



SOUTHEAST OHIO MISSION

DAY TRIP SUMMARY

Vinton County Sept. 24 2016



Lutheran
Social
Services
of
Central
Ohio

PLANTING SEEDS



**On Bended Knee, Serving Others
Serving God**

Matthew 25:40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Galations:6:9 ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

The UALC Southeast Ohio mission volunteers feel called to take on small construction projects several times a year. God works through Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and UALC mission trip leaders to lead us to the projects done in His name. This was the 5th fall one day trip which the author has had the privilege and honor to be a part of. We are not the only group of missionaries that serve people in the area. However, time is short and the workers are few so, it is not unusual to leave work undone to be finished by another group. One group plants the seeds, another comes behind, waters them, and prays for the Holy Spirit to take over. Such was the case with Martha's, at least that's what we thought would happen.

Martha is a single woman living in a trailer home in Wellston Ohio. She leases the property where this trailer home sits. Martha is struggling with many health issues, many of which may be due to a weight problem similar to her departed parents and departed brother. This fall He has led us to return to Martha who we served on two prior trips, on which we could only partially address her needs. On the first trip we found out Martha had broken her ankles on two separate occasions getting in and out of her trailer on the steep stair steps outside the front and back



doors. At this point her mobility was compromised enough that she desperately wanted a porch and wheelchair ramp on the back side of her home which was used as the primary entrance. Actually, she asked for a porch and ramp on the front and the back. With the limited time and limited number of volunteers we could only build one porch with a ramp and the hillside presented challenges such that it was only practical for us to build a ramp on the front. So, in the last week of July 2015 Greg, his son Adam, John, his nephew Charles, Jim and Mark built a wheelchair ramp on the front, leaving the back for the next group.



When Dale, Loren, Greg, Duane, and I returned that fall, it turned out that we were the "next group". It took us five days to build the ramp on the front so, we knew there was no chance we would be able to build a porch and ramp on the back in one day. The best we could do is replace the narrow, wobbly, free standing steps in the back with a stable porch extended out to the hillside eliminating the need to traverse steps. It was a temporary, less than ideal solution since guests coming and going thru this "primary entrance" would have to walk through the grass on the hillside to get to and from the driveway, but another group could come in later to address her request for a ramp off the back porch.



For this fall's day trip, here we were again at Martha's. We were the "other group" again. We didn't expect this to be the fall project and had already prepared materials list and plans for another project. Long story short(oops too late), from the planning and advance prep work prior to the trip, it turns out that the land owner didn't want the landscape changed as much as would be required to accommodate a ramp to the porch on the rear entrance. So after conferring with Martha, all parties involved decided this wooden sidewalk best fits her need and satisfied the land owner.



Thanks be to God for Lutheran Social Services, volunteers Dean, David, Greg and Loren that Martha's home and especially her primary entrance is more safely accessible to her and her visitors.

So, did we see God at work? Absolutely! Where? We planted seeds hopefully with Martha. But as the lead, He was definitely at work on me as He helped me find the implemented solution through the land owner and others and sent volunteers. We were humbled by every mistake we made in the construction process. It looks good now but there were plenty of mistakes as is always the case with every single project. Dean's Son was a last

minute unexpected blessing added to the group and had not been part of a mission trip before. There is more to that story but some seeds landed there. While we worked, the neighbors watched curiously and even waved. They'll be asking who were those people and what motivated them to do this? why were they building all this stuff? They'll find out we were from a church and volunteered to do this, more seeds. Martha's unofficially adopted grandson brought his puppy out several times to see the progress and interact with us briefly. We had met him last year at the cookout/marshmallow roast we held. He knows who we are and what we represent. God worked through us in ways we may not think of. We had to talk the plans over with the land owner. He knows we were there to serve. The list goes on and we may never directly see the real fruits. Mostly right now we can only guess at all the places God was at work but undoubtedly He will surprise us in unexpected ways.

††