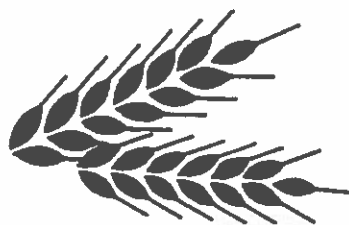


ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

In Focus



www.stpaturbana.org

SPECIAL EDITION

St. Patrick's CREW On Mission, 2008

CREW mission trips generally offer St. Patrick's teens and their chaperones an opportunity to enrich their faith by giving of their time to help others in need. This year's journey – to Winnebago, Nebraska – was no different, yet had an added dimension that made this year's trip truly special: the opportunity to connect with people of a different culture.

Twenty-two teenagers and 12 adults, including Fr. Joe Hogan, spent July 6-11 helping the Native American people of the Winnebago reservation, and in return got an intimate look at love of God and neighbor through the eyes of another culture.

The St. Patrick's contingent joined with teens and chaperones from St. Francis Parish in Humphrey, Nebraska, where Fr. Tom Bauwens, a close

friend of Fr. Hogan, is pastor. The combined group spent the week at St. Augustine's Parish and Grade School in Winnebago.

During their first full day on the reservation, the teens took a bus tour of the Winnebago village and learned about Native American history and culture from a Native woman, Sarah Snake. Sarah, youth minister at St. Augustine's, became

their guide, mentor, liaison, and friend.

Daytimes were filled with corporal works of mercy: scraping and painting a house, reorganizing a food pantry on the Omaha reservation (south of the Winnebago reservation), building a sweat lodge, building porch steps, weeding a playground



The 2008 CREW participants ready to leave on the mission

and community garden plot, cleaning a large wood pile on the church grounds, helping at the Senior Center (by bagging laundry detergent and handing it out in the neighborhood), taking part in the setup of a tepee, and, as an act of love and thanks for all she had done for the group, cleaning up Sarah Snake's yard.

One work crew built a cedar fire enclosure for Native American funerals.

Native funerals last for four days, during which a fire burns for the deceased. St. Augustine's had only a small fire circle, so the crew's task was to build a fire enclosure made of cedar (a sacred wood for the Native Americans).

Evenings were devoted to spiritual activities. Fr. Hogan and Fr. Bauwens celebrated Mass on two evenings, accompanied by the CREW Praise Band. The Masses included several special elements, such as Sarah signing the Our Father using

Winnebago sign language and Father Bauwens introducing the spiritual significance of cedar in the Native American culture. On Wednesday evening, Lonnie, a Native American holy man and medicine man, along with his son Lemar and son-in-law Bucky, took the group through a sweat lodge experience (see related story). On Thursday, Lonnie led the teens and their chaperones through a Native American devotional service in a tepee.

Like all mission trips, this one ended with the opportunity for the teens to be teens, stopping at Adventureland in Altoona, Iowa, for an afternoon of roller coasters, log rides, arcade games, and a circus.

About the Winnebago Tribe

The village of Winnebago is the largest settlement on the Winnebago Native American reservation in northeastern Nebraska. The Winnebago Tribe was originally from the Wisconsin area. After being displaced, they eventually came to Nebraska where the Omaha Natives generously gave them the top third of their reservation land. Later, two-thirds of the tribe's members, now known as the Ho-Chunk Nation, returned to their homeland in Wisconsin; a third remained in Nebraska.

(Right) Weeds don't have a chance with the CREW at work!



(Above) Teens from St. Patrick and St. Francis work together to clean up the wood pile on parish grounds.

"I've realized that many people live happily with much less than I have."

- Nathaniel Perry

"It has made me realize I can make a change, and I feel more open to others."

- Kelsey Kaiser

"The trip has emphasized that we all are in need at times, whether that be shelter, sustenance, or a hug. We need to be more accepting of help when offered."

- Kathy Cimasky (chaperone)

"I felt like my faith was strengthened. I met so many people who put God first in their life, and it made it easier for me to try to do the same."

- Theresa Laumann



Betsy Schuele (foreground) and Kelsey Kaiser are hard at work raking the yard.



“(The) Sweat Lodge (was the) ultimate reconciliation service – so personal – even though all those people were there, I felt it was only God and me.” – Bonnie Kimball

“The sweat lodge, it was an amazing experience, and one I will never forget. I felt so spiritually connected.” – Hannah Noonan



Cleansing One’s Spirit in a Sweat Lodge

One of the more intriguing tasks placed before CREW members was the building of a Native American sweat lodge, which is used by the Winnebago people for the purpose of cleansing, purifying, and praying to the Creator God. The sweat lodge looks like a small hut, but has been described as a “very intense sauna.”

The CREW teens and their chaperones had an opportunity to participate in a “sweat.” White-hot rocks were placed in a dug-out pit in the sweat lodge. The door was closed and Lonnie, the medicine man, Lemar, his son and medicine man in training, and Bucky, his son-in-law, chanted and sang prayers after pouring water on the rocks to create steam. After the first set of prayers, the door was opened to signify the end of the “first door.” Then the door was closed again and the process was repeated. The first sweat was for all the men who wanted to participate. After the “second door,” the men exited the sweat lodge and the women took their turn. At any point during the sweat, a person could ask to leave by saying, “All My Relations.”

Afterwards, one teen commented that dripping with sweat during the sweat lodge experience felt distinctly different from sweating during a basketball game: the sweat from the lodge experience felt cleaner.



CREW teens and adults build a fire enclosure for Native American funerals on the St. Augustine parish grounds.

(Right) Native Americans are the only ethnic group without their own saint. Many pray to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.





(Left) Annie Valocchi pulls weeds in the community garden plot



(Right) Nathaniel Perry, Gracie Mayer, and Theresa Laumann tackle the weeds on the school playground.



(Left) It's hard work, scraping, but preparation is half the job.

Caitlin Lowry (left) and Paige Whippo have fun with some of the neighborhood children.



(Above) Gracie Mayer, Hanna Noonan, Paige Whippo, Caitlin Schutz, and Will Penning enjoy lunch with their new friend, Weehah.

Mission 2008

Teens

- Aimee Black
- Mary Cimasky
- Jenny Crull
- Mike Fitzgerald
- Cora Freidhof
- Sam Freidhof
- Kelsey Kaiser
- Mary Kimball
- Theresa Laumann
- Caitlin Lowry
- Gracie Mayer
- Kaleigh Niccum
- Hannah Noonan
- Will Penning
- Nathaniel Perry
- Mark Sandwick
- Betsy Schuele
- Caitlin Schutz
- Nick Thompson
- Annie Valocchi
- Fiona Weingartner
- Paige Whippo

Adults

- Kathy Cimasky
- Chris Freidhof
- Denise Freidhof
- Patrick Hatch
- Fr. Joe Hogan
- Bonnie Kimball
- Peggy Loftus
- Jim Mayer
- Patricia Mayer
- Randy Pankau
- Marty Sierra-Perry
- Jim Westervelt

"The best part was meeting so many new nice people." – Annie Valocchi



CREW travelers enjoy their first lunch in Winnebago, Nebraska.

“People may need help with their houses, but sometimes they help us more spiritually.”



Male teens and chaperones help set up the teepee frame and raise the teepee



Catch a lot more of the action by checking the parish Web site (www.stpaturbana.org) for more photos of CREW working, playing, and praying on mission, 2008.