

# MOUNTAIN ECHOES

Episcopal Appalachian Ministries

EPISCOPAL APPALACHIAN MINISTRIES

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WINTER 2009

## work CAMps 2009: Three weeks of great volunteering

Work camps 2009 saw a lot of changes and yet proved the old saying that the more things change the more they stay the same. Changes included a new work camp director, Paul Buckley, a long-time EAM work camper from Plymouth, Mich., who stepped in when the former director, Kate Hannon, resigned to return to school, a new cook, and the first ever all-female work camp week.

Eleven families helped by 67 campers

We had a total of 67 work campers from 12 dioceses. Two work campers came for the entire three week period and one came from Colorado for two weeks. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers, eleven families have warmer, safer, drier and more convenient homes. We built and/or rebuilt handicapped bathrooms, replaced rotten floors and kitchen cabinets, redid porches and railings, painted, and did plumbing work. And, of course, we visited and got to know our host families.

The first week was very unusual. It had the only group that has ever been without a priest in attendance, the only group that has had only one teenager, and the only all-female group. Well, all-female except for Paul. He referred to the group, which ranged in age from 16

to 83, as "his builder chicks." But they were wonderful. One of the women even cut hair for her host family and was still being complimented on it two weeks later.

The second week was about half teens and half adults. A newlywed couple from the Diocese of Maryland who met at an EAM work camp several years ago continued their work camp tradition. Participants started the large project of putting a new roof on a trailer. The project was made more difficult by the fact that there was an addition to the trailer that was causing some of the leakage, so it needed to be incorporated into the structure that would cover all the differing heights and angles. (See photos on page 4).

Week three participants worked to finish up some of the large projects that had been begun in week two and to build a new ramp for a young girl in a wheelchair. (See article by Cathy Deats on page 7).

'Like a big family reunion'

As always, each Friday evening featured a picnic to which all host families, former years' host families, and local musicians were invited. Some of the local families have been coming for enough years that work campers feel they have watched the children grow up. It's like a big family



Susan Escobedo, Diocese of Maryland (left), who helped out all three weeks (!) of this year's work camps, teaches teens how to use a saw.

reunion. The picnic and music consistently rank as the highlight of the week. That is especially true when work campers are willing to share their talents with the group. The pictures and stories in this issue will give you an idea of how

meaningful the experience is to the work campers and host families alike. And, in this time of talk about stimulus packages, it is good to know that the three weeks of EAM work camps added about \$18,000 to the local economy.

### Fall grants awarded

## EAM small grants program brings hope to distressed communities

Episcopal Appalachian Ministries awarded grants totaling \$15,311 to nine projects in six dioceses in the fall grant cycle. This brings the total amount awarded through the Appalachian Initiatives Grants program in 2009 to \$18,620.

Grantee organizations offer variety of services

Grants were given to the Young Adult Ministry Diocesan Program of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia (\$2,900); to the Shoes: Gospel of Love Program, Trinity Episcopal Church in Parkersburg, W. Va., which provides shoes for low-income families (\$500); to All Saints, Portsmouth, Ohio Counseling Center for addiction services and housing (\$2,411); and to Spirit of Christmas for Kids (SOCKS), a program of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Washington Courthouse, Ohio (\$500).

Other grants went to the Loaves and Fishes Thrift Store, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Hancock, Md., (\$2,500); to Volunteer Ministry Center of Knoxville (Diocese of East Tennessee) for emergency assistance (\$1,500); to St. John's Episcopal Church, Charleston, W. Va., for Spokes 4 Folks for bike shop equipment to help their efforts to provide bicycles for low cost transportation to people who need a way to get around (\$700); and to Trinity Episcopal Church, Parkersburg, W. Va., for their Parish Nurse Ministry (\$1,700). A grant of \$2,600 for a scholarship program in Eastern Kentucky, a cooperative effort of St. Mary's, Hillsboro, Ohio (Diocese of Southern Ohio) and St. Mary's, Middlesboro, Ky. (Diocese of Lexington) is the first cross-diocesan award.

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## T Registration open for T Summer 2010 work camps

EAM will sponsor three work camps in 2010: July 18-24; July 25-31; and August 1-7. Work camps are open for individuals and small groups (usually no more than six from any one congregation). Work campers must be at least rising tenth graders. There is no upper age limit.

