



Rural Appalachian Service Immersion

The Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Appalachian Institute

What will I be doing?

Based on the needs of the several communities we serve in across WV, groups will be placed in a rural community to work on disaster relief efforts, home repair projects, soup kitchens, meal delivery programs, children and elderly programs, community revitalization projects, thrift stores, and much more. We believe direct service is about serving *with* communities, not *for* them. In order to do this, we incorporate educational and cultural components into our evening programs so that students can develop a relationship with the communities they are living in and remember to work *with* them even when they've returned home.



St. Louis University students help dispose of debris after flooding hit the area.

Service Site Examples *(subject to change based on location site)*

- **Open Door Ministry**—students help to prepare, serve, and deliver meals to the people of Wetzel County, WV.
- **Housing and Church Rehabilitation**—from minor to major repairs, students help local communities by rehabbing houses and churches in need of strong and devoted hands and minds.
- **Catholic Charities**—by teaming with this leading non-profit, students are able to work with numerous activities benefiting the community—from food pantries to fundraisers and even a fish fry or two!
- **Donald Taylor Community Center**—this Southern WV center is committed to providing services for low income residents—whether its planting gardens or building a porch—students will work to empower the local communities through service efforts
- **WV Long Term Recovery Committees**—students work with individuals and organizations looking to help flood and fire disaster victims through deconstruction, rehabilitation, and meal/clothing programs.
- **Appalachian Outreach**—students load trucks and organize this warehouse that serves communities around the state that are impoverished, but have little social services available.
- **WV Head Starts**—by interacting with many of the communities low-income children, students will be able to teach valuable life lessons through curriculum development with topics ranging from public health to an appreciation for the environment.

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*Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds, exhilarate the spirit,
and restore the tone of languid nature.*

~William Cowper

How much?

The trip costs \$300/person (\$325-HS groups) with a minimum of 10 people. This cost includes meals (unless eating off-site), lodging, programming, and resource materials. Deposits must be made approximately 6 months in advance.



James Madison U. students enjoy a campfire with local community members at Lantz Farm.

Where will I be staying?

Because of the ever changing needs of our partnering communities, we have several lodging facilities around the state to accommodate groups. All sites have cooking and showering facilities and plenty of space for students to reflect, hike, and appreciate their surroundings. Some lodging is cot style, while others have bunk beds and/or individual rooms.



Wheeling Jesuit U. students help community members in Mingo County prepare for winter with wood chopping service.

Call to Action!

At the end of each immersion experience, the Institute performs a “Call to Action” for the entire group to focus on setting goals for awareness and advocacy. We believe post immersion experiences are incredibly important for students coming on immersions and for the future of the communities they’re serving with. The service and programming experiences we offer seek to *awaken students from the sleep of inhumanity*, as Father Jon Sobrino put it, and provide them with opportunities to build meaningful relationships and develop objective, informed opinions on issues pertaining to Appalachia and their own home communities.



Presentation HS students help prepare a meal for Open Door Ministry’s weekly feeding program.

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