

# Christian Partners

## From Christian Appalachian Project

FALL 2010



### *Newlywed year becomes year of service*

Aah, that newlywed year. For many it's a time of creating their own space, building the habits of their marriage, continuing to nurture the relationship that has brought them together. It's not usually a time to do service.

"A lot of people said we were crazy for doing this," Molly Lueken says about the choice she and husband Kyle made to spend their first year of marriage volunteering with CAP. "I think this is such an adventure and it's great to have someone to do it with."

The two Indiana natives met while students at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. After graduation, they continued to date though they didn't always live in the same place. Molly worked as an elementary school teacher and Kyle as a landscape architect.

The couple had seen friends do service work so the idea wasn't new to them. Before they married, they talked about the lifestyle they wanted. For them, it needed to be based in faith, service and simplicity. Volunteering with CAP in eastern Kentucky seemed to be a good way to get started on that path.

The Luekens arrived in Kentucky in October, 2009.

NEWLYWED CONT. INSIDE ►

### • ADULTS FOLLOW FOOTSTEPS • OF PASTOR AND YOUTH

• One day as Dick Wallace walked by his pastor's office, Father Chuck McCoart called him inside to consider an idea. Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, Virginia had been sending their youth on service trips in the U.S. and abroad for several years. Father Chuck's question was—what about the adults? After all, the parish motto is: Loving as Christ loves, serving as Christ serves.

• That's how Wallace came to organize a volunteer trip for 22 people to eastern Kentucky. After hearing Fr. Ralph Beiting speak about the area, the parish decided to check into volunteering with CAP. They then began to plan for a one-week August work trip to the mountains of Kentucky.

• Father Chuck himself had spent some time serving in eastern Kentucky with the Glenmary Home Missioners before he realized his own call to the priesthood and went to seminary. It's just one example of how any time spent in service can continue to influence one person's life, which then influences another, and another, and another.

• Wallace says many of the group members are "empty nesters" who thought it was an honor and privilege to help out. Once in Kentucky, these volunteers divided into three teams to work with CAP crew

FOOTSTEPS CONT. INSIDE ►



◀CONT. FROM FOOTSTEPS

leaders and volunteers on three different homes.

One crew worked on installing a new roof on the modular home of a 70-year-old veteran and former roofer who had become disabled. In the group's report on their experience, they wrote that he, "... transcended by a ready laugh, charming personality and stream of quips. We enjoyed our visits with him and, as a bonus, were able to cool off in his air conditioned living room, which gave some of us respite from the heat."

Because of the oppressive August heat, the crew decided they wanted to head out to the work site at five a.m. They sat in awe when they realized their CAP house mother, Anita, knew their plan so she also got out of bed early, drove to where they were working and prepared breakfast. "She was the best house mom," Wallace said.

A second team worked on a floor replacement in a home where the floors were in such disrepair that people fell through. The homeowner related stories of rats and snakes entering her house during the cooler months. The participant, her daughter and sister all pitched in to get the work done.



A third team worked on building a 65-foot wheelchair ramp for a couple who live with their 36-year-old son. He had been born without feet. The team learned the father was a former coal miner who had met his wife at church. "They were a delightful couple who clearly wanted to do all they could to help their son and were grateful for

the help. They sat on the porch every day watching the progress and sharing many details about their life."

Upon their return to Alexandria, Wallace (who didn't go on the trip) said, "It was obvious they were moved... It was truly an eye-opening experience for them all."

The experience was so positive that everyone who participated this year wants to do it again and one person suggested staying for two weeks. Jim Murphy, who participated in the trip, suspects there will be at least twice as many people want to participate next year.

"We ranged in age from 20 to 70. All of us thought it was a phenomenal experience, and each of us plans to be first in line for next year (it's gonna get crowded!)," Murphy says. "We are a persuasive and charming bunch and will have little problem convincing our fellow parishioners what a life-expanding opportunity that week is. (I won't mention what a great time we had getting to know our clients, each other, and ourselves better)."

Now back at home, the team is working on various ways to share their experience with their fellow parishioners. No one can say how the most recent seeds planted in the group of service-minded people will be harvested in the years to come.

◀CONT. FROM NEWLEYWED

Molly served as an adult education tutor; Kyle volunteered in home repair. They shared one room in the Johnson Volunteer house.

