

## APPALACHIAN EXPERIENCE 2013

This year's group that participated in the Housing Repair Program based at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Clintwood, Virginia, accomplished quite a bit the week of June 15-22. The group of 12 traveled the 400 miles to the western tip of Virginia and settled in on Saturday then attended Mass. Sunday's activities included a trip to The Breaks, a nearby interstate park with lots of trails and outdoor activities.

Splitting into four groups and working with program leaders Debbie, Lee, and Brandi, the week's tasks began on Monday. Unfortunately, Sr. Jean Korkisch, CSC, the program's coordinator, was not able to be present during the week due to out of state family commitments. Of course, she checked in daily on the group's progress.

Pictured Left to Right:  
Dan Fejes, Bill & Brandon  
Curtin, Caitlin Chartier,  
Kathi & George Trares,  
Sean Fejes, Jerry & Gerald  
Chartier, Dan Gooding, Vince  
Festa, Nathan Bell (front)



The Dorothy Baker House, the church's housing site for participants, was the project of George & Kathi Trares and Dan Gooding, our parish's summer seminarian. The main bathroom's two showers were removed along with several layers of damaged flooring. Floor joists were reinforced and a smaller window was put in as well as one new shower and most of the plumbing. Preparations were made for future installation of a stackable washer and dryer. Kathi also worked on the flower beds of the site tackling much needed weeding, transplanting, and trimming.

Sr. Bernie Kenny's home in Clinchco was the sight worked on by Dan & Sean Fejes and Caitlin Chartier. Sr. Bernie, a nurse practitioner, previously co-managed the St. Mary's Health Wagon, a non-profit health care corporation delivering quality mobile health services. The trio did some heavy labor under the direction of Brandi helping to replace a large set of wooden stairs with cement and wooden platforms. Digging posts, building forms, pouring cement, and stabilizing the hillside all to allow easier access to Sr. Bernie's home were all a part of the week's work.



Jerry & Gerald Chartier and Vince Festa labored at the home of Jason & Mandy installing a wall to make a bedroom out of part of the living room. Framing the wall, installing drywall and a doorway, window repair, and painting for the daughter's space were the tasks of this project.

The home of Billie and Ms. Vance was the week's task for Bill & Brandon Curtin and Nathan Bell. They put in a wider doorway to accommodate a wheelchair, did some electrical work and roof repairs, installed gutters and soffit, and replaced a back door.



The experience included meeting new people and learning new skills as well as local site-seeing and discussions around Appalachian issues. On Tuesday the group enjoyed the traditional picnic hosted by the parish as well as entertainment from Jimmy Mullins & Kathy Reynolds, local musicians and storytellers. A visit to the 4th World Movement Co-Op Learning Center was on Wednesday's agenda. A human commitment to ending poverty and exclusion, The Fourth World Movement is an international, non-governmental, anti-poverty organization with consultative status in the United Nations. Vincent and Fanchette Fanelli, who take an active role in their community as well as being members of the organization The Fourth World Movement International Volunteer Corps, are members of St. Joseph Parish in Clintwood. The center hosts a variety of things to assist with employment opportunities, gaining new skills and confidence including computer classes, stress management sessions, woodworking, quilting and weaving instruction, and other workshops. On Thursday, the group traveled to nearby Pound, Virginia to enjoy "Pickin' in the Pound", a bluegrass jam session held at the town hall. Some members even joined in the dancing and playing. Friday's planned trip to Birch Knob Observation Tower just north of Clintwood was cancelled due to thunder storms with lightning. Instead some members walked down to the Ralph Stanley Museum in town to listen to an impromptu bluegrass session dubbed "Pickin' on the Porch" while others enjoyed playing card games. Visit the parish's website, [www.stjosephmantua.com/stjosephorg.html](http://www.stjosephmantua.com/stjosephorg.html) and click on the "Appalachian" button to view more photos.

Not only did the group work hard but they've acquired friendships and a camaraderie with those they worked for and with. You are welcome to join us in future trips as we follow Jesus' example and use our gifts to reach out to others! Look for details on our parish website and bulletin reminders about informational meetings early in 2014.