

West Virginia Mission Trip Day 6 – August 11, 2017

Carol: It's our last day and I think we are all ready to come home. We finished up at Linda's today, trying to paint outside between the raindrops. The living room is painted and all of the lattice around the house. We are heading out to eat tonight, will pack, clean up and head home first thing in the morning. I, for one, am ready to sleep in my own bed and see my kitty cats. It's been a fun and productive trip!

Chuck: Linda was very happy with the work we accomplished. We got everything on the original list done and a few others as well. If it hadn't started raining we could have gotten a few more "nice to do's" done, but rain was the deciding factor to clean up and pack up and get out. Made it back to ASFC by 2:30. Many are resting and getting ready to pack out in the morning. We all look forward to getting home safe. See you all Sunday.

Jenny: It's been a wonderful week both in terms of doing the work that we came to do; but also getting better acquainted with those on the team. This was probably more important for me since I am still a relative "newbie" at EEC. I appreciate each and every member for the gifts and talents that they bring to the team; but most of all, for their compassion and love of their fellow man. I'm so looking forward to being home!

Dean: It was been a GREAT week! The work has been both rewarding and fulfilling. I believe the receipts of our hard at both the Wade Center and Linda's home were very much appreciated. I enjoyed the camaraderie of this team and how everyone pulled together to accomplish our projects. It was also interesting to see another side of the team members than what I see at church – and I found it both enjoyable and relaxing. We went out to dinner this evening since it was our last night, and it was an excellent meal, but not as good or as enjoyable as the meals prepared by Joni and eating at simple tables with the other team members. See you soon.

Margaret: I have to say "ditto" to all of my teammates' comments. This has been a wonderful experience, both in ministering to Linda and others in this area and in being ministered to. Everyday brought new experiences and deepening relationships with our fellow team members. It also brought tight muscles and other aches and pains but they were soon forgotten in the light of being able to be God's hands and feet. Thank you to our prayer partners and all who have been praying for a safe journey and meaningful time spent. Your prayers were, and are being, answered!

Rev Rhonda+: It has been such a gift to minister alongside Chuck, Dean, Carol, Cathy, Mikayla, Taylor, Margaret, Jenny, and Joni this week. I can't wait to share with you some of the things God made possible! Thank you for all your prayers

and support. You were with us each step of the way. God's peace to each of you!

West Virginia Mission Trip Day 5 – August 10, 2017

Cathy here: Because of the weather we waited to take a day off today but we only took off part of the day because there is not that much to do in Hinton and in Pipestem Park on a rainy day. We worked on the job site (Linda's house) from 9:30 till 11:30. Taylor painted walls inside. Dean and Chuck did work around the back of the house and Margaret, Carol, Jenny, and I painted lattice. Rev. Rhonda, Joni, and Mikayla did work back at the ASFL center. Then we went to the Market for lunch; always good there. The trip to Pipestem was foggy so the view was not as good as usual. We supported the gift shop a little and then Chuck, Dean, and Carol made the trek up the lookout tower. We hope to have a good workday tomorrow to finish up the jobs. Thanks to our family at EEC for all your prayers.

Chuck here: it has been a few days since I have written. The last two days were very busy on Linda's house. I have been under the house to repair a major water leak, under the deck repairing deck post footers and replacing deck boards. The only job left on my job list is repairing the back stairs. Everyone else will be painting the railing and lattice and the living room. If we have time the front steps could use adjustment. We hope to finish by 3:00.

Carol: We had a fun day. My friend Janet who lives in Princeton came and picked me up this evening and I went to dinner with her and her husband. We went to the BEST Italian restaurant! They have the best garlic knots I have ever eaten. It was so fun to catch up with my friend and she pointed out some new places for us to eat. We have a lot of work to do tomorrow, so we are all praying for good weather!

West Virginia Mission Trip Day 4 – August 9, 2017

Hi all! Jenny here: It's been a very productive day! I cleaned out the gutters on the shed. The debris was quite deep. Dean made sure the drain from the gutters worked efficiently. Then I moved to the front porch per instructions of our fearless leader, Chuck. Carol and I painted railings and lattice on the front porch. We'll finish that up tomorrow. The others can report in on their activities. It was a great day. Lots of laughs, support and hard work! This team rocks!! God's Peace be with you each and every one.

Hello from Margaret. Another great work day over, wonderful spaghetti dinner and brownie sundaes, courtesy of Joni and Mikayla, make the day perfect. After dinner, it's Compline in the gazebo and just sitting watching the sunset with wonderful friends. This has been a most remarkable week so far and we still

have a few more days to go. The work is rewarding and the friendship grows deeper as the time goes by.

Think about becoming a part of this next year.

Dean's turn: Another GREAT breakfast from Joni – breakfast burritos; a great way to start off the day before some very physical but rewarding work at Miss Linda's house. There were broken and rotten boards in the back porch that were taken up and replaced. Siding was replaced in two places on one side of the house, and from the gutters down around the entire house and part of the shed were washed and cleaned. The fence on one side of the back porch was repaired and scrapped before it was painted, along with the railing and lattice on the front and one side of the house. Hopefully, the rest will be painted tomorrow. There was another crew that again worked inside, cleaning walls and providing a fresh coat of paint, but I will allow someone else describe that project. Chuck also did a lot of work proving proper support to the front and side of the porch. Tonight during "Princess Uno" I learned tonight from a quote from one of the players that "all is fair in love and Uno." This group has some cutthroat players.

