

The Lakota Journey Summer Internship 2008 was an exciting time of growth and encouragement for the interns, the people we served, and the people with which we served. It required openness to the moving of the Spirit and willingness to go where God led us. Many times this meant spending quality, enjoyable time with our friends on the reservation. Other times following the instruction of the Spirit meant entering difficult or less desirable situations. Our purpose in all things this summer, however, was to glorify God's name by loving those with whom we came into contact. Our prayer is that this was accomplished through our activities and choices during this internship.

The first two weeks of the summer involved preparing for and taking part in the Lakota Journey, a week-long experience for youth groups from several different states. These groups travel to towns around the reservation and support that community in whatever way possible, such as holding kids clubs, basketball camps, sharing dinner with the community, etc. As interns, we were responsible for helping new groups settle into their community, organizing housing for all the groups, and keeping things running smoothly throughout the week.

After Lakota Journey week in June, we began our six weeks of volunteering in different communities and with different ministries. Two of us spent weekday afternoons in St. Francis working with the Summer Rec program. This was a fun opportunity to continue building friendships with kids from Kids Club in St. Francis, and it also yielded fruitful relationships with the Summer Rec staff. The other three of us went to Parmelee to work with the Boys and Girls Club that had recently been developed in the town. This opportunity was challenging but rewarding as we built new relationships with the kids of Parmelee and the Boys and Girls Club staff.

In addition to our consistent volunteer opportunities five days a week, we had other weekly responsibilities to support local ministries. We attended church on Sunday mornings at All Nations Assembly of God, the church in which we stayed all summer. Here we helped out with the children's Sunday School and assisted in leading worship. The youth pastor at All Nations was gone for the month of July, and she let three of us work with the students in her youth group on Wednesday nights as well. Also on Wednesday nights was a Bible study in St. Francis with the Open Door Ministry. Two of us went to this Bible Study in addition to all of us going to services on Saturday nights. The pastors of this ministry also asked us to plan a camping trip for some kids in St. Francis in order to further show God's love to the community. Finally, we as interns met together every Thursday night to discuss our summer curriculum (the book of Acts and a seminar by Richard Twiss) and to fellowship with and support each other.

Our other evenings and mornings were less structured but equal in purpose. The mornings offered us time to read, pray, and spend time with the other church staff and their kids. These times were restful and important as they allowed us to prepare for what each day would bring. We spent our other free evenings and weekends hanging out with the people from St. Francis we've met over the past six years. During these times, we went to birthday parties and had cookouts with our friends. We went swimming and played outside until it was dark. We jumped on trampolines and had dance parties in

driveways. Most importantly, we listened to stories of joy and stories of hurt, and we shared the hope we have in Christ even when life is painful. Though these times were not a part of our “schedule,” they proved to be some of the best times we had this past summer.

This brief overview of the Lakota Journey Summer Internship barely touches the surface of our time on the reservation. Our experience this summer was only the beginning of lifelong friendships with the Lakota people, and the things we learned in the last two months have only begun to be used in our lives.