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“Before this week I never ran a power saw... never used a drill, never showered in sulfur water... never had to pop my ears because of the mountains....and never sang ‘Country Roads.’”

From Diana’s journal, Orlando FL team in Hampden

West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps, Inc. (WVMAW), was started as the Disaster Recovery arm of the Presbytery of West Virginia in September, 2001. The organization was incorporated in May, 2002. WVMAW’s Executive Director reports to a Board, which represents Presbyterians from around the state. The Reverend Joan Stewart, Executive Director also periodically presents reports to Presbytery, and is an agency member of the Mission Committee and is a member of the Leadership Team of the Presbytery of WV.

Volunteer Management

Number of volunteer work teams. From March 2, 2013 through August 10, 2013 we have hosted a total of 55 groups. They represent groups PA, IN, IL, OH, NC, SC, NY, NH, MD, MI, VA, NJ, GA, and WV. **Spring break college groups** came from Cabrini College, Notre Dame University, George Washington University, Penn State, and the College of Wooster. We also hosted Holy Ghost Prep School from Philadelphia, and St Peter’s Prep of NJ. Yay spring break teams that choose WV over the beach!



Holy Ghost Prep School, Bensalem, PA celebrates 20 years of mission in WV. Thank you to John Fitzpatrick (center front) for all the coordination, hard work and outreach through the years.

Estimated value of volunteers Total number of volunteers thus far: 697. Total volunteer hours: 23,776. Valued at \$21.79 per hour, the total value of these volunteer hours is \$518,079.04.

Hampden, WV: Pastor Cab and Bonita Wolford are the site supervisors at Hampden, near Gilbert. They have a team of four volunteers from their congregation at the Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer who work with Cab and the volunteer teams to help keep materials on site and give instruction. Fourteen teams so far have worked on 27 homes that have included roofing, flooring, reconstruction of walls, decks, wheel chair ramps, underpinning, plumbing, paint and clean up.

Mount Hope, WV: Tim Stewart led eighteen groups in Mount Hope, WV that helped work on 29 homes. Projects have involved roofing, repairing and rebuilding decks, porches, wheel chair ramps, replacing flooring, plumbing, and kitchen work. In partnership with Catholic Charities and the Regional Long Term Recovery Committee, derecho repair work was made for six homes.

Montgomery, WV: Mike D'Aversa led nine summer teams in Montgomery and helped with some of the Mount Hope teams. Mike and teams completed work on 19 projects for families that have included replacing flooring, sheetrock work, replacing bathroom, kitchen, re-wiring, ceiling work, demolition and reconstruction of room and porch, and wheel chair ramps.



Summer intern Tyler Rea

Colcord, WV: Art Petty supervised one spring and five summer weeks of teams that assisted 29 families. **Tyler Rea**, summer intern, helped Art to work on projects that included siding, porches, wheel chair ramps, roofing, flooring and bathroom and kitchen repair.

Webster Springs, WV: WVMAW once again partnered with Webster County Workcamps where **Jimmy Utt** from Cowen, WV coordinated 7 teams that painted, built porches, wheel chair ramps, roofing, and general repair. Ten families were served.

St. Albans, WV: WVMAW partnered with St. Paul Community and Economic Development Corporation of St Albans, and provided two teams of volunteers. These

teams helped to build a bathroom, wheel chair ramp, roof, porch, paint, trim, and gutter. Six families were served.

WVMAW Working in Partnerships

- As members of **Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)** WVMAW collaborated with **Catholic Charities** in Fayette County to complete repairs for families whose homes were damaged by the June, 2012 Derecho. This was in partnership with the **Region Long Term Recovery**.
- WVMAW Site Supervisor Tim Stewart worked for **Catholic Charities** to help with case working Derecho damages to homes in Nicholas and Fayette County
- WVMAW joined with **Catholic Charities and the Fayette County 911 Center** to follow up on phone calls to set up case work
- WVMAW partnered with **Webster County Work Camps** to bring in volunteers that stayed in the Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches in Webster Springs.
- WVMAW partnered with the **Summersville Presbyterian Church** for a youth targeted project for one day. Youth and adult leaders helped to build a set of steps for a couple in need. These steps were the beginning of a project that led to a needed wheel chair ramp for the couple.
- Rev. Greg Kubar, pastor at **Summersville Presbyterian Church** and WVMAW Board Member, hosted volunteers from Jenkintown, PA. The SPC weekly newsletter summarized their project: "They were planning on constructing a community garden, but due to the weather, they came inside and totally cleaned the pre-school room, disinfected all the toys large and small, washed down the walls and floor, cleaned the carpets (actually beat them outdoors too!); sorted all the canned goods by type and expiration date in the food pantry and its storage rooms; and helped with the summer kids food program! A hearty thanks to Grace Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania!"
- The Executive Director has enjoyed doing pulpit fill around the state in various churches, sharing WVMAW stories and getting to preach or present mission: **Summersville, Upperglade, Richwood, Frankford, Hico, Summerlee, Highlawn Huntington, Kanawha United Charleston, Glenville, and Fayetteville**. She also preached at the **Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer** in Hampden to thank God and the church for their partnership with WVMAW.
- The Executive Director was the guest preacher at the World Day of prayer service at **Fayetteville Presbyterian, Fayetteville WV**.
- The Executive Director has traveled to share mission stories to **St. Johns United Church of Christ, Clear Springs, MD**.
- WVMAW Treasurer Karen Robinson is on the Board of the **Waste Water Treatment Coalition of McDowell County**. WVMAW continues to collaborate with agencies and utilities to help develop wastewater treatment projects in remote areas of the county.
- WVMAW partnered again with the **St. Paul Community and Economic Development Corporation of St Albans**. (see story for ecumenical partnership formed)

