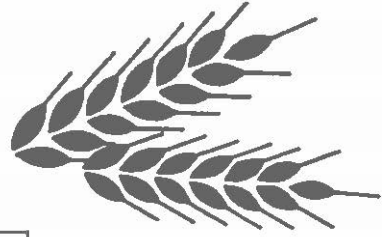


In Focus



SPECIAL EDITION

St. Patrick's CREW on Mission, 2000

St. Patrick's CREW (Christ Renews Everyone's World) were able to "shine" their light during the recent mission trip from Jul. 29 to Aug. 5 to the Washington, D.C., area.

The 20 teen members of CREW, our parish youth group, and their 10 adult chaperones traveled to the Maryland towns of Brentwood and Ranier, where they helped to paint and landscape three homes. Working together on the houses for 4 days from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the teens and adults touched the lives of the residents and created a memorable experience for everyone involved in this special endeavor.

According to comments made on the Mission evaluation sheets filled out by teen and adult participants

after the trip, the Mission was a life-changing experience. Here is a sampling of their comments:

"This trip has made me so much closer to God and to the rest of CREW. I've been reassured that just because you're in financial trouble doesn't mean that you aren't nice or respectable."—*Angelina Davito*

"This trip has taught me not to judge other people by what they have on the outside but to get to know what they have on the inside."—*Megan Blair*

"I came on this trip worried about having to do Bible study and getting along with people, and I'm leaving with 20 new friends and greater respect for my Church and the people in it."—*Flannery Ellis*

"The theme of this Mission was SHINE. I really saw that I was shining when one of the children at my site said: 'I want to be like you when I grow up. I want to help people just like you helped me.' That made me feel like I was lighting her torch to help it shine."—*Stephanie Kalipeni*

"This trip was a great community building opportunity for our parish. The teens and the adult chaperones were able to bond. They shared this memorable experience together."—*Cindy Shaw (chaperone)*

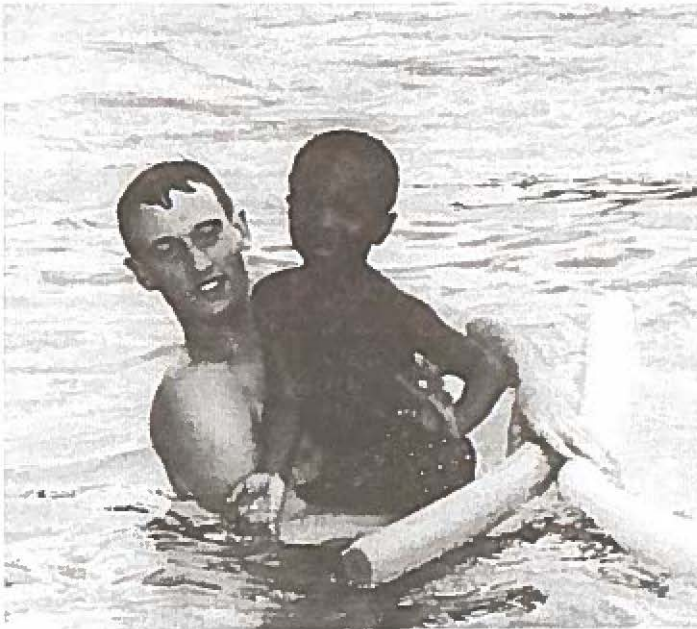
"I was reminded by the teens of the newness of spiritual hunger I had as a teen. It gave me a different appreciation for my faith journey."—*Linda Zumbahlen (chaperone)*

The trip to Washington was made possible by the hard work of the teens and many other parishioners. To qualify for the Mission, each teen had to contribute service hours and fund-raising hours. Service hours included volunteering help for the Catholic Worker House and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Fund raising included working at the parish fish fries sponsored by the Urbana Knights of Columbus and selling the CREW recipe book.

While in the Washington, D.C., area, the CREW members were visited by the mayor of Brentwood



Ranier Work Crew (this photograph also appeared in *The Catholic Post*).



Anthony DeCerbo in the pool with a friend during the party.



Nicole Weisiger and Flannery Ellis swim with a friend during a pool party sponsored by Gateway Development at the end of the Mission.

and Ranier. They were also featured in an article for a local newspaper. The Mission was coordinated through Gateway Community Development agency.

On each night of the trip all of the teens received small gifts and notes from "secret servants," members of St. Patrick's who did not go on the trip and who may not have known the teen recipients. One "secret servant" gave up coffee one day and slept on the floor another, as an offering of sacrifice for what the teen was doing. Another gave a prayer card that by chance was his favorite prayer. "The teens were really surprised that people they didn't even know were praying for them and giving them little gifts," Cindy Shaw commented. "This was another opportunity for the teens to connect with their parish."

