

Spring Service
Projects 2016

SERVING CHRIST

THROUGH
SERVING
OTHERS

NORTHWESTERN
COLLEGE
CAMPUS MINISTRY

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me ... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. Matthew 25:35-40

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

HAITI

by Kaitlyn McCurdy '16

United Christians International | ucihaiti.org

For the 5th year, Northwestern students worked alongside missionaries Kristie (De Boer '95) and JeanJean Mompremier. They served food, painted and helped teach English to elementary school and university students. Athletes on the team taught soccer and volleyball skills to youth, and nursing students helped in the UCI clinic. The students also poured cement floors for a school and family home.

Simple request

While on a prayer walk, we met a woman whose single prayer request was that she be the hands of God. How humbling to witness her devotion. We have more money and things, but she is richer than us. We strive to have a faith like hers.



Being known

While in Haiti, we realized the need we all have to be known. We want to be called brother, sister, friend, child. We want to be called beloved. What an amazing experience we had to know and be known by our Haitian friends. When we took communion together, we called each other brother and sister. We prayed together as children of our Father. We looked into each other's faces and recognized each other as beloved of God.

Looking for love

Love was the theme of our trip. Where do we see love, and how do we spread love? How do we leave love behind when we return to the U.S.? After a week of loving and being loved so richly, we all left a piece of our hearts in Haiti.

THE NETHERLANDS

by Madison Raska '16

Shelter Youth Hostels | shelter.nl

For 18 years, Northwestern students have spent spring break alongside staff and volunteers at Shelter City and Shelter Jordan in Amsterdam. The hostels seek to demonstrate hospitality and Christian love by providing clean, affordable and welcoming accommodations for travelers. Team members cleaned and worked in the hostels' cafés. They also led evening activities and Bible discussions for guests.

Bubble burst

Even though the Shelter hostels are Christian hostels, around 80 percent or more of the guests are not Christians. It was eye-opening and a good learning experience to live our faith outside the Christian "bubbles" we often find ourselves in. We were more aware of how we acted and what we said in the midst of challenging conversations.

Purposeful conversation

Among the guests we met was a young man traveling through Europe alone. He stayed at the hostel a few nights and attended a few of our Bible studies. On the last night of his stay, he talked with a member of our team about purpose and the meaning of life. Our teammate Naomi was able to share the gospel with him and give him a New Testament for further reading on his travels.



NICARAGUA

by Karisa Fuerniss '16

The Moravian Church

For the 14th time, a team returned to Bluefields, Nicaragua, to minister to the community served by Reformed Church in America missionaries Rev. Adrian and Dr. Bernadeth Bobb-Kelly. The students painted at a clinic and at the Comedor, which serves daily meals to kids. Many of the children who visit the Comedor were also given a pair of shoes. Team members also hosted a session of Vacation Bible School, leading the children in singing, Bible story learning and crafts.

No shoes, no service

We took around 200 pairs of shoes with us to Bluefields, but half of them were confiscated when we entered Managua because customs officers feared we would sell them. It was a discouraging beginning to our trip, having to fly on to Bluefields without the shoes. Our team had been given additional funds for the trip—something to spend on any need that presented itself. This was a need, and the extra money was providentially just \$1 shy of the cost for one of our faculty leaders to return to Managua to try to reclaim the shoes. He returned, and as he was explaining the situation, businessmen who overheard our predicament helped pay the small tax necessary to free the shoes. He brought them to Bluefields and they were distributed to the kids.

Heartache

One of the biggest delights of Bluefields was the children. They were immediately affectionate with us, and we had so much fun playing with them. On the flip side, though, becoming so attached to them made it difficult when we realized the realities of their lives: We knew the meal we served at the Comedor might be the only food they ate that day. We knew the encouragement and hugs we gave them might be the only affirmation they received that day. Our hearts were full and broken at the same time.

The gift of presence

We learned that one value of short-term missions is the encouragement it provides for the host ministry. Pastor Adrian said that while prayer and money are very valuable forms of support, being present with a ministry is equally important. Money cannot buy a face-to-face conversation, piggyback rides or a hug.



U.S. SERVICE

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

by Lizzy Rice '17

CityYouth Ministries | cityyouthmin.com

CityYouth Ministries is an afterschool ministry that develops strength, wisdom and character in inner-city youth as they play games, study Scripture, get homework help and eat a free, nutritious meal before being transported home. Team members cleaned, painted and organized at the center each day and spent their late afternoons and evenings interacting with the kids. This was the 16th Northwestern SSP team to serve at CityYouth Ministries.



