

ROAD-REPORT



The following articles are written by home school students from across the United States, traveling with **ACTION Impact Missions' Great Lakes Road School Mission Trip— Summer 2006**

In the Beginning

Almost dead center on a map of the U.S. lies the state of Missouri. In Missouri lies Branson. In Branson sits a Salvation Army church, and in that church sat a nine person mission trip team. Why? To undergo a week of extreme training that would prepare them for four and a half weeks on the road serving God.



Many intense hours were spent with our heads bent over our Bibles, searching the Scriptures for verses on speech, life, love, faith, and purity. Over three hundred verses on love were read and discussed! After numerous late nights and early mornings, our hard work finally yielded Bible studies on the five areas listed in 1 Timothy 4:12. These were what would be taught to our peers at the workshops.

In addition to the creation of five Bible studies, we learned 17 songs choreographed using mime, drama, and sign language, each song portraying its own unique message. The songs were practiced over and over; every detail was critiqued. Tired and sore, we eagerly awaited our beds at the end of each day.

During the week, we had the opportunity to meet the Branson AIM team. It encouraged us to know that we would be supported with their prayers throughout our entire trip!

Training camp was definitely not easy, but through the good times as well as the hard times, God kept the team together. At the end of the week, as we sat in the pouring rain waiting to depart, we knew that it was with His strength alone that we had been able to persevere. And with His strength we would continue!

Yasmin Thomas, age 16
San Diego, CA

And They're Off!

After one week of intense training and a long ten hour drive, the six students, three leaders, and one baby were more than eager to arrive at their first stop. Few hardly knew what lay ahead of them as they looked forward to the next few days in Newton, Iowa.

Our stay in Newton held many firsts. It was the first time AIM had ever been in this area, as well as the first stop for the team and the first time for us as a team to run a workshop. We were very excited to have fifteen students participate in the three-day Excellence University program.

So, how was this different from any other workshop? Remember, this was a time of firsts. Another one of these firsts was that every single person who attended all three days of the workshop finished at least the first section of memory verses. Never before have I seen every single one of the students work so hard to memorize their verses.

Several of us had the opportunity to stay in the countryside of Newton. As we arrived late our first evening, our tired eyes opened wide with amazement. All around us, as far as the eye could see, were tiny sparkling lights covering the whole expanse of the corn and bean fields. Many enjoyable evenings were spent catching these lightning bugs and running through the tall grass fields. Better yet were the times of simply looking out on the sea of twinkling lights and up to the vast sky filled with more stars than can be fathomed. Several nights we were awakened to the loud booming thunder and bright flashes of lightning as God put on a miraculous show for all to behold. Just think how amazing it is that we can intimately know the Creator of all the extraordinary beauty of creation.

After three days the students were ready to share what they had

learned. As we all waited anxiously downstairs, the students joined in our time of prayer. Through our prayer, we were reminded where our focus truly belonged. The word came that it was time to start. The medium-sized sanctuary was full of the students' family and friends. The hour-long presentation went by all too quickly as the last notes of the final song died out.

As our short stay in Newton came to an end, we said our good-byes and jumped into the bus. We were ecstatic to be taking part of Newton with us, as one of the young men who attended the workshop decided to join us on our journey. As we drove off, we took one last look at the breathtaking beauty of Newton, Iowa before our minds began to look forward to the many new adventures, experiences, and growth opportunities that still awaited us.

Rosalie Hughes, age 19
San Diego, CA

The Race Set Before Us...

The chill of the morning was driven out quickly by the rising sun. The noise of the city had long been reverberating throughout the streets, with car engines running, dogs barking, and friendly hello's wafting up from the surrounding neighborhoods. In a nearby park a peculiar collection of anxious people awaited an event that would call out every ounce of their strength as they focused their attention on one goal, the finish line. Anxiously each runner prepared themselves for the race at hand, knowing that only one would receive the prize. Kneeling down, one runner adjusted the lace on his shoe, another threw off the pack he was wearing, knowing that such a load would only slow him down. One runner, however, stood out from all of the others. Wearing worn jeans and a hefty winter coat, this runner attached his number to



himself and stepped into his starting position. Though an experienced racer, he made a decision to hold onto the load he was carrying. The whistle sounded, summoning each person to his starting place. Looking at the runners, it was obvious who would not take first place that day.

