

AREA YOUTH RETURN FROM MISSION MINISTRY TO NEW YORK CITY

The First American Lutheran Church Youth League recently completed a week-long mission trip to the Bowery Mission in New York City. Eighteen area youth and four adults participated in the trip which began on Friday, July 10, 2009. Youth participating in this year's trip were: Cory Muhowski, Dana Scheffen, Justine Woodworth, Bailee McClintock, Abbie Beekman, Abbey Miller, Lauren Caldie, Amber Trepanier, Lexi Woodworth, Katie Zoeller, Casey Peterson, Miles Exworthy, Landon James, Marshall Bradshaw, Nathan Cox, Ross Heise, Adam Martens, and Casey Wusterbarth. The adult chaperones for the trip were Brad and Jane Weber, Karen Cox and Frank Votava. Including this year's participants, 71 youth and adults have participated in the mission program through First American Lutheran Church.

This year's trip was to the Bowery Mission in New York City. The Bowery Mission, founded in 1879 is the third oldest Gospel Mission in the United States and its red doors have symbolized caring, compassion, and a safe haven for New York's hungry and homeless. Last year the Mission provided homeless men and women with more than 362,500 meals, 78,500 nights of shelter and 50,000 articles of clothing, as well as showers, haircuts, 550 professional doctor's appointments and 69 eye examinations.

The Bowery Mission is an amazing place that continuously teams with activity. It encompasses many programs such as: a transitional living program for 77 men, a transitional living program for 21 females, chapel services three times a day and counseling services available 24 hours a day, cooked meals three times a day, twice weekly shower and clothing distribution, weekly medical clinics, outreach meal sites, outreach food distribution, and a homeless shelter for 25 men a night.

The Bowery Mission's transitional living program is a national model for men who were once homeless or recovering addicts. The program incorporates one-on-one and group counseling, addiction recovery, career education and training. Students live in a dormitory together and participate in daily worship, prayer and bible study. Up to 70 men participate in the program at one time, working to break destructive habits and preparing for lives of wholeness and lasting productivity.

We were able to stay at the mission in the volunteer quarters and participate in most of the programs that the Bowery Mission has to offer. We participated in the daily food program and prepared approximately 3,000 meals for the shelter and outreach programs. We worked in the outreach van and the shower and clothing distribution programs in addition to the constant cleaning and unloading of food and supplies. Our days would begin as early as 4:00 am and last until 4:00 pm with such activities as unloading the semi truck of food for the week and food preparation for breakfast after the chapel service at 6:00 am. From there we divided into teams and rotated work assignments throughout the week.

In addition to our work at the Bowery Mission, we were able to go to Ground Zero, Broadway, Times Square, Chinatown, Magnolia Bakery, Rockafellar Center, the Brooklyn Bridge, Wall Street, the Hershey Factory, the Crayola Factory and a Toledo Mud Hens baseball game.

This year's trip was the eighth trip for the First American Youth mission program. Previous trips have been to McGraws, West Virginia, Custer, South Dakota, St. Louis, Missouri, Lynn, Massachusetts, Coahoma, Mississippi, Monessen, Pennsylvania and Lame Deer, Montana.

A special presentation about the Bowery mission trip will be given at First American Lutheran Church on Sunday, September 20th at 9:00 am and Wednesday, September 23rd 7:00 pm during the regular church services.

A planning meeting for next year's 2010 mission trip will be held on Wednesday, September 16th at 6:00 pm in the Youth Room at First American Lutheran Church, 511 Madison Street, Oconto. Any youth in grades 9-12 who want to serve through relational and work-oriented service may participate in the mission program. Spaces for the 2010 mission trip will be limited. For additional information about next year's mission trip, please call Brad Weber (Youth Director) at 920-834-2479.



Jane Weber and Dana Scheffen serving soup at Outreach site.



Abbey Miller, Lauren Caldie, Casey Peterson, Bailee McClintock and Abbie Beekman preparing lunch



Landon James, Adam Martens, Marshall Bradshaw and Frank Votava working in the clothing distribution area.



Left to right standing

Karen Cox, Lauren Caldie, Jane Weber, Casey Peterson, Ross Heise, Abbey Miller, Marshall Bradshaw, Bailee McClintock, Adam Martens, Landon James, Nathan Cox, Miles Exworthy, Dana Scheffen, Amber Trepanier, Brad Weber, Casey Wusterbarth, Lexi Woodworth, Justine Woodworth

Left to right sitting

Cory Muhowski, Katie Zoeller, Abbie Beekman, Frank Votava