EAM bases its work camp experiences on the last three questions of the Baptismal Covenant: "Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?...Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons?...Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" In this context, the work comes second to forming relationships between the work campers and the people who welcome them into their homes. Morning and evening worship are included, as is group reflection time.

The work groups interact with local families as they do home rehab work. Cost per person is \$220.00, which includes food and lodging and covers a small portion of the building materials used. Accommodations at Grace House are in bunk houses - one for males and one for females - each with a bathroom and shower.

Contact the EAM office at smelledge@aol.com to reserve a slot.

# Crossing the river succeeds: Mountain Grace VI

**E**ighty-four people flocked to the Mountain Grace Conference Sept. 12 at St. John's, Huntington, W.Va. It was the first time the annual Appalachian ministry conference was held outside Southern Ohio, where it began in 2004. This was also the most ecumenical gathering to date, including Methodists, Lutherans and Catholics among the presenters and participants. Crossing the river did not deter scores of Southern Ohioans from attending a conference they value.

Many people hurting physically and spiritually

The conference theme "Keeping the Faith in Hard Times" provided the focus both for the keynote and for the eight workshops. "This theme acknowledged the fact that in this time of economic crisis a lot of people are hurting, both physically and

needs of the poor, but also established dispensaries, schools, loan funds, and industries to provide jobs. Wesley also taught stewardship: "earn all you can, save all you can, so you can give all you can."

Wesley's four remedies — financial management, micro-credit, job creation, and affordable health care — could not be more timely, Fisher said. "Now is the time for the Church to step up and revive the people," he said. "Now is the time to hit our knees to pray. But now is the time to stand up to create opportunities for the poor, to lead people out of poverty."

Environmental sustainability and human health

Two of the Mountain Grace workshops illustrated tools within everyone's reach to recover environmental sustainability and human

Creative programming and social networking

In the Ministry in Hard Times workshop, representatives of several West Virginia congregations convened

by Archdeacon Faith Perrizo described the kinds of ministries they are currently operating. One of the problems they address is people's lack of cash. "Lack of funding leads to poor nutrition and this leads to diabetes and other nutrition-related diseases," said one speaker. "Programs have to offer activities for recreational time as well as food distribution." One attendee described a program for preschoolers which is held on a bus.

"Social networking takes the primary cultural value of Appalachians and applies it to the web," said the Rev. Jeffrey Queen in his workshop on social networking and evangelism. "When Appalachians meet, they spend the first five to ten minutes on genealogy. This is our need to be connected, to be grounded." He then explained how to use



Examples given of ways churches can help

The Rev. Larry Fisher, keynote, and the Rev. Jeffrey Allen of West Virginia, who are both United Methodist pastors, offered a wealth

of current practical examples of faith-based economic development, including using church facilities for low-cost space for start-up businesses. Fisher referred to "income patching" such as cooking, alterations, an answering service and other small businesses that can generate \$6,000-\$7,000 a year for a family with very little overhead out of space rented by a church. They described how micro-loans, business mentoring, and advocacy for policy changes can all be organized by churches.

2010 Mountain Grace

Conference sponsors include the dioceses of Southern Ohio and West Virginia, DisciplesNet, Episcopal Appalachian Ministries, Episcopal Community Services Foundation, Rural Ministries Network and the



Methodist pastors Jeffrey Allen (l) and Larry Fisher (second from left) teaching workshop on faith-based economic development at the Mountain Grace conference, which was held at St. John's, Huntington, the first time it's been hosted by the Diocese of West Virginia, long a conference sponsor. On the right is the Ven. Faith Perrizo, a member of the planning committee.

spiritually and the Church is working hard to respond," says Patricia Haldeman of the Diocese of West Virginia's DisciplesNet, one of the conference sponsors.

Keynote: Church must be 'the balancing point'

"It is time for Anglicans — and this Methodist — to rise up and talk about the triple bottom line: profits, planet, and people," said keynote speaker, United Methodist pastor Larry Fisher, director of the business incubator at ACEnet in Athens, Ohio, a leader in rural economic development. "The Church needs to be the balancing point, ensuring that economic revival includes the people."

He challenged Episcopalians to model their work on John Wesley, the Anglican priest whose revival movement gave birth to the Methodist Church.

