

CATHOLIC HEART WORKCAMP 2009

Catholic Heart Workcamp 2009 took us to Champaign, IL for a week of work and spiritual growth. The long bus ride is well worth it when you step off and the camp instructors are all smiles and ready for work! Next year we are tentatively heading for St. Louis on July 25-31, 2010. We will be having an informative meeting in the next few weeks so if you're interested in finding out what's so special about this camp, come join us! Still undecided? You can view pictures of last year's campers and their jobs by going on the church's website www.saintspeterandpaul-seneca.com and clicking on Catholic Heart Workcamp 2009. A huge thank you to Julie Lierz for doing this for us! Now read a few of last year's camper's thoughts about CHWC!

Catholic Heart Workcamp was a truly amazing experience. It brought me closer to my faith in God and taught me to be thankful for what I've got. Most people don't understand why we pay money just to go out of the state and work for others, but all of us that have been to Catholic Heart Workcamp know exactly why. It's the smile that you get from the people that you have helped that week that just makes you want to do more. It just makes you want to go back another year. This is an experience that everyone should go through at least once in their life. I have gone to Catholic Heart Workcamp for two years and I plan on going again next year.- **Lindsey Lierz**

People always ask me why I go to CHWC. I tell them that I go because it's a different way to meet God. When you go to camp, you are helping people with jobs that they can't do themselves. But that is just a small part of the whole picture. Camp affects you from the day you get there till the day you leave and most people that you talk to, that have gone to camp say that they want to stay there. I met new friends and have seen God in a different way in the past 3 years I have gone. Catholic Heart Workcamp is something that someone must experience to truly understand how it effects people and how it immerses them in their Catholic faith. - **Philip Lierz**

This was my third year of CHWC and was yet again an AWESOME experience! This year at camp was a lot of fun because I got to experience a few things that I've never done before. I was stationed with my group at a trailer park where our resident needed a wheelchair ramp. It was a great job for me because I always love to learn how to do new things. My group was great in working together and getting our job done as efficiently as possible. I was sad to leave at the end of the week, but am glad that my group and I still stay in touch. I encourage everyone to take a chance with CHWC and find out for yourselves what an amazing experience it really is. Trust me, I wouldn't have gone all three years if CHWC wasn't fun! - **Elizabeth Haverkamp**

I am, again, amazed at how much Catholic Heart Workcamp can change my perspective on so many different levels and continue to strengthen my relationship with God. Both of the years I have attended, I have had, in my opinion, the best groups imaginable. This year, my group and I bonded amazingly. We had the opportunity of helping two different residents and also helping the Catholic Hospital in downtown Champaign. While helping the residents, my eyes were opened to how well we have it back at home. I have come to appreciate everything I have a lot more now. Our group's favorite part of our work during the week was washing ambulances and getting the true luxury of eating the food provided by the hospital!! I also had the honor of getting a 5 gallon bucket of water dumped on me by a fellow group member while I INNOCENTLY sprayed down the ambulances. CHWC is, to this day, the best experience I have ever had. Growing closer to God is incredible and I can really not put into words how awesome it is. Even though the last impression I have of this year's camp is being stranded in a St. Joe truck stop for an hour and a half after our bus blew a tire, I am already counting down the months until I can go back one last time because the overall impression is definitely worth it. - **Erin Hermes**

I thought CHWC was a good experience. I meet new people and had a lot of fun. It felt good to know I was helping people who are less fortunate than me. I had to paint, cut tree limbs, and move things which the resident couldn't do herself. I'm glad I went and plan to go next year.- **Devin Argo**

One of the best experiences of my life was attending Catholic Heart Workcamp. I had the opportunity to build wheelchair ramps for two people who had difficulty getting out of their homes. The first ramp that we built was for an elderly woman who cared for the children in her neighborhood. The other ramp was for a man who had cancer and regularly had to receive treatment. He was very grateful since he had no way out of the trailer house. During our 4 days of work, I was able to meet many new friends. There were hundreds of teens from all over the United States and plenty of time for socializing.. The programs each night were both fun and spiritual. Dancing and singing, interesting speakers, and entertaining videos kept us all busy. This trip was my second, but it won't be my last! I think everybody should have the opportunity to participate in a volunteer project like Catholic Heart Workcamp. - **Matthew Nordhus**

