



The SSP Report

Fall 2012

A Message from Board President, Kathy Platnick

Editor's Note: Kathy has been a counselor since 2008 with Rolling Hills United Methodist Church and has served on the Board of Directors for almost two years.

You probably already know that the typical teenager who attends a summer session of Sierra Service Project returns more than once. Many teens attend three or more summers. And the teens who started SSP in junior high will have the opportunity to be a camper for seven summers (or eight if they were in the pioneer class)!



▲ Kathy, center, is celebrating four years of continuous SSP participation with Taylor Routh and Caela Roach of Rolling Hills UMC

So why do teens and adults return year after year? The SSP Board identified a number of critical factors that we think are necessary for a project to have that special SSP magic. If you think we missed anything, let us know on our Facebook page.

- Empower teens and young adults
- Serving marginalized communities
- Hands on projects
- Faith based programs
- Cultural education
- Sense of community
- Element of sacrifice

As SSP thinks about its future, these are the features we want to preserve. We've tried to do that during the past ten years. In that time, SSP began its outreach to Central America, started a Los Angeles based site, launched the

junior high program, first offered spring break projects in urban locales and expanded to include Weekends of Service. Whew! We're delighted that these past accomplishments include all the aspects of our "magic formula."

This year continues that trend. In addition to our normal summer offerings, this year we are partnering with Seeds of Learning on a project in Nicaragua and adding a new summer urban site in Stockton. Lastly, we are expanding our Weekends of Service to include Los Angeles. You can learn more about these programs on our website.



▲ Kathy, far right, taking part in community building during free time in Susanville, California last summer.

We continue to grow physically and in faith. We need to also grow our resources. Our program fees do not cover all of our program costs. For that, we need your help. If you believe in our mission, if you or someone in your life has been touched by SSP, or if you just want to help a teen to have an amazing experience, please donate. We need resources of every sort, including money, materials and human hours. Thank you for your help. To donate now, you can use the enclosed envelope or visit our website at www.sierraserviceproject.org.

Intentions

By Rick Eaton, Executive Director

It is a privileged to serve as SSP's Executive Director.

The people I encounter in the course of my work are a constant reminder of the truth of that simple statement. I spent a weekend in October with SSP's volunteer board of directors, a diverse group of sharp, energetic and committed individuals who are responsible for guiding this organization.

Our newly-elected board president, Kathy Platnick (see her article on the previous page) opened the meeting with a prayer and by telling us that at the start of each day, she reflects on her intentions for that day. What a simple, powerful idea!

Through the SSP experience, we know that each of us has the ability to powerfully affect those around us. Depending upon our intentions, we can be powerful forces for good, for growth, for joy, for healing, for learning.

And, of course, this is SSP's intention as an organization – to provide powerful, positive, life-changing experiences for young people. To allow young people to grow in their understanding of the world, in the richness of their relationships with others, and in their understanding of God – while at the same time strengthening communities in need.

Thank you for your support of and involvement in this organization. Enjoy the newsletter!



2013 Project Locations

Summer begins June 30, 2013

Junior High Summer Locations:

Susanville weeks 1-3

Coarsegold weeks 4-6

High School Summer Locations:

Navajo Nation, McDermitt, Smith River, and Los Angeles weeks 1-6

Stockton weeks 1-3

Susanville weeks 4-6

New Site in Stockton

Next summer we will pilot a half-summer site in the multicultural city of Stockton, which is surrounded by farmland in the California Central Valley. Our focus will be on the ethnic and religious diversity of the city, and the financial challenges that it faces. During the summer of 2012, the city of Stockton filed for bankruptcy and has an unemployment rate over 20%.

There is a large need for home repairs as well as a shift in the perception of this city. We will be hosted by a long-time SSP church, Central United Methodist Church. Join us in learning more about this multifaceted city during the first three weeks of the summer. There is more information about this new summer location on our website.



Weekend of Service

This fall, we are piloting our Weekend of Service program in South Los Angeles. Youth will learn about the community while completing important construction projects.

We are continuing weekends in Sacramento and Portland, providing opportunities for groups to serve locally and spend time in fellowship. Last year, teenagers constructed community gardens, built walls and floors, and painted. Check the website for dates, or create your own – call the office to discuss details.

▲ *Rose City Park UMC youth builds compost bins at NE Emergency Food Program in Portland.*

◆ *Youth from the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real puts the finishing touches on a new floor in Sacramento.*



Coarsegold, CA

Chukchansi Rancheria

◀ Junior high youth sing and dance to Bim Bom, a traditional Hebrew song.

◀ Senior High youth with their homeowner and carpentry project.

Susanville, CA

Susanville Indian Rancheria

▶ Daisy, staff, and a youth play their guitars at an evening worship organized by a work team.

▶ A youth builds an awning.



McDermitt, NV

Fort McDermitt Reservation

◀ Songtime with talented musicians from Community UMC of Pacific Palisades.

◀ Junior high youth installs a handrail on a set of stairs.