Parallels with John Wesley's time

Fisher cited parallels for today's economic crisis in Wesley's time: displacement of rural workers, soaring unemployment, lack of health care, and war. Wesley collected alms, food and clothing to meet the immediate

health: "Toward a Healthy Planetary Future," presented by Sr. Paula Gonzalez, S.C., a biologist and founder of Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, and an environmental workshop conducted by Paul Clever and Micki Smith Darnauer of Athens, Ohio, who shared practical tips on how volunteer networks can provide incredible amounts of locally grown fresh food to poor people.

Disasters, hard times, and prayer

Our Lutheran partners offered a workshop on how congregations can respond to disasters such as burnouts and floods. Mary Woodward of Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio helps Episcopal congregations in Southern Ohio in their disaster response work. Her West Virginia counterpart, Sherri Shaefer, does similar work in West Virginia.

The workshop on Prayer in Hard Times was one of the most popular. The Rev. Deacon Carol Callahan and Sr. Faith Margaret, CSC, described the four types of prayer and offered helpful advice on the practice of prayer as a spiritual discipline. "God knows what we want," said Sr. Faith Margaret, "but the act of prayer helps us to focus."



Participants from Southern Ohio and West Virginia listen intently to the Mountain Grace keynote Larry Fisher of ACEnet, Athens, Ohio.

diocesan web sites, [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com) and other web resources in spreading the Christian message.

Learnings from next triennium

In a workshop on Jubilee Ministry in Appalachia, the Rev. Christopher Johnson, Domestic Justice and Jubilee Ministry officer for the Episcopal Church, described the Church's approach to domestic poverty. "In the next triennium, there will be a new initiative in Native American ministry," said Johnson. "Then we will see how the learnings can be applied to Appalachia and other regions." The seven Jubilee Ministry Centers in West Virginia and six in Southern Ohio include churches, ecumenical or community-based non-profits, and a diocesan charity (ECSF), which provide human services, resources ministry, and/or advocacy for social justice.

Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Ministry in Appalachia. The seventh Mountain Grace conference will be held October 9th, 2010, probably in the Marietta, Ohio area.

*"The keynote... offered a wealth of current practical examples of faith-based economic development, including using church facilities for low-cost space for start-up businesses."*

# Episcopal Appalachian Ministries small grants program brings hope to distressed communities

... continued from page 1

EAM is using funds from the Appalachian Initiative grant approved by the 2006 General Convention to make small grants for ministry in Appalachian communities. Grants of \$500 to \$3,000 are given to diocesan, parish, or community-based organizations in member dioceses. These organizations serve communities in the Appalachian region or

urban Appalachian (migrant) communities outside the region.

Grant criteria and application forms are available online at [www.visit-eam.org](http://www.visit-eam.org).

Applications may be submitted at any time but are reviewed in the spring and fall. EAM anticipates having around \$18,000 available in grant funds in 2010.

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## Appalachian Initiative Grants Guidelines

### SIZE OF GRANTS:

Grants usually range in size from \$500 to \$3,000.

### ELIGIBILITY:

Grants are made to diocesan, parish, or community-based organizations in member dioceses. These organizations will serve communities in the Appalachian region or urban Appalachian communities outside the region.

### CRITERIA:

Appalachian Initiative Grants may be used as seed money for organizations to seize opportunities of a one-time nature. On-going operating costs will not be given priority. Successful applications will usually involve helping Appalachians address regional issues such as poverty, health care, unemployment, education, cultural affirmation, or the environment through direct service.

### APPLICATION DEADLINES:

Applications will be accepted at any time. The Grants Committee meets in April and October. Usual project start times are July 1 or January 1. Exceptions will be considered. Applications for spring 2010 are due by April 9.

- E-mail your proposal to: [meamon@aol.com](mailto:meamon@aol.com).
- Then follow up with a hard copy to: Michael Maloney, Interim Executive Consultant
- Episcopal Appalachian Ministries • 5829 Wyatt Ave. • Cincinnati, OH 45213
- Phone: (513) 531-8799 • Fax: (513) 531-3899



A teacher for the MUSICare Project offered by Trinity Episcopal Church Good Neighbor Outreach Ministries of West Pittston, Pa. (Diocese of Bethlehem), shows a pupil how to keep time with a tambourine. Funds from EAM's Appalachian Initiative grant in the spring of 2009 provided training and equipment for the project, which assists children in developing their musical intelligence and an appreciation of the music of their culture.



