

# 'Life-changing' mission trip with Catholic Heart Work Camp

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For the bulk of each day, we worked. At the beginning of the trip we were split into groups of approximately five people we didn't know and were assigned our homes. Our projects ranged from painting to repairing windows, to doing yard work, to watching kids at day care. We were awed to see people who had next to nothing for themselves have such a strong faith. Our residents prayed with us, helped us, offered us food and drinks; they did whatever it took to show us their gratitude, even if it meant not having a meal themselves that evening. We saw God that week. In everything we did, we saw Him. In our residents, in each other, in the workers, and in ourselves.

One of my favorite parts was the "Four Corners" experience. The gym lights were turned off, candles were lit, and a reverent mood was set with soft music and personal stories from the staff. Many tears were shed and many eyes were opened. There was a corner for praying for others, one for healing, one for faith, and one for reconciliation. I visited all the corners and was humbled by the powerful impact they had on me. I renewed and strengthened my relationship with God. Praying with a friend, we found new light in ourselves and have had a stronger faith ever since.



At the start of the week, students and chaperones participated in team-building and introduction activities.

It was honestly a life-changing experience. None of us have ever been moved as much as we were on this trip, which is why we are so psyched to go back this summer!

Sharla Sugierski, 16, and the other members of Holy Spirit Church's youth group will be returning to Catholic Heart Work Camp July 15-21 for another summer mission project. This year they will travel to Pittsburgh, Pa., to help those in need.

— Sharla Sugierski, special to the Catholic News Herald

This past summer I was part of the lucky group who attended Holy Spirit Parish's first-ever week-long mission trip to Catholic Heart Work Camp in Bluffton, S.C. CHWC's mission is to revitalize communities and homes for those who are unable to pay for needed repairs.

In addition to this, the organization sends strong messages to its participants and leaves them with lasting impressions. We slept, ate our breakfast and dinner, and had morning and evening programs at a local school. During the programs, we sang, danced, prayed, and connected with God and one another. It was an amazing way to share my faith with my friends, old and new.



**Holy Spirit teens pause for a group photo before their first group mission trip. (Photos by Kate D'Amato and Doreen Sugierski)**



**Jordan D'Amato of the Holy Spirit youth group works with a new friend in her work group. Teens gathered from all across the**

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