un-ending spirit and a wealth of energy in serving the less fortunate, her peers and her community looks like. The gift of always being up-beat, always having a smile on her face, always ready to serve when and where needed. She showed me what positive energy and a love for God and fellow man looks like.

Thanks you Sam, Christina, Gabby, Eddie and Olivia for showing me just what a mission trip should be.

Deacon Ed

Mission Trip Reflection
By: Sam Hayes

The mission trip taught me manners. I have been nicer to people after going on the mission trip. I learned how important it was to treat people nicely. I liked how it felt to make other people happy. I learned that religion is important. I now go to church without being forced by my mom. I made friends with people from church like Mr. P and Father Artur. At the mission trip I also met a lot of kids my age. I plan on trying to attend more church events so I can keep up my new friendships. I learned about Native Americans and their culture. I went to a Pow Wow and learned some new dance steps. The mission trip was really great. I think everyone should try to go to a mission trip. I learned a lot from going.

Reflection

A mission trip is break from one lifestyle to another. Mission trips affect different people in different ways. This is how it affected me. I came into this trip without knowing what would happen, who was there, or what changes I would face latter. Has soon as we were there, I became more comfortable with everyone around me and the new environment around me. As the days went by I volunteered at a day camp, performed skits, and did volunteer work. At the day camp I played with the children. I thought that those few kids that were misbehaving and not listening to us were bad kids, but as soon as you get to know them all it was all a misunderstanding. All of those children had a good heart and needed time to be understood. Seeing the joy and happiness in those kids made me feel good inside knowing that I was there to experience it. From cooking meals to painting bathrooms I had a great time. Besides the manual labor experienced everyday I grew closer to God in my own special way, a way that I spiritually understand. In service in body, mind, and spirit I became a stronger person than I was before. Thank you TNT.

Kyle Kempke

Kyle Kempke

Kate Myranda

Coming on this trip, I expected to be painting some houses + helping some less-fortunate people. But, as the trip went on, I quickly learned that there was a much greater reason for us to go down there. We were told to focus more on building relationships with the people we met there and less on getting the job of painting or scraping. This seemed somewhat stupid at first, but we did it anyway. The worksite that El was at, was a woman's house named Julie. She didn't have much, but she was so excited for us to be there, she even brought us a bunch of food and she made us home-made rice. Clearly, she could need that money for food much more than we did, but she had done this anyway. It's funny how someone who "hardly" had anything was willing to give so much to us, when people who live here ~~are~~ in nice, "upperclass" homes are so hesitant to give away anything. Julie was one person who El definitely saw God in.

Another time El saw God, was in all the little kids that we met at Kid's club. They were almost all so happy and excited to meet us and play with us. It was so refreshing to see these kids who hardly

Leech Lake Mission Trip Reflection

By: Gabrielle Wydra

Since returning from the Mission Trip, I have begun to see things in life differently. My perception of a Mission Trip before was to be on good terms with God, or to be a better person in His eyes. Now I have realized that a vast part of my Mission Trip was focused on how I see myself being apart of this world, and making an impact in the smallest way, but with the most value and heart. The most important thing I focused on all week was the act of putting others first, whether it was giving endless piggy back rides to the kids in Kid's Club, cooking terrible food in large quantities for my chaperones and friends, or giving my full support and attention to work site crew despite the circumstances of my control freak nature.

Being with such a big group of people, I was always tested. Through all the times my mind sent a message to my brain, warning me if the situation would not turn out well, I was able to look past my negative premonitions. I saw a new side of myself and I saw myself being able to do things with such an ease, like there was not a care in the world, just me and the people of Cass Lake working to make our lives happier with the amount of time we had together.

I did not think the towns' people would make an effort to interact deeply with us, because we would be leaving them in week. I realized by the first day, how all the towns' people shared an eagerness to become closer to us Youthworks! participants in as many

ways as they could, whether it was inviting us into their home, preparing us meals, teaching us about their culture and sharing with us their personal stories and struggles.

What astonished me the most was that with all the heart-aching stories I had heard, I looked around one night during the Pow Wow we were at, and saw nothing but happiness and a willingness to live life to its fullest extent! I feel as though I am connected to people I have encountered at Cass Lake. Even though the kids and towns' people I connected with are more than six hundred miles away, when I look at my Mission Trip pictures the feeling of being there comes back to me. As much as I miss not seeing the people I had experienced so much with that whole week, I remember an Algonquin word we learned. It was, "Wah Wah Kee Shee.", which means I'll see you soon.

Phil Kawczyk'ski

6/30/07

Reflection

I enjoyed the mission trip very much & I thought that what we had done for the community was great and I know that we couldn't accomplish everything on our own, but I felt we, St. Jolie's, made an impact and I won't forget what we did there.