EAM Board members pose for pictures during the October 2009 meeting at the Cathedral Domain outside of Irvine, Ky. Back row, from left: The Rt. Rev. Michie Klusmeyer, Diocese of W. Va., newly elected President; Tupper Morehead, Diocese of East Tenn.; Mary Berl, East Tenn., Treasurer; the Rt. Rev. Charles von Rosenberg, East Tenn., out-going President; AJ Stacks, Southern Ohio, the Rev. Scott West, Southwestern Va., the Rev. Donovan Cain, Diocese of Lexington; the Rev. Theresa Kelley, W. Va., Vice-President. Front row, from left: The Rev. Katharin Foster, Southern Ohio; the Rev. Leslie Fleming, Southern Ohio; Pam Fleming, Maryland, Secretary; Michael Maloney, Southern Ohio, Interim Executive Consultant.

## Carol Callahan and Michael Maloney receive the John and Jean Carson awards at Mountain Grace VI

The Southern Ohio Episcopal Appalachian Ministries Committee has awarded the John Carson Award for outstanding clergy service in Appalachian ministry to the Rev. Deacon Carol Callahan, and the Jean Carson award for a lay person giving outstanding service in Appalachian ministry to Michael Maloney. Both Callahan and Maloney received quilted wall hangings in traditional Appalachian patterns made by the Rev. Theresa Kelley of Wheeling, vice president of EAM. The awards honor the tremendous role John and Jean played in social justice and human services during John's tenure as rector of St. Mary's Hillsboro, Ohio. Both died in 2007.

Callahan key member of Mountain Grace planning committee

The Rev. Deacon Carol Callahan taught at Southern State Community College in Adams County, serving as mentor and advisor to many



Michael Maloney (standing, left), EAM's Interim Executive Consultant, receives a beautiful Appalachian wall hanging as part of the recent presentation to him of the Jean Carson Award. The award, presented by the Southern Ohio Episcopal Appalachian Ministries, goes to a lay person giving outstanding service in Appalachian ministry. The wall hanging was made by the Rev. Theresa Kelley of Wheeling, W.Va. Presenters of the award included (standing, right) the Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal and the Rev. Mary Carson, daughter of John and Jean Carson.

students. Carol chaired Southern Ohio's Episcopal Appalachian Ministries Committee, served on several diocesan committees, and as Deacon at the Church of the Good Samaritan in Clermont County for

six years. She has played a key role on the Mountain Grace planning committee since the creation of the conference in 2004. The award was especially poignant as she is about to retire from Good Samari-

tan and move to Seattle to be near her daughter.

Mike Maloney wears many hats in work for Appalachia

Michael Maloney, an esteemed Appalachian sociologist raised in Kentucky, has served as Appalachian Ministry Consultant to the Diocese of Southern Ohio and regional community organizer for Catholic Social Services, spearheading a multitude of grassroots and regional solutions to community needs. A consultant for the Ohio Arts Council, he is currently Interim Executive Consultant for Episcopal Appalachian Ministries and staff for the national Episcopal Network for Economic Justice.

Maloney has written and lectured extensively on Appalachian history and culture, contributing articles to several anthologies on Appalachia. He is co-editor of *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present* and section co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*.

# Work Camps 2009 work camps

## New work camp director describes the three-week adventure

by Paul Buckley  
St. John's Episcopal, Plymouth, Mich.

The year 2009 saw some changes for EAM's work camp but the most important thing, helping the families of Appalachia, did not change. One of those changes was my being hired as Work Camp Director.

We had three very productive weeks of work.

### WEEK 1:

We had two work crews of very dedicated ladies from New York (nine women in all), one adult from Maryland and one teen from Maryland. One crew completed a wheelchair ramp and deck railing and repaired a bathroom floor and reset a toilet for one homeowner. The second crew built a new larger deck and painted the homeowner's house. We also started the repair of a back porch area for a third homeowner.

### WEEK 2:

We had six work crews with a more typical work camp mix of teens and adults



Jane Janke uses all of her 83-year-old strength to attach the deck railing being held in place by work camp director Paul Buckley.

from many different places. One crew worked on a home where inadequate floor supports were causing the floor to fall in. They raised and re-supported

the floor, installed some new windows, including one to provide an emergency exit if it should ever be needed, and replaced some crumbling doors.