"We had to be careful not to alienate ourselves from our housemates," Kyle says about the experience of being a couple in a house of singles. They purposefully worked to establish themselves as individuals so they could spend time with the other volunteers and fully participate in the community living experience. To help with that they took on the roles of social coordinator and business coordinator for the house of volunteers.

Like most volunteers who step into a group living environment, Kyle says, "We gained a lot in terms of patience... It also gave me a simpler sort of vision of a home." In the house where they lived, Kyle saw there wasn't a great need for

material things. He also learned you might not always get what you truly want (like the food choices at the supper table) but for the sake of the community you accept what is put before you.

The Luekens also liked being part of a Christian community that made a number of efforts toward creating a sustainable lifestyle. They composted, monitored electricity usage, gardened and undertook other efforts to walk lightly upon the earth.

As far as their personal relationship, Kyle learned the importance of communication, especially in a household where people would notice if Kyle and Molly weren't communicating well. "You really have to remain purposeful in your communication," Kyle says. Doing that helped them remain open to the community.

For Molly, the time spent with Kyle as a volunteer in a community house has helped

her see the world in a different way. "It's a very rewarding experience," she says.

When their one-year volunteer commitment ended, Molly accepted a teaching job in Kermit, West Virginia and Kyle decided to continue volunteering. They found a house just five minutes from the volunteer house. "I still feel very community-centered even though we're not living in the house anymore," Molly says. They want their home to be open whenever their friends drop by.

While they both learned from the experiences of community living and volunteering, Molly said, "We've definitely grown closer." They learned how to work together and the adventure has solidified their faith, their choice for simple living and their decision that they want to continue to use their lives to give back.

# Volunteering to volunteer

They served as moving crew, entertainers and cooks so they could repair homes in Appalachia.

Days hammering nails, building porches and erecting handicapped ramps have planted a passion in the congregation of Hanover Evangelical Friends Church that spurs them to pursue short-term mission trips year-after-year. CAP has been blessed by their participation for the past two years as enthusiastic group leader Jim Trusty has brought his team to volunteer for one week each August.

“We’re not a big church. Our desire is for as many people as possible to experience short term missions,” Trusty says. To make that happen, the congregation organizes a number of fundraising events to defray the cost of the week for volunteers. They have carried out yard sales, dinners and a talent show where Trusty says he laughed harder than he can remember laughing ever before.

This year they also took

advantage of a new opportunity to raise funds. One family was leaving the area so they hired people from the church to move them then paid them generously. The volunteers volunteered so they could travel to Kentucky and volunteer again. That’s the spirit of Hanover Evangelical Friends Church.

“We’ve all been so blessed,” Trusty says when remembering the mission trips to Kentucky. He acknowledges that although they go out on worksites to do jobs that need to be done and that people appreciate, the actual windows they install, roofs they repair or stairs they build aren’t the most important result of their visit. “You hear people’s stories and learn about their lives,” he says.

That often times leads to the opportunity to offer encouragement, spend a few moments in prayer or share a word from the Bible. He finds the spiritual purpose of the

mission to be the most important. Through everything they do, Trusty says, “It’s important to be able to show God’s love.”

Besides enjoying the relationships he has built with the families he has served through CAP, Trusty has also enjoyed meeting CAP’s staff and volunteers. “We’re all the body of Christ and we get to be together,” he says. He has seen God speaking through all of the people involved in the process, demonstrating a love for neighbor that is paramount.

“That’s the way God works,” he says. “You give a little time and he blesses your heart. I believe after you pray and do this you can get a passion for serving the Lord this way. It’s a blessing for your church.”

Those who participate in the mission trip (there were 26 people this year) share their experience with the rest of the congregation. “They send us, they pray for us and support us,” Trusty says. In turn, the participants give a testimony



