

gsYTH
missions

UPDATES
2019



Below are responses from those who went on summer mission trips this past year. Each person chose three questions to answer regarding their experience on the mission trip.

KATIE MARTIN

What was your favorite memory?

I loved that the kids all participated in the memory verse on the second day of vbs. Even the kids who were quiet or didn't speak English all said the verse and did the hand motions!!

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God taught me that he answers prayers in ways that we don't expect it. He also taught me that I need to rely on him and not my own strength.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

I didn't know that I could coordinate a vbs or teach a lesson to the kids. God helped me by giving me wisdom, patience, amazing leaders and a servants heart.

ALLIE MARTIN

What was your favorite memory?

My favorite memory was spending time with the kids at the VBS. This was my favorite memory because you could play with them and tell them about Jesus. I liked picking them up or dropping them off at their houses.

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

One new priority that I have started is doing a devotion every day. I do this because I can get a bit of truth in my head every day.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

One word that would describe the trip would be Compassion. I chose compassion because I got to go serve little kids at the VBS. I would go and help build a deck for all these kids that like to sit around with friends.

FAITH WICKLUND

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

I loved seeing the kids just play outside. No electronics. They were happy to enjoy anything on wheels - no matter the condition. I have always placed a high value on quality time with relationships over possessions but it affirmed that the less people have the more they connect with each other.

Share a difficult moment on the trip that you are now thankful for.

It was sometimes hard to step back and let the kids lead. I see how important this is to their learning process and I love how we debriefed each day about the team's success.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I loved the sense of community as we walked the neighborhood. Kids caring for other kids as their parents worked. Families took pride in their gardens. True joy in the faces of the kids that they were cared for and loved. The program is building bridges to the community through education. Showing God's love to all.

TREY KERSCHBAUM

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

Not get super stressed during the VBS and also feeling awake all day instead of being super tired.

Share a difficult moment on the trip that you are now thankful for.

The VBS prep day when the adults acted like kids. While it was happening it was very stressful but looking back now it was hilarious and it helped us a lot for the actual VBS.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

The way all the houses are and the neighborhoods. Where we live most houses have one family living in them. In Dayton they had had similar sized houses but three families would live in them.

RYLEE FRAAZA

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

The most difficult the about coming home for me was making sure I still had time in my day put aside specially to spend time with God. Every day during the trip we had time to be with God, one on one. Once I got home, my schedule went back to how it was before the trip and I had to remind myself to make sure I was spending one on one time with God which was hard since it's so easy to get caught up in a routine or busy schedule and forget about things making sure you're taking time out to be with God.

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

A new priority I am bringing home with me from the trip is taking more time to be with God daily. I didn't spend as much time with God as I wanted with God before the trip and I really wanted to make it a priority when I got home.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

The biggest difference between home and Dayton is that there are more resources here at home. Here most people have good drinking water, a bed, safe streets or neighborhoods to go outside in, and other things that are part of our everyday lives. In Dayton, there are a lot of unsafe places and a lot of people around the area don't have as many resources as we do here.

EVA HALLEY

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

To listen to other peoples stories and not be afraid to pray with them.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Inspiring. I picked this word because it inspired me to read my Bible more and pray more.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

In Dayton there is a totally different culture within the people than here.

KATE DEKRUYTER

Share a difficult moment on the trip that you are now thankful for.

God can do anything and I can do anything through God.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Awesome. Everything we did was so much fun that I would do the whole trip over again.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

Removing a buried wooden post, completely encased in cement in 2 hours.

BRYNN DEKRUYTER

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God can do anything and I can do anything through God.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Fun. It was neat to do different things I didn't know I could do like build a deck and communicate with kids who knew no English. Also I got to hang out with people I didn't before the trip.

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

I brought home techniques for doing devotions that I learned.

JJ HEIKKA

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

God enabled me to be a little more open to being crazy. Normally I am pretty quiet around people I don't know well, but I was very into playing with the kids at the VBS. I thought that I would be a more quiet, but at the end of the VBS I had kids who would not get off my shoulders. I was definitely more into playing with the kids and just having fun with them than I thought I would be able to.