Falling fast in love

The most fulfilling—and challenging—part of our ministry was time spent with the Jonesboro youth. The young kids engaged with us quickly, and it was easy to fall in love with them. A second grader with pigtails and sweet dance moves had me by the hand for the two nights we spent with elementary-aged kids. We traveled from station to station together, learning about David and Goliath, competing in relay races, and playing Chutes and Ladders. The second night, I rode along while we brought the kids home. When we got to her home, she hopped out of the van, waved goodbye and yelled, "See you next week!" As the door shut, it hit me that I wouldn't see her the next week. Our team struggled with this reality of short-term missions. I am comforted knowing the CityYouth staff consistently love the kids, and next year another NWC team will be back to love these kids, even if only for a short time.

Big world, bigger God

When all the SSP teams returned to campus, we gathered for a night of celebration and reflection. As I sat with students who had traveled to

California, Texas, Nicaragua and the Netherlands, I marveled at the redeeming work God is doing simultaneously around the world. The same God we praise in northwest Iowa is worshipped in Spanish and in Dutch, in the inner-city and in Hollywood, by the young, old, rich and poor. We serve a big God.

COMPTON, CALIFORNIA

by Jana Vermeer '16

Emmanuel Reformed Church | erc.la

For the 5th year, team members partnered with Emmanuel Reformed Church, Paramount, Calif., which runs the Compton Initiative, a 40-year commitment to investing in their neighboring city of Compton. Compton is known for its violent gangs. The Compton Initiative aims to improve the city's image and inspire residents to reclaim their neighborhoods by cleaning, repairing and painting facilities in the community. Students painted street curbs and murals on school buildings. They also interacted with Compton residents in an afterschool program and at the Salvation Army.

Fresh perspective

One of the things we did in Compton was paint the house of a woman named Gabby. She'd grown up in a house just down the street and had witnessed a lot of the gang violence over the years, even losing her nephew in a gang shooting. Despite all that, she prefers to focus on Compton's future rather than its past. She's proud to call Compton her home and is determined to be part of making it a better place. Her children are grown, but she volunteers at a nearby elementary school. Her volunteerism caught the attention of people involved with the Compton Initiative, and that's how she came to be served by us. She was so touched that college students were willing to give up their spring break to put a fresh coat of paint on her home.

Living toward the light

Pray for the people of Compton who are trying to be a light in their community. There's still a long way to go, but these saints prefer instead to focus on how far Compton has come from its gang-ridden, violent past. Their perseverance is a testament to God's sustaining strength.



JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

by Morgan Olhausen '16

2nd Mile Ministries | 2ndmile-jax.com

Team members volunteered at two elementary schools in the Brentwood community of Jacksonville, assisting the classroom teachers and tutoring students. They also worked with an elderly Brentwood resident who maintains a garden for the neighborhood and participated in other Brentwood beautification projects. There was also time for discussions about poverty and justice with the 2nd Mile staff. This is the 5th year Northwestern has sent a team to 2nd Mile Ministries.

Learning heartbreak

We really enjoyed the 2nd Mile staff and the children we spent time with. It was heartbreaking, though, to witness the poverty, the brokenness and the injustice in the Brentwood neighborhood. It was hard to see so much that needed to be redeemed and to feel so ineffective in the face of such deep need. It was frustrating to see bright children struggle in school because their lives outside the classroom are not conducive to learning.

Having God's heart

In addition to working alongside 2nd Mile staff, we spend a lot of time talking to them and learning from them as they told us about God's heart for justice. We were reminded that to be a disciple of Christ is to care about the same things Christ cares about. God cares deeply for people who are poor and those facing injustice, so we should care deeply for them too—not just in Jacksonville, but all over the world.



NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

by Kate Arnold '18 and Anna Stroh '18

Urban Impact | urbanimpact.org

For the 20th time, a team of Northwestern students traveled to New Orleans to serve at Urban Impact and Castle Rock Church. Many of the homes and residential lots surrounding Castle Rock Church have been abandoned since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Team members cleared brush and tidied up vacant lots.



Waiting for restoration

Memories of Hurricane Katrina have receded for many in the U.S., but in New Orleans, there is still a lot of damage and many uprooted lives. In the neighborhood surrounding Castle Rock Church, homes and residential areas have simply been abandoned—leaving physical, emotional and spiritual emptiness too.

