The Journey to Bellingham

March 13, 2011 By Moreau Center (Edit)

Our journey began at 8:00 AM this morning- which really felt like 7:00 thanks to Daylight Savings Time. We were all tired but excited to begin our trip after several months of preparation. Throughout the past two semesters, we have been meeting as a group and also attending Moreau Center seminars. Today was the first day that it became real! We could not have been more excited.

After a 5 hour drive to Bellingham- through rain, wind, getting lost, and good music- we finally arrived at the United Church of Christ in Ferndale, our home for the next six nights. We were blessed to receive such a warm welcome from Bobbi, the church pastor, and several other members. They are so gracious, hospitable, and eager to be hosting us. We will have the opportunity to share several meals with the church this week and exchange stories of service trips.

We will begin work on the housing site on Tuesday, but tomorrow we will be doing service work with the Bellingham Food Bank and a home for elderly/disabled persons. We will also get to do a bit of exploring around Bellingham. After such a long trip up, we are all exhausted so sleeping on the floor should not be a problem! We look forward to what tomorrow brings as we dive into the first actual service day, and we can’t wait to work on the house! Thank you for your prayers and support! So far everything has gone as planned.

Love,

Hilary and Hannah

Day 1: Service and Bonding in Bellingham

March 14, 2011 By Moreau Center (Edit)

Though waking up was a bit difficult today, several members of our team cooked us a nice M&M pancake breakfast! Today we split into two groups to do some volunteer work in Bellingham and spent the rest of the day exploring the town and getting to know one another. Half of the group went to an apartment building for elderly/disabled folks to help with chores, and the other half of the group went to the Bellingham food bank’s local farm and planted radishes in a green house.

Hilary’s perspective of the farm:

Matia is the head farmer and showed us the roots of working in the green house. We went through several beds, hoeing through the dirt and mixing new manure into the soil. We planted several beds of radishes and got a tour of the farm with Mike, the executive director of the
Day 2: First Day on the Site!

March 15, 2011 By Moreau Center (Edit)

This morning during breakfast, we had to choose a word to describe how we felt about the coming day; all the words were synonyms for excited! We arrived at the site and began work right away. There are two houses that we are working on; one is in the very beginning stages and the other is coming along quickly. Most of the group worked on insulating the first house while others worked on the foundation for the second house.

We enjoyed getting to know the Habitat for Humanity carpenters! After all of our work- whether we were in the cold outside or covered head to toe in protection while insulating- we were ready for a hot shower. For dinner, several families from the church joined us for a delicious meal of macaroni and cheese prepared by a wonderful woman named Marta. At the dinner, we met the mother of the woman whose house we are building. It was such a touching moment and she was so thankful. We found out that she was the one who donated our pizza dinner last night and hearing her words of thanks in person brought a lot of meaning to our trip.

Tomorrow we continue work on the houses- more insulating! We will also be adding to the foundation. It was so satisfying to look at our progress at the end of the work day. We can’t wait to start again tomorrow! We have had lots of team bonding time- tonight we played a great and wild game of Signs along with a huge bowl of Muddy Buddies, possibly one of the best snacks/desserts ever.

We’ll be at the site again tomorrow- 8:30 AM sharp- and we are excited to continue!

Love,

Hilary, Hannah, and the Team
Days 3 and 4: Building!

March 17, 2011 By Moreau Center (Edit)

Wednesday in a Nutshell

Yesterday, we laid tresses on the foundation of the second house and shoveled two truckloads of sand for the garage area. Everyone participated in hammering in the sun for several hours and worked together to lay the tresses and the first pieces of plywood for the flood. It was a beautiful day and we were able to get lots of work done. In the evening, the church hosted a potluck and we were able to meet many more members. We have been playing many games togethers- such as Signs and Silent Football. Ask participants about their nicknames! ;)

Thursday

Today we were lucky to have good weather, though it was chilly at times! We continued laying boards on the foundation and about six of us, including Hannah, began working on the crawl space of the first house. We also burned extra tree remains in the bonfire and as well as any extra wood. Tyler, Hilary, and Matt did some sheet metal work. Habitat for Humanity kindly donated lunch and we enjoyed hotdogs around a bonfire. The highlight of today, though, was when a car pulled up and a woman and her two daughters got out. It was the mother and daughters who will be living in the house we are building! It was so exciting, special, and rewarding to meet them. The mother was crying tears of joy and they were so gracious for our work. We also got to meet the family living in the first house, which is nearing completion.

It has been wonderful getting to know the workers who are helping us with the homes. The main carpenter’s name is Rusty, and he has been patient and helpful. Today we got to met his 20-month year old daughter and he shared the story of her adoption from Africa. Tomorrow we will finish the insulation in the first house and begin sheet rocking!

Love,

Hannah and Hilary