Share a difficult moment on the trip that you are now thankful for.

One difficult moment on the Dayton, Ohio mission trip was the day before we started the VBS. The leaders pretended to be the kids that would be at the VBS and were very difficult to handle. It made all of us a little nervous for the first day of VBS. When the first kids came in the next day all of us were on edge a little bit, but as we started to play with the kids we realized the adults we a lot more crazy. The adults being crazy made the rest of the VBS easier to handle.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

The major difference between home and Dayton is mainly that the Kalamazoo area is more rural. The city of Kalamazoo is small, but Dayton is very urban. It is whole different dynamic in Dayton than in Kalamazoo. Kids are all within walking distance of the VBS and in walking distance of each other, so they have very tight knit friend groups and everyone knows everyone because they all live on the same street.

LEAH PERKINS

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God has taught me that he has awesome plans for me in life and that he wants me to follow a path that he has made for me. He taught me to be brave and try to step out of my comfort zone.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

God enabled me to be social. A lot of people know me and think that I'm super social, but my family knows that I am super duper shy. I didn't know everyone that much before we went on the Missions Trip. Some people I just usually have a quick conversation with, but God wanted me to cross the line and let myself socialize.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I saw God bring joy to families who were in bad situations and help to rebuild their happiness in their lives.

CLARA HEIKKA

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

The most difficult thing about coming home was that I wanted to keep serving because it felt good. Also, I knew I was helping someone and I had accomplished something. But now I know that I can still serve in Richland with gracespring through Saturday serve, work projects, etc.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

One word that describes this trip is SERVE. I picked the word, serve, because that was our mission, to serve the refugees/locals through the building of the deck and the VBS and to serve each other through making meals for each other.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

The biggest difference between home and Ashland/Dayton is that in Dayton you can tell that it has a lot more refugees than in Richland/Kalamazoo County.

ALYSSA BLACKBURN

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I saw God at work in the community we were serving by the way so many people are working together to help these refugee families to a better life.

What was your favorite memory?

My favorite memory was when we did the encouragement beads.

What's the biggest difference between home and Dayton?

The biggest difference between home and Dayton was the amount of refugees that lived in the city.

Below are responses from those who went on summer mission trips this past year. Each person chose three questions to answer regarding their experience on the mission trip.

LILLY WALKER

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

I never thought that I could be a leader. I was always so afraid that I wouldn't know what I was doing so I would never step up. God showed me that he's placed me where I'm suppose to be to lead others to him.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

You could just see the joy in their eyes. Seeing the kids faces light up when they got off of those van was so amazing and just people thanking us for our hard work.

How was God at work in your heart throughout your trip?

God truly changed my life on this trip and he just answered so many prayers and I know that he is so faithful to his word. I have such a love for him and other that has grown so much in this trip.

NATHAN BENNETT

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

Jesus forgives even the biggest mistakes and he will always love me.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

Lead with a giant passion.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Helpful. It was helpful for the people of Montana and helpful for me spiritually.

CALEB ARLEDGE

What one person impacted you the most and how?

Jon Spackman. He encouraged me to speak up during team time. I took it as a challenge and I did it. It felt great afterwards. I also spoke up after that.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

At VBS, Tuesday was hectic. Kids ran all over the place. Pandemonium. Wednesday and Thursday were amazing. We connected with the kids and prayed for some of them.

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

I can't do anything unless I have him with me.

ISAAC HIBMA

What one person impacted you the most and how?

I thing I was the most impacted by was one of the kids at vbs. It was just eye opening how little these kids have and just to be able to live in these kids is awesome! They have so little and it just opens my eyes to how much we take for granted.

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

To try to look at people not based on what they've done but who they are now.

How was God at work in your heart throughout your trip?

I feel like a completely new person and it's not just because of the "missions trip high". I am just overall happier and just so ready to be there if anyone needs me.

TORRIE WETTERS

What was your favorite memory?

One of my favorite memories would have to be after the second day of VBS we all circled up and we were waiting for some people before we started evaluation so we started sharing cool things that happened during VBS and just hearing how many relationships were formed and all the cool stories was just an amazing moment!

