

WHERE DID
WE SERVE?



PORT PERRY, ON
JULY 4-11



CLARA CITY, MN
JULY 11-18



HOLLAND, MI
JULY 19-25

Student Testimonies

SUMMER SERVICE PROJECTS 2015



Thank you for your support and encouragement ...

When we say things like, "we could not have had this experience without such a loving and generous Church Family" we mean it from the bottom of our hearts. Because of the financial and prayer support from all of you, 36 students and leaders were able to travel to 3 locations where they met the needs of the poor and marginalized, built stronger relationships within our youth group and new relationships with other CRC youth, and experienced the transforming power of the Holy Spirit at work in their own personal faith journeys. We've written out some of our testimonies, and we hope that as you read you hear us saying two things: "Glory to God!!" and "Thank you!!"

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Port Perry, Ontario, Canada Hope CRC

JENI BUIKEMA:

SERVE has always been a highlight of my summer, and this year was no disappointment! This year I went to the mission trip to Port Perry, Ontario, Canada. The host team was very welcoming, and the worship team was just as excited to be there as we were! We had plenty of time to interact with the community at the worksites we went to, and had a ton of fun at the same time! God was definitely working through our speaker, Zan Ingalls. He could make us laugh and cry our eyes out in the same night, and it was awesome! SERVE trips have a way of putting students on a "Spiritual High," and it gets us fired up to come home and keep on serving! This year I continued my service by helping out with the SKiP program on Wednesday mornings. I love mission trips, and can not wait for what next year's SERVE has in store!

JESSE COLVIN:

I wasn't sure how another SERVE was going to go this year because I thought last year was the best that it could probably get. I was wrong though, and this year was amazing. Everything seemed to click. I had a great group and a great leader. I don't think there was a single point during it that I didn't enjoy. It was an awesome experience and I feel a lot closer to God because of it.

RACHEL BAAS:

SERVE this year really impacted me in several ways. I learned more about myself, and how to trust God through everything. God also showed me a glimpse of what his plans are for me after high school. I definitely grew closer to God, and my relationship with him was rekindled and set on a better path! Hearing pastor Zan speak really hit home for me, and the worship time was great! It was hard leaving all our friends we made, but great knowing how much our relationships with each other in the youth group had grown.

KARISSA SCHROTENBOER:

A person who greatly impacted my thoughts on SERVE was Pastor Zan. Each night Zan had a message that he taught us, and each message was full of challenges and questions that made me think about why I signed up for SERVE in the first place. Zan brought so much emotion and depth to his messages that it was nearly impossible for me to leave unchanged. My thoughts about who I am, and what I am called to do has been deeply impacted through Zan.

DYLAN BUSSCHER:

I saw God throughout the entire week of serve from all of the people I met. We went to a woman's house whose husband was a hoarder. She had a pretty hard life but she continued to love God and put her faith in him. While we were there, she found a medallion that had a dove on one side and on the other side it said "always with you" which she instantly thanked her husband and God for. I grew in my faith the most during the worship services. Whether it was the songs or pastor Zan laying his hands on me, I really started to grow in faith in God in those moments.

ABBY DYKEMA:

SERVE this year was a major blessing in my life. Pastor Zan with his fire and passion helped reawaken a spirit in me that sang until my voice cracked and then sang some more. I couldn't get enough of Jesus. I haven't felt that fire in a long time, and throughout the week I used it to face fears and truths about myself I didn't want to admit. I have never grown more in one week than I did at Port Perry Serve this Summer.

BRANDON BRISTOW:

My last experience on SERVE was amazing. I met so many people that love worshiping God as much as I do and love helping other people out. I was lucky enough to have Dick Bouman as my leader for the week. He was so encouraging to me and the others that were in my group. Zan was the speaker for the week he was so energetic and taught me the I AM statement which I know by heart. It made Zan tear up that I was there to spend my last SERVE with him and I was glad that he was there for us. He made the worship time so much fun, he made sure you got what he was saying and he was easy to follow. The worship team was amazing we sang a lot of awesome songs.