Ramp, deck, roof, floors, bathrooms, counters and cabinets

One crew started what turned into a two-week project (actually one of the bigger projects this year); they built new roof trusses on top of a mobile home to solve a long term leaking roof problem. After several failed repair attempts by other groups, we decided a new roof was the only solution. One of the crews laid new linoleum peel and stick tiles in a bedroom, hallway and kitchen. They also installed a new handicapped shower in place of the bathtub. Another of the crews started a project that ran into the third week. They built a complete handicap accessible bathroom in what had been a small dining room.

The last crew of Week 2 started another of our two-week projects. They repaired a failing kitchen floor and took out all the cabinets and

counter tops. They were able to get the flooring replaced and the lower cabinets installed.

I should add that the Week 2 teams had nearly two days all but lost to rain and in spite of that, they accomplished a full week's worth of work.

### WEEK 3:

Again we had six crews with a mix of teens and adults. One of the crews took over the roofing project and finished up laying the tin and closing in the new roof to keep "critters" out. One crew worked on a home with a second floor wrap-around porch supported with columns that ran to the ground. They replaced most of the columns, lattice work and the steps to the second floor as well as some rotting deck boards. Another crew finished up the new handicap bathroom/dining room. This included building a wall, plumbing, installing the handicapped shower and toilet and hanging some doors. One of the crews got the kitchen job to finish up. They were able to get the upper cabinets hung, the new counter-tops ready to be attached, the new sink in, all the cabinets and doors stained and varnished and smaller tasks done. [A crew that came in the week after our last week finished the kitchen.] Our last crew built a new wheelchair ramp and finished the porch deck project started in Week 1.

### Volunteers are indispensable

I would like to thank everyone that took a week or more out of their busy lives to come to Grace House and work like crazy, take short showers, deal with delays in getting supplies, cope with not always having the right tools and feeling like you were in way over your head. Without the volunteers, work camp could not happen and our host families would not have warmer, drier and safer homes. You are work camp and you are the reason that people like me keep coming back — that and all the fun we have along the way!



Cindy Worrall, from South Carolina, and Debbie Burns, from New York, follow the wise practice of measuring twice so they only have to cut the board once.

## Weeks two and three: a family's home gets a new roof



# Work Camps 2009 work camps

*W ' . . . What we gave came back . . . full force and multiplied.'*

by Jennifer Dean  
St. Stephen's Episcopal, Delmar, N.Y.

In mid-July, a team of six women from the Diocese of Albany traveled to St. Paul, Va., to participate in a work camp sponsored by the Episcopal Appalachian Ministries. Our base camp was Grace House, a small, intimate "Spiritual Life Center" on a mountain top deep in the Appalachian coal fields of southwestern Virginia.

## Discovered work camp on the Internet

This was a return trip for St. Stephen's, having been "hooked" by everything and everybody we encountered on our trip last year. To give just a bit of background, we stumbled upon this mission idea after our parish priest suggested that we think about augmenting our international mission trip involvement with something in the U.S. After searching the Internet using phrases like "mission work" and "Episcopal Church" as a start, we found Grace House.

out doing the type of work most of us would shun, many becoming prematurely disabled from the hardships of the work environment in the mines.

Coal mining is definitely NOT what we see on TV, and we should all appreciate what these people go through daily to give us the power we sometimes waste without even thinking twice.

One similarity between what we've seen in domestic and international missions: all the people we have worked with are full of God's Holy Spirit beyond what you might imagine. After all, where else can you go in the U.S. and see a 45-year-old man wearing a t-shirt with the words "real men love Jesus" emblazoned on it. We were told that our work in Appalachia would be 50% manual and 50% pastoral. It was hard to believe this in the beginning; but I think what we all learned was that what we gave came back...full force and multiplied.

The work this year was different for us. While building porch rails



Week One of work camps brought a first for EAM: an all-female group (except for camp director Paul Buckley). Nine of the women came from three different congregations in central New York; the other two from two congregations in Maryland. They ranged in age from 83 to 16!

five feet from the coal train railroad tracks (no exaggeration). When the ceiling was taken down, the mess included about four inches of coal

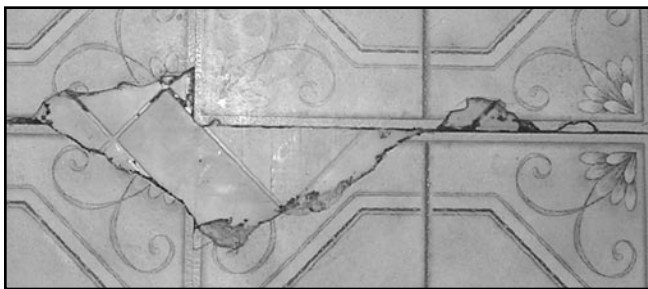
dust which showered down on the workers. (Wearing hats and masks — of course).

