

Catholic Heart Workcamp: A heartwarming experience

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Confucius once stated: "Wherever you go, go with all your heart."

Nine students from Delphos St. John's took that belief with them to Farmington, Michigan, a couple weeks back. These students, along with their three chaperones, participated in Catholic Heart Workcamp for a week, partaking in various service projects, predominantly in the Detroit area.

Upon arriving at the camp, the students and chaperones were paired up with other students and chaperones to work alongside, a new experience for both parties. In regards to breaking outside of their comfort zone, students had to quickly rely on new peers whom they had never met to collaborate together and serve those in need. The chaperones, in turn, were responsible for new students and overseeing the projects they had to complete.

Each student participated in a wide range of projects – gardening/landscaping, food preparation, cleaning, work with underprivileged children, and work with mentally handicapped adults to name a few. For some individuals, it was a new project every day. For others, they had two projects in a day: one in the morning, another one in afternoon.

Catholic Heart Workcamp consisted of roughly 300 kids from Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. For the students, the week was a nice balance of service, praise and worship, and simply hanging out with teens their own age who share the same faith.

One of the students, Haley Rode, a sophomore at St. John's, experienced the acceptance from her peers and sharing her faith. "All the people there were really accepting of who you are and were all super nice. There were so many opportunities to step out of your comfort zone and meet new people and build lasting relationships! I was able to build a relationship with the people worked with and it was also fun and a great experience that I will never forget!"

Samantha Stevenson, a senior attending St. John's, was able to live out the theme of the workcamp, "Amplify Your Faith." She stated, "I had a lot of fun at Catholic Heart Workcamp! I met a lot of great new people and was able to help spread God's love through the work we did!"

The students felt a newfound appreciation for the "haves" in their lives after working with those who were not as blessed to have even the simplest things in life. In diving headfirst into building new relationships with other peers, they were able to discover and be true to who they are as individuals.

Kim Honigford, one of the chaperones, was able to see the students grow more profoundly in their faith. "It was wonderful to see our kids truly give of themselves to serve others. They were able to put their faith into action. To praise God and serve His people, it just doesn't get any better than that!"

The group was blessed and thankful for the generosity provided by Ace Hardware in Delphos for the tools and supplies they so graciously donated. For the St. John's students and chaperones, it was their first experience at Catholic Heart Workcamp. Their new goal for next year: to double the numbers of students attending from Delphos.

These students went to Michigan with all their heart, and came back with an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives: to live fully and serve others is the best gift from the heart.



Catholic Heart Workcamp attendees include, front from left, students Haley Rode, Jana Hamilton, Madison Fulk, Samantha Stevenson, Brooklyn Mueller, Ally Gerberick, Haleigh DeWyer, Samantha Kramer and Alyssa Martin; and back, chaperones Maggie Wannemacher, Kim Honigford and Seminararian Tony Coci. (Submitted photo)