Dear Lexie,

Unplugged

We went without hot water, air conditioning, comfortable beds, WiFi and other American comforts for a week in the Dominican Republic. Each day we had hours without electricity, bug bites became a way of life, and oppressive heat drained the energy out of us. We dug 60-yard trenches with shovels and picks, leveled, laid blocks, mixed and poured cement.

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Our Community Prayer Journey to Adelphi Elementary

Our prayer coverage this week reaches the busy, bustling neighborhood along Riggs Road. During the summer break, kids leave their homes to cross this car-busy street to get to stores and to the parks. May a special host of angels guide their ways and quicken their decisions to maximize their safety.
Summertime: An Opportunity for Service

Summertime is finally here! If you're like me— you're thinking of baseball games, cookouts and trips to the beach! Surely this is a time to relax and enjoy the blessings of family and friends. Each of these activities is delightful and should be savored. But there's another activity that your young people will be doing that may not come as readily to mind when we think of summer activities: serving others. And that is exactly what some of our Sligo youth will be doing!
Spam
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We went without hot water, air conditioning, comfortable beds, WiFi and other American comforts for a week in the Dominican Republic. Each day we had hours without electricity, bug bites became a way of life, and oppressive heat drained the energy out of us. We dug 60-yard trenches with shovels and picks, leveled, laid blocks, mixed and poured cement.

Each day began with worship. We also paused after lunch for worship and ended each day with worship. Being unplugged from the world allowed us the time and head space to plug into God and each other. There was no WiFi, no text messages, no social media to distract us from what God was doing in us, for us, and through us. Youth who had seen each other often in America but rarely spoke finally started to have conversations with each other thousands of miles away.

The work was not easy. When we started mostly everyone needed breaks after just a few minutes of labor. Most did not have the physical strength or the mental stamina to keep up. However, we kept pushing and by the end of the week our physical ability had grown. We needed fewer breaks and our endurance and stamina had increased. After just a week of work the youth learned that not only had their bodies grown in strength and endurance, they also realized that they had a new found work ethic and that work builds character. More importantly, they realized that being unplugged, having unadulterated time with God, working hard and being in nature brought them closer to God. As the week wore on, it was evident that God was doing something in the group that far too often we are too distracted at home to notice or allow.

At the end of the week we closed the Sabbath with vespers sitting on a beach. The Sabbath seemed to mean more after a week of character building work. Since we had been worshipping together all week, the Sabbath became a celebration of where we’d been with God and what He had been doing in us. Instead of being the normal weekly social ritual, it was a special day for fellowship, reflection, and celebration with God and with each other. As we closed the Sabbath with prayer, four youth came forward for baptism and one for re-baptism.

Although not all of us can go on mission trips, it is important for us to create time and space where we can be unplugged. Perhaps families could put all their phones away during meal times and family worship. Create opportunities where family members can spend time engaging in character building work. Spend intentional time in nature. Foster an atmosphere of worship through the week, so that Sabbath is truly a celebration of where your family has been with God all week.

We went to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic intending to give of our time and energy, which we did. However, what we gained far outweighed what we could give.

I leave you with some quotes from the youth who were on the mission trip:

…I always heard mission trips change you but I wouldn’t know till I gave it a try…I ended up making great friends…and I started to understand my path with Christ more. – Naomi

Mission trips give you a sense of relaxation and peace with yourself and God. Being away from technology for a week
can hurt but it can bring you so much closer to yourself and your surroundings. – Liz

…We became a family on a spiritual journey. – Victoria

Mission trips allow people to step out of their comfort zones, experience new things, meet new people, and remove yourself from your monotonous life. You’re able to separate yourself from the outside world and reconnect with God and get to know Him for the first time… -Briana

…I got closer to God on this trip. I don’t do worship every day. – Anonymous

This mission trip was worth going on because it brought me closer to God… – Anonymous

This mission trip helped me to grow closer to God and meet new people. – Asher

I feel like this mission trip changed my life by seeing a whole different world. – Jovani

…Building the sidewalks also build up my character, stamina, and work ethic. I appreciate this opportunity for all it taught me and I’m so glad I came… – Jessica

It changed my life and showed me how blessed I am. – Michael

This trip was truly life-changing. It was very humbling and just altogether amazing… – Desiree

A picture is worth a thousand words and can only capture so much; but the memories that are made, those are priceless. – RJ

(by Pranitha Fielder)

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Our prayer coverage this week reaches the busy, bustling neighborhood along Riggs Road. During the summer break, kids leave their homes to cross this car-busy street to get to stores and to the parks. May a special host of angels guide their ways and quicken their decisions to maximize their safety. May their parents be prompted to make library visits a summer tradition to keep learning fresh and vibrant.

May a different type of learning and reinforcement occur from VBS programs, community centers, and pools.

• We pray that the teachers get the renewal and refreshment they seek.

• We pray for the other staff members as they prepare the building to ensure a vibrant learning environment.

• We pray that the crossing guards find alternative employment during the break.

Church we continue to pray!
Summertime: An Opportunity for Service

Scott Lawrence

Summertime is finally here! If you’re like me—you’re thinking of baseball games, cookouts and trips to the beach! Surely this is a time to relax and enjoy the blessings of family and friends. Each of these activities is delightful and should be savored. But there’s another activity that your young people will be doing that may not come as readily to mind when we think of summer activities: serving others. And that is exactly what some of our Sligo youth will be doing!

As I have mentioned in several other articles, the Disabilities Action Team (DAT) is joining forces with the Youth Department to give our youth opportunities to serve. Teams Sligo youth will be matched up with those who have some sort of limitation and they could use some sort of help. Who can use this service? Sligo youth will be happy to help anyone who may need these services. For example, maybe you’ve recently had some sort of surgery and could really use a little help. Or maybe you have a child who has a disability and you could really use some help with the child so that you could get some things done. Finally—maybe your just lonely and would really enjoy the company of some young people for an hour or two. Here’s how it works: once a month—usually on a Sunday—our youth will go to Sligo members and help them with light chores, yard work, shopping etc. But here’s the thing: we can’t help if we don’t know where the needs are.

Please stop by the Welcome Desk and give us your information below and we will be in contact with you. All you need to do is fill out the form to request these services. But be forewarned: these kids have energy and a passion for service!

So enjoy the blessings of summer. And let’s give our youth the blessing of serving others!

(by Kathy Roy Johnson)