Each family we worked with had pastoral needs we were involved with to the extent that we could. Domestic violence, substance abuse, living with medical issues — only scratches the surface of what these families face daily. We did a lot of praying, including much prayer for Grace House's caretaker, Vickianne, who is in need of hip replacement surgery, and Abigail (the daughter of our cook for the week), whose cancer resurfaced within weeks of the date the doctors said she could consider herself "cured."

## Also time to visit museum, winery, hike and swim

We had a bit of free time, which was spent mostly in a rocking chair on the porch, going over the day's events, or simply "chillin' out." We also got a chance for short visits to a local winery, the local coal-mining museum and a waterfall for a hike and swim. We concluded our week with a group prayer service in a rustic chapel built in the woods, followed with a cook-out with our host families.

P.S. We (all three congregations represented) have already made reservations for next year!



Damaged linoleum was replaced in one home with gleaming new flooring. Lisa Hartge-Sabetti, of the Diocese of Maryland, became the resident expert in peel-&-stick tile after doing a complete kitchen and adjoining hall.



Jennifer King and I enjoyed our experience so much that we talked about it at some diocesan events with people who had done mission work with us in the Dominican Republic. This stirred enough interest that we recruited four women from two different congregations plus my mother and sister from North Carolina to join us this time.

## 'Mountain folk we met have worked their hearts out . . .'

For some of us who have gone on mission trips before, it seemed a bit the same, while at the same time different. There is a vast difference between the needy in places afar, such as the Dominican Republic, and people here at home, deep in the Appalachians. While the people we work with in the DR are people who would love to work, but have little or no opportunity, the mountain folk we met have worked their hearts

and laying floors were last year's projects, this year we were split into different teams with differing projects. One team worked on the expansion of a deck for safety reasons, and painting the exterior of a trailer. Another team also built a deck (porch) with railings, allowing a woman who was afraid of leaving her house for fear of another fall off her "stoop" to again venture out. She had previously fallen off the porch and broken her hip. A bathroom toilet was also replaced, as it was falling through the trailer floorboards.

## Hazardous repair work next to railroad tracks

The third project included rehabbing the enclosed rear porch for a family that included three very shy kids, one of whom was wheelchair bound. This house was actually hazardous to work in as the rear wall was only four to



Samantha Mitchell and Bill Whelan, of the Diocese of Delaware, celebrate the completion of the bathroom rehab they worked on all week.

# Work Camps 2009 work camps

*W ‘... Watching a community being created is fascinating ...  
 ... finding each other ... discovering rhythm as a team ...  
 ... hearts in common.’*

by Jane Pruter-Scherlis  
 Wellspring Anglican Church  
 Littleton, Colo.

**T**his year’s work camp was significant to me in terms of relationships. There were new, fresh faces attached to interesting and wonderful personalities.

Making new friends and reconnecting with acquaintances is the best part about EAM work camps! Watching a community being created is fascinating: the bold drawing out the shy; listeners and talkers finding each other; discovering rhythm as a team — do-ers paired with be-ers .... hearts in common. It is rather like a dance: who leads? toes stepped on, apologies tendered .... grace and balance, smiles ... connecting.

‘... weave the input of eight individuals into a single prayer ...’

Each team of week three was encouraged to compose a collect to share

with the larger group — it proved to be an interesting exercise to weave the input of eight individuals into a single prayer. Each offering was unique and centered on original themes of team work. Thank you, Cathy Deats, for having us do that — sometimes we get so intent on the hammer and nails that we put glorifying God on the back burner.

... and remember the ones not able to come this year

I feel so fortunate to receive an invitation to participate each summer — seven unforgettable camps! But coupled with the joy of serving with a new bunch of folks I also sense the absence of those not able to be with us. I missed you and hope our paths cross again. As for the new friends who said they’d be coming back in 2010 — you better not have been kidding, I can’t wait to see you again!



Debbie Burns of New York not only did home rehab work, but she also gave haircuts to host family members and to work campers. As one person said, “It was like going to a slumber party thirty years later!”

## W Hosts and volunteers share their musical talents each year



Al Peden of the Diocese of Maryland shares his love for the clarinet.



