



photo courtesy of Jill Adams

Juniors Kristin Lampe and Bill Traphagan haul bread at Open Door Mission in Omaha on Saturday as part of the Urban Plunge experience. Four Concordia students were involved in the weekend-long event.

Helping the Homeless

Concordia students take part in Omaha mission experience

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news editor

You've just got done with a hectic week of classes and homework. What do you feel like doing for the weekend? Sleep in, visit with friends or maybe watch a movie? How about visiting a jail and then walking the slums of Omaha speaking with the homeless?

A group of four Concordia Mission-Minded Students recently did just this. These students experienced mission work with the homeless first-hand as part of the Omaha Urban Plunge held Feb. 22-24.

The group of Concordia students spent the weekend in Omaha's inner-city visiting nine different faith-based organizations that work among the poor. Participants spent time with homeless individuals on the streets, fed homeless at a rescue mission, visited a jail and helped hand out clothes and food to the needy.

"I enjoyed working at the food pantry; it was a real hands-on experience," said Amber Konz, a

freshman, who attended the event.

Konz also felt that the prayer walk was a special part of their weekend. The group walked through an area of Omaha that has the highest drug and prostitution rates in the city. As they walked they prayed for the people of that neighborhood.

The organization, Christ for the City International, sponsors this event. Sara Harris, development manager for the organization, said the purpose of the weekend was not to give a "tour of poverty," but to help students discover their passion and how they can use their own personal gifts to help the lives of others.

"It's great to watch youth interact with people on the street," said Harris. "Young people bring an atmosphere of joy and hope to a lot of dark situations."

Harris says that the weekend was also about building relationships between students and mission organizations as well as with those they helped serve.

"It's rewarding to watch the participants' reactions and growth during the weekend to the point

where after the Urban Plunge they are ready to join up with a ministry somewhere or are even ready to start something of their own," said Harris.

Christ for the City International sponsors a variety of different mission trips and projects, many of them in Latin America. Harris says they can help set up trips for students who are interested. She says there are opportunities for students to work alongside experienced missionaries. She feels that mission work is a good option upon graduation or even as something to do over the summer.

Harris says there are mission options for all types of majors. Harris says that college students are a great age for this line of work because it can be a great opportunity for growth.

Harris says they are also looking for help expanding the Urban Plunge to other cities like Des Moines or Denver.

Students seeking more mission related information can contact Sara Harris at 1-888-562-7551.

"There is a plethora of opportunities out there in mission work and there is a great need for it," said Harris.