Also I have learned that there are many places in the U.S. that have communities living in poverty and I feel very fortunate to have the house and family that I have, because not everyone has a family or nice clothes and I know that God will always be watching us and with his help we can do anything for anyone.

Mission Trip Reflection
Cass Lake, Minnesota
By: Debra Gialamas-Hayes
June 30, 2007

This was my first mission trip so I had no idea what to expect. I stressed out about the upcoming trip for weeks and carefully packed my bags. This trip was far outside my comfort zone. I only like to sleep in my own bed. I prefer my showers to be taken alone. I also suffer from insomnia and at home I am able to watch TV or use the computer. Still, my son wanted to go and due to health concerns I could not allow him to go without me.

Upon arrival on the first day I questioned my sanity. After driving in vans for 13 hours we were told there would be no shower time. I also realized that food would be a big issue. I am probably one of the pickiest eaters. This trip was a great diet jump-start. My anxiety level on that first night was quite intense. Lights out was at 11:15PM. I drifted off sometime after 3AM, while reading inside my sleeping bag with a flashlight. Insomnia and mission trips do not mix well. We had to be up at 7AM the next morning. No problem my internal clock woke me up at 5AM. With 2 hours of sleep I was rearing to go.

The mission trip area was a Native American site. We were able to connect with many of the members of the community. We painted, worked with children, attended a Pow Wow, went to a beach, worked on a garden and prayed. All of the activities were very tiring but also quite rewarding. The trip allowed me to reach out and meet a variety of different people from a very diverse background.

Although very demanding both physically and emotionally, I would highly recommend participating in a mission trip. It opens up your eyes to the reality of every day life. Leaving your comfort zone makes you appreciate what you have more when you arrive home. I also realized how much I loved and appreciated my husband of 25 years. I missed my family and my home more than I expected.

I'd like to thank St. Julie's Church for giving me the opportunity to participate in the mission trip. The event was spiritually uplifting. I am glad I fought off the temptation of packing my bags and catching the first flight back. The event was emotionally and physically draining but in the end the positive aspects far outweighed the negative ones.

Reflection

Amanda Meyers

I didn't really know what to expect from Cass Lake. I had heard that Indian Reservations were in terrible condition, and that they needed a lot of help. But, on the ride here, I didn't see anything that looked like it was in need. At first I was confused as to why we would drive 12 hrs. to help a town that was in perfect condition. But, as the week progressed, I realized that this town has a different kind of poverty.

On Monday, I did Outrageous Sport Camp. I had a lot of fun planning and playing with the kids. I didn't really know how to deal with their attitude of anger, but I learned later that night when we went to The Spirit of the Forest. Watching the girls do their Hibal dance and talking to Matt Matsa ~~made~~ was amazing. I finally had a better idea as to why we were here.

Then, on Tuesday, I got to go to Kids Club in the morning. I had so much fun playing with them. They were energetic and fun and loved to play. I immediately connected with 2 little girls: Maya + Praisley. We talked and played the whole day. When Praisley asked if I was coming back on

and hope that people will follow in our footsteps. Mission trips not only change the week, they change your life. I would give anything to come back next year in Cairo. I'm going to miss the trips more than anything and have really enjoyed my time in TNT. It's been amazing, and I thank God for every minute of it.

Ellie

At first

I came on trips because many of my friends did and it seemed like a fun time. Eventually I realized there were more to Youthworks trips. We built relationships, made a difference in the community, ~~to~~ learn about the culture, and have fun. I come home feeling much closer to God and feeling a great sense of accomplishment.

I serve because it is a major way to show love. It is important for us to show others God's love and even though it is often hard work, we get sweaty, and become tired, it is totally worth it to see someone smile and help someone out.

My story.

I am very close to my family and ~~I have grown very close to~~ they have helped me to serve God. I have a deep faith life. I became involved in my

6/28/07

Leek Lake Reservation

Mary A. Maglin

Yesterday, Boss (YW leader) talked about our memories & attitude of our mission. He said, "Don't remember me, or the house you painted or kids you played with... it's all about God!"

This statement really got me thinking. It pushed me beyond a plateau I'd reached. I don't expect a "thank you" for helping out, I don't say to myself, "Look what I did... God received His glory." But wait...

~~Remember Boss~~

Jesus said the poor will always be with us. God expects us to serve Him. He expects us to treat everyone with the same amount of respect - rich or poor, pretty or not. He expects us to be missionaries. Although I know I'm pleasing God, this trip is not another "jewel in my crown." It's a humbling thought.

Memories of the trip - the painted house, the kids etc - they're a tool for me to use to give glory to God.

It's all about giving glory to God.