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FCC Volunteers Serve In Joplin On Mission

JULY 29TH 2011 BY NEWS

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*By Debbie Stidham,
Special to the ShowMe Times*

Eight members of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including Dr. Larry Colvin, Larry Thompson, Debbie Ellinghouse, Lisa Thrower, Debbie Stidham, Kellie Reese, Jansen Williams and Sarah Moore left Sunday, July 24 for the mission trip to Joplin stopping in Springfield to pick up another volunteer, Nancy Wright.

This group of nine worked Monday and Tuesday at the Joplin Family Worship Center on 7th Street distributing to families and individuals who lost their home or their employment due to the tornado of May 22, 2011.

Those effected would first register and complete paperwork as to their needs, whether it be furniture, bedding, hygiene supplies, baby supplies or food. The group from FCC worked in the food pantry, loading grocery carts with “bonus” supplies of cases of Sunny D, concentrated grape juice, tomato soup, chicken and noodle soup, sloppy joe, enriched powdered drink, crackers, mac and cheese, chicken gravy and beef gravy, chicken and beef broth, milk and microwave dinners.

In addition to these cases of food, they received items they specifically requested, such as cereal, breakfast food, pasta, pickles, peanut butter, jelly, chips, candy, tuna snack kits, tea and or coffee, microwave rice and beans, rice casserole mix, , frozen rolls/cinnamon rolls,

pig in a blanket and much more. There were also household and personal supplies such as bath tissue, batteries, flashlights, paper towels, cleaning solutions, detergent, fabric softener, bleach, sponges, buckets, tissue, window cleaner, dish detergent and much more.

On Wednesday, Larry Colvin, Larry Thompson, Sarah Moore and Jansen Williams reported early morning to Americorp and were assigned an apartment complex where they picked up debris to clear the way for demolition equipment to get to the complex.

Debris was separated into what could be incinerated and what could be recycled as metal. There were various personal items that were found, including a high school student's personal notebook, lots of toys and even clothing still hanging in the closets that were still standing.

The other five of the group, Nancy,

<images/Blog Images/NEWS - JUNE&JULY2011/7.29.2011 pet.jpg>

Debbie Stidham, Debbie Ellinghouse, Kellie and Lisa volunteered at the Joplin humane society where Kellie and Debbie Ellinghouse did mounds of laundry, Nancy swept and mopped floors and assisted Lisa in some administrative duties. Debbie Stidham worked cleaning the rooms and cages of the adoptable cats/kitten. There were several animals (dogs and cats) at the society including a very large long ear bunny!

After touring the disaster area Monday evening, it is apparent that the devastation was immense and that Joplin is still in need of volunteer assistance. It was amazing the number of people that were there, with most of them being teenagers. The FCC group worked along side a group of 50+ teenagers from Michigan and met 35+ teens and adults from Atlanta on their way to Joplin who had stopped at Hillbilly Junction.

While in Joplin, the group was housed at the First Christian Church in Neosho, who also provided breakfast, sack lunches and dinner. Representatives from the church stated that they had housed some 270 volunteers from all across the country, including Los Angeles, CA in the past two months.

The group heard lots of stories from the folks at the church and there were tears, hugs and lots of thanks from the residents. They met young and old, and every age in between, those who were lower income and those who were highly educated. This tornado spared no one class, race, religion, level of education or age.

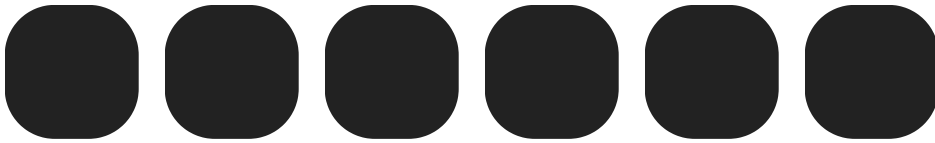
While it was dirty, hot and hard work, the group agreed that they would return again, if they had the chance, to help the victims of the Joplin tornado.

Thanks to Debbie Ellinghouse for the photos!

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