Web pages were prepared nightly by Mike Andrejasich, chaperone; Prairienet donated space on their servers for them. If you haven't done so yet, you can still visit the Web site for a vicarious experience of the work and the joy of Mission. The address is

www.prairienet.org/crew2000/. Some of the moments captured there are printed here (as space permits)

"I've definitely grown closer to God, and this trip has brought me a lot closer to the Church."—Nicole Weisiger

"It made me see how many need help and assistance. I understand that not everyone is well off."—Yeu Nguyen



Some CREW members visit the Pentagon City Shopping Mall after a long, hard day's work.



CREW and sponsors at the picnic with families from the renovated homes.

for those of us who don't yet find the Internet all that accessible.

Teens who went on Mission are Liz Amberg, Megan Blair, Teresa Davito, Angelina Davito, Mija Hubler, Emily Millsap, Yen Nguyen, Flannery Ellis, Dustin Coleman, Robbie Grove, Nicole Betenia, Stephanie Coverstone, Lori Edwards, Natalie Handal, Emily Kacich, Jacqueline Kalipeni, Nicole Weisiger, Jason Retz, Anthony DeCerbo, and Patrick Hatch. They were accompanied by adult chaperones Mike Andrejasich, Dave Ellis, Bruce Millsap, Chuck Shaw, Lynda Zumbahlen, Cindy Shaw, Tom Kacich, Kai Nielsen, Jared Wouters, and Mary Weisiger.



Emily Kacich has fun with Janet at the Mission picnic.



Stephanie Coverstone, Angelina Davito, Nicole Betenia, Anthony DeCerbo, and Lorie Edwards with Mike Andrejasich during Bible study and worship at the end of the workday.

"It was a struggle for me to get here.... In fact, I didn't want to come.... I had faith, came, and trust my God's instincts more than ever. I always know what I need to do, I always have, but now it's stronger.... I hope to find more reverence and serenity in my life. I feel this is a starting point for something great for me."—Anthony DeCerbo



Work Crew 1 outside the house in Ranier.



Work Crew 3 outside the house in Brentwood.

"The best part was the feeling you have after a long day of work, and the feeling you have looking at all you've done and how you've changed the children by sharing your light with them."
—Teresa Davito

"This mission trip has helped to increase fellowship among teens and between teens and adults. The St. Pat's community was greatly improved due to this trip."
—Patrick Hatch



Work Crew 2 outside the house in Brentwood.

"I think I'm being called to be more willing or giving now because we fixed their houses and really helped them, and it was great."—Stephanie Coverstone

"I won't be so quick to judge others on how they live their lives to the fullest."—Emily Millsap





Three up and three down.



The clean-up crew.



Let's stop and think about this...



Quite a pair!

"The best part was getting to work with lots of people, learning more about myself, and getting to help people in need."—Jason Retz

"This mission trip made me think about what other people go through.... We really made a difference, not just in fixing the houses but in the families' lives."—Natalie Handal

"I feel I'm being called to share my faith with others, to listen to others, to share my God-given talents."—Chuck Shaw (chaperone)



Note the "gloves" our CREW are wearing.



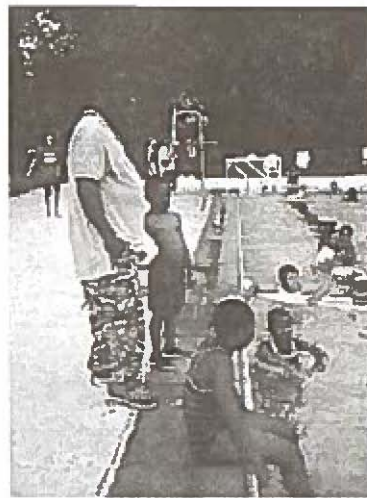
A day of hard work followed by swimming brought on big appetites



Gateway Project Coordinator (right) chats with the Mayor of North Brentwood.



Loading up the plates!



Our new friends contemplate joining the fun.



No, Mom, that's only root beer.



A game of Keep-away between CREW and our new friends.

"At the pool party I spoke to the children. One of them barely spoke English and no one understood her. So I talked with her in Spanish."—Nicole Betenia

"I'd have to say this trip ranks right up there with Marriage Encounter, WATCH, and Cursillo for me. The fellowship with other chaperones and the teens is something I would not trade for anything else. Being able to shine my light along with my daughter was especially meaningful."—Dave Ellis (chaperone)