



Appalachian Experience

**St. Joseph's
Housing
Repair
Program**

Giving Stewards

We worked hard, met new people, learned new things & had a rewarding time!

For those of you who don't know, St. Joseph's, Mantua, sent a group to St. Joseph's in Clintwood, Virginia, to take part in Sister Jean Korkisch's Housing Repair Program this summer. Helping low-income residents maintain decent housing for their families, the program has groups work on housing repair jobs both inside and out.

Appalachian Experience 2007 began Saturday, June 23, with part of the group meeting at Eat 'n Park Restaurant in Streetsboro before heading down the highway. This year's participants included George, Kathi & Jeff Trares, Mike, Barb & Jake Shilling, Renee Wiggins, Alex & Nathan DeHoff, and three students from Walsh Jesuit High School, Andrew Burns, Brittany Pallay & Grace Kesic. Members caravanned the 400 mile trip south & arrived at the Dorothy Baker House either Saturday or Sunday. Sr. Jean welcomed the group & spoke of plans for the week's work. Saturday & Sunday's activities included settling in, planning & shopping for the week's meals, attending Mass, swimming at a nearby park, some area site-seeing and relaxing.

This year's group of 12 participants had some new people and some who have participated in the program for a number of years. Working on two different homes along with program helpers Debbie, Leanne, Brandi & Josh, the group accomplished quite a bit of work throughout the week. Group #1, consisting of the Trares family, the Wiggins/DeHoff family,



Appalachian Experience 2007 Group with musicians (Alex DeHoff not pictured)

Debbie & Josh, spent the week helping to make the home of an elderly lady who has a little trouble getting around ready to move in to. Alpha's double wide trailer on Reedy Ridge had been vacant for quite some time mainly due to water problems so she was living with a sister across the street. Repairs on her home included water lines being repaired & plumbing leaks were fixed, 5 or 6 layers of old shingles were torn off & replaced on her front porch roof, the front & back porches were power-washed & restained, wrought iron porch railings were repaired, scraped & repainted, the unit's underpinning (skirting) & the kitchen floor were painted, windows were caulked, and gutters & downspouts were painted in preparation for reinstallation later. In addition, years of accumulated junk and a non-working refrigerator & air-conditioning unit were removed

from the site.

Group #2 with the Shillings & Walsh High School students, Leanne & Brandi making improvements to the modular home on Caney Ridge of Alma, an 80 year old woman living on a remote road with a granddaughter, her teenage son, toddler son & boyfriend. Installation of underpinning with framework, replacement of a rickety handicap ramp, installing a French drain along the front of the home, and adding another set of steps were among the tasks the group did to help the family. Of course, Sr. Jean supervised the work being done at both sites to help ensure that her clients are warm, safe & dry.

Participating in this outreach effort since 1998, St. Joseph's volunteer group has never had any serious injuries or accidents—poison ivy, asthma attack, heat related problems, wasp stings & stepping on a nail are the only incidents.

Unfortunately, this year Alex DeHoff became sick early in the week & the family had to leave Wednesday evening.

Not only do volunteers do some hard but rewarding work, meet new people, and learn new things, but cultural events, local site-seeing & discussions around Appalachian issues are also a part of the experience. As an unofficial tradition, several members enjoyed the very popular movie "O, Brother Where Art Thou" (starring George Clooney) that features music of the region. Several of the songs from the movie are sung by Dr. Ralph Stanley who grew up in the Dickenson County area. The Ralph Stanley Museum and Traditional Mountain Music Center, which was opened in 2005, is located in Clintwood.

On Tuesday evening, volunteers enjoyed a picnic hosted by parishioners followed by entertainment from folk singer & storyteller, Ken Childress & fellow musician Jim Mullins. This year a few members of the group even got up during the entertainment to learn how to "flat foot" dance from one of the parishioners.