I had a great time and am already looking forward to going next year. The little kids there really opened my eyes as to how tough of conditions some people have to live in, even in the United States. The people living in the area I was at seemed to really appreciate what we did there for them. Being there helped me realize that I should be more thankful of the possessions that I have and not worry about the things I don't. CHWC was/is a great way to express my love for God, and helped me realize I shouldn't be ashamed to show my love towards God. I would highly recommend going to anybody who would like to go. - **Ross Niehues**

This year at Catholic Heart Workcamp has been great. I got to meet other people from different states. I also made friends with the kids of the surrounding area. It's nice to get away for a week, and to help out those in need. I helped paint a hotel that was close to being shut down. Every day you got to see the residents, and they always had something encouraging to tell you. You're missing out on a great experience if you decide not to go. - **Mark Stallbaumer—St. Michael's, Axtell**

"You'll have a great time, I promise." These are the words my father said that made me decide to go. I was scared at first because I didn't know what to expect but once I got there I was amazed about how my dad was right and it was only the first day! The thing I remember the most is seeing the smiles on the people's faces that your group helped. I'm truly amazed how much my faith has changed and how I'm not afraid to express my love for God. Even though we had a flat tire on the way back and stopped in St. Joe for an hour and a half, we found things to keep us occupied. For example: My friends were wondering how I would react to my first energy drink. Well let's just say, don't have an energy drink when you're already hyper before you chug it! Not cool. In the end, it is totally worth going and I have yet to repay my dad for encouraging me to attend CHWC. I am looking forward to attending camp next year. - **Julie Kohake**

When I signed up to go to CHWC in Champaign, IL, I had no idea what I was in for. My son, Philip had been to camp twice and my daughter, Lindsey had gone once already. I was curious to find out why they have come back from camp on a real spiritual high. The experience I had while at CHWC was one I will never forget. Doing odd jobs for the residents was very rewarding. Not only were we helping them out, but we also touched them in a way I can never describe. The residents cried telling us how grateful they were that we were there to help them. It made me see how we can each "be Christ" in very simple ways. I was also impressed by the youth of our parish. I witnessed them praising God each and every day through their actions, in their prayers, and as they sang. This moved me deeply. We should be very proud of the youth in this parish. - **Julie Lierz, chaperone**

Catholic Heart Workcamp is one of the best things out there, in my opinion, for teenagers. I was amazed at the teenager's work ethic and the fact that not a single one complained about the work they did. I had the honor of being a trouble shooter, which allowed me to help several of the groups with their bigger projects. One experience, which will always stay with me, is building a wheelchair ramp railing for an elderly woman. She leaned on the railing the first night for several hours just watching traffic and talking to people. The next day, she gave me one of the biggest hugs I have ever had and thanked me. She went off about all the little things we did; most of those little things are what we take for granted. Seeing that many teenagers work, grow closer to God, and have fun while doing all of it, assures me that there are at least 300 good kids in the world. While the long bus ride and sleeping on an air mattress in a room full of high school boys were an experience all in themselves, I loved every minute. I am happy I went along and can see why our children go back year after year. - **Ken Hermes, chaperone**

Another year and another great week of camp! The camp leaders tell us that the camp is really nothing all that special, it's the kids that make the camp so great, so we must have some awesome kids because the camp keeps getting better and better every year! We truly do have some remarkable youth because there are never any problems and they are usually the hardest working kids there. We are blessed to be able to travel with youth from Frankfort, St. Marys, and Wamego to name a few. The kids work well together and have made friendships that will last forever. If your child is thinking about going next year, encourage him or her, and then make the leap of faith and become a chaperone. I guarantee you will get just as much out of the camp as they will!! -**Greg Elder, chaperone**