Marathon winners have learned an invaluable lesson which, when applied, has contributed to their success. That lesson: *"Run in such a way that you may win."* (1 Corinthians 9:24b)

In Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth he likens our life to a race urging us to run, without distraction, towards the finish line. The writer of Hebrews imparts a similar message:

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2

Imagine if runners chose not to "lay aside every encumbrance" but rather bore excessive, yet unnecessary, weight in their race for the finish line? No doubt their travels would become exceedingly burdensome and possibly futile if their attempt is to win the race.

We as Christians are given a challenge to lay aside anything that might slow us down or distract us from our goal, Jesus Christ. Instead we are "run with endurance" the race at hand. What is the result? The result of a race run well is a reward! (2 Corinthians 5:10) If life is like a race and our job is to run as hard and as fast as we can towards the finish line, why would we want to carry extra weight?

This is the life-changing message

the 7 young people from across the united states felt it crucial to bring to the Great Lakes! Putting together five intensive Bible studies based off 1 Tim. 4:12, these young people challenged their peers to live a life of excellence through a 3-day program called "Excellence University". Young people walking away from this program received creative evangelism skills (mime, sign-language, etc.) and a desire to "run in such a way so as to win."

Jenny Stafford
Branson, MO

Where Blessings Fell Like Rain

Blaine, MN was our team's second stop. Exactly what lay ahead of us we did not know, but we were ready for anything. We arrived at our host homes full of anticipation and excitement. As a team, we unpacked and jumped into reviving and improving our five Bible studies on speech, life, love, faith, and purity. It soon became apparent that our "Life" Bible study needed the most work. Though we didn't know it then, over the next few days we would spend more than nine hours working on it!

Our host home was a large, pleasant house owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bloyer (Tess Rolf's uncle and aunt). They had two sons – Jay and Nolan – whom we got to know and become friends with. They were a very enjoyable family and we were blessed to have them open their home to our entire team.

Our first full day in Blaine was spent doing school and revising our Bible studies. We also practiced some of the songs we were going to present later that evening at "Blaine's Blazin' Fourth of July Celebration."

When we arrived at the park where the celebration was to be held, we were able to present several sets in various locations. One particular presentation area was directly in front of a psychic hand-reader's booth! God certainly has a sense of humor! We were very blessed to be a part of this celebration.

The next morning we helped an elderly man move from his old apartment to a newly-purchased mobile home. We had an enjoyable time despite the heavy

rain that hit halfway through the job. Regardless of the rain, we finished the job successfully. Unfortunately, the rain did pose a problem, as we were scheduled to be in a parade right after our moving job was completed! However, God was faithful and cleared the skies before we even arrived at our starting location. We walked in the parade with our van behind us playing patriotic songs, and we alternated between stroll-miming and signing to the songs.

After the parade was over, we went back to our host home and worked more to develop our "Life" Bible study until we were satisfied with the results. That evening we returned to "Blaine's Blazin' Fourth of July Celebration." Despite the rain that had returned, we presented one long set and received many encouraging comments from the crowd that had gathered.

Our final morning in Blaine, MN was spent at a large church where we were able to work with and present for the K-5th graders. It was exciting to see shy children arrive with nervous and confused faces, only to be playing an exhilarating game of "mime baseball" only 3 minutes later! It was definitely a memorable time for both the children and the team.



Abriam Blair, age 17
Newton, IA

A Spark of Enthusiasm

They gazed upon the unknown land. A land that has never been explored by crusaders like themselves. The team was ready, this is what they trained for. Giving up countless hours completely dedicated to the cause they so strongly believed in. The mission trip team, completely willing to go into the unknown, was ready to complete another part of their journey. A journey that now led them to host a workshop in Germantown, Wisconsin.

These were the people they were here to serve. With so many students to teach, the mission trip team separated them into three classes: two mime and one flag. Though the Wisconsinians had never seen creative evangelism like this before, almost all of them readily participated in the classes with

child-like eagerness and ambition.

Though teaching creative evangelism was an enjoyable part of the workshop, it wasn't the main reason the team had come. There was a much more important reason – to challenge them towards excellence. You see, the mission trip team had written five life-changing Bible studies, which they shared with the students at the workshop. Along with these studies, the students were invited to memorize verses and achieve one of the five degrees: Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate, and Post-Doctorate. They each got consecutively harder, with the Post-Doctorate being impossible to achieve. However, as mentioned before, these students were eager and ambitious and two of them managed to do the impossible! Zack Taylor, a former SDYIA member and Alaska '05 participant, was one of them.