Cathy here. Margaret and I cleaned walls in the living room. Then Taylor and I painted two of the walls. It's a beautiful shade of blue and Linda, the homeowner, loves it. Linda is such a nice lady and so much fun. Margaret and I laughed and sang with her all morning. Mission trip doesn't always involve hard work. Sometimes it's just listening and singing. God finds a use for your gifts; notice I didn't say talent. Even if you can't sing it can be a gift to share with others.

Rev Rhonda: It's been a great day. We've worked hard, sung loudly, prayed, worshiped, and ended the night with some competitive UNO and charades. The greatest part of being on a Mission Trip is the TEAM, whom we come to love more each day. One of the most rewarding moments is the smile on Linda's face when she surveys the work we've done at the end of the day. God is so, so good! And, no matter what, God IS good ALL THE TIME. Love to you all.

Carol: It looks like everyone had said almost everything. We are having so much fun. We work really hard during the day and then have even more fun at night. We are having wonderful meals, thanks to Joni and today her assistant, Mikayla. Tonight we had brownies with ice cream for dessert. You know, it's all about the dessert! Everyone has headed to bed except Cathy, Taylor and me. We'll be heading there shortly. Mission trips are great! If you've been thinking about coming, we want you to join us next time!

West Virginia Mission Trip Day 3 – 8/8/17

Rev Rhonda here: It's 5:41 PM. I better write now before I fall asleep. We worked HARD today. No, really, we did! Our team amazes me. I'm grateful for

each of them. Our homeowner was so warm and welcoming of our presence. She loves the Lord....she was inspiring to me. Keep praying for us. We are praying for our EEC family!

Taylor: I probably won't have an as inspiring blog as last night but I have to agree with Reverend Rhonda, Ms. Linda was so kind and sweet and thankful. I am so glad to have been part of the mission team that helped her shape up her yard because she physically couldn't. She makes me feel like my need to help is complete, at least for now. As soon as we really started working and got really into it, the sun cleared up above us, a nice breeze set in and everyone feels warm with completion. Go Mission Team!!!

Dean's turn: It was a beautiful, warm day in WV. After a wonderful breakfast from our head chief, Joni, we took off for Bluefield, WV where our EEC team was divided into two teams. One worked inside and the other team (the one I was on) worked outside on the yard. As mentioned, it was hard work, but very rewarding! Everyone worked very well together to accomplish today's mission. After a full day of cleaning and reorganizing inside; the outside team completed plumbing, mowing, trimming, pruning, cutting, and pulling brush to the road. After a full day, and everyone appeared tired, we started our trip back to ASFC when someone asked how many steps everyone had so far today. As members began to announce the number of steps they had so far I realized the FITBIT WAR was on. We'll see if it lasts the rest of the trip. A delicious dinner awaited us when we returned. So far, a great experience for this first time mission team member going out of state.

Carol: As everyone said above, today was a very rewarding day and we worked really hard. We had a delicious dinner (as usual). Thanks Joni! I just came back from hearing about coal mining. It was interesting. It's really cool and nice out. Today was very sunny and warm!

West Virginia Mission Trip Day 2 – August 7, 2017

First day of work – **Chuck here**, started slow lots of hurry up and wait finally got to the Wade Center, a summer day care and after school care center for young children, lots of work to do. We combined with the St Mary's UCC group of 27 and then split into five work groups

1. Cleaning and organizing the cafeteria kitchen and pantry
2. Cleaning and organizing the prize storage room
3. Cleaning and organizing school supplies and closets
4. Finish dry walling a sleeping area
5. Replacing vinyl floor tile

I was on the replacing vinyl tile and have three blisters to show for it.

We will move to a woman's trailer tomorrow and repair her deck, paint the living room, and clean outdoors.

Taylor - As it being my first time on a mission trip, I didn't know what to expect, only what others had told me. I had expected run-down rooms and horribly small bathrooms and only darkness at night, I have a flashlight and a very bright lantern to attest to that belief.

Anyway, as never seeing Wade Center ever before or even being in West Virginia before, as Roger told us about Wade and everything and how he could just possibly start tearing up, I imagined a tiny, cramped building where the children were in rags and the employees were exhausted and unhappy. I couldn't have possibly been more wrong.

The building was huge, four stories high and each one as wide as two of my school cafeterias combined. I saw no children today but the employees and helpers were energetic, chipper, friendly and more than happy to have us there. I organized things on the kitchen shelves, the kitchen pantry and the kitchen drawers. Every time I would finish, I would go back to Doris and say: "Please, give me something else to do, I want to help." Everyone kept complimenting me as I started helping pulling up tiles and then went to go help organize the library but I just wanted to help.