Willow Smith, also from the Diocese of Maryland, has a lovely singing voice.



Barbara Collins (left), another of the Diocese of Maryland’s talented folks, sings with Anita Boyd, a member of the Grace House staff.



The work campers and local residents wait for the start of the musical entertainment ...



... while one helper contributes some pre-concert talent of another sort.

# Work Camps 2009 work camps

*W '... We can all learn from the virtues of another culture.'*

by The Rev. Cathy Deats  
Rector, St. James' Episcopal  
Hackettstown, N.J.

It's good to be home. Don't get me wrong; I love Appalachia. Our groups have had nothing but profoundly moving, exhausting, exhilarating experiences there. But as we packed the car, a familiar sense of anxiety came over me. Even though all of us had been there before, we were on our way to parts unknown. Although we were sure that God would go with us, we were apprehensive.

## Lack of frantic activity

After all, the South is different than the North. People speak differently and in Appalachia, they live differently than we do. There are few high powered jobs; there is not the intense pressure for teens to get into the best schools or to go far from home; there is a lack of frantic activity that I sometimes experience in the metropolitan area of New York, even though our sixty miles from the city and rural surroundings give us some relief from the frenzy. The food is different: chicken and dumplings, grits, canned dilly beans. The mountains are higher and the valleys deeper; the trains are full of coal, not cars and electronics.

Let me tell you a little about my experience at the job site I shared with five other workers. I was surprised to hear that we would return to a site I had worked on five years before, for two years in a row. The home was in Dante, perhaps the most depressed former coal town in five counties. Our hosts, I will call them Linda and Martin, were raising their children, ten-year-old twins, a boy and girl, and thirteen-year-old Bonnie, who has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair.

## Adapting previous work to new reality

The biggest job we had completed for this family in our previous visit was the construction of a ramp at the front door. At the time, Bonnie was in a stroller, so the ramp from front steps to street, only eight feet long for an elevation of twenty-seven inches, though not ideal, was manageable. Compared to carrying her down the stairs, it was the best solution at the time.

Our task this week was to remove that ramp and build a new one. Bonnie was now a young woman, and soon would weigh as much as her mom. Not only was it difficult to carry her down the stairs, but she needed to be independent, to be able to leave the house and go play in the yard with her brother and sister, or even visit a friend by herself. We needed to manage the elevation by constructing a ramp that was closer to code. The solution was to build a deck, about four feet by ten feet, extending from the house doorway, through the porch doorway and over the steps. Then, we constructed a ramp from that deck to the yard, a distance of 24 feet. The work was difficult, made more so by the fact that no angle was straight, no elevation even and time was limited.

## Learning the nuances of another's words

Food and language are not the only things that are different in Appalachia. The pace of life is different and people behave differently than we do here up north. We are often frustrated by the slower pace of life, the time and distance of mountain travel and the lack of resources like a Home Depot or Lowe's every few miles. We are puzzled when we offer a sandwich or a cookie to someone in our host family and they say, "I don't care for any," which really means, "I am being polite and hope you ask me again later."

## Host mother intuits needs

I noticed that the members of my host family appeared to listen more and talk less. So many times on the worksite, when I needed a hand and everyone was busy, Linda would be right there at my right hand to hold a board steady. Or she would guess what tool I needed and hand it to me. She was very matter of fact about her life and the things I would find very distressing: when I asked if Bonnie could benefit from a chair height commode, she told me she wore diapers and would for the rest of her life. I had no sense that Linda felt a "why me?" attitude, although I was sure she had asked herself that question.

To a person, there appeared to be a sense of acceptance of life on life's



A first week tradition: stopping for ice cream at the local Frosty Bossy on the way home from the work site each day.

terms that I have struggled to develop. The most striking difference was paying attention and listening. There was a serious lack of words that at first made me think folks were shy or overwhelmed and embarrassed by our presence in their homes. Later I real-

ized that most of the folks I met don't waste words; they don't speak to hear themselves talk.

There are definitely virtues common to people of Appalachia that are not as common among northerners.

... continued on page 8



Another tradition: Diocese of Maryland teens entertain one of the host families' children.



All of the work is worth it! A homeowner and her new friends pose on her porch to show off the new railings built by the work campers.



Dogs are always a welcome part of our work camps. Their presence enriches the sense of community and provides a playful part of the whole experience.