- We continue to give thanks for Kristen Lohe, our “computer geek” who designed the WVMAW web site. Kristen is from Carmel, IN and is a member of **Crossroads Church**.



A little paint can brighten up a lot!

Visions from St Paul Missionary Baptist Church, St Albans

Pastor Michael A. Poke had a vision of mission ministry in St. Albans. He knew of projects to bring hope and help to families in need, and WVMAW Board Members Rev. Paul Romine and Elder Jack Rogers, of First Presbyterian, St. Albans, knew of some expertise. Now for the second year in a row, WVMAW partnered with St. Paul Community Economic Development to bring a helping hand to families in need.

The volunteers were housed at Highlawn Baptist Church. First Presbyterian Church, St Andrews United Methodist, Highlawn Presbyterian, Riverlawn Presbyterian, St Mark Episcopal, and St Paul Missionary Baptist provided meals. Thanks to Dale Young who lined out the work, Rev. Herk McGraw who greeted the groups and provided stories and escort service, Elder Charlie Shaeffer who has given his plumbing expertise to help out, and to Rev. Dr. Michael Poke who has given countless hours to finishing up the projects and laying the ground work for a future partnership!



Slightly unusual site for the parking lot at Highlawn Baptist, St. Albans!

Taking in a Stray

Mary Katherine Hart from Houston, TX joined us for three weeks this summer. As part of a project for the school she attends, Mary Katherine had to complete volunteer community service. Thanks to Rev. Jean Sutton of Huntington, who happens to be best friends with Mary Katherine's mom, we welcomed her to join with three different groups. Thank you to Fran Morton of First Presbyterian, Lexington, NC for taking the first week in Hampden. Thanks to Rob Bradford of Kalamazoo who took her the second week in Colcord. And thanks to Jean Dofflemeyer of Elkton, VA for the final week in Webster Springs.



Mary Katherine Hart

Mary Katherine wrote, "I had a really good experience on work camp. I enjoyed roofing and organizing a closet, I particularly enjoyed building a deck, it was a lot of fun. I had a diverse experience with the residents, some were wonderful and some hard to serve. Sil was very warm and hospitable even in the midst of her own disabilities....I felt an affinity with the poor of WV, they were people just like me, they just had less money." Mary Katherine said she would do it again, however she would only go for two weeks. She was worn out by the third week!



Numbers and Stories

All of the numbers are because that is what I have to report. I think it is the “Martha” in us that gets focused on the work totals and that becomes the value of what we have done. But numbers barely begin to tell the story. The story is in the lives that are changed because people care enough to take their faith in Jesus beyond the walls of a building and into the Kingdom where he called us.

The Gospel of Luke tells us the story of Martha who was furious with her sister Mary for sitting at Jesus’ feet to listen to him instead of helping her in the kitchen. Martha told Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help her, but Jesus said that Mary had chosen the better part. This is not a story that sits well for any of the Martha’s out there—especially all of the many Martha’s that come to WV to “get the job done.”

Last winter I had met Bob at the food pantry. He has severe arthritis and walks nearly bent over. He was in need of a wheel chair ramp that was quite an engineering feat. It had to be 70 feet long, and the mission team that took it on had 6 teenage girls along with four adults and the site supervisor. They had four days to complete it and were worried that they couldn’t get it done. You know all that rain we kept getting this summer? The rain that would soak us one minute, and then clear up 5 minutes later? Well this was the rain that brought all the Martha’s off the ramp and onto the porch where they could meet Bob and his wife Jackie, and learn their story. They learned how Bob suffered being immobile for nearly nine years before surgery allowed him to become mobile, even though he walked with extreme difficulty. What we saw as severe handicap was actually more freedom for him than he had known in a long time, and he said he was blessed. When we saw him, we saw what we thought he could not do. What he showed us all was that God had given him a re-do—he was a walking miracle. And he was known for his prayers for others. Perspective. And that perspective changed the way the girls saw the busy work that they were doing. They were not doing something FOR Bob. They were sharing his life, and helping to liberate him and Jackie to be able to get out more easily. They took away Jackie’s fear of not having a way for ambulance people to help in an emergency, or for her own struggle when Bob would be completely wheel chair bound. The presence of Jesus—hearing the God story—changed things.