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God taught me that no matter what my passions are he can use them for his glory. At the beginning of the trip I still wasn't sure if God could use my art to impact other people. But he showed me in several different ways the he could use them and he had already used them. He showed me by some conversations that I had with people and he showed me by reminding me in my growth journal of a time when I gave someone one of my drawings and he told me in that moment that I impacted them with my art.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Impactful. Because the whole experience was very impactful on my life and I believe that we made a huge impact in the community of Ashland Montana with the relationship we made with the VBS kids and the love that we showed them, by the work projects we worked on and completed, and by the overall light of Jesus we shined while we were there. And our light shine on the people we interacted with on the way there a back.

NETTA MARGALIT

What was your favorite memory?

Getting to know the kids at vbs and seeing me and other students make an impact in their lives.

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

Knowing that I won't be around this amazing group of people that I got to know and love so well for the 10 days that I was with them.

What's the biggest difference between home and Ashland?

The community and how extremely poor it is compared to where we live. It makes me so blessed and thankful for all that I have and for all the people that are a part of my life.

TESSA SANDUM

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

At VBS, the first day the kids didn't really know us all that well and were kind of out of control. But the next day, including the following day, the kids were absolutely great. So many kids were touched by God and changed by Him.

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

Coming home was hard. I had so much fun bonding with my team and worshipping God at the same time.

What's the biggest difference between home and Ashland?

I feel like I can be myself more and open up to a lot more people that care about me. Ashland Montana was a lot of fun and a lot more involved and interactive than the things at home.

BECCA VANDERVOORT

What was your favorite memory?

Seeing the drastic change in VBS when we placed more effort into relationships than the overall goal. Similarly, I loved seeing members of our team who don't normally like to work with kids taking the plunge and bonding with a kid or two.

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God is greater. Always. And He can turn any bad moment into a situation that brings Him glory.

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

Experiencing for the last time the wonderful thing that is a youth group missions trip. Each of my missions trips changed me in big and radical ways and I will miss that a lot.

TAYLOR VANDERLAAN

What was your favorite memory?

My favorite memories were at meals. I really really loved getting to talk to and get to know lots of people that I didn't usually talk to or hang out with. And getting closer with my friends that I normally hung out with was super fun. I just love talking to people and getting to know them. It's something very important to me.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

God gave me a lot of patience during the mission trip that I didn't think I had. During the first day of vbs when all the kids wouldn't listen and it was very stressful, I surprisingly had patience with the kids even when they didn't listen. I also had patience with my friends because you kind of get sick of them after you've lived with them for 10 days but I didn't get frustrated or anything with them because of the patience God enabled me to have.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I saw God at work through the kids at vbs. They had gone through so much and yet some of them still let us in at least a little and let us show them who Jesus is through the love we were able to give them. I saw such a difference in those kids from when they arrived at vbs to when they went home. It was amazing to see him working through us to give them so much love and care and to show them that they matter.

MARLAINA ARLEDGE

Share a difficult moment on the trip that you are now thankful for.

There was a particular night that was hard for our entire team and through that I really saw God work through many people. He worked through me in that he gave me such an overwhelming sense of peace and compassion that I had to pour out onto my teammates, allowing me to pray deeply over them and really show them not only my love, but God's love through me. It was a very emotional night for us all, but looking back, I'm glad it was emotional because it brought us closer not only as a team, but as a family.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Challenging. This trip challenged my leadership, my thoughts, my actions, everything! I've had to step back and be ok with others doing things differently than I would do them. (And that's really hard for me!) Playing the role of the (sometimes annoying) leader who asked questions to get the job done instead of just showing how to get the job done really challenged my leadership and made me reevaluate how I've done things in the past. It was a hard, but much needed lesson to learn.

What's the biggest difference between home and Ashland?

Ashland is WAY prettier than Kalamazoo, not gonna lie. The mountains and colors and wild horses just set the tone for this little town in the middle of nowhere. The beauty of the town can almost distract you from the severe poverty and hurt that resides in Ashland as well. Ashland Montana will always have a place in my heart.

