

Youth in Mission: Preparing young women and men for ministry in the world

By Heather Wallace

For the past four summers the Youth in Mission ministry at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago has offered two programs for high school youth: “Serving Christ in the World” and “Beyond Belief.” These programs aim to deepen the faith lives of students and to excite in them the calling to ministry. Youth from across the country have been nurtured, challenged, and encouraged as they integrate their faith with their vocational and life choices. Jessica Elsen, one of the “Serving Christ in the World” participants from 2006, summed up her experience by saying, “[the trip]] opened my eyes to the world and set a fire under my feet to change the world. I grew as a Christian and built relationships to last a lifetime.”

LSTC thanks the Lilly Endowment, Inc. for providing the generous four-year grant that funded the development of this program. LSTC is working on a sustainability plan for Youth in Mission to continue its ministry. As part of that sustainability plan, “Beyond Belief” will be self-sufficient starting in 2007.

Since it began, “Beyond Belief” has consisted of LSTC planned and led week-long mission opportunities in Chicago. Now high school youth groups from across the country will journey to Chicago for their own “Beyond Belief” experience. By creating this self-sufficient format, the “Beyond Belief” program will be more flexible and can run year round.

Youth leaders and pastors will be able to fit the time and projects to cater to the needs of their youth both financially and spiritually. LSTC will continue to offer minimal-cost housing, service project contacts, local congregation contacts, devotional outlines and the opportunity to talk to seminarians about vocation and seminary. LSTC believes that these changes not only make the program self-sustaining but allow more opportunities for a greater number of groups to participate.

The “Serving Christ in the World” program will, for the summer of 2007, continue with the format it has followed since it began. Participants are rising high school sophomores and juniors. Together with LSTC faculty, seminarians, local pastors and leaders,



Tom Lindfors

Anthony Schock, Juli Herder, Rachel Campbell, and Erin Daubert enjoyed being part of “Serving Christ in the World” in 2006

the youth explore, discover, and experience God in themselves, in others, and in the world. In turn, they learn to give and receive God’s love through serving others. The group spends two weeks at LSTC and one week at the Lutheran Center in Mexico City, Mexico. The core emphases of this program are to explore the issues of diversity and multiculturalism, to experience interfaith and ecumenical dialogue, and to be challenged by the dynamics of wealth and poverty. A participant from 2004, Tom Drummond, stated, “I have grown more in 3 weeks than in the last 3 years...God is present in everyone and everything.”

Youth in Mission focuses on building stronger relationships with God, with others, and with service in the world. As LSTC looks to sustain the Youth in Mission ministries, we invite you to partner with LSTC in this endeavor through your financial contributions, prayers, and participation. Please encourage youth and youth groups to participate in these programs as they serve Christ in the world. For more information about Youth in Mission, see our website at www.lstc.edu/yim/ or contact Heather Wallace at 773.256.0725 or youthinmission@lstc.edu.

Dates for 2007:

Serving Christ in the World - June 17- July 7, 2007
Beyond Belief—Year Round