“Meeting Bob made me realize that life may get you down, but it is your choice and yours alone to decide whether to get back up again. From now on until the end of time, because of Bob, I will get back up again.” Highlight from Genesis Youth Group, Moorestown, PA

WV Version of Hurricane Sandy: Blizzard
Sharing a portion of a sermon by Mark Banasiak, Your Minister
First Presbyterian, Clarksville, TN

...Well, we arrived and set up camp in the fellowship hall and Sunday school rooms of the First Baptist Church of Webster Springs, WV. The town is quaint.....population of 775. It has been experiencing a rough patch with the closure of two coal mines in recent years. Sunday afternoon, Mikey and I went with our site coordinator to visit our work site. That is when we met the O'Dell's. Dennis and Miss D. Their homestead was at the end of a long and windy road.....the place where the pavement stops and the dirt road begins. This is where Miss D and her 11 siblings grew up....160 acres of gorgeous West Virginia hills. The house sits on a flat piece of land at the bottom of the holler surrounded by a stream, 4 vegetable gardens and Miss D's day lilies. She had every color in the rainbow and they were in full bloom. Their house was originally a single wide trailer but had been doubled in size in recent years with some room additions. They were excited to see us and share with us their story. You see, when Super Storm Sandy came on shore last year it slammed the East coast with wind, rain, and a powerful storm surge. Well, by the time it made it over this little holler in West Virginia, it was snowing. I am sure they thought it was gorgeous as it laid in the grass and on the trees. But as the inches turned into feet they began to worry. It didn't stop snowing until it was over 50 inches deep.....yes, I said 5 – 0 Fifty inches.



That day, Dennis heard some noise and went to look, by the time he realized what was happening there was no stopping it. The weight of the snow collapsed the roof of their house. Everything they owned was under a mess of shattered beams, roofing, and snow. Days turned into weeks and weeks into months. In April, they were able to begin to rebuild. Family and friends helped them clean up the mess, strip the walls down to the studs, and build a new roof. This is a slow process as they work to live while trying to save money to make the necessary repairs. A few weeks later a group of men from Nebraska showed up and helped to start to hang the new drywall....A couple of weeks later, we show up. Dennis later told me that when we arrived with 15 teenagers he was hopeful that some work would be accomplished but not sure how much the teens would actually be able to do. On Monday, we arrived on our worksite. Our plan was to work on hanging drywall as well as tackle a few other tasks. The first day is always slow as it takes a little while to unload the

tools, assign tasks, and then instruct each one of the youth how to complete their task. After an hour, you could see youth sanding the joints that had been completed by the men from Nebraska and also taping and mudding the joints left unfinished. They also began to measure, cut, and hang new drywall in the remaining 2 1/2 rooms. The youth worked when they needed to and rested when necessary. I loved hearing them say, “what can I do now?”.....Dennis has gout and faces periods of severe pain and was unable to help. He simply sat and watched the youth work. However, he was always willing to talk to any of them who needed to sit and rest. Miss D was energetic and worked right alongside the youth. As we cleaned up to head out for the day Miss D hugged everyone’s neck. As we sat in that room, a 64 year old man wept as he verbalized his appreciation for what those teenagers had actually done for them....You see.....those youth gave up a weeks worth of their summer vacation to DO, LOVE, and WALK. It just wasn’t fair that the snow accumulated and collapsed Dennis and Mrs. Dee’s house.....why them? We don’t know why and never will. But I do know.....without a doubt, that those 15 youth DID their part, to LOVE Dennis and Miss D all while WALKING humbly with their God in midst of that holler in WV.

For the entire inspired sermon by Mark, please go to website www.wvmaw.org and click on link. Thanks Mark for sharing this with us!

Future

We still have eight more teams scheduled for the fall, ending the week of Thanksgiving. We continue to look at partnerships with churches and agencies around the state so that we can serve people in need.

Seventeen groups are on schedule for 2014 so far. There are so many more stories of God’s grace, and many more stories to unfold. One young lady wrote: “My highlight of my workweek was getting out of my comfort zone and learning new handy things about tools and also the lifestyle change for some people. Talking to [homeowner] was really touching and it definitely impacted my perspective on the world. I think it is safe to say that I am going home a changed and better person.”



Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever! Amen.