

## **HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH REPORT ON ALABAMA TRIP**

Last summer a group of fourteen St. Paul youth and three adults traveled on a mission trip to Bayou La Batre, Louisiana. This small community is located southwest of Mobile near the Gulf of Mexico coast and is an important to the fishing industry. The Optimist Club help support their mission trip through the Can Kennel. Isaac Schmidt, Blair Hartigan, Josh Lammert, Paige Andersen, and Megan Godfrey (left to right in photo) spoke about their experiences visiting at part of our country that is culturally much different than our community. During the five days at Bayou La Batre they participated in church bible school activities, painted houses, played bingo with seniors, observed the oyster fishing industry, and made new friends. On their way back home the group visited New Orleans. Then everything was turned upside down in this region when hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf coast. Megan showed photos received from the youth pastor they met at Bayou La Batre that illustrated the extreme damage there from the hurricane. Fishing vessels were sitting on roadways and buildings were torn apart because of a 25-foot storm surge driven ashore by the hurricane. Most of the homes were damaged so much that many families are presently living in temporary trailers if they have no where else to go. Their fishing industry was devastated. Treynor youth are actively seeking support to send to the youth pastor at Bayou La Batre to help local families. Nearly three thousand dollars has been contributed so far, but much more is needed. Contributions, which go directly to this community, can be left at the high school.