

## YAC Mission Trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin June 17-23, 2017



Seven CRLC youth, four Peace Lutheran Church youth, our Youth Director Paul Travaglianti and Johnny Miller did a mission trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin on June 17-23, 2016. The program is coordinated by a company called Youth Works, a Christian based organization based in Minnesota.

During the 2014 mission trip, Paul befriended the Youth Director from Messiah Lutheran Church in Wauconda, Illinois. The two leaders have stayed in touch and decided to have all the youth do another mission trip this year. Last year, the group from

Messiah Lutheran Church traveled to Ohio and stayed overnight at our church before we all departed for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

This year, we traveled to Wauconda, Illinois and spent the night at their church before going to Milwaukee. Combined, the youth from these three churches (CRLC, Peace and Messiah) total about 40. We had dinner and played a few games before heading to bed. On Sunday morning, we attended church at Messiah and had a group send-off before we departed. On the way, we made a visit to the Milwaukee Zoo. Upon arrival in Milwaukee, the four Youth Works coordinators greeted our group as well as the youth and adults from several other churches. In total, there were 65 youth and 14 adult leaders (entire group pictured above).



Each day began with breakfast followed by devotions (private time for each youth and adult to reflect on a theme of the day) and then off for the Ministry Day. Our youth spent the day helping the needy in Milwaukee. Part of the group interacted with seniors at a nursing home. An act that can be challenging at time but the youth would amaze you with their ability to help those in need. Part of the group spent several days assisting the staff at a special needs day camp. Each staff member was responsible for at least 4 children (age 5 to 18) so our youth intermixed and gave special attention to these youths. The youth also helped stock a food bank, deliver food for those in need, help landscape an area that was overgrown and whatever else Youthworks needed us to do. By the end of the fourth day, it was hard to say good-bye to our new-found friends. Youthworks asked us not to take any pictures of any of the youth or adults that we were assisting while we were here.

After a much-needed shower (sometimes in cold water), there was free time before dinner. After dinner, there was an evening activity. One night was supposed to be a night at the beach but due to rain, the Youthworks staff improvised and had each church create a skit set to music . . . and 45 minutes to prepare it before performing. Naturally, CRLC took the most awards. Other evening events included a progressive church service, a discussion with a panel that consisted of primarily former drug users that told their story of how finding God has saved their lives and a cookout in the northside suburbs with the local residents. We cooked 160 hamburgers and 80 hotdogs.

At 9 PM, was "Group Gathering", the Youth Works staff hosted a group time to talk about the day, sing songs and talk about highs of the day followed by a "Christ centered" talk. Group Gathering was followed by church group time where we met with only our youth to talk about the day. Lights out at 11 PM.



Thursday's "Group night" featured a foot washing. The Youth Works staff began by washing the feet of the adult leaders and said a prayer. In our case, they washed Johnny's feet and after we all prayed, Johnny asked to wash Paul's feet. Then Paul and Johnny washed the feet of each Peach Lutheran and CRLC youth followed by a prayer. This is already a very emotional night because after Paul or Johnny said a prayer, each youth prayed for that youth. By the end of the evening, there was not a dry eye among our group.

The connections made with the youth, the adult leaders and the Youth Works staff is truly amazing when you consider that you are only together for five days. To show how connections are made, five years ago, Paul was in a work group with youth from the Madison, Wisconsin area. The next year, that group came to our church to spend a night before heading on their mission tour. One of the youth lives in Milwaukee and came to meet Paul after the church service.

We departed for home about 8:30 AM and before we got to Chicago, not a youth in the van was awake. A busy week combined with an emotional foot washing the night before may have had something to do with it. The youth from CRLC and Peace Lutheran have formed some great friendships. You cannot tell that the youth are from different churches. The friendships started at the Youth Gathering in Detroit in 2015 and have continued to grow. Two mission trips and several activities later, we are already looking forward to the Youth Gathering in Houston in June of 2018.

