

St Paul Youth Mission Trip

Denise Wilson and the St. Paul Youth group spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on September 10. This summer 13 youth and 5 adults went to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation at Lame Deer, Montana on a mission trip through Youth Works.



Lame Deer has about 2000 residents. 78% of the adults are unemployed, 68% of the families live below the poverty line, 67% of the people are under age 18, and the average life expectancy is 57 year old. The tribe leaders are trying to maintain the traditions of the tribe, but that is difficult with many people struggling with alcohol and drug addictions.

The youth joined two other churches in the project, with 4-5 Youth Works people supporting the entire summer program.

One new activity this year was called a blanket exercise. Each youth got a small blanket to stand on and a note card. The blankets represented the United States. As the size of the Indian lands shrunk in colonial days, youth with a certain color of note card had to pick up their blanket and move away. The final 3-4 blankets represented the size of the Indian reservations today, versus the original size.

The youth on the mission trip painted houses, participated in Boys and Girls club activities, and held a prayer walk. The Boys and Girls club activities included making bracelets, sports activities, and skits. For the prayer walk a group of youth and adults would stand on the driveway of a house and pray out loud for the family that lived in the house.

The youth noticed that there were dogs everywhere. There are a lot of run down and abandoned houses. Some boarded up houses still have people living in them. There is a lot of arson. Some youth just burn down houses out of boredom. Over 50% of the kids coming to Boys and Girls Club are in foster care.

The tribe was preparing for a sun dance the following week. The dance is for rain, even though it rained every day they were there. The sun dance is three full days of continuous dancing.