

GRETNA BREEZE

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2007 will be a year of positive positioning where God reveals his divine plan and divine purpose for your life ..."

A group of seven students and three adult sponsors from Gretna Community Church sat together in a pew, transfixed as they took in the passionate message of Senior Pastor Reverend Dr. Selwyn Q. Bachus of Salem Baptist Church. The group attended Sunday's worship service in North Omaha as part of Urban Plunge Omaha.

Bachus' sermon echoed the mission of the Urban Plunge, sponsored by Christ for the City International, said event organizer Michael Ross. Ross said by visiting nine inner city ministries,

Urban Plunge participants can see how God speaks to them, what excites their passions and how they can fit in. He then encourages groups to help a similar ministry in their own community or to start something new.

"Henry Blackaby, in his book, 'Experiencing God,' said, 'Find out where God is working and then join Him there.' Our Omaha Urban Plunge challenges you to do just that," he said.

Christ for the City International is an evangelical mission organization with 180 missionaries in 13 countries. The Urban Plunge Omaha experience is open to church, school, business and community groups of all ages and costs \$75 per person for the weekend including lodging and food.

The Plunge weekend begins Friday evening at North Omaha's Hope Skate Center and throughout the weekend participants visit and help with various missions in North and South Omaha including the Open Door Mission, the Mission to All Nations and more. The staff encourages participants to keep a faith journal, where they can write down their thoughts and experiences after visiting each ministry.

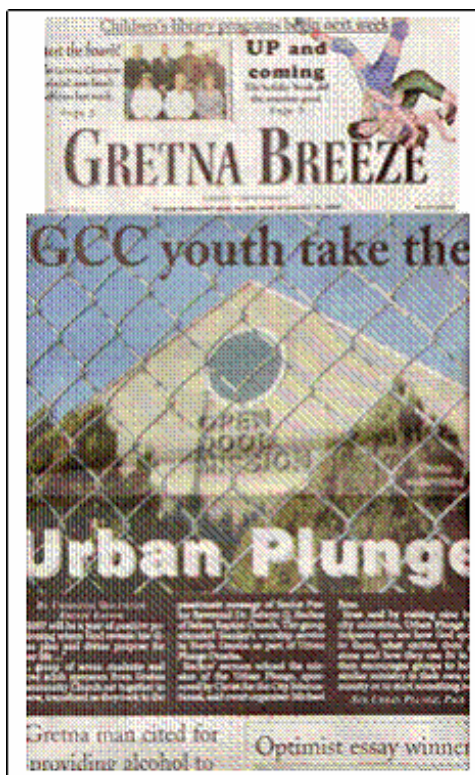
Gretna High School freshman Keenan Fischman said he felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the Urban Plunge. Fischman said one of the highlights for him was helping out at the Open Door Mission Saturday.

"It makes you see that everything's completely different just 10 minutes away from where we live," he said.

Fischman's brother, Cory, is a junior at GHS and also attended the Urban Plunge Omaha weekend. Cory said the weekend's events had a big impact on his life as well.

"It makes you see how blessed we really are and that out here is a totally different world," he said.

Gretna Community Church Youth Director Marty McDermott said he heard about Urban Plunge Omaha when he received information about the program in the mail. The GCC youth group has been involved in several mission and volunteer service trips outside of the state, McDermott said, and he thought **the Plunge would be a good opportunity for the teens to see how they can make an impact close to home.**



"Our devotions are not about the poor, but rather about discovering your purpose, your passions, your gifts and then using those purposes, passions and gifts to come alongside a ministry," Ross said.

"We encourage you to think about how you can duplicate something you saw. For example, while a clothing ministry needs help folding clothes and you might help because you feel obligated, but if it is not your passion you'll probably lose interest. If you use your purposes passions giftings with a ministry then you'll stick with them longer and find more fulfillment."

GCC youth group member Janice Ivester, a junior at Omaha Christian Academy, said the Plunge was a valuable learning experience.

"I live in a very safe neighborhood," she said. "I've been able to come out of my comfort zone and we get an opportunity to help with problems and it's a great way to let our guard down."

Ivester's mother, Claudia, was one of the sponsors of the trip and stayed with the teens and participated in activities throughout the weekend. She said the highlight of the weekend for her was Sunday's visit to Empty Tomb Church in south Omaha. Everyone who comes to the church service gets a bag of groceries and the Gretna group helped distribute food and clothing, she said.

"It's been great for the kids and good for me too," she said. "It's good to take you out of where you start to feel comfortable. To see the Lord working is just awesome."

"While many of the Urban Plunge teams are made up of high school students, this is an excellent experience for any group," Ross said. **"Not everyone can attend a 10-day mission trip overseas.** This is an opportunity for any member to go on a less expensive and short mission trip close to home."

For more information on Urban Plunge Omaha, visit www.cfi.org.