

God's Work, Our Hands!

COLORADO MISSION TRIP, JUNE 22-27, 2014

Building Trust and a New Perspective

By Ally Krueger

"Many small people in many small places, do many small things that can alter the face of the world." –Anonymous

In our week at Colorado, I'm certain that each one of us got a chance to experience the true meaning of the above quote. We grew in our relationships with each other, made new relationships with the people that we served and served with, and most importantly we either established or grew in our relationships with the Lord. All of these things gave us a new perspective on life and impacted the world.

This was the second mission trip Zion Lutheran Church has taken. Last year we went to Tennessee, but this year we went to Colorado. Although this was the second time being on a mission trip for a lot of us, including myself, this was also completely new to a few others who didn't quite know what to expect. When our flight arrived in Denver on Sunday afternoon, we jumped in our rental van and headed off to the church in Greeley, CO that we would be staying at for the following five nights. When we arrived, we got settled, had some dinner, and then began the real fun part: crew assignments! We found out where we would be working all week and who we would be working with. After our busy first night was complete, we got to bed knowing that we would need to be well rested for our first day of work!

The typical day at our week in Colorado was similar to our week in Nashville. We started the day with breakfast and a morning worship. Then we went to our work sites. When we got back in the afternoon we had some free time, followed by dinner, evening worship, group devotions, more free time, and then lights out at 11pm. Each day followed that schedule except for Tuesday, when we had our

free night.

For our free night, we received very generous hospitality from Jim and Pat Johnson and their daughter Michelle Thompson who was visiting them. Jim and Pat are members of Zion who just recently moved to Colorado. They live only about 30 minutes away from the church we were staying at, so they offered to help us make our night very fun! When we got to their apartment, they had a very delicious meal waiting for us! After we ate our meal, Jim took us hiking at Devil's Backbone, a beautiful ridge with lots of rock formations. We hiked to a part of it called the Keyhole. The view was amazing! When we got done hiking and came back to the apartment, we filled the rest of the night with fun activities like swimming, a fire, and making s'mores! We all had a great evening thanks to Jim and Pat's generosity. While we enjoyed our fun night, we also enjoyed working on our service sites.

Colorado is very diverse, especially in Greeley, the city we were staying in and the city in which my crew worked. Parts of Greeley are very poverty stricken and in some cases wore down due to the excessive flooding that Colorado sometimes experiences. I was lucky enough to be able to be paired up with New Hope Church, a church in Greeley that focuses a lot on helping the children of these harsh areas. During the summer months, New Hope makes and delivers around 750 breakfasts and 750 lunches per day to children and adults in Greeley who might have otherwise not been able to eat. *(continued on next page →)*





These kids were such an eye-opener for me—some of them had so little, yet smiled at the smallest things. Some of them opened up to me about everything they've been through in their short few years of life. It's truly amazing how they can still be as positive as they are. It really makes a person realize just how good they have it. Seeing some of the places these kids are growing up also changed me. Back in our small farming community in central Wisconsin, we are so sheltered and not used to any kinds of violence, gangs, poverty, natural disasters, or diverse ethnic groups. This experience taught me that not every community is a seemingly perfect place. I have gained vast amounts of respect for all of the people I met while serving.



Some other people that I met while working with New Hope were the college interns that keep the place running smoothly and help to make all of this possible. They all come from different places and backgrounds, but they fit together like a family. From the moment we arrived they made us feel very welcomed. I really loved their ability to be so compassionate about helping people while having a blast at the same time. They were always so fun, hilarious, and outgoing, and there was never a dull moment with any of them! They always found ways to make serving people such a memorable and enjoyable experience, which is something that I will definitely try to pass on to others! A few of the interns that I worked with and got to know pretty well were Eloy Trujillo and Leigh-Ann Maes. I was inspired by their friendliness, boldness, and passion for Christ. I think that all of us who went on the mission trip had encounters with people like that.



Other crews had the service projects of interacting and helping out with mentally disabled children and adults, helping out with flood relief work, and other things like that. These types of service projects are often challenging, but very rewarding. All of us were touched in a certain way that sparked a change of perspective in our lives, whether it was the people we served or the people we served with. Meeting all of these new people wasn't the only thing that touched our lives though. Everyday we had a morning worship service, devotions with our crews during the workday, an evening worship service, and church group devotions after that.



They were all specific to each day's theme. The daily themes in order were: (1) A Boy and His Lunch, (2) From Howling to Hearing, (3) Grief, Anger, and Hope, (4) Getting to Jesus at Any Cost, and (5) Putting Faith Before Fear. All of these daily themes stressed the importance of trusting in God, and each fit into the theme for the week "Repair: Be a Story of Transformation". At least one of the daily worship services deeply touched each and every one of us and let our faith soar to new heights. We were all able to open up to God, another person on the mission trip, and ourselves.



