

Mission Jamaica Team Report February 11-18, 2009 Garland Hall Children's Home, Anchovy, St. James, Jamaica

We are a "Wednesday to Wednesday" Team. We are thirteen people who come from Christ Lutheran Church, Marine on St. Croix, MN, Farmington Lutheran Church, Farmington, MN, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Appleton, WI, and Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN. We do the majority of our maintenance and other work on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.



Sunday, February 15, was our special day with the staff and children of Garland Hall Children's Home. But I will write more on that later. On Monday, with most of our work done, and our special day over,

Mission Jamaica Executive Director Michael Wittkamper accompanied four team members back to the orphanage to hook up and finish up a few of the projects in the Computer Lab. While we were there, Michael asked one of the children, "Did you have a good day yesterday?" The little boy answered unexpectedly with a resounding, "NO!" Michael had asked a child who just came to live at the orphanage on that day, who had heard about our wonderful Sunday, and who was wishing he had come a day earlier. Every other child and staff member would have answered the question with a resounding, "YES!"

We arrived at the Sunset Beach Resort on Wednesday afternoon, February 11, and took the rest of the day for rest and orientation, concluding with devotions on the beach, watching the sunset, and dinner at the Banana Walk Restaurant. On Thursday morning, we boarded our bus for the ride up Long Hill Road to the town of Anchovy and to the Garland Hall Children's Home. Upon our arrival, Administrator, Gwendolyn Woodit, other staff members and the children who were not at school at the time, greeted us, and we toured the facilities, identified our projects and inventoried our supplies. We had proposed to divide into four work teams to work on twelve projects that we estimated would take 240 person/hours. If we all worked hard for six hours each day, we estimated we had 234 person/hours available. Faith and naïveté are wonderful gifts.

Our projects were as follows.

1. Dining Room: Replace broken window slats. Repair wall, touch up paint as needed, replace damaged entry door, lockset and door jam and paint new material.
2. Lower Level Boys' Dorm: Remove and replace broken door and lockset, paint new material and touch up paint the walls.
3. Sitting Room/Storage Room: Convert this room into a Computer Lab and Library. Clear out items, disposing of unnecessary items and storing important things elsewhere. Construct a four level series of shelves along the entire South wall, populating them with the books found in the many boxes. On the entire East wall, construct a support system and new computer tables using pre-formed laminate counter tops. Paint all new material.
4. Girls' Larger Dorm: Clean and seal stains on ceiling. Paint ceiling and touch up walls. Replace broken lockset.

5. Girls' Smaller Dorm: Replace damaged 10' x 12' ceiling with new treated plywood and install 1 x 2" battens on seams and around perimeter creating a grid pattern. Paint new ceiling and touch up walls.
6. Hall Bathroom: Replace damaged door and lockset. Paint door.
7. Kitchen: Repair outside door and paint door. Clean walls with TSP and paint lower walls white to match existing paint. If Time Permits: Paint upper walls/ceiling gray to match existing gray area.
8. Small Dining Area off Kitchen: Clean 12' x 13' ceiling with TSP and paint ceiling white.
9. Back Veranda/TV Room/Shower Room: Install new lockset on door to Boys' Dorm. Replace shower room door and lockset. Paint doors and touch up ceiling and walls.
10. Small Room off Back of Veranda: Replace broken window slats and fix area above window. Paint. Seal off water trough/ground drain with welded wire fabric on both ends to prevent rat entry.
11. Wash House: Repair broken door with new wood and paint door. Replace damaged water faucet, sink basket, and waste lines.
12. Exterior Work: Re-secure zinc panels on sloped portions of roof on main building. Silicone seams on peaked and sloping portions of roof. Repair leak around pipe coming out of the dining room. Install white elastic roof coating material on side walls and "eyebrow" between upper and lower areas of flat roof. Reseal loose edge areas remaining after previous installation of bituminous membrane roofing. Seal area between peaked area and flat roof.



