

BOUNDLESS IN SERVICE

Service & Adventure Week for Youth

Lutheridge

Three of our Youth - Lou Blanks, Cameron Tucker, and Mary Vettorel - had planned to go to the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer, along with Lori Brown, Pr. Gregg, and Pr. Rachel. When the Gathering was cancelled, this group decided to keep the scheduled week open and to find an alternative. NovusWay stepped up and offered "Boundless in Service", a week focused on service projects and camp fun for those who would be missing the Gathering. Our Boundless group decided this was what we wanted to do, and for the week of July 24-31, we went to Lutheridge in Arden, NC, for an adventure!



We joined three other congregations for this week of camp and service, and there were about 30 youth in all. Our first full camp day was based on building relationships, to get us ready for the group work we'd be doing!



Monday evening, we went on a hike up Black Balsam Knob. This trail was labeled 'difficult', but our group forged on and encouraged one another! We were rewarded at the top with beautiful dusky mountain range views.



We had the great surprise of our Area Director for the week being Matthew Shealy, a 2022 Winthrop grad and Grace attendee!

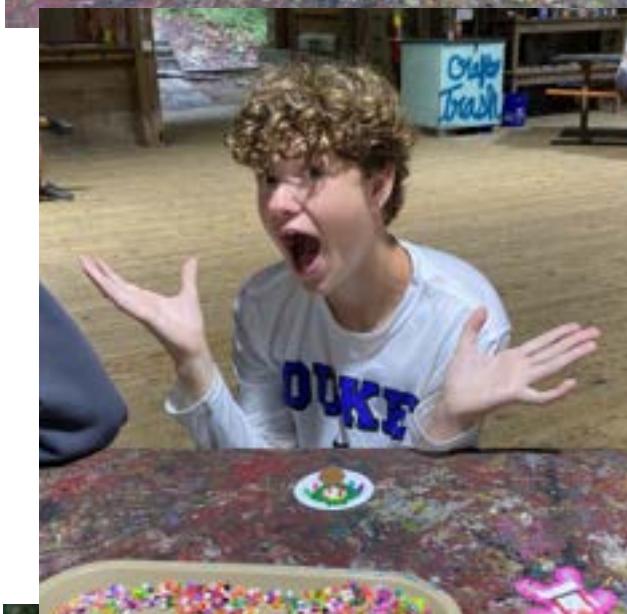


Throughout the week, we enjoyed traditional camp activities interspersed with our service work.



Crafts was a great place to make friends. As our kids pointed out, it's easier to make connections over a common interest, like melty beads or friendship bracelets.

The pool was an excellent treat after time spent working in hot and humid conditions.



On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, our time was focused on serving the local community. We had the opportunity to serve 4 different organizations, and we learned something new in each place.



Monday started at Carrier Park, where we removed invasive plants to allow native species to thrive.



Later, we went to Calvary Episcopal Food Pantry, where we assisted in removing rocks from a future garden plot, then learned about the pantry and stocked some items, including green beans fresh picked from the current gardens.



On Wednesday, we went to the YWCA. Our task was to sand and repaint the railings outside the building, where each day nearly 200 children, infants to kindergartners, come for childcare.

Mary took on the task of power-sanding the front bench, which took nearly 2 hours! The rest of us moved up and down the railings, sanding and re-sanding to ensure the new paint would stick and last.



Someone asked our host how long this project would have taken him to do himself - he replied

that this would be a months-long project, done in segments. Instead, we completed this project in less than 4 hours! The youth were excited to have made such a difference!



On Thursday, we headed to Eliada Home, an organization dedicated to helping children succeed. Our jobs were to spread mulch around a large greenhouse, weed, and help turn over garden plots for the next season of crops. These gardens and their produce are used to feed the children who come to Eliada Home. Our youth were able to use some gardening

skills they knew, and learn some new skills as well!



Boundless camp was a bit different from 'regular' camp in that we did not 'sign in' our youth to Lutheridge. They remained in our adult leaders' care, which meant we could be flexible, take side trips, and adapt as the week went. Our leaders wanted to incorporate some aspects that we would have shared at the Gathering, like eating in local restaurants and seeing local sights, to better connect with our host city. Our group was able to try several local eateries, including a trip to the French Broad Chocolate Lounge for ice cream!



We also took the opportunity to hit the putt-putt course one afternoon when our service projects were done early!

Finally, on Friday afternoon, our Boundless group took a float on the French Broad river, tubing and celebrating a successful week of serving, learning, and growing together.



This Boundless week was an incredible experience for our Youth, and our leaders were grateful to get to be a part of it with them!

Throughout the week, our Youth engaged in thoughtful discussion, solid reflection, and intentional unpacking of what we did, how we did it, and why it mattered. We found ourselves having deep conversations about the world, our culture, and how we live as God's people in the midst of it.

Our leaders were so proud of our Youth in this week. The work we were doing was physically demanding; it was hot and humid; sometimes things didn't go as planned. Our Youth leaned in, they encouraged one another and the rest of the group, and they continually put their best effort into whatever project they were asked to do. They were kind, compassionate, and cheerful. They looked out for one another. They invited others in. They shared God's love in the world.

One of the best parts of the week, for the Youth, was seeing the impact they made. Our projects were very visible, and being able to tell how their effort changed things for others helped them see that their work mattered.



We encourage you to watch the video our Youth made, where they share some of what they learned and what they loved. And we invite you to ask them more about their Boundless week! They have many stories to share.

Finally, we thank you for supporting our Youth. We could not have done this week without your ongoing support of the Youth program, the Gathering, and our adult leaders. Your support has made a difference for these Youth, and in the lives of everyone they served this week!