The next morning, our crusaders said their final good-byes just as the sun was rising. Even though the verses were said and the presentations were over, the team knew they had accomplished what they came to do – they planted seeds and encouraged others in their walk with Christ. Knowing their task was done for the time being, the team loaded up and headed off to their next location.

Ryan Manglicmot, age 17
San Diego, CA

Peddling the Gospel on Mackinac Island

I was shoved into the basket of a brown and green beach cruiser bike. After the 20-minute ferry ride from the mainland to the island, I was ready to begin our three-day workshop. As a mission trip backpack I'd been to many places, but Mackinac Island stood out from the rest.

I bumped up and down as the ACTION team rode bicycles down Main Street. Never before had I been to a place where cars weren't allowed. Anywhere you went on the island you either walked, rode bikes, or hopped into a horse-drawn buggy. As the ten bikes peddled down the street, I couldn't believe how beautiful the scenery was. Main Street was lined with stores inviting you in with their wide-open doors. But



more inviting than the souvenir stores were the fudge shops. It seemed that every other store was a fudge shop; all of them letting the aroma of freshly-made fudge drift into the streets. As we left downtown and started towards the church, I was amazed at how beautiful God had made this place. To our right was a marina with many sailboats floating on the clear blue surface of Lake Huron. Seagulls flew overhead as we continued towards the residential part of the island. White picket fences surrounded the cottage-style houses, and enormous trees cast shade over the entire street. Up one more hill and our crew arrived at the church where we would be spending the next three days teaching the workshop.

The building where we were staying wasn't really a church, but an old theater with enormous rooms lining the auditorium. This was where the local church met for service and fellowship. After being carried into the magnificent building, I was dropped along the wall with all the other backpacks as the team hurriedly prepared for the workshop. They watched as 3 o'clock came and went. I was realizing that, on the island, people didn't have that, "Hurry, I'm late" mentality. You just got there when you got there. Therefore, the workshop started when the students came.

During the workshop, the team worked with two groups of students for two hours each day; the younger group before dinner and the older group after dinner. The number of students the team worked with each day varied depending on if the students were working that day. Despite the fluctuation in the number of students (anywhere from 2 to 8) the ACTION team diligently taught. I sat along the wall watching for three days as the students from the island learned a new way to evangelize. I watched as teens who didn't know Jesus get to see the gospel in a new way; and teens who were already Christians were challenged to stand up and declare to the world that they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I loved watching the workshop, but what I saw that was even more encouraging was the way the ACTION team was refreshed by their stay. The team was privileged to be able to work

closely with Pastor Ken and his wife, Lori, along with the other believers in the Mackinac Island church. These people opened up their homes and truly demonstrated Christ's love to others around them.

As I sat once again on the white-washed metal floor of the ferry, I thought about all the things that had made me smile over the last few days: the views of the lake I'd seen from the basket of the bike while the team rode the 8 miles around the island; the funny looks the team got as they rode down Main Street in mime face on the way to a presentation; the smiles of the team as they enjoyed Mackinac Island fudge. But most of all I smile when I saw the many expressions of Christ's love while visiting the island.

Elizabeth Armstrong, age 18
Blacksburg, VA

Cherry City Capitol Dead Ahead

"To God be the glory for ever and ever..."
Rang from the team in the van.
When we drove over the Mackinac Bridge
A brand new day had begun.

Cherry City capitol dead ahead;
Our destination is at hand.
Traverse City was filled with excitement;
Some unexpected, some planned.

The first was seeing my Grandparent's again;
We ate dinner at their house.
I was able to show the team to them
And the other way around.

At the end of the day we entered the church,
Our home for the next three days.
How blessed we were that Community of Joy
Had opened their doors our way.

Their kitchen was equipped for every need;
There were rooms where we could sleep.
Large and spacious community rooms too,
To gather, work, and eat.

Such an ideal and quiet location;
We were surrounded by peace.
Yet every day some kind person would check
That things were just as we pleased.

How blessed we were that Community of Joy
Had opened their doors to us;
And though they'd not heard of AIM before,
In God they were willing to trust.

Our Nation's birthday we could not deny;

A feast our leaders did spread;
With ice cream and cake to top the day off,
And fireworks at the end.



Each day was filled with something neat and new;
No two were ever the same.
We had a nature hike and schoolwork time,
A Wal-Mart stop and games.

Into the van the team loaded again,
Off to help at Cherry Hill;
A pleasant, serene convalescent home,
We were ready to do what they willed.

