

Mission team from Tennessee works at Christ's Outreach

By: Shirley Cox

When 19 youth from Covington, Tennessee are asked what they did on their summer vacation, they will have some pretty interesting stories to share. This particular group spent June 9-14 doing work as part of a Mission team at Christ's Outreach for the Blind, a nonprofit, Christian-based camp that is being established for the blind and disabled in Mt. Vernon. Instead of lounging in the sun, these young volunteers, grades 7-12 and six adult leaders from the First Presbyterian Church spent a week weeding, digging, raking dirt, moving rocks, gulching a hole for a pond, moving a fence, staining a bridge and cleaning the Outreach Center.

Mike and Lori Gates, Directors of Christ Outreach, were as involved as the youth as they helped plan and coordinate the work on a building project that has been ongoing for two years. Mike admits that when he was blinded in a hunting accident in 1989, he had a death wish for some time. Then, he says, "God spoke to me and told me that I could help others like myself." Christ's Outreach now encompasses 800 acres of Rockcastle wilderness. Wood fences line the road leading to a metal building that houses two staff apartments, an indoor archery range, a hydrotherapy room, steam room, weight room and bathrooms. Another building, the Outreach Center or Lodge, is nearly completed. It has 10 bedrooms, 12 bathrooms, a cafeteria, a commercial kitchen, an office, a laundry room and a maintenance storage area. When the facility officially opens, it will accommodate 600 campers per year. Mike estimates that it will cost each participant only \$35 to attend. Camping activities will include horseback riding, hunting, fishing, swimming, mountain climbing, hiking, rappelling, gardening and inde-

pendent living skills. "Our activities are based on everything that everybody tells the blind or disabled that they can't do," Gates says. An outdoor classroom, constructed with a grant awarded by PRIDE will also be used to teach campers about their environment.

The mission team was impressed with Mike's decision and determination to see the building project go forward. Ricky Lyle, Youth Minister said, "Mike has been working with a chainsaw just like the others. It is hard for the students to refuse to do something." Mike and Lori also joined the group every morning and evening for devotions. Noting the effect on the young people whose work was being supervised by a visually impaired person, Ricky stated, "The change in the team happened with the first devotions. We were having problems with unity. There was shock for a lot of them, but when Mike shared his intention for the camp, it dawned on the group that they were part of something meaningful, getting this camp ready. The first night, Mike invited them back. They (the youth) can help children who come here and look at the pond and know that they helped do that. This is something that lasts."

Cile Fullerton, the Pastor's wife, also expressed a positive impression of Mike and Lori and the Christ's Outreach for the Blind, saying, "The vision is impressive, the fact that Mike and Lori are so obedient to the Holy Spirit's prompting to provide a facility that is so nice for the visually impaired. It is a visual feast and I can only assume, for the visually impaired who rely on their senses, it will be an emotional feast to hear the birds and smell the fragrances... God reveals Himself in different ways and in nature in particular." That was the challenge that her husband had given

the mission team before they left, she said, "to see where or in what situation did they see Christ during the week." Despite the hard labor, Mike's invitation to come back to work at the camp when it is finished was well received by the youth. "Several of the youth want to come back next summer and particularly when the children or campers are here. It is encouraging and exciting that they want to come back. It has obviously had a positive impact."

The last night of devotions, the teenagers shared their written testimonies of how the week had changed their lives. Christy Barton said, "Working for others, serving God

through other people really showed me how we can be disciples and servants of Christ in our lives by helping other people that truly need our help." Another youth, Lain Freiler, shared, "It has helped me realize I can make a difference and without little people like me, the world can't ever be improved. It has changed my heart so that I want to do mission work. I want to help everyone I can and I want to serve God in everything I do." The unity problems that surfaced within the team the first day seemed nonexistent as Jay Freeland shared, "I saw that a small group of determined youth could accomplish a lot when trying their best together. I also felt a lot of unity within the people I

worked with and we all grew closer to each other and God."

The entire week was encapsulated in a statement by the Youth Minister, "Mission work always reminds me that a lot in the church might think physical work is not evangelizing. It will eventually speak to the community here and to the children who come here and also to us. This helps us to identify what Jesus meant by service, that He did not come to be served, but to serve. We are actually

living out the gospel, putting sweat and effort behind it."

