

Bethlehem Mission Trip

On June 10th, Bethlehem launched its first mission trip to Benton, West Virginia as a part of the Appalachian Service Project's (ASP) work to make housing safe, dry, and warm in the Guyan Valley. The group consisted of Marilyn Abbott, Frank deNobriga, Ann Larson, and Larry Larson. Our group was met by Rick Kirkendall from the Boston, MA area who volunteers each summer with ASP as a "Helping Hand." After a "Sending Service" at the 8AM service, our group departed for the three and a half hour trip to ASP's Service Center in Benton.



Our project was to remove and replace the "underpinning" of the trailer home of Roger



Myers and his family consisting of wife Denise, son Adam, and daughter Amy. Despite the 90-plus degree weather, the group removed most of the existing underpinning on Monday. By Tuesday, the framing of the front of the trailer began. On Wednesday, the majority of the front framing was done although the two corners really presented a challenge. Frank

and Rick did a super job of custom making the two corners that are sure to outlast the trailer. By Thursday, our group, now termed the "Silver Foxes," by the other church groups since ours was, by far, the oldest group participating that first week of work, had the front framing complete so installing the soffit could begin. Ann and Marilyn



turned to on that effort while the guys continued framing the sides of the trailer and building an access door. As Friday rolled around, the group was tired but satisfied by the work they had done by meeting these folks as they are where they are. Bright and early Saturday morning, we bid farewell to the staff at the Service Center and headed home.

Our group was filled with the love of Christ as we were able to help this family have a better living environment that they couldn't afford on their own.



ASP's work continues in four states, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia to improve the lives of families who are in need of help.

While the work was hard, each day we could feel that we had come closer to the goal of completely framing and replacing the underpinning. By Wednesday, we realized that we wouldn't be able to complete the job by the end of the week but the staff

assured us that they never intended for a small group like our to complete the entire trailer. The group that would replace us the following week would finish what we started.

The week was not all work. We started our work day with group devotions that included a Bible reading, a devotion, a prayer, and a hymn. In the evening, after dinner we had devotions for the entire group. On Wednesday evening, we had a cultural presentation on the Appalachian area.



Thursday evening the ASP staff hosted a picnic for all the volunteers and the families we were supporting. Wyoming County has one of the lowest incomes per capita in America as shown by the welcome sign in the ASP Service Center. The area is also dotted with coal mines that have just started to re-open after eight years of being under pressure

by the government to close throwing thousands of people out of a job. It is also an area of beautiful scenery.

Bethlehem hopes to send another group out next summer to help those in need accepting who they are where they are. We hope that this time we'll have a group of our youth join us so they can experience bring Christ's message to those who need to hear it.