Group #1 was working right next door to Fanelli's 4th World Movement Co-Op Learning Center. Vincent and Fanchette Fanelli, who take an active role in their community as well as being members of the organization The Fourth World Movement International Volunteer Corps, are members of St. Joseph Parish in Clintwood. On Tuesday the DeHoff boys were able to take part in a musicians' session who let them take a turn on the

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**ST. JOSEPH'S HOUSING
REPAIR PROGRAM**

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**Offering Home Repairs
to the Low-Income
People of Appalachia**

Learning About Appalachia

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fiddler & steel guitar. The center also hosts stress management sessions, computer classes to assist with employment opportunities, new skills & gaining confidence, and take part in house-improvement projects coordinated by Binns-Counts Community Center. A human commitment to ending poverty and exclusion, The Fourth World Movement is an international, non-governmental, anti-poverty organization with consultative status in the United Nations. In 2005, the volunteers heard a presentation about the organization & saw the beginnings of a learning and resource center, both for the local area and for the U.S. Movement. In 2006 the group toured the then nearly complete center which includes living quarters for the couple (their previous home on the property will be used for the organization's activities as well). For more information about the Fourth World Movement, please visit www.4thworldmovement.org.

On Thursday evening, the group heard about the coal mining industry from parishioner Larry Kennedy who worked in the mines for over 20 years (he now works for Social Services). Larry brought his tools of the trade & explained his work experience and the impact of mechanization & strip mining on the industry. Poverty remains in this Appalachian region due the impact by

the coal, gas and timber industries, and absentee ownership. There are no other industries willing to commit to this area because of the lack of any major interstate system in this remote area in the southwestern tip of Virginia. Even state capitol officials fail to recognize and/or act on the many of the needs of this part of their own state. Despite the poverty, and land and water devastation, these proud people are determined to assume control of their destiny. St. Joseph's in Clintwood, VA is one of several churches in this area that has formed a ministerial association to meet some of the needs of local residents. St. Joseph's Housing Repair Program offers low-income people home repairs and engages the community in discussions around housing related issues and actions.

Appalachian Experience participants genuinely feel a sense of accomplishment helping the truly needy of this area be safe, warm & dry. Not only did they work hard but they've acquired friendships & a camaraderie with those they worked for & with. You are welcome to join us in future trips as we follow Jesus' example and use our gifts to reach out to others!

**Watch for photos & links on the
Appalachian Experience page
of our parish website.**

www.stjosephmantua.com

How Can I Get Involved?

Our parish is planning to send a group again next summer. Average-sized, "workable" groups are 15-20 people. Adults & high school students are encouraged to participate. It is suggested that youth groups have at least one adult for every five youth & participants be of high school age or older. If you have ever pounded a nail, sawed wood, laid tile, painted, hung wallpaper, or performed ordinary repairs & maintenance on your own home, you can handle the work. You won't be asked to do anything beyond your strength or skill level. Safety is of primary concern. Inexperienced individuals/groups may wish to hold a "hands on" training session to familiarize them with repair work. If you would like to be a part of next year's effort, watch for details in the bulletin early in 2008 or call Kathi at the Parish Office.

Financial backing for the program & patronage of fundraising efforts are also essential. Fees for volunteer groups are \$175.00 per person which covers lodging at the Dorothy Baker House, materials for work projects, and related expenses. Food

expenses of approximately \$50.00 per person plus gas money for the trip down & back (it's about 400 miles to Clintwood) & to work sites during the week are also required. The parish & participants help to defray these costs but the group would prefer to earn most of their way through fundraisers & donations. Any support you may be able to provide is greatly appreciated.

Although the majority of supplies are purchased in the Clintwood area to help support the local economy, there are some

items that are used continually. Ongoing needs of the St. Joseph Housing Repair Program include nails, work gloves, dust masks, rags, and good paint brushes. The Dorothy Baker House is a fully equipped household, however, groups do need to bring or purchase their own paper supplies, trash bags, personal items, dish soap, etc.

If you or someone you know has a working computer that they would like to donate to a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, Sr. Jean would be most grateful to be put in touch with them. She may be reached at (276) 926-4328.

Of course, your prayers & words of encouragement for the group's successful efforts & safe trip are most appreciated. God bless.

"Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

— Matthew 5:16

