

“My Pisgah Experience inspired me to make a difference in the world.”

Pisgah student **Julia McLendon** experienced a dramatic change of perspective when she went on a two week mission trip to Jamaica – a change that will remain with her for a lifetime. “Going to Jamaica really opened my eyes to the rest of the world and let me see how others are living. In America we think that possessions are everything, but going to Jamaica allowed me to see that happiness and love are really what matter in life. The people there don't care what you looked like or how much money you have, they just want to get to know you.”



Julia was thrilled that Pisgah offers opportunities to participate in mission trips. She and many of her fellow students are enthusiastic participants in Mount Pisgah Christian School's thriving Christian Leadership program.

The Pisgah family is dedicated to spreading God's message of love and salvation throughout the globe. In the past year, 92 Middle and Upper School students and 17 parents and faculty members have participated in mission trips to Mississippi, Montana, Costa Rica and Jamaica. Not only do these trips help Pisgah make a global difference, they also result in dramatic impacts on the participants themselves.

“Mission trips give the kids a totally different perspective – culturally, economically and politically,” said **Peyton Mosher**, Pisgah's Director of Christian Leadership. “It helps our kids see God is at work all around the world. It creates a platform where spiritual eyes and ears are opened.”

While in Jamaica, Julia and the rest of them team rolled up their sleeves and performed plenty of manual labor (repairing buildings, painting, cleaning, etc.), but most of all, their work was a labor of love. The bonds they formed and the love they shared with the children and adults of Jamaica created powerful memories and left lasting impressions.

Mosher explains that mission trips are important because they help students see the many blessings we take for granted (including running water, a house or air conditioning). He said that these trips give students the opportunity to see how people with so little are so happy. “A mission trip is a great opportunity for our students to experience life outside of our community. These trips also provide a platform for young people to begin to construct a social conscience that will hopefully lead them throughout the remainder of their life,” said **Trey Arnette**, Pisgah's Director of Development.

The group helped refurbish a church with a new roof and paint. They also helped during the church's Vacation Bible School. “That was great because the kids don't get much attention and we all felt like superstars,” Danielle said of spending time with the children at VBS.

Sophomore **Brantley Black** went on her first mission trip over spring break to Bozeman, Montana. “All of the students grew closer to one another. Every night as we got together we talked about how we saw God in everything. That was my favorite part of the day,” said Black, who added that she now looks for God in day-to-day activities.

While in Montana the students were divided into groups and worked around the community. Black said her group went to a nursing home and to a food bank, and also worked with Habitat for Humanity. Arnette, who also coaches the boy's varsity Soccer squad, took his team on a mission trip to St. Simons Island this spring. The team played some games, but also helped in the community. “Mission trips are a great opportunity for teams to bond outside the normal atmosphere of their sport. It is easy to develop patterns of how we relate to one another, especially when it is always within the same boundaries of a specific arena. But changing that environment forces us to challenge and alter those relationship patterns, strengthening our ties at a deeper level,” said Arnette.

“This experience made me a lot more thankful for the things that I have,” said sophomore soccer player **Matt Reilly**. “Our team bonded and became closer, which showed in our victory in our final game there.” “I'd love to see more teams go on trips, even if it is just local community outreach,” said Mosher. “I think more and more sports teams are seeing the importance of mission trips.”

Middle Schoolers got into mission mode when 22 eighth grade students spent a weekend in the Gulf Coast region to lend a helping hand in Katrina Relief efforts. The students and adults pitched in on a variety of hands-on projects that included debris removal and demolition at various sites, as well as cleanup at the First UMC in Pascagoula, MS. They wrapped up the trip by spending Sunday morning in fellowship with the residents of two area nursing homes.

Sam Reilly enjoyed the trip and could see the impact of his work on others. “We moved a bunch of stuff into a shed, which they had been working on for a couple of months and we did it in a day,” Reilly said. “We definitely quickened the process.”

In the past few years, Pisgah's impact in the mission field has continued to grow. In total a quarter of Middle School and Upper School students went on mission trips during the 2007-2008 school year. “It's something I've been working on – building that tradition. I hope to see it grow,” Mosher said.

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