Construction work will continue at Christ's Outreach for the Blind as Mission Teams from Stanton, Kentucky and Kalamazoo, Michigan visit in the month of June. Mike and his wife, Lori, are members of the First Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon. If you have any questions about this camp for the blind and disabled, please call Mike Gates at 1-888-254-6319.



"Letters"

(Cont. From A-2)

Home, Berea National Bank, Mareburg Baptist Church, Mahaffey's Quick Lube, Sabrina's Hair Design, Scaffold Cane Baptist Church, Pine Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Mary Martin Insurance Agency, Livingston Christian Church, Town & Country Chevron, McNew Monuments, Margaret and Raymond Offutt, Rockcastle-Area Tech Center, Donald Bradley's Garage, Morning Glory MV Homemakers, Woodmen of the World, Poplar Grove Baptist Church, McKinney Income Tax Service, Freedom Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon Senior, One Voice, Jack's Hardware and Appliance, Inc., Denny's Towing Service, Maroon Bowling Lanes, Christian Appalachian Project, Hilltop Market, D&D Lawn Service, Contours Express, Livingston Baptist Church, Charles and Rella Hadley, JohnHobbs, Jeffrey and Twila Burdette, Fred Mullins, Jr., Wayne

Lear, Rockcastle Middle School, Sam Ford, Danny Ford, Suzanne Thacker, Gladys Carpenter, Vickie Sears, Reynolds Insurance Agency, Inc., Reppert Funeral Home, Payne's Auto Sales, Earl and Judy Phillips, Peg's Food Mart, Apollo's Pizza, Livingston Homecoming, Broadhead Baptist Church, Wildie Christian Church, Kentucky Powder Co., Regency 7 Cinema, Cedar Rapids Country Club, Daves Computer Service, Rose's One Stop, Shoprite of Broadhead, Williams Funeral Home, Livingston Market, Hometown Cafeteria, Danon's CTA, Ottawa Baptist Church, Orvil and Billie Kemmer, Jerri L. Smith, Debra Hembree Lambert, First Baptist Church, Grace Baptist Church, Barnett's Auto Salvage, Taylor Produce, D&V Jewelry, David's Tire Center, Rita Aid, Laurel Co. Ambulance, CSX Railroad, Old KY Campground, Lake Linville Boat Dock, Industrial Mfg. Berea, Country Sams, Fennell Furniture, Hays Furniture, Valley Baptist Church, Clear Creek Baptist Church, First Pine Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Image Entry, Helen Abbey, Hayes Lemmerz, Inc. Appalachian Medical Equipment, Hilton's Florist, Mitchell Tolle Galleries, Kentucky Farm Bureau, Our Lady of Mt. Vernon, CTEBNA, Alcoa, Inc., Celena's, Hiatt's & Son, Sunshine Homemakers, Veterans of Foreign Wars, B&M Liquiders, Mt. Vernon Signal, FoodWorld, Lowe's Sporting Goods, Bible Baptist Church, Pam Chaliff, J. Hall of Fame, Hall's Print Shop, Jack Burford Chevys-Olds, Darrins Computer Cars, Smith's Tire Center, Hick's Lumber,

Philbeck Construction, Godfather's Pizza, Subway, Aletha's Flowers & Gifts, Cox Florist, RCMS Y-Club, FoodWorld, Jimmy Osborne, RTEC, Laurel Grocery, Save-A-Lot, Shoprite of Broadhead, Wanda Carroll, Charles Napier, Darlene Mays, All Rockcastle County Teachers & Staff.

If we have accidentally left someone out, please feel free to call us and let us correct the error.

Nancy Hale, Chairman
Project Groundwork
2002 Committee

Dear Editor,

A friend of mine passed away on June 1, Lois Mullins. I met Lois two years ago. She was one of the sweetest women anyone could have ever known, but God called her home. As we go through life most people never know what it's like to know an angel. I know what it's like for me. I met Lois Mullins. And I know that God needed His angel. So He called her home.

The Bible says to cry at a birth and to rejoice at a death. I know it would sound bad, but that's what I do. I cry when a baby is born, because I think of all the things it will go through in its life. And then when someone passes on, I feel happy, for they will never feel pain or sadness again. I've lost a lot of my family and a lot of very good friends, but really I haven't. Because now I have more angels to watch over me.

Linda McWhorter
Renfro Valley, KY

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