DICK BOUMAN:

Another great SERVE in Port Perry, Ontario where we all can be so proud of our Park Church youth. Pastor Zan challenged all of us to live the other 51 weeks of the year like we do the 1 week at SERVE. Great memory of week (there are many): we worked for a couple days at John and Debbie's house. Debbie had an aneurism years ago and is being cared for by John who has had a leg amputated due to diabetes. We cleaned their house, organized and insulated his garage. They were invited to the Friday night praise and worship time and when it was finished they asked what they needed to do to be saved. They received Christ into their life that night.

JEN ROZEMA:

This year my small group spent quite a bit of time interacting with adults who have special needs, and we were stretched and blessed at these worksites. It feels a little like these although these men and women had an impaired capacity to think or move or care for themselves they had a WAY bigger capacity than the rest of us to show unconditional love and to live in true community. I was deeply impacted to see how much they care for each other, looking out for each other's feelings and needs, listening intently as they went around the circle talking about their day, cheering each other on as they sang karaoke, and saying heartfelt goodbyes to each other at the end of the day of their summer camp program. The most heartfelt goodbye at the end of the day was when a young man named Zach said goodbye to Isaac Nelson, who was part of my group. Zach talked with Isaac about how he knows God is real, challenged Isaac to trust God no matter what others might do or say, and wiped tears from his eyes as he told Isaac that he was one of the truest friends Zach had known. Zach's capacity to love and embrace Isaac in such a huge way over such a short amount of time really challenged me in the way I love others – I'll take that with me into "the other 51" for sure!

Clara City, Minnesota Bunde CRC

JESS VANBROCKLIN:

This years SERVE was a great time to get away from the normality of the week and really dig down and focus on what our main point should be, not what we make it to be. So often, we focus on our selves and not the people around us. This years theme, "The Other 51" has really encouraged me to go out and serve other people. Whether that is as simple as holding a door for somebody, or mowing their yard, there is always ways to serve others. Working hard with a group on SERVE should be just the beginning of a transformation of the world. We, as students, have the power to encourage those around us to take up the other 51 as a challenge, and work to make Jesus known to everyone.

ANDREW DEPREE:

The men that were at Life Right gave testimonies about their lives. Many had struggles with drugs and/or committed crimes such as theft. It gave me a different view of these individuals. They expressed how they regretted what they had done and they were turning to God. Everybody in this SERVE project enjoyed working on the sites and getting to know each. My small group consisted of all Canadians, except me. They called me "America."

KATIE ROZENDAL:

My cool memory from serve is seeing people come on stage every night to recite scripture from memory. Jason would give each person who could recite scripture a hat that he knit himself. By the end of the week he had given out so many hats. A song from serve I liked is "at the cross" by Chris Tomlin. I'd also like to be in the praise team on serve Sunday if it's not too late for that.

CURTIS KOETJE:

I went on the Clara City MN SERVE trip this summer. I helped paint/scrape a house. I didn't really change my life like it probably should have but it was nice to go on one for the last time. I also met some guys that struggled with drug addictions and talked to them for a while and learned how they have transformed their lives around.

JORDYN BREUKER:

The way that my faith grew on SERVE was through the worship and the way that they had us running around. It was something that would normally be out of my comfort zone, but just the way that I could feel the spirit working in me made me want to do it and it wasn't uncomfortable at all. It was a really good week and I felt with each thing that we did it made me feel closer to God.

NATHAN SCHLOFF:

The Other 51 taught us that we don't need to wait until summer to be the hands and feet of Christ. So often we get caught up in thinking "I'm going to SERVE this summer so I don't need to do any other service work". Then we are prone to pass up opportunities to be salt and light in our hometown. It taught me to look for ways to serve in our hometown because do we need to go all the way to Minnesota to paint some decks and plant some flowers? No. The Other 51 taught me to seize opportunities to serve, and to be salt and light, when they are presented to me during the other 51 weeks of the year.

MARY DEPREE:

This experience was memorable in many ways.

1. Spending time with our youngest son and others on a SERVE trip to MN.
2. Experiencing Christ's body "in the middle of somewhere".
3. Being reminded that each person, including myself, is on a path designed and created by the Lord for personal growth/service and for His glory. We are all connected as one large body of Christ.
4. Committing to "The Other 51". Moving forward I will continue to make a conscious effort to serve the Lord in my weekly/daily life.

