

# Christian Student Fellowship

May 2012

## CSF Goes to Joplin, MO!

Julie Adams

Have you ever had the opportunity to spend a whole week focusing entirely on God's two greatest commandments: Love God, Love Others? (Matt. 22:37-40) Well, as some of you already know, ten of our very own CSFers did just that in Joplin, Missouri during Spring Break this year! We met many amazing people along the way and exchanged a lot of life-changing, world-changing love with them!

The past few years, we've worked alongside Crossroads Missions on our spring break trips, which is nice because you basically show up and they have the whole week planned out for you. However, this mission trip required much more pre-trip planning because we were working with **Rebuild Joplin and Americorps**, organizations that simply connect volunteers with work sites. "As you can imagine, **preparation** for a mission trip is chaotic, stressful, and requires a massive cooperative effort from everyone involved," wrote Matt Law. Fortunately, Josh Walker set us up with church lodging in Joplin, but we still needed to do a lot of fundraising and planning for group devotions. We ended up creating a fantastic set of devotions led by CSFers and, with the help of a lot of loving and giving people like you, funded our trip through donations from a couple of bake sales and letter-writing!

A little background information before I start: On May 22, 2011, the small town of Joplin, MO was leveled by an EF5 tornado (the highest rating a tornado can receive). As Dustin described **the damage**, the tornado "carved out a 1 by 6 mile block of the town; nothing was left standing, not even a tree." Although this area had received tornado warnings before, they had never experienced anything close to this. There's really nowhere to hide from something so intense. The tornado was so strong that it moved an entire 9-story, concrete hospital 5 inches off of its foundation! As you look out across Joplin, you can see lots of green space...green space that used to be entirely filled with houses. It was astonishing and heartbreaking to witness first-hand the devastation left behind by this tornado.

I suppose you are wondering what in the world we did while in Joplin...Well, they kept us on our toes the whole week, and we ended up doing something different every day! Luckily, we had a willing, servant-hearted group of CSFers who were ready every morning with enthusiasm for whatever we were asked to do that day. Here's a quick overview:

- **Monday** - worked with other groups to remove debris from a previously forested area; cut up fallen trees; removed LOTS of brush and logs
- **Tuesday** - 1/2 of our group folded and sorted clothes for a Salvation Army clothes giveaway, and we met Carol; 1/2 of our group worked on mudding and sanding drywall at Dan's house



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### Connect With Us!

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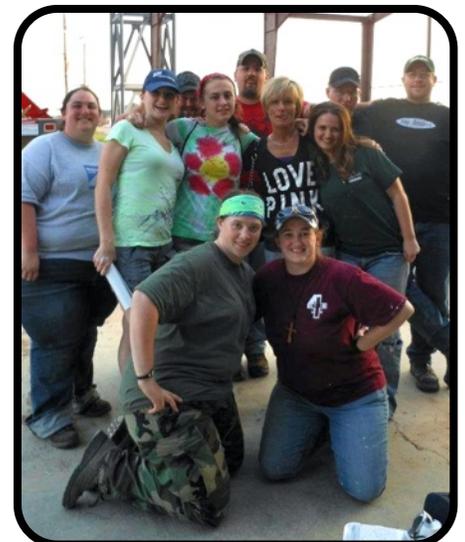
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- Wednesday - the other 1/2 of our group got to meet Dan and work on his house, too; just a block away, the other 1/2 of the group worked on fixing up the outside of **Eric's house**, where Rachel noted "the broken glass, dirt swirls around the rooms, and light coming in through the walls."
- Thursday - 1/2 of our group removed bags of debris from a house; 1/2 of our group drove posts for a fence
- Friday - 1/2 of our group sorted donated adult diapers at a donation warehouse; the 5 "bandies" in our group sorted sheet music from the now-destroyed high school

Although the obvious purpose of a mission trip is to serve, the people that we met on our trip truly made our trip spectacular. While working on his house, we met Dan, an older man who gives a lot of love and service to those around him even though his own house was destroyed as well. We met Mark, Mark, and Kelly, the supervisors and workers at the donation warehouse; we had a blast sorting adult diaper donations all day because they were such a fun group to work with. We met Eric, a hairstylist, artist, and author, who worked so desperately not to lose what was left of his destroyed house. We met the people of **New Palestine United Methodist Church** in Indiana, who poured out love, shelter, and food for us. We met Becky, a wonderful lady that served in **St. Paul's United Methodist Church** as the head cook and weathered the tornado alone in the church's kitchen. We met and worked with volunteers of all ages from all across the country. We met the people of St. Paul's, who welcomed us in, fed us, and so graciously helped us with trip expenses after only knowing us for a day. Most of all, we met Carol, a spunky woman who showed us so much love and kindness, and truly made our trip a special experience. She has an amazing story and an amazing heart for people, especially volunteers. She even took time to show us around town, especially the areas affected by the tornado, telling us stories of her friends and family and the people of Joplin.

On mission trips, there is always an abundance of personal growth and relationship-building with the community and within the work group as well. This year was a new experience for us because we planned all our own devotions and cooked our own meals every night. These **group times** really stood out to Kerry, one of our newest CSFer's: "These moments were great opportunities to feel more at home with CSF."

So, despite a few **hardships** along the way, we managed to grow together and let God direct our hearts and actions all week. Overall, I think most of us would agree that it turned out to be one of our favorite spring break trips yet! Thank you for all your support and prayers that allowed us to have such a wonderful opportunity! Now every one of us holds a special place in our hearts for Joplin, MO.



## More on the blog!

[csfwvu.org/blog](http://csfwvu.org/blog)

Check out longer reflections about the trip on our website:

### Preparation

[Matt Law]

### Joplin Organizations

[Annie Argabright]

### Joplin Damage

[Dustin Whitt]

### Hardships

[Jared Zinn]

### New Palestine

[Katy Riley]

### St. Paul's

[Lance Harlan]

### Eric's House

[Rachel Gregory]

### Group Times

[Kerry Kunze]



Keep a look out! As a part of our After 18 initiative CSF will be traveling around the region this summer to reach out to youth at various camps and events. More info to follow on the website!