

SHG's J.O.S.H.U.A 2006 Mission Trip
by
Clare C. Zimmerman

Albert Ralston could not believe his eyes. As part of the JOSHUA Mission Trip, more than 30 Sacred Heart-Griffin (SHG) High School students spent the first day of their 2006 summer vacation scraping old paint from his three-story home in Steubenville, Ohio. "Unbelievable, it's just unbelievable, that these kids work together so well! One of them goes down a ladder, and another goes right back up. The girls work just as hard as the boys!"

Leaving SHG on early Monday morning, May 25, the 2006 JOSHUA trip is the seventh JOSHUA (Journeys of Service to Upper Appalachia) journey since SHG students first made the journey eight years ago. SHG students first traveled the 550 miles from Springfield, Illinois, to Steubenville, Ohio, in the summer of 1998. Early journeys included 10 to 12 students and 2 adult chaperones. Every year since then, the enthusiasm and numbers of participants has grown. During the May 2006 JOSHUA mission trip, 32 SHG students, grades 9-12, and 15 adults, experienced the opportunity to share their time, talent and treasures with the families and community of upper Appalachia. This year, every one of last year's JOSHUA students returned for the 2006 service trip.

Preparations for the JOSHUA Mission trip include a variety of service activities and began early in 2006. Student participants contribute their own earnings to participate, fundraising to cover project costs; trip planning, meal planning and dealing with the challenges associated with living in the Appalachian community while also serving it. Projects to raise money for the service trip include, making and selling "puppy chow" snacks, speaking at churches, asking for corporate donations, selling bottled water at school events, and many other student fundraising efforts. Students learn the many needs, expenses, and details associated with the undertaking, planning and paying for a weeklong service trip for 47 participants.

JOSHUA, developed in 1990, is an outreach of the Urban Mission Ministries, an ecumenical Christian social service agency in Steubenville, Ohio. Initially, Franciscan University of Steubenville provided free housing to the work teams. In 1997, however, the Catholic Diocese of Steubenville and St. Anthony's Parish donated its parish convent to the Urban Mission Ministries and it is now used as housing for the JOSHUA teams.

On the first day of JOSHUA, the congregation of the Second Baptist Church in Steubenville served the workers a homemade breakfast to the work team. After a great breakfast of sausage, bacon, biscuits and eggs, the work assignments were given. SHG had work assignments at two homes right next door to each other. The group named them *The Green House* and the *Blue House*.

The Green House had not been painted for more than twenty years and needed extensive work. The entire outside of them home needed to be scraped, primed and painted. The Blue House needed some interior painting, porch demolition and

reconstruction and exterior paint touch up. Albert Ralston, owner of the Green house, heard about JOSHUA through his neighbor Tim next door. To apply for assistance through JOSHUA both Tim and Albert had to apply to Urban

Missions, provide the deed to the home, and provide proof of income and social security benefits. Tim Lancaster, owner of the blue House, heard about JOSHUA through his wife who works as a custodian at Urban Mission Ministries. Although Tim has worked his entire life, he and his wife had never had enough money for materials or labor to fix the porch. Tim said he "could not have asked for better workers" and he was overwhelmed by how quickly the SHG students finished his job.



Getting up on high ladders was quite a challenge as both the Green and the Blue Houses were more than 3 stories tall



One of the volunteers at Unity Kitchen was Ifeanyichukwu Achebe, an AARP worker at the Unity Kitchen, from Nigeria. Fascinated with Terry's camera, Mr. Achebe, said that he liked photographers because the lens of the camera is Jesus and Jesus sees everything. If you are not with Jesus then you are not in the picture. Mr. Achebe has lived in the US for 35 years and always invited me to come within the camera.

his favorite part of the JOSHUA trip, and he added, "I like making food for people who need help."

The JOSHUA experience gives SHG students an opportunity to personally serve the poor, to grow together in Christian community, and to share and participate in spiritual growth as individuals and as a community. Students learn, observe, and share in the full range of services and ministries for and with the poor in an experience that impacts their school, community and the world throughout their lifetime. Sacred Heart-Griffin (SHG) High School lives its mission to explore opportunities of service and to understand the call to social justice. Service at SHG is understood as faith in action. JOSHUA, a service project and mission trip, is just one outstanding example of the many ways that students at SHG serve others. All students return home and to SHG with an appreciation of their life creature comforts and a deeper love for their family. Sr. Linda Mary, who is does Campus Ministry at SHG, says, "I enjoy JOSHUA so much because it teaches students what ministry truly is. It is where the rubber meets the road." She believes that JOSHUA provides SHG's students with the opportunity to know that service is what ministry means. As the week ended, Sr. Linda Mary told the 32 SHG students that "meeting people where they are at is what ministry and service is all about. You have done hat this week and, looking at you, I know the world is in good hands."

Clare Cadagin Zimmerman, a senior at SHG, is a member of the National Honor Society, Encore, OP Teen Board, Swim Team, Curtain Call Drama Club, and Science Olympiad. She is a Western Catholic Union Scholar, active in prevention, and a volunteer junior counselor at New Salem Pioneer Life Day Camp. . She is employed as a swim team coach, childcare provider and is a newspaper carrier. Clare is a cantor and choir member at St. Agnes Parish and she performs in SHG and community musicals.

Each day during JOSHUA, SHG students worked at the Urban Missions Ministries Food Pantry Warehouse and the Soup Kitchen. The Soup Kitchen, which is nearly ten years old, is open three days a week and serves about nearly 90 people about 160 meals per week. SHG students served chicken wingdings, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, corn on the cob and hot dogs. The manager of the Soup Kitchen, Rev. Toni Hubbard, says it is a Unity Kitchen, not a soup kitchen, "This kitchen feeds people two ways, physically and spiritually. I used to be a city bus driver, but God called me to come to this kitchen. At first I was a taker, but now I am a giver." Toni is the only paid staff person and she relies on volunteers to help serve and prepare the food. Hugh McDermott, who will be a senior at SHG said, "Meeting Toni was humbling. It was interesting to see all sorts of people at the Unity Kitchen. It makes me feel fortunate for my blessings."

Before serving every meal, Toni reads a Scripture passage, does a short preaching and then serves the food. Some of the clientele have learned to come late to reap the food benefit have to hear God's word. Toni says that she "always serves those who listen to God's word first." John Zimmerman, who will be a junior at SHG said working at the Unity Kitchen, was