YPCA Work Team Spends Spring Break Doing Good

By Lydia Ramee
Correspondent Writer

Fourteen EMU students spent spring break in Florida, but they weren’t there to party. The fourteen were a Young Peoples Christian Association (YPCA) work team that went to Lakewood Retreat Center in Florida. YPCA work teams offer students an opportunity to travel and help out in various communities.

When asked why he chose to participate, Sophomore Denis Cela responded, “Because it was 60 bucks... and I wanted to help the community as much as I could.”

To the same question Junior Crystal Minster replied, “I’ve been at camps my whole life and so it’s neat to see camps in different places.” She added, “I had gone before and had a lot of fun, so I thought it would be nice to go along and be a leader.” Senior Devryck Weaver and Junior Kim Siemens were the other two leaders.

At Lakewood Retreat Center the group worked hard to complete the tasks they were given and learned a great deal from his work.

“When I got started [interviewing]... I realized that I basically touched the tip of the iceberg. There’s a huge history around apples, and the industry is changing now, and so I think it was a good project to work on,” said Jost.

As he edited interviews and compiled his pictures, Jost strived to portray themes that came up repeatedly during his project and were representative of orchard life. Some themes predominant in the exhibit are the connections many growers have with each other. He emphasizes that many orchards are passed down from generation to generation, and that many growers have worked together for many years, love farming, and are passionate about their livelihood in raising and selling apples.

Jost also portrays many of the rapid changes and issues happening in the industry that he encountered during his interviews. These ranged from economic problems (such as falling prices over the past couple of years, effects of global market, and diminishing land value) to changes in farm legislation (like development pressure, the diminishing number of apple growers, and the amount of land on which to raise apples). Jost asked very open ended questions...out of a short string of basic questions. People tell you all sorts of stuff. This was elective interviewing where I didn’t have an agenda, but people told me their story from their perspective,” explained Jost of his interviewing process.

Although many audience members would consider the exhibit a documentary, Jost said that “documentary” was a problematic term.

“Documentary is just recording these facts and putting out this objective picture, and it’s really not objective,” said Jost. “I’m interpreting what’s going on. An artist always interprets experience and puts it out there. I’d like to think of it as interpretive photography.”

Jost did emphasize that although he makes his own conclusions clear, he tries to honor the stories told to him through the exhibit, even though there were some perspectives he encountered which he did not agree.

“I was somewhat mystified about the work we did.”

In addition to the work they accomplished the group also had time for fun. Each day after working, some of the group members would go swimming, and after supper there was more time for group games and activities.

Cela said, “My favorite activities were beach volleyball, swimming, and hanging out in the living room playing different games.”

On Wednesday the group traveled to Sarasota, Florida where they spent the day at the beach. “It was nice to be in a more relaxed setting with that group of people rather than working,” said Musser. “It was good to take a break from working and just enjoy Florida.”

All of the work team members enjoyed the chance to head south and enjoy warmer weather but for many in the work team the highlight was getting to know the other group members.

As Junior Josh Miller said, the group was “nuttier than squirrel turds.” But he added, “I enjoyed the group. It was awesome.”

On The Sidewalk:

“What do you wish you had done over spring break?”

“Gone on a motorcycle rampage.” -Joelle Hackney, sophomore

“Gone to Arizona instead of being stuck in the midwest.” -Karl Yoder, freshman

“Met Fidel Castro.” -Tiffany Miller, junior

“Gone to Mardi Gras with a pallet of beads.” -Ben Weaver, Jesse Sigman, & Matt Boamann, sophomores

Both are needed to tell the complete story. He is also welcoming feedback and is eager to hear what people have to say. The exhibit runs from March 10 to April 4. There will be an exhibit reception on March 16 where Jost hopes to have local apples and cider on hand as refreshments.

The apple-themed artwork of EMU professor Scott Jost will be on display on the third floor of Haritzler Library through April 4.

THE WEATHER VANE

March 13, 2003

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