With Windex and rags we all set to work,
Cleaning the windows and screens;
We vacuumed the floor, unloaded the car,
And helped wherever need be.

The residents faces were filled with joy
'specially when Jessie came 'round
Carrying a delighted Baby Cadence
Whose smile knew no bounds.

What a wonderful way we'd been given
To help those who give so much;
And to share if even a portion
Of God's tremendous love.

How great is God, our Lord and King
Who knows our every need,
And gave us a breath in Traverse City
So again we'd run full speed.

This time in Traverse was a restful repose
To reunite as a team,
Refocus our thoughts on Jesus Christ,
The author of this dream.

Michelle Otto, age 17
Sacramento, CA

The Land of Corn

Picture it – Mendota, Illinois...the small town of cornfields, gorgeous green pastures, and friendly

people. Mendota is not like most towns; the population is small and consists mainly of retirees, farmers, and small families. The people tend to know each other and are very kind and open. The scenery is beautiful with oak, maple, and willow trees blowing in the wind. Sweet corn is visible as far as the eye can see, framed by fields of tall green grass. The setting was perfect.

We knew this workshop would be different than most, but we did not know how. As it turned out, the students were shy and very reserved on the first day. This was to be expected to a large degree, considering they did not know who we were or what we did. However, after introductions were made and we showed them a glimpse of the ministry, the group in Mendota, IL began to open up. We could see the desire for excellence begin to take root in their hearts, and they worked hard to learn everything we offered to teach them. Even more amazing was the chance we got to learn the heart of the saying "lead by example" as we watched the youth pastor step on stage, alongside his teenage sons, to learn and present (in full make-up) the choruses to each song that we taught the young group.

The memories of Illinois are not ones that will quickly fade from our minds as we recall the experiences we had in the mid-west town of Mendota.

LauRen Snider, age 14
San Diego, CA

To Serve and Be Served

While we were in St. Louis, Missouri, we saw the joy of the Lord. "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10b
Our workshop in St. Louis was different than any of the workshops we had conducted on the trip so far. The difference came in the age range for the students, anywhere from six to seventeen years old. Because of the variety in the ages, the workshop was split in two groups, the younger kids and the older teens. What a unique opportunity we had with not only teaching the dramas, giving the students a chance to live what they believed, but with the Bible Studies and Bible verse memory. The Bible Studies were given separately to

best challenge both groups. All the students were challenged during them to set the example in every area of their life. What was more exciting than the drama classes or the Bible studies was being able to help plant seeds in many hearts by studying and memorizing scripture. Because many of the younger students couldn't read, memorization was a task to tackle. The ACTION team did an excellent job working one on one with them and helping them hide God's work in their hearts. Many of the students left the workshop noticeably changed. One evidence of this was in this way; during the workshop, when the students were asked to do a job that wasn't the most fun task, like practicing the dramas over and over and over, the students would simply reply with a phrase that we had taught them the first day of the workshop, "That's exactly what I wanted to do." One simple reminder of how God moved in the lives of the students in St. Louis and how they were starting to live out what they believed.

While in St. Louis, we had the opportunity to work with a Salvation Army church in East St. Louis, Illinois. When we first heard what neighborhood we would be working in, there were a few concerns as to whether or not it would be safe for us, but God protected and refreshed us by our time spent there. On Tuesday we were able to attend the women's ministry meeting and present at their service. The next day we spent cleaning the church. Many jobs were accomplished from buffing floors, to organizing closets, to sorting pounds of food. It rained while we cleaned. Our time spent with the Salvation Army church showed us that the Lord really can be our strength during difficult times.

Much of the refreshment for the team, during our stay in St. Louis, came from the witness we saw of the body of Christ and how they were working together to serve. The moms that ran the workshop were a living testimony of this. They truly showed us the love of God as we served their children. They used what talents they had to serve us through providing meals and homes to stay in and most of all lived out how the body of Christ is supposed to work together and show love to all people. We then depend on God's strength through stressful times

and continue to have joy in every circumstance even when it was stressful. Our time in St. Louis was a blessing. When we arrived at the workshop on the first day we were excited to be in a new place but tired from our last workshop. When we left St. Louis we had been refreshed by seeing how when you rely on God, and he is your strength in the hard times, the joy of the Lord shines through.

