

Providing Service and Strengthening Relationships in Jamaica



The Jamaica Mission Team, intent on bolstering relationships with the Andrews Memorial United Church and providing service through its community outreach efforts, left for Mandeville, Jamaica on Saturday, February 8, 2014 at 6:30 a.m. The team members included Nathan Brandon, Dr. Liv Brien, Craig Buffkin, Elvin Carrero, Reverend Sam Cooper, Dr. Kathleen Coyne, Duncan Dashiff, Danny Dotson, Susie Elder, Liesel German, Michael Hindman, John Hollins, Jr., Adele Holloway, Andrea Jenkins, J.T. Martin, Allison Milam, Todd Presnell, Matt Simpson,

Darryl Thompson, Jim Wall, and John Wimberly.

Once in Mandeville, our week began and ended with two special events. The first occurred on Sunday morning when we headed to Andrews Memorial United Church. During the 2+ hour service, we were welcomed with open arms and heard fantastic praise music. Our own Nathan Brandon delivered the sermon and did a remarkable job. Nathan's sermon began by introducing the FPC mission group and thanking the congregation for our church partnership. Nathan's sermon focused on four points: (1) Invitation (invite Jesus into your life—ask and you shall receive); (2) Prayer; (3) Serve; and (4) Obedience. Nathan ended his sermon by performing an amazing solo performance of Precious Lord, Take My Hand, with the choir, drummer, and congregation joining in. The sermon and song proved spiritually uplifting for everyone.



Monday through Friday provided ample opportunities for service, and our group tackled four major projects during the week. Darryl Thompson led an effort to construct four garden, or planter boxes, complete with a composting apparatus, for the students at Albion Primary School and Ebenezer Primary School. Modeled after similar structures at Oak Hill School, these planters will allow the students to learn through planting, nurturing, and harvesting various vegetables.



Oak Hill School teachers Susie Elder, Andrea Jenkins, Adele Holloway, and Allison Milam spent the week working with teachers and students at the Ebenezer and Albion schools. The teachers “team taught” with the home teachers, taught individual classes, and worked with the teachers in a joint professional development session. The OHS teachers provided helpful advice and strategies on topics ranging

from classroom management to teaching techniques.

At the Ebenezer Primary School, Nathan Brandon and John Wimberly led a team that included



several local Jamaicans, J.T. Martin, Matt Simpson, Duncan Dashiff, and Todd Presnell, in constructing a restroom facility adjacent to the school. At present, Ebenezer has no flushing toilets and has only outhouse facilities for its students. The team poured the foundation, shoveled fill dirt, constructed walls, and left this massive project in excellent shape for future completion. The teachers and students were overtly grateful for what this restroom project means to them.

Our project at the Albion Primary School involved constructing, from the ground up, a stand-alone building to house additional classrooms that are so desperately needed. Beginning with a foundation, the team of Jim Wall, Craig Buffkin, Dr. Liv Brien, Rev. Sam Cooper, Elvin Carrero, Matt Simpson and, at various times Duncan Dashiff, Todd Presnell, Darryl Thompson, and Nathan Brandon, moved fill dirt and mixed and poured concrete utilizing the old fashioned, yet uncoordinated, bucket brigade technique. We built framing, constructed walls, and topped it off with tin roof laid on a bright, sunny day.



The dental team of Dr. Kathleen Coyne and Liesel German, ably assisted by John Hollins, Jr. and J.T. Martin, once again provided much-needed dental service to hundreds of Jamaicans. Long lines greeted this team on a daily basis and, working 10–12 hour days, this team exceeded expectations by working until every patient was served. Their work was so popular and needed that the team often saw patients who showed up at the camp---after our dinner.



When these labors concluded, the second special event occurred when members of the Andrews Memorial United Church hosted a traditional Jamaican dinner in our honor on our last night. Amidst jerk chicken and oxtail, Reverend Bailey publicly thanked all of us for our hard work and, more importantly, First Presbyterian Church for committing

the time and resources to help the Mandeville community in general, and the Albion and Ebenezer primary schools in particular. It was a fitting way to end a terrific week of service.