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## Teens lend hand to poor and elderly

Camp teens to lend hand to local poor and elderly

By ROBIN CAUDELL Press-Republican Jun 2, 2017



PLATTSBURGH — What 300 teens can accomplish in four days will be wondrous for the local people they help through a faith-and-service initiative.

“The Catholic Heart Workcamp is an international camp program based out of Florida that has camps for teenagers who do service work,” said the Rev. Bryan D. Stitt of St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s churches.

“Every camp has their own thing that they do. There are soccer camps. There are hiking camps. This is faith and service.”

### **LOTS OF COTS**

Teens, in high school and college, will be based at Seton Catholic Central School from June 25 to 30.

They will hail from the North Country, as well as Maryland, Michigan, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

“We are there to serve poor and the elderly in the community,” Stitt said.

“Whatever those people and institutions need, we are there to do. Once people hear about this, they’re like ‘Yeah, we want this in our town. It’s such a good thing.’”

The teens do minor yard work, scraping paint, painting and minor construction.

“We build handicap ramps,” Stitt said. “We fix steps and porches.

“My favorite project that I was part of was knocking down a small barn. We had to clear out an old barn that was starting to show its 100-years plus. They needed to put that stuff in a new storage unit.

"We removed all that stuff, we demoed the small barn. It was great fun."

## FAITH GROWERS

The teens also visit elderly people in nursing homes.

"We also do some work with little kids, like if they are having vacation Bible school," Stitt said.

"Teens love working with the little kids, and the little kids respond well to the teens."

Now, camp managers Jocelyn Kelly and Samantha Poulin are tasked with prepping work sites.

"We have 300 teens coming; they need work to do," Stitt said.

"We're almost to the point we have filled up our docket of work sites, but it doesn't hurt to still ask."

## DOWN TO BASICS

In the past several years, the teens were hosted in dormitories at Wadhams Hall Seminary College in Ogdensburg.

"Normally, this camp goes to schools as their base of operations," Stitt said.

"They are just looking for cheap housing. The kids are not doing it for lavish accommodations. They are not doing it for the food. They are doing it for service work and to grow in their faith.

"Every day, they start the day with prayer and they end it with prayer."

Fun games, activities and social are interspersed throughout their stay.

On their last day, the out-of-town teens travel on their free day.

"They stop at Great Escape or Water Safari on their last day home," Stitt said.

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## LEARN MORE

To request assistance from the Catholic Heart Workcamp, contact Jocelyn Kelly or Samantha Poulin at 518-651-0786 or 518-521-3299.

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