

Mission group at Christ's Outreach

In August 2002, Brenda Venhuizen working through CAM (Coalition of Appalachian Ministries) presented to her congregation an opportunity to service the Lord at Christ's Outreach for the Blind. At that time many people picked up information and applications. Three people filled out the paperwork on

the spot. One member who was unable to go on the mission trip and having a heart for doing the Lord's work and helping others wrote out a check to help buy materials needed at Christ's Outreach. Then Kim Kuster presented the needs of the camp to her OASIS (Orland Area Sight Impaired Support) group. The

group was able to donate commercial kitchen cookware to the camp. By the time the group was ready to head to Kentucky, a total of twenty adult skilled and unskilled workers were ready to go. On October 20th, the Orland Park group arrived at Christ's Outreach for the Blind in a caravan of five vans with a truck loaded with donations arriving the next day.

On the very first day, many of the mission work camp volunteers felt a sense of being overwhelmed — the beauty of God and the work to be done. Even though autumn greeted them with its awesome display of colored leaves and seventy degree weather, the camp presented many jobs that needed to be done. Some of the group felt that they possibly couldn't help with the skills they had, but God proved them wrong. Kim Kuster shared, "I am legally blind and have a deep passion for helping those who are usually impaired to better cope with their sight loss. This camp will teach the children that their sight may be impaired, but their lives don't have to be. When I first came, I wondered if there would be any way that I could assist Mike and Lori. I could not pour concrete or do carpentry or plumbing. Now I realize that whatever gift God has given us, it can be used in some way to prepare the camp for its opening — even helping in the office to do office work or in the kitchen to prepare meals. I have a master's degree in Blind Rehabilitation Teaching for Adults, so I have had the opportunity this week to use some of my skills in making the camp accessible for children who are visu-

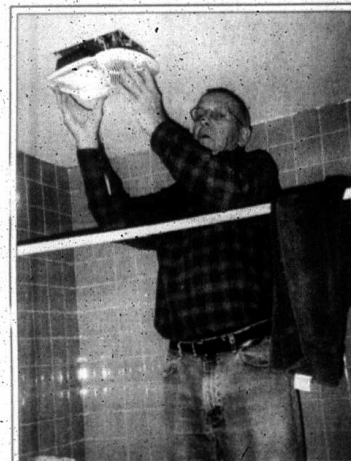
ally impaired. For example, I placed raised dots on phones to enable them to use the phones easier."

The Orland Park group worked hard during the week of October 20th. They accomplished much: painting bedframes, laying flooring, sanding, painting walls, hanging molding, putting up track lighting, hanging mirrors, bushhogging, pouring a cement sidewalk, installing a flagpole donated by the Mt. Vernon and Broadhead Lions Club, and almost completely constructing a PRIDE greenhouse. Kenneth Ipema wrote about his work experience, "God gave me the strength to do the work even with a bad arm." Also, Joyce Ipema shared how God had worked in her life to allow her to have the strength to work hard even after the loss of her son, "I lost my son six months ago. I have not been able to keep my mind set on anything. I worked for eight hours a day without feeling that I wasn't. God gave me strength that I have not had and the desire to complete a project we started. I could not have done it without the grace of God."

With a feeling of accomplishment, the Orland Park Christian Reformed Church began their trip back to Illinois on October 26th. Maureen Loerup summed up the work camp experience by saying, "It's been a great experience! The work has been so hard, so fun, so rewarding. The days were full — the fellowship great — What an awesome experience!" If you are interested in a work camp experience at Christ's Outreach for the Blind, please contact Mike Gates at 256-8588.



Evelyn Terry, one of two cooks.



Toin Schmauer installing electrical fans/lights.



Ken Ipema and Rich Brouwer hanging drywall.



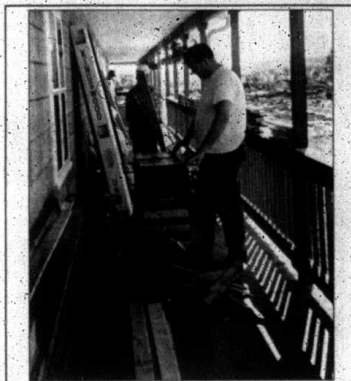
Adrian and Carol Vroegh, Brenda Venhuizen and Nancy Rhodes painting beds.



Installing a cement pond are Hank Gates, Don Huienga, Hank Loerup, Roger Ellens, Rich Brouwer and Ken Ipema.



Ruth Huisenga after workers, also pictured is Pete Vois.



Toin Thompson cutting molding for rooms.

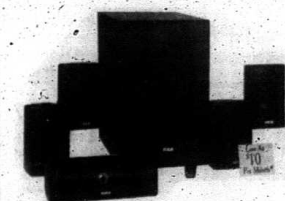


Maureen Loerup and Joyce Ipema painting baseboard.

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