

## Youth challenged to see Jesus

By Marth McDowell



If you had been driving through Brevard on Wednesday evening July 15 and passed a certain hotel, you might have seen 43 tired and dirty youth and their adult leaders. It had been a scorching day and even being in the mountains couldn't help. However, all were joyful, focused and content. They had traveled from Winston-Salem's Ardmore Baptist Church the Sunday before and had been meeting the needs of aging adults in a multitude of ways from ramp building to yard work to nursing home ministry. For some in the group, this week-long mission trip to meet the needs of those 65+ was the third year in a row partnering with North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM).

Following dinner that night, the youth minister, Betty Wright, asked a simple question, "Where did you see Jesus today in Brevard?"

These are some of the group's answers:

One team built a safe, sturdy porch and walkway for an aging resident suffering from a degenerative eye disease. Tears ran down her cheek as she made her way down the walkway for the first time. The group said they saw Jesus in her.

Another team had made deliveries and dug post holes at almost every worksite. On one project, they worked late into the evening to complete a long L-shaped wheelchair ramp for a gentleman. The youth said they saw Jesus in each other as they worked to "get 'er done."

When teams got rained out and had too much mud at one site, the group went to another and pitched in. Every day, each member of the church's group gave it all and was willing to do whatever was needed. One youth said he saw Jesus in this way.

The team preparing meals for the week saw Jesus in an aging gentleman when they were buying groceries and supplies. The man noticed their mission tee shirts and stopped them to share his faith. They were amazed and saw Jesus in him.

At the nursing home, when a woman with advanced Parkinson's disease was able to play hymns on the piano with steady hands, a group said they saw Jesus.

In the majestic mountains, witnessing what an amazing world God created, one work team saw Jesus in a woman who was overjoyed by the yard work the group was doing.

The answers are only a sampling of the comments I heard from the group that evening. It was powerful to see how willing and diligent they all were, from the youth to the youth leaders, to serve aging adults in need.

As I talked with the youth and adults involved, it was clear to see they were determined to make a positive, lasting difference in the lives they encountered. Their intention to help aging adults is so evident through this summer's mission commitment as well as the intergenerational service projects they do in their own community throughout the year.

The Ardmore Baptist Church mission group completed their work that week and as they were driving away from the Brevard area, they passed a completed worksite and the aging resident waved from the new deck the group had built – there was Jesus!

The church and youth spent more than \$20,000 of their own resources plus hours of labor and months of planning to provide for aging needs three hours from home. But the consensus was that it was worth it all.

Their new grocery store friend who had admired their tee shirts after learning about the mission work, told the team members, "May God bless you so much that you have to ask him to back off!"

The group said that is exactly what God did! The mission team celebrated knowing the work done during that one week will positively affect the daily lives of those they helped for months and even years to come.

**"Help for the Journey," Volume 6, Issue 1, 2015 North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)**