Helping hands

As we cleaned up one abandoned lot, a man who only spoke Spanish walked up and asked if we might clean up the lot near his home. Members of our team who understood Spanish learned he hadn't been able to get any assistance yet. He was so grateful when members of our team helped him finally clean up the lot.

OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

by Morgan Boroviak '17

Hope for Opelousas | hopeforopelousas.org

Northwestern was the first college to send a service team to Opelousas in 2008, and teams have returned every year since. In addition to tutoring in Opelousas schools, students also completed outdoor and indoor repair and cleaning projects in the neighborhoods served by Hope for Opelousas.

New views of poverty

Our eyes were opened to depths of poverty most of us hadn't witnessed before. A child might show up to school wearing new shoes, but that might mean he and his family made do with fewer groceries for the week.

Love for Opelousas

Love changes everything. You can't turn a whole city around overnight, but it's still amazing what a committed core group of people can do. The core people working to bring hope to Opelousas radiate the love and joy of Christ. Every day they go to work for the sake of the Opelousas community because there are kids waiting for them—kids who need them, kids who look up to them. Everywhere we turned, we were greeted with smiles, and it was nearly impossible to be unhappy when working alongside such joyful servants. Even as we spent one day picking up trash that had been soaked by rain, we were repeatedly encouraged that we were helping to "make Opelousas more beautiful."



GRAND PORTAGE, MINNESOTA

by Allison Derr '18 and Marie Jeppesen '17

Mt. Rose Church & Coldwater Foundation | coldwaterfoundation.org

Team members served on the Ojibwa Reservation in Grand Portage, cleaning and completing projects at Mt. Rose Church and interacting with the church's youth group and tribal elders. Northwestern students have served with the Coldwater Foundation for six years.

Cultural loss

As we were arriving at the Ojibwa Reservation, our leader explained that we were entering a sovereign nation with its own government, culture and language. It was like traveling to a different country without needing a passport. It renewed our appreciation for how much diversity lies right in our own country. And yet, the unique culture of the Ojibwa people is disappearing. Only a handful of people still speak the language fluently, and the Ojibwa perspective is not part of the history being taught in the surrounding schools.

Warm relations

The Ojibwa youth warmed up to us quickly. After just a short time of hanging out together, sharing meals and playing Nerf gun fights, the young people began to tell us about their lives. The stories were heartbreaking, but they weren't looking for pity. They simply wanted someone to listen.

Northern Lights

After our first full day in Grand Portage, which we'd spent hiking, entertaining youth and interacting with the new people we met, we were tired. After debriefing with Mt. Rose Church's Pastor Jake, he ushered us outside where the Northern Lights were just beginning to show in the night sky. We got into vans and drove to an open field where we watched the lights dancing in the sky for two hours. Few of us noticed the cold as we were awestruck by God's masterful handiwork.



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

by Abby Stevens '16

Urban Ventures | urbanventures.org

This was the 3rd year a Northwestern team volunteered at Urban Ventures, an organization that seeks to heal community and family brokenness in Minneapolis. In addition to interacting with kids in Urban Ventures' afterschool program, team members also worked at CityKid Farms, an Urban Venture initiative aimed at educating kids about nutrition and growing their own food.

Diversity and community

The area we served included three diverse communities: African Americans, Latinos and Somalis. We were able to engage with each of these communities and appreciate God's heart for his diverse creation. Each of the communities welcomed us, and individuals within the communities were willing to be open and vulnerable with us about their struggles. The Africa American community has endured an unbroken cycle of poverty, violence and fatherless families. Members of the Latino and Somali communities are struggling with the transition to life in the U.S., which includes a language barrier that makes it difficult for them to understand and defend their rights. We understood the realities of systemic injustice much more deeply.

Relational mission

The world in which we live is terribly broken—but also beautiful. It contains injustice—but is cared for by a God who wants to make things right and new. It is challenging in short-term mission work to feel like you've made a real impact. But our team focused on building meaningful relationships with the people we met.

Visit nwcsiowa.edu/SSP-in-action to watch this year's teams in action.

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN SHORT-TERM MISSION

Northwestern College Campus Ministry is committed to Standards of Excellence (SOE) in Short-Term Mission. The SOE criteria were developed by representatives from many U.S. mission agencies, schools and churches who send short-term missionaries. The common set of standards helps ensure that individuals or teams sent by U.S. organizations are excellent.