BAILEY MOUGALIAN

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

God enabled me to pray with children. I have always had a fear of praying in front of others but when it came down to sitting down with a child in need, I ended up offering to pray with her and the words came so easy.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I think God was most prominent through the children at VBS. On our first day at VBS, we had some difficulties with kids who tried running away along with kids who refused to focus on the lesson or worship. There were kids that stole hats and sunglasses and most kids refused to talk to our youth. They were a bit out of control. Our team went back to the church and prayed about having a better day and prepared ourselves for the worst. The next day came, not a single runner had to be chased, the kids were engaged in lesson and worship, and one on one relationships were forming. By the last day, most of the kids had tears in their eyes because they had to say goodbye for good. The progression of the children showed how the love of God can impact one's life.

What's the biggest difference between home and Ashland?

Obviously the conditions were less luxurious than at home. In Ashland we slept on the ground outside the kitchen and had to pack up our air mattresses and suitcases each morning and put them in the corner. We also had community showers that we had to drive to after a long day of worksite and VBS. This is not a complaint at all, I truly enjoyed venturing out of our comfort zones and living without the luxuries of home for a week. I believe it made us more prepared to jump into something new each day whether it be on meal prep, the worksite, or at VBS.

TAYLOR VANDERLAAN

What was your favorite memory?

My favorite memories were at meals. I really really loved getting to talk to and get to know lots of people that I didn't usually talk to or hang out with. And getting closer with my friends that I normally hung out with was super fun. I just love talking to people and getting to know them. It's something very important to me.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

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How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I saw God at work through the kids at vbs. They had gone through so much and yet some of them still let us in at least a little and let us show them who Jesus is through the love we were able to give them. I saw such a difference in those kids from when they arrived at vbs to when they went home. It was amazing to see him working through us to give them so much love and care and to show them that they matter.

AUSTIN CANNIFF

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

God taught me that big tasks can get done quickly with everyone working on it and trying their hardest.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

God enabled me to get a lot of work done in a short amount of time.

What's one word that describes the trip for you and why?

Fun. It was so much fun being around everyone and getting to work and cook meals.

SKYLER CANNIFF

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

That He can help you do anything and that I can do a lot.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

Be open and make a lot of friends.

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

I saw God work through vbs.

HUNTER HALLEY

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

The actions and moods of the children changed hugely between the first and the second day of vbs.

What one person impacted you the most and how?

John, he challenged me to take risks and work hard every day. He helped my faith grow tremendously and our friendship grew as well.

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

He will always be there for me and he always has a plan for me.

PRESTON WINE

What one person impacted you the most and how?

The person who impacted me the most on this trip was one of the Leadertreks missionaries. She taught me that everyone serves God in different ways. She also showed me that it's important to talk about how I feel and that it's okay to ask others for help.

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

In this trip I was shown how powerful time alone with God is. The morning devotionals we did gave me the strength and encouragement to get through the day. I felt so much closer to God after taking time to pray and thank God for all the blessings he has given me.

What new values or priorities are you bringing home with you?

In this trip God enabled me to step out of my comfort zone. God has helped me to have more confidence in myself and to have faith in the plan he has for me.

KADEN MCLOUGHAN

What was your favorite memory?

Bonding in the car rides and listening to music or watching movies-just being together in a small space making memories.

What did God enable you to do that you didn't think you could do?

After the first day of VBS I thought having a relationship with a kid from Montana would be impossible but the second day came and I immediately buddies up with the most difficult kid and we had a blast.

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

Going to college so quickly after coming home has made it hard to really dwell in what happened... I wish I had more time to be with the group and in the biblical atmosphere.

AIDAN WALKER

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

How he often makes a situation that looks bad but turns into an influential moment

How did you see God at work in the community that you were serving?

A lot of the kids at VBS were clinging to our youth and by the end of the three weeks didn't want to leave

How was God at work in your heart throughout your trip?

He let me step out of my comfort zone with the kids in VBS.

KATIE WILSON

What is one thing God taught you about Himself and yourself?

That being different is okay!

What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?

Missing vbs and all my friends