While on this mission trip, we were all able to work hard, explore Colorado, build unbreakable bonds with all kinds of people, grow in our relationships, build trust and faith, and help to repair and transform others, which in turn helped us to repair and transform ourselves. Some messages that I believe we all took home from our mission include:

Changing the world occurs one helping hand at a time, to help ourselves we must first help others, and trusting in God is one of the most important things we could ever do in our lives. All of these messages are life changing, along with everything we experienced on our mission trip to Colorado.

On behalf of our whole 2014 Mission Team, thank you so much for your outpouring of support! We can't tell you just how much we appreciate it. God bless!



Group Reflections

Everyone was asked to share a "Facebook status" about their feelings about their experiences. Here are their responses:

There are no such things as coincidences.

God works every day, in every way!

– Kaitlyn Ulrich

This is one of my favorite trips ever! Because we all worked so well together and God put me with the best people this week. – Anna Spaeth

As the week proceeded, I grew closer to my youth group, crew members, youth leaders, and most importantly, God. I wouldn't trade this trip for anything in the world! – Heather Pupp

This was a very hard thing to do only being 14 years old. As the week went on my faith, trust, and love for God grew greatly. This was a great experience!

– McKenzie Ford

Being on this trip has really opened my eyes to God! I've learned to not be afraid because God has plans for each and every one of us. – Rachel Busche

This mission trip was amazing! It was so cool to see all the things that we can accomplish. This experience was a real eye-opener for me, and I would do it again. – Clare Thompson

Colorado has changed my life! I was blessed with a crew who did nothing but support and laugh. We spent our rides smiling and talking about our day. Hearts & Horses has helped the kids I worked with so much in 4 days. Even though they have disabilities, they don't slow down. I'm so proud of everything! - Olivia Burrows

Every day I grew closer to God, my youth group, and my new friends. It was so fun to come to CO to help others and meet new people. I hope to do it again. – Sam Manecke

This was definitely the best week ever! I learned so much and got to experience a ton of different things. I got to meet a ton of different people along with becoming much closer to people I already knew. - Jadyn Gebelein

This week in Colorado has been one of my favorites; putting smiles on hungry children's faces, meeting so many new people and starting new relationships, and hiking mountains were among the best. But, most of all, growing closer to God was by far the best thing that has happened to me over the last six days.

- Ally Krueger

I had a wonderful time this past week in Colorado and met many cool people and touched many lives. It was amazing how big of an impact the smallest things can have on people's lives. I met many new friends on this trip and got to see some of God's work by the creation of the Rocky Mountains. - Matt Fish



Group Reflections Continued...

This past week has been one of the most amazing weeks of my life. I was nervous at first, but with God's help everyone in my crew became my family. We all had so much fun with helping children in Vacation Bible School and going into the Rocky Mountains to help with flood relief. Learning more and becoming closer with God was the best part of this experience. I'm so glad I went on this mission trip and had this experience.

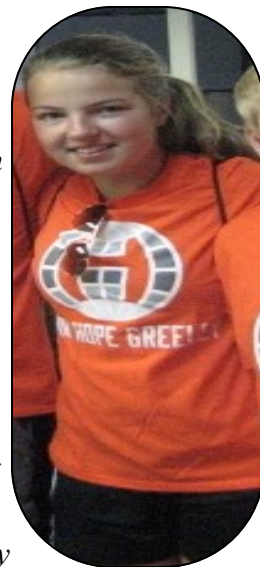
- Marissa Gebelein



I always felt this was a great group of kids, but getting to spend time with them on this mission trip validated it more than I ever could have imagined. I enjoyed getting to spend time with ALL of them serving & experiencing God sightings. I will always remember & cherish this step of my faith journey. - Kecia Krueger

This week has been a great experience getting to know the youth from our church and seeing a whole new side of them since they were away from their comfort zones. We shared a lot of great moments together as a group and also with the new people we have met. You could feel and see God in a lot of the moments that we had through out the week. Everyone needs to experience a Mission Trip at least once in their life to fully understand all the great things we will be sharing with when we return. - Lita Landwehr

These young people are awesome! Colorado and the mountains are awesome! God is Awesome! What an awesome week! - Ben Natzke



Thank You!!!

Thank you for your generous and gracious support! Your prayers, positive thoughts, encouragement, and financial support made this mission trip possible and helped to make it an INCREDIBLE experience! We are all so blessed to have you in our lives.

Thank you!

