

Northminster Baptist Youth Team in Arkansas Delta

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This summer my youth group and I went on a mission trip to Helena, Arkansas. We learned on the way that Helena is in the top twenty poorest counties in the nation. It was hard to believe I only lived four short hours away. The city of Helena impressed me so much even through all of its many struggles. The people we worked with were truly an example of what it means to come together for one purpose to help better the lives of others through Christ.

While in Helena, we worked in and around the community doing various jobs such as tearing down brick walls, playing with kids, preparing for an upcoming vacation bible school, and helping clean up a newly built church. We could see the difference we were making right in front of us and we were proud of ourselves for it. There was a community center we worked at that provided kids of all age groups something to do during the day. We played games, did crafts, and ran around the playground with them.

At the end of one of our workdays, a man said that these kids don't realize how fortunate they are to have a place like this to come. I thought to myself, "If these kids with so little don't even understand how much they have, what does that say about me?" I have it so easy compared to all of them and have so many more opportunities. I started to feel a sense of guilt for thinking how naïve I must be. I realized that I had been blessed with more comforts than many others in the world, but I shouldn't feel bad for it. I should make use of how much I have to reach out to others and to use all of my many blessings to help others. You see all these kids with their smiling faces just happy to have you spend time with them. It makes you see how small and insignificant our daily complaints can become.

I got to this place and I was so excited to start helping these kids and to try to be an example to them, but it turns out I got just the opposite. They helped me in a way that no preacher, parent, teacher, or any adult could ever have. I think the reason for that was their innocence. The way they were just so happy to enjoy the present spoke to me. For me, it was the best example of living in the moment I have ever witnessed. I know that through these kids God was teaching me a lesson about how he wants me to lead my life, with the same kind of joy and acceptance for others as they had.