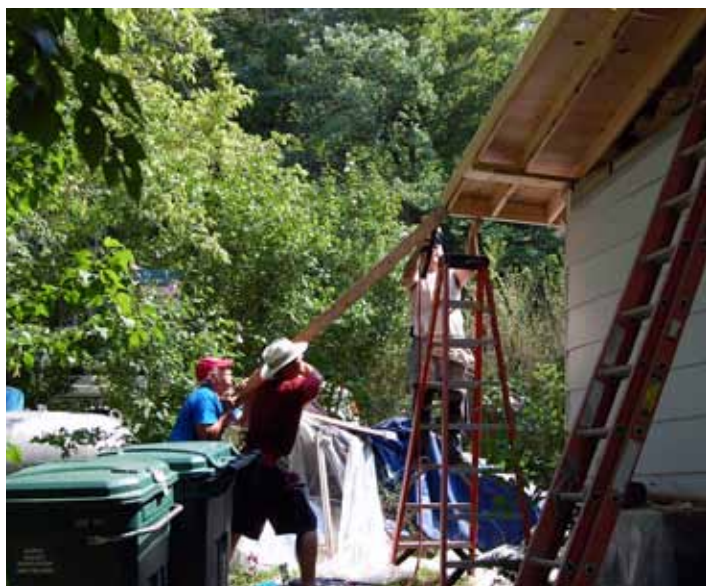
**“I’ve been extremely blessed that we’ve been able to work with CAP,” Jim Trusty says. “You can look at the experience and the people and see the passion for it. It gives people an opportunity to experience God in numerous ways”**

in September. They share their experience and photos, hoping it gratifies their congregation as it also lets them know they have participated in this mission.

“I’ve been extremely blessed that we’ve been able to work with CAP,” Trusty says. “You can look at the experience and the people and see the passion for it. It gives people an opportunity to experience God in numerous ways.”

He encourages other congregations to, “Pick a date, make a phone call and do it.”

*Thanks to Andrew Rath of CAP for the photos.*



## CAP mourns loss of long-time volunteer

Many groups who have volunteered with CAP met long-time volunteer Steve Laudenslager. We were saddened to hear of his death in July. He was well known and loved by so many. Please

join us in offering our prayers for Steve and his family.



# Volunteers finds lessons and beauty in Appalachia

Kristen Lauer comes from a family of teachers, yet when she studied biology and art at the University of Dayton, this Ohio native didn't envision herself surrounded by children. But that's exactly where she's been during her volunteer service with CAP.

Like many of CAP's volunteers, it was during college that Kristen began to think of easing into the "real world" by applying to serve for a year. Some of her classmates had volunteered with CAP during summer months and she visited. Kristen applied to a few places and chose CAP.

That choice placed her in a volunteer house with nine others in rural Jackson County. On school days, she either team taught a practical living class for fourth-



grade students, taught science or art for fifth-grade students, or helped with an after school reading program. When the academic year was finished, Kristen will help with day camps at five schools.

"I've been having a blast with this," Kristen said about her experience. She found her students to be creative and interested in learning.

The volunteer experience has been one of learning for Kristen. "I've gotten to know about the Appalachian culture and people here," she said, noting that she loves the

natural beauty and the people. "One of the many wonderful things I love about this place is that people are not afraid of who they are—they are so proud of their land, their family and their spirituality."

"My most memorable and heart-grasping times are when I have the pleasure of listening to people sing and play their instruments—it is raw and beautiful," Kristen said. She also enjoyed learning from the experience of community living. "It's been great to have that time after dinner to share with one another and discover what we're passionate about," she said.

Kristen is passionate about serving and plans to do so for another year, either in Kentucky or elsewhere.

## Come to Appalachia and fill these needs

The CAP Volunteer Program is looking to fill the following long-term (9-12 months) positions. For more information, contact: [volunteer@chrisapp.org](mailto:volunteer@chrisapp.org) or 1-800-755-5322.

**Parenting Instructor:** Implement the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program. Experience instructing or leading small to medium size groups ideal.

**Spouse Abuse Shelter:** Serve in a 24-hour safe shelter for female domestic violence survivors and their children. Requires working a variety of shifts, some weekends, and occasional holidays.

**Elderly Services:** Provide home visitation, transportation, social activities,

prescription assistance and various other services which decrease isolation and increase socialization of homebound senior citizens.

**Family Advocacy:** Provide short-term emergency assistance such as food, utilities, shelter, household goods, clothes and education expenses.

**Substance Abuse Recovery:** Assist in providing a faith-based residential recovery environment for women with addictions to a variety of legal and illegal substances. Requires working a variety of shifts, including regular night and weekend shifts.

**Respite Services:** Provide in-home respite

care for adults and children with physical and/or mental disabilities. Volunteers provide companionship and personal care if necessary to participants while primary caregivers are away from the home to shop, run errands, etc.

**Risk Management:** Provide administrative support to the Risk Management Department. Must be highly proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Powerpoint.

**Wellness Program:** Coordinate the Wellness initiative of CAP's Human Resources department. The purpose of the Wellness Program is to encourage CAP employees and volunteers to make small changes towards a healthier lifestyle.



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