I have never felt more of a truth in my life then this sentence: "I want to help." This feels like my calling, to help others, to help in any way I can until my hair is greasy and my hands are raw and my clothes are covered in dirt. I have a calling inside my head and heart that is whispering to me to help, and who am I to disobey?

Cathy here. Wade Center is an old school that has been reopened for after school activities and summer programs as Chuck told you. It is a really wonderful place doing great work. They were on break between summer and fall start-up. It is a faith-run facility. God lead us to our comfort places. Mikayla and I were in our element we organized toys for reward points. It was just like setting up for the Easter egg hunt. Carol and Rhonda organized school supplies; that was perfect for them. Margaret and Taylor worked in the kitchen (skills Taylor learned from her Mom were used). The lady who was in charge of the kitchen needed Margaret today. She'll tell you about that. Chuck and Dean chipped up tile floor to be replaced. Jenny sorted flip-flops for the clothes room among other things. We came home to a wonder dinner and gifts from our shopping fairy, Joni. (Things we forgot or would be useful donations to the center.)

Carol here. I loved working at the Wade Center. It has such a wonderful vibe there for helping kids and everyone was so friendly there. I wish it was closer to home because I would love to volunteer there on a regular basis. I even called my friend who lives up here and said it is right up her alley and she should check it out to volunteer. I think I might be a little sore tomorrow. I went up and down the stairs A LOT!

Rev Rhonda+

This has been the best day! Rain could not dampen our spirits or our energy. The Wade Center offers After School Care and summer programs for children

1st-5th grade, with the hope of extending it to middle and high school. Though the facility is a very old high school, the dedicated staff and volunteers have worked hard to provide quality programs for children who have so little in their lives. Many mission teams have been here providing improvements to the aging facility. We were no exception. Deep kitchen cleaning, organizing of hundreds of school supplies, preparing a library, sanitizing EACH toy and book in the “prize center,” in addition to ripping out the kitchen floor (to be replaced) rounded out our contributions.

EEC family: this work is giving me some ideas for ministry in Hampton!! Are you ready? Love to you all!

Jenny here from Flip Flop Central... I'm thinking the whole sorting at least 5,000 pairs of flip flops will become my moniker. Not really 5,000 but more than 100 pairs?? One of the gentlemen from the other group working here from PA, and I totally cleaned and organized the Resource Center. It was hard work but well worth it. They're ready to go in that area! Love to you all and thank you supporting us with your support and prayers. We feel them.

Margaret—I want to share a wonderful Holy Spirit “coincidence” happening from today's work at the Wade Center. I had been working all morning in the kitchen along with Taylor and a few people from the other group. The woman in charge of the kitchen, Ms. Doris, was through for the day and preparing to leave. I asked her if I could give her a hug and as we hugged, she whispered, “My best friend died this morning.” I asked if she would like for us to pray. She said an emphatic “yes” and we held hands to pray. To my surprise, Ms. Doris was the one praying. She prayed a beautiful prayer; not only for her friend who had died, but in thanksgiving for the volunteers who had come to help. She finished and I added my prayers for her friend, family and Ms. Doris. It was a wonderful unexpected moment and proved to me again that God in the person of the Holy Spirit is ever a surprise!

West Virginia Mission Trip – Day 1 – August 6, 2017

Day 1 – Travel and set up. Done!!!

Chuck here, 362.8 miles of issue free driving, thank you prayer partners. Dinner was excellent. The other group has shown up but has not come up to talk yet. We are expecting orientation any minute. Puzzle is going.

Dean's turn: Arrived safely thanks to our drivers, Chuck & Joni. Chuck, Cathy, and Carol gave us a tour of the place while Joni prepared dinner. Now some are walking to get their steps in and others working on the puzzle.

And now for the newbie, Jenny. I'm overwhelmed at the beauty of both the surroundings and the team assembled here. We had an absolutely fab trip up.

Beds are made and we're awaiting orientation. Seriously, I'm ready for lights out!!

Cathy here: Taylor and Mikayla are out in La La land playing softball with a volleyball. Carol must be out with them. Joni is making up her bed. She hasn't stopped; driving, unloading, organizing, cooking and now unpacking. Pray that the rain cooperates with us. It's fine if it rains just not between 9 and 4. That's not too much to ask, is it.

Carol: The other group is huge – about 30 people! They are staying down the road and some are even staying in tents. Tomorrow we are all going to the Webb Center to do work there. The weather is not suppose to cooperate, but maybe our prayer partners will get the rain postponed until the evening! Card games have already started, and of course the singing. Oh, and guess what? We have wifi here now. Also, they remodeled our dorm so we have more room, two toilet, two showers, and lots of outlets! It's the little things folks!

P.S. Dinner was absolutely fabulous – beef brisket! Yum!!!!

Rev. Rhonda: After a wonderful opportunity to sit in the pew and hear Cris Hiatt preach and Becky LaManque officiate Morning Prayer, we survived, and even thrived, on our 362.8 mile trip to West Virginia. It's beautiful in the mountains. Our team is wonderful---already much laughter, singing, and goofiness. God is good, all the time. I'm thankful for this time to serve God among and alongside this group! Thanks to our prayer partners. Keep 'em coming! Love to all!