Through the grace of God and the diligence of our Red, Blue, Green and Yellow Teams, we completed all these projects and several others. They include:

- A. Wash House Window: We discovered the window and jam were rotten and we replaced them.
- B. Lower Level Boys' Dorm: We found and fixed a broken bed.
- C. Bathrooms: We replaced two missing showerheads.
- D. Assistant Administrator's apartment: We installed and painted two new doors.
- E. Girls' Larger Dorm: We repainted the walls rather than touch them up.
- F. Kitchen: We painted the upper walls and ceiling.
- G. Computer Lab/Library: We did electrical work to hook up equipment. We installed the four used laptop computers we had brought with us. We purchased and installed an all-in-one printer. We purchased and installed a DVD player. We installed a Wii that we had brought with us.
- H. Lessons: We gave some of the children rudimentary lessons in the use of the computers, DVD player, and Wii.
- I. Groceries: We brought contributions of money for groceries that were gratefully received. We also gave money for chicken feed. (We built and populated a chicken coop several years ago.

- J. Additional Computers: We provided money to facilitate the delivery of some used computers from Kingston.
- K. Scholarship: We provided funds for an alumna of Garland Hall Children's Home and actually enrolled her in the Caribbean School of Business while we were there.
- L. Shirts: We gave the children and staff blue shirts with Garland Hall Children's Home embroidered over the left breast.

The children helped us on Saturday, our last workday, and many ended up as stained from paint and other substances as our team members. A tired, but satisfied, group left Garland Hall Children's Home for the trip down Long Hill Road and back to Sunset Beach Resort.

A night's rest and recuperation brought us to our special Sunday. We began the day by picking up the children and accompanying them to Mt. Carey Baptist Church, a few miles from Garland Hall Children's Home in Anchovy. We attended Sunday School and worship with the children and staff. We were warmly welcomed there by the teachers, worship leaders and members of the congregation. When worship ended, a second bus met us and we journeyed



together, children, staff and missionaries, to Montego Bay. We had rented the Palace Multiplex Theater for a showing of *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa*. When we got to the theater, we gathered our popcorn and drinks and sat together in the theater. Everyone enjoyed the experience – which began with all present standing and singing (or listening to) the Jamaican National Anthem.

At the conclusion of the movie, we got back on the busses and rode to the Kokonutz Restaurant for a sit down chicken dinner. The children were incredibly well behaved, as were most of the adults. When we all finished our meal, we boarded the busses for the trip back to Garland Hall Children's Home.

When we came, we came bearing gifts! Each of the congregations represented on the Mission Trip had collected gifts for the children and staff. Some volunteers from our group combined the gifts making sure that each child's gifts were commensurate with the others. Back at Garland Hall Children's Home after dinner, the children sang to us and we, under the musical direction of Pastor Jim Sbertoli, sang to the children. Then the missionaries brought gift bags to the children with whom they had been paired for the day. Joy and mayhem ensued. Actually, it was a time of joy and tenderness as we shared some special moments together. We finally tore ourselves away and had a quiet bus ride back to Sunset Beach Resort, reflecting on our time with the children.

Each day of our trip included a time in the evening for devotions and reflections. We usually gathered by the beach for this significant time. We supported, encouraged and valued each other.

Our Mission team included Dan Froiland, Bill Eggers, Jim Sbertoli, Barb Shaw, Dave Shaw, Karen Parker, Mike Reynolds, Bob Appert, Pam Grunner, Janet Fulkerson, Bruce Hanson, Bob Armitage and Tom Nyman.

Each missionary paid his or her own way and gave additional gifts to the children and staff of Garland Hall Children's Home. In addition to our own gifts, we brought gifts from our congregations, friends and mission partners.

The staff of Mission Jamaica also supported us: Michael Wittkamper, Lori Goble and Cathy Schwarze.

We thank God for giving us the courage, opportunity and rewards intrinsic to being part of a short-term mission trip. We find that our lives are enriched as we enrich the lives of others. We find that we bring hope by returning to the same place year after year. We give them the gift of the future. They can – and do – look forward to our return. Many members of our group plan to return to Jamaica and Garland Hall Children's Home February 10-17, 2010. You can come too!



Respectfully submitted,
Tom Nyman
February 20, 2009