Elizabeth Armstrong, age 18
Blacksburg, VA

The Job Is Never Done

At one point in time, as fathers often do, my dad gave each of his daughters a nickname. Excuse me...he gave two of his daughters nicknames. I was left out of this common naming ritual, for reasons unknown to me. So, while my sisters were called to my dad's side via unique and exclusive nicknames, I was beckoned by a simple, "Jessica." That is until about 6 years ago. You see, my dad likes to build computers and one afternoon he called me out into the garage to show me his latest craftsmanship – a computer of my very own. I sat down and wiggled the mouse. As usual, the first screen to appear was one prompting the user (me) to enter their password so they can access the programs on the computer. And that's when I saw it. Jessie Bee. It was simple...not quite like the nicknames belonging to my sisters. But it was mine.

Maybe it doesn't make sense to begin this article with the story of computers and nicknames. But recently my husband and I had the opportunity to take out 7 young people on a mission trip to the North Central part of the United States. Similar to my dad giving each of his children a nickname, God gave each person on this trip a calling of their very own to come and serve Him in the 6 states that we had the opportunity to visit. For some, this calling came months before the trip began. For others, it came two days before training camp started. And yet, for another, the call came during the very first three-day workshop we conducted. Regardless of the timing, they each received the call and jumped on board.



Despite my new nickname – Jessie

Bee - it wasn't until about 8 months ago that I developed a large fascination towards honey bees. I began to research all it would take to be a beekeeper and I've noticed a strong parallel between this mission trip team and the honeybee...

1. Honey bees are very adaptable; a beekeeper can start a hive on acres of land in the middle of the country, or on the rooftop of their Manhattan apartment.

(1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
From sleeping on the floor in windowless churches, going 4 days without showers, conducting a complete workshop with only 2 students, and facing rain at every stop, the team never slowed down. Not only did they complete their job with excellence, they did so in whatever circumstance they found themselves in.

2. The honeybee is not born knowing how to make honey; the younger bees are taught by the more experienced ones. (Proverbs 19:20)

Before the team headed out on the road, they went through a week of intense training so as to challenge them individually towards excellence in their lives, as well as learn various songs to evangelize across the north-central United States. They then, in turn, taught songs and encouraged their peers towards excellence at each of the stops that were made.



3. The Queen Bee is the reason for peace within a colony. If the Queen Bee is removed from the hive, the colony will erupt in chaos and eventually die.

The mission trip team learned early on that, if this trip were to be successful, they needed to rely on God to be the one in charge. It was obvious that, without Him leading the team, this mission would not succeed. As a result, the team readily ushered God to the front and allowed Him to take control of the various aspects of the mission trip. From listening to Him when they were writing and rewriting and rewriting the Bible studies; making sure they were presenting for Him only, especially when they got to an outreach with lots of rain and no people; keeping focused on Him during 8-hour van rides; and relying on Him when sickness came to visit the team. However, the entire team worked

through each difficulty that arose and learned how to be a team that differed to one another and follow God's lead.

When the trip came to an end, the team went home exhausted. I was no different. However, a few days after resuming my "normal" life, I took a walk to the store and passed a hive of bees swarming around a neighbor's fence. It was an odd sight to see, but perhaps they were positioned there by God because, upon noticing them, a thought occurred to me – the bees are still working so...why should I be different?

The honeybee only lives for one month and yet, regardless of their location, they work from the time they are born until the time they die. Seeing those bees swarming in my neighbor's yard reminded me that I hadn't left my mission field upon arriving home. The question is: Am I still working?

Jessie and Stuart Hughes
San Diego, CA

AIM's Great Lakes Mission Trip Members

Elizabeth Armstrong, age 18
Blacksburg, VA

Abriam Blair, age 17
Newton, IA

Rosalie Hughes, age 19
San Diego, CA

Ryan Manglicmot, age 17
San Diego, CA

LauRen Snider, age 14
San Diego, CA

Yasmin Thomas, age 16
San Diego, CA

Michelle Otto, age 17
Roseville, CA

Directors
Stuart and Jessie Hughes
San Diego, CA

Chaperone
Jennifer Stafford
Branson, MO

Morale Monitor
Cadence Hughes, age 8 months
San Diego, CA

THANK YOU

For reading *AIM's* ROAD-REPORT! If you would like to learn more about this exciting ministry

OR

If you would like to bring this ACTION-packed ministry to your area

OR

If you would like to travel with this life-changing ministry

OR

If you would like to commit your time, talent and/or treasure to help this powerful ministry continue to go to the frontlines

THEN...



Contact Us!
ACTION Impact Missions

1-888/542-9186
417-334-8001

PO Box 7070
Branson, MO 65615

www.aiminternational.org
act@aiminternational.org