

# Teens serve and sacrifice in Appalachia

EAST AURORA — Young people from Immaculate Conception Parish spent a week of their summer, July 15-20, serving others in the Appalachia area of Pennsylvania. This was the Immaculate Conception Youth's third Mission Trip with Young People Who Care in Frenchville, Pa. Each day the teens picked blueberries at YPWC's blueberry patch and then went to various work sites. Roofing, yard work, painting, pouring concrete and various building projects were among the tasks they completed for residents in the area. The blueberries are sold to raise funds for YPWC.

During the week the teens lived and learned about the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The morning prayers focused on the following principles: respect for the life and dignity of the human person, the option for the poor and vulnerable and call to community. They lived the principle of solidarity with the poor by giving up electronic devices, junk food and soda pop. The only beverages available were water, hot chocolate, coffee or tea for the week. They also conserved water with limited military showers.



COURTESY OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Immaculate Conception's youth group members prepare for a service trip to the Appalachian Mountains in Pennsylvania. Among those who went were (front row, left to right) Tanner Newell, Alexandra Mullane, Annie Koester and Julia Livingston. (Back row, left to right) Anna Brach and Denise York, director of Youth Ministry for the East Aurora parish.

Sometimes at work sites the people being helped provided lunch or flavored beverages. Tanner Newell,

a third year participant, noted that he was more appreciative of these gifts because he was living without them for the week. Breakfast and dinner were cooked by the young people who were on home crew each day. The home crew also created and led the night prayers.

Every year the young people return with a new perspective and often a deeper faith. This year they were joined by teenagers from different areas of Pennsylvania and Illinois, so they also made new friends within the Christian community they created for the week. The entire experience allows young people to see what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus.

In addition to the Mission Trip Immaculate Conception teens served at Harvest House Baby Ministry, Vive la Casa and Response to Love this summer. The Junior and Senior High Nights will begin again in September.

For more information visit [www.icyouthea.org](http://www.icyouthea.org).



COURTESY OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Immaculate Conception's youth group members Alexandra Mullane, Julia Livingston, Annie Koester, Anna Brach and Tanner Newell receive a blessing from fellow parishioners before embarking on a service trip to the Appalachian Mountains.