Training, resources, peer input, data collection and accountability are all components of SOE membership. As a member, Northwestern is serious about doing short-term mission well—from preparation through follow-up.

soe.org



CARY, MISSISSIPPI

by Amber Gilpin '17

Cary Christian Center | carychristiancenter.org

Cary community members apply to the Cary Christian Center (CCC) for specific help and then negotiate a reasonable financial or in-kind payment for services. As volunteers for the multi-faceted ministry of CCC, Northwestern students worked at the thrift store, sorting and tagging donations. They also painted a neighborhood house. This is the 7th year an SSP team has served in Cary.

Responding to life's storms

On Monday morning Audrey, who oversees the ministry's thrift store, lead devotions, challenging us to be joyful in the midst of suffering. She said our word for the week should be "Hallelujah!"—especially when our work was hard or we felt discouraged. Throughout the week, she'd pop in and ask, "What's the word?" and we replied, "Hallelujah!" Thursday she was called away from the store because storms had flooded her house. She turned to us before leaving and said, "Hallelujah!"

Nursing wounds

The nursing students on our team hosted a health clinic Thursday at the thrift store, taking blood pressures and answering basic health and hygiene questions. As one woman was having her blood pressure tested, she broke down, describing her financial and housing difficulties and sharing her heartbreak and guilt over her daughter's death. While she talked, everyone standing nearby gathered to lay hands on her and pray for her. It was a beautiful sight.



LINDALE, TEXAS

by Carissa Tavary '17

Calvary Commission | calvarycommission.org

Calvary Commission (CC) is a ranch-like residence and educational center for ex-convicts who are born again and desire to spend time growing closer to God after they are paroled. For the 21st year, a Northwestern SSP team traveled to CC to help with yard work, maintenance and other aspects of the CC ministry. Team members also led a worship service at a Lindale prison.



Community spirit

The Calvary Commission community was incredibly hospitable—welcoming us with open arms and praying for us. We were free to roam their nearly 126 acres and were able to spend a lot of time building relationships with the CC "students." We felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and were immersed in a community devoted to prayer, worship and following Christ passionately. We also spent one evening at "Hope on the Streets," dancing, laughing and listening to the testimonies of the people there.

Family devotion

This trip was life-changing. Our team grew exceptionally close to one another. We were vulnerable with each other and forgiving toward one another. During our devotional time, we worshipped together, struggled together, and felt more like the family of God—like brothers and sisters in Christ—than we had ever experienced.

SPRING SERVICE TEAMS

HAITI

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Sandi Altena*
Brandon Black
Lucy Cardamone*
Ethan De Groot
Michaela Gibson*
Laura Korver
Rachael Lee
Kaitlyn McCurdy
Lindsey Riesselman
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Danielle Sullivan
Todd Tracy*
Jennifer Van Riessen
Mikayla Vos

THE NETHERLANDS

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Jenna Beeson
Beth Benschoter
Adam Bleeker
Andrew De Boer
Barb Dewald*
Abigail Eben
Jennifer Feenstra*
Mawuli MacDonald
Madison Raska
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Madison Stephens
Brooke Van Gorp*

NICARAGUA

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Josie Clark
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Andrew Currier
Dana Dlouhy
Karisa Fuerniss
Ray Gibler*
Nick Heider

Bailey Loveall
Kris McDonald*
Nicole Opgenorth
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JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

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Teagan Hill-Norby
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Reese Johnson
Katie Landhuis
Hannah Lautner
Meridyth Lee
Anna Niessen
Elizabeth Rice*
Emily Sorensen
Meghan Teunissen
Maria Vander Plaats
Jasi Vasher
Elizabeth Vos

COMPTON, CALIFORNIA

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Keegan Mulder
Jose Muro
Kyle Ochsner*
Kristin Schmiedt*
Pieter Swart*
Courtney Van Beek
Jana Vermeer

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

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Kecia Caudill
Kaitlyn Garwood

Caitlin Hagerty*
Morgan Olhausen
Kaitlyn Schofield
Rebecca Sparks
Tara Woodward*
Jonathan Wubben
Alexandria Yoerger

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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Carrie Bouwman
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OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

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Morgan Boroviak
Katie Bosch
Danielle Cupp
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Jordan Strand
Samantha Thomson*
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GRAND PORTAGE, MINNESOTA

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Marie Jeppsen
Hannah Lindsey
Andrew Opgenorth
Caitlyn Van Es*

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GARY, MISSISSIPPI

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LINDALE, TEXAS

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Ashley Doran
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**Student, staff and alumni
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