

## Habitat Mission Trip Report – Rebecca Pope 8/6/06

Three weeks ago, twenty-seven youth and nine adults, all sporting t-shirts designed by Lauren Southwell, departed for John's Island, South Carolina to build a Habitat House for a week. We started building walls for the house several weeks in advance in order to be able to get right to work once we arrived.

This was my second habitat trip with the youth group, so I think that I had a pretty good idea of what I was getting myself into. Others, unfortunately, did not. So Sunday night, after chowing down on some amazing spaghetti prepared by the men chaperones, Lee Gray and Bert Green laid out the ground rules for the upcoming week. Lee told us how we needed to be at the work site by 6:30 so we could try to beat the heat of the afternoon. All of the youth were very wary of this because in order to be at the work site by 6:30, we would need to wake up in time for Lee Gray to come pick up the girls at 6:00. This was very, very tough, but we did get to enjoy several memorable comments from the mind of Lee Gray on the bus ride over to the work site six miles away. For example, every single time we would travel down Bohicket Road (the main road down John's Island) Lee would remark "this is my favorite part of the drive" as we would fly through a very wooded part that appeared to be like a tree tunnel. After hearing this about three times a day, everyone was saying it and making fun of Lee. Lee Gray also warned us Sunday night to be very cautious around the work site with all the hammers flying and nails being pounded. Lee told us that every year that he has gone on the trip, there has been a pretty major injury, so everyone should expect there to be another one this year. He said "it might even be you". He also said "the work site is a pretty dangerous place where anything can happen. There's no need to be scared...well maybe a little bit." Will McLeod later told me that he was wondering what on earth he had gotten himself into, were we going into battle??

Well Monday morning rolled around bright and early, and after a delicious breakfast prepared by Mrs. Hutchinson for the eight girls in my house, we were all out on our site by 6:30. Our foundation was there, basically built on a pit on black sand. A hilarious and *useful* addition to our work site was the "Nature's Calling" port-a-john which provided entertainment for many of the boys on the last day, when they threw nails into the top vent of the port-a-john. After putting up the walls, several teams were formed; siding, roof, OSB, etc. I joined the siding crew with Bill Claytor. We have always been dubbed the Siding Queens, and Bill was our head Queen. The roof crew quickly got the trusses up.

Two doors down, there was another youth group from New Hampshire working on a Habitat House. One day, they yelled chants over to us like "we've got walls, yes we do, we've got walls, how about you." Our youth group mistakenly thought that they were taunting us or something, so we yelled back "we've got a roof, yes we do, we've got a roof, how bout you?" This was a put down, because they had been building walls for the past three days and had no roof in sight. We very quickly realized that they were just trying to be supportive and yell out cheers to us.

After the first day of work, showers were the first thing on just about everyone's minds. Our site was so dirty, that my legs turned completely black from my knees down. Everyone looked like they had rolled around in dirt. I don't think I ever got completely clean the entire week.

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights, the men cooked the entire group delicious dinners. The menu included spaghetti, frogmore stew, chicken bog, and hamburgers and hotdogs. Before dinner each night, a specified class would decide on awards to be given out for some action that deserved an award like "tool of the day", "superstud award", "hammer time", and "high on G-O-D". The consensus of the rising Senior Class was that Will Mcleod deserved to be awarded the Superstud of the week award.

After five days of hard work, our house looked fully functioning from the outside, with the entire roof shingled, almost all of the siding up, and all of the windows and doors installed. Saturday morning, we dedicated the house to our family. In our dedication service, every youth had a chance to wish their best to La Neisha and her three young children.

I speak for all the youth when I say, thank you so much to Bert Green, Lee Gray, Scott Kerly, Chuck Jones, Doug Hammond, Ken Raynor, MC Sorrell, Bill Claytor, Brooks Fuller, Judy Godsey, Rene Hutchinson, and Julie Hammond for all of your help during that amazing week and in all the preparation before. This trip would not have been possible without your time. We also want to thank the church for your support and contributions which allowed for this trip. It was an incredible week!