DAR KOOPS:

There are always lots of highlights on SERVE. To me, two always stand out: The relationship the students build with each other and the Lord is most rewarding. The other being on Friday night when they take the microphone and express their love for the Lord and fellow students. Park students always excel in this. Great to see.

Holland, Michigan Harderwyk CRC

CLAUDIA DANTUMA:

Well at my serve trip I saw God the most during our acoustic singing in the dark. During this time I felt God's love washing over me, and got a small glimpse of how much he truly loves us. All my life I have been reminded of his love for us, but this was the first time that I really felt it and took it to heart. That experience will always be with me, and I will cherish it for the rest of my life.

JOSHUA ROZENDAL:

My favorite part of the Harderwyk Summer Service week was hanging out with people from the Graafschap youth group because we had a lot of fun together. I'm glad I got to know them. I also enjoyed floating down the Muskegon River on our day-away. God taught me to trust in Him for my safety, and, because of that, I was able to overcome my fear and enjoy an adventure.

CLAIRE DEROO:

Throughout my week at Harderwyk, I grew closer to God through listening to Jolene speak each night. My favorite lesson was when we talked about fears, wrote them down and tacked them to the cross. I also enjoyed growing closer to my youth group and having fun learning dances while at the same time stacking wood. I really enjoyed making new friends from various churches.

MADDIE KURBURSKI:

This year was my second year going to summer service week. Each year my faith grows stronger and stronger with God. I had a lot of fun meeting new people and growing in my faith with them too! Jolene was amazing again this year!! She always knows how to brighten up my day and was always there whenever I need to talk. I loved and enjoyed growing in faith with our church group. They are crazy, but truly amazing people. I wouldn't have wanted to have gone with anyone else this year!

BENJAMIN LEEKA:

I have 2 things that stuck out to me. On the third day our job was to make the out door chapel look nice. It was very fun being able to make a place for God look beautiful. Working with my youth group made every job even greater. Something that touched my heart every day was worship with Jared. Whenever I am singing to God is when I feel the closest to Him. When I was there praising, I could just close my eyes and God would be right there next to me singing along.

KAYLEE DYKEMA:

By far the best thing about serve was the worship nights. My favorite night was when we sat by Jared, in the dark around 10, singing to our Creator beneath the cross in the sanctuary. Words cannot describe this moment it was just so surreal to be beneath the feet of God Almighty.

TRACEE LEEKA:

It was again a privilege working alongside the middle school students. We tackled each job with enthusiasm and went above and beyond what was expected. Our theme for the week was "Get Out of the Boat," referencing when Peter took a leap of faith and walked to Jesus on the water. During small group time we asked the kids to think of ways that they could get out of the boat. We pushed ourselves during the week by doing some random acts of kindness. For example, we bought coke bottles with peoples' names on them and gave them to people at service week. On the last work day, we joined with Graafschaap church and helped them with their car wash site (our church groups really connected during the week).

WE ARE SO EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO SHARE
the SERVE experience
WITH OUR ENTIRE PARK FAMILY IN 2016!

Yes, yes, yes: the rumors are true! For many years now, our leaders and students have come home saying, "we wish our whole church could come on SERVE with us." Now, this coming summer, we have an even cooler opportunity than all participating in SERVE together: we get to host SERVE together!

After you read the bulletin insert detailing how we prayerfully arrived at the decision to host SERVE at Park, hopefully your hearts will have one question burning in them:

HOW CAN WE GET INVOLVED?

In the coming weeks and months there will be many opportunities for you to play various roles in hosting SERVE. Mark your calendars for June 25-July 2, 2016 and be sure to keep your eyes and ears open for emails and bulletin announcements with those details. For now, our first action item is to establish a "Park SERVE Prayer Team." If you feel called to be part of our prayer powerhouse, the vital team of men and women lifting up decisions, host team members, Youth Unlimited, the students and leaders who will come to our site, seeking protection from warfare and wisdom and discernment for God's will, please get in touch with our Host Team Coordinators, Dick Bouman or Jen Rozema. This team is one of the most important pieces to the puzzle, and we are anxious for it to convene!