Montana Mission 2014 encompassed four main outreach venues to the residents of the reservation. Team members spread their talents to minister in multiple settings.

The men in the group continued renovating a mobile home for an Adventist widow. Before the Village team arrived, resident Gary Marsh leveled the trailer. The men replaced rotting wood structures, added new siding and doors, and redid the plumbing.

One group conducted a Vacation Bible School in Frazer, about 45 miles from the tribal house used for lodging. The six students from the team actively involved themselves in the experience, assembling craft supplies, leading singing and games, and creating a skit for each day. Dr. Kate Keith gave a health lesson, Desi Dunomes taught the Bible story on creation, and Anna Chiarenza prepared a daily creative snack.

A smaller group gathered at the community college in Poplar to provide a grief recovery class for children. The hazards of living on the reservation were easily illustrated by counting roadside crosses on the route to church on Sabbath: twelve were seen in about ten miles.

The fourth team outreach met nightly with the teens in the juvenile center. Those residents at the juvenile center with improving behavior, were allowed, but not required, to attend the meetings. Each teen who was allowed to come, chose to join the sessions. The Marshes provided GLOW tracts, religious books, and Bible study cards for the teens.
Making Friends for Jesus

Following the Haywards ministry visit in April to the reservation, the mission team was invited to share Depression Recovery information at the juvenile center in Poplar. A core group came nightly to interact with the teenagers. Dr. Kate illustrated a different health topic each time, teaching life lessons about the importance of fiber in the diet, how much sugar is in energy drinks, and other pertinent topics.

Pastor Kelly and Pastor Hayward taught the principles to win the battle over hopelessness and depression from Dr. Neil Nedley’s material.

The meetings were held in the gym and most evenings the men played basketball with the boys, several of whom are aspiring to become professional players. The women of the group took the time to get acquainted with the teen girls. Two evenings our own young people from the Village Church were given special permission to come into the juvenile center to share their musical talents.

Each evening a different healthy food was served. The more adventurous ate their own portions and their friends’ as well! Extra servings were brought for the guards’ sampling, who seemed to appreciate the treat.

Besides making friends with the teens, the mission team became acquainted with the guards on duty. It became increasingly clear how much these adults care about the teens in their charge, becoming sort of a family to them.

The last evening with the teens, Pastor Kelly appealed to the young people to give their hearts to Jesus. He encouraged them to meet again with the team, but on the other side of the detention center. Warm hugs were given with the goodbyes.

While taking pictures outside the center, a voice was heard over the loudspeaker, “You can’t take the pictures without me!” from one of the guards.

“Come on out,” was the invitation, and one of the team’s new friends joined those outside to share a photo opportunity together.

HEART TO HEART

I wasn’t totally prepared for the bold expression of reincarnation from the 14-year old seated a quarter of a turn around our circle. He was bright and funny, though failing in school, and he knew exactly what he believed about life after death – his spirit would come back as another person somewhere and some time in the future. We were only about halfway through our week and still building friendships, so I left the error alone. But God wasn’t caught off guard.

A few days later an officer at the juvenile center encouraged us to invite the teens to accept Christ before we finished the week. What a beautiful privilege on our last night to let my 14-year old friend (and all his fellow inmates) know that He was special to Jesus, not just a temporary body of flesh inhabited by a life force. And that someday Jesus would come to take him home if his heart belonged to the Savior. He was listening.

We have such a beautiful message! Combine it with a beautiful life and the power of the gospel is maximized. We are walking advertisements for the teachings of Christ. What an awesome privilege! So be reminded today and everyday of how special you are to God and may His beauty flow through us so that others will want to taste and see how good He is.

Pastor Ron
Thanks, Elizabeth, for all the yummy meals, served with flexibility and smiles!
**Church in Chelsea**

A previous Montana mission trip team painted the quaint one-room country church in Chelsea, about 5 miles outside Poplar. An old Native American cemetery ends the dusty drive past the church, with some graves marked very simply, or covered with stones.

Both Sabbaths the mission team worshipped in the church. B.J. Miller provided heart and soul music on the piano, and the young ladies joined in with flutes, violin, and singing.

Desi Dunomes taught the Sabbath School lesson the first week, and team leader Bill Keith, the second Sabbath. Pastor Kelly shared the morning messages with the group.

**Potential Property**

Gary and Marla Marsh, former missionaries, former Village members, have settled into their home in Poplar, Montana to use their retirement years to bless the Native Americans on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. They currently worship with our church, via the live stream broadcast, in their home.

The Montana Conference is interested in purchasing a piece of property in a prime location in downtown Poplar. The Marshes would love to see a community center built there where lifestyle education classes could be taught, along with a place for short-term volunteers to stay.

**Still Swimming**

Several layers of trash in the bottom of the pool prevented Poplar residents from being able to use the town swimming pool until the “green shirt people” cleaned it out several years ago. Not only is it still trash-free, but townspeople laugh and splash in the water on hot summer days, continuing to make good use of the gift of service from Village members.