Fort Hall, ID

Fort Hall Reservation

▶ Thursday evening spirit walk overlooks the surrounding farmland during sunset.

▶ Homeowner asks the youth to paint his new shed to match his home, in camouflage.



2012 Summer Snapshots



South Los Angeles, CA

◀ Youth paint small business facades.

◀ Work team plants trees along South Hoover.

▶ Rev. Porter of St. John's UMC shares about the Watts Towers and neighborhood of Watts.





Study and Serve in Nicaragua *By Joanne Poff, Trip Leader*

This year I went with my church, Fremont UMC, to help build a lavandara (laundry and shower facility) in Madera Negras, Nicaragua. I am excited to return as one of the trip leaders for SSP's inaugural team that will go to this beautiful country. We will work with Seeds of Learning, a nonprofit, in their efforts to promote education and improve living conditions in Nicaragua.

Editor's Note: Jeremy Wells from Atascadero UMC will co-lead this session.

◀ Lake Atitlán in Guatemala.

▲ Local artwork displays life for a Guatemalan.

Guatemala: June 30 — July 10, 2013

Nicaragua: July 13 — 24, 2013



Stories from Guatemala *By Allison Kielhold, Staff (pictured above)*

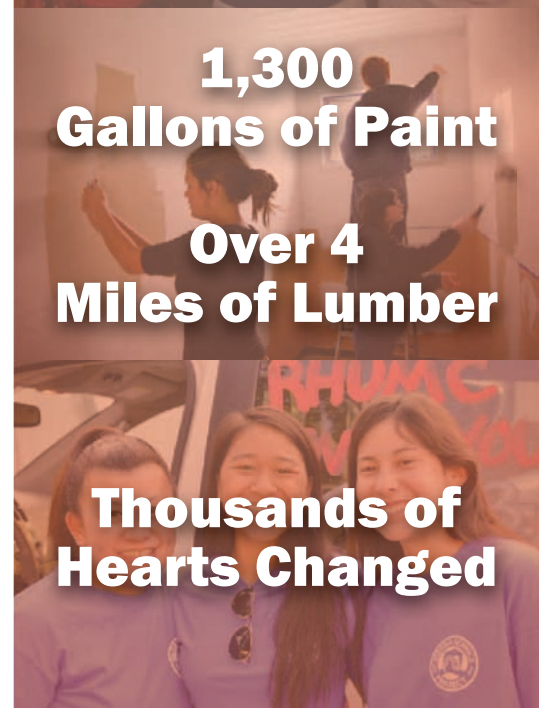
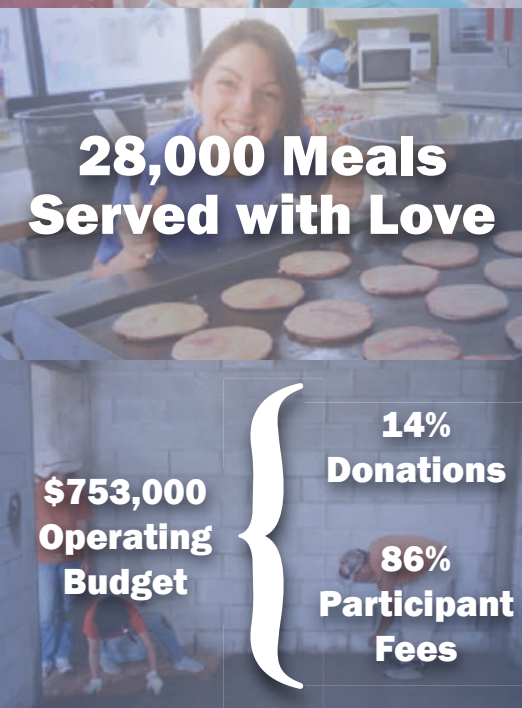
The Study and Serve program in Guatemala is a wonderful opportunity to serve as well as learn about the history and culture of another country. Last summer the projects ranged from building a house, to painting, gardening, and making adobe blocks for a future Methodist clinic.

In addition to the work, we visited a weaving cooperation in San Juan La Laguna run by local women, and a non-profit language school that is helping to develop a small rural community. We ate at a non-profit and free trade restaurant in Xela to learn more about the history of the civil war from 1960 to 1996. In Santa Anita we stayed at a free trade coffee plantation run by ex-guerrillas. I believe that all of these experiences helped us to have a better understanding of Guatemala's difficult history, as well as the problems that face the country today.

◀ Work team and community members install a new concrete floor.

◀ Felipe Poron with Allison Kielhold.

▲ A youth works on a wall.



Love > Fear

By Moe Leneweaver, Site Director in LA

This summer's theme was "love is greater than fear." Our love for each other and God's love for us, casts out fear. Knowing that God is on our side eradicates fear — of bullies, circular saws, new experiences, the future, and even of not knowing if God exists or not.

Understanding that Love is the greater force can give us the courage that is vital to doing God's work. God doesn't teach us to fear, but teaches us to love both ourselves and others.

A Year in Facts 2011-2012

5 Summer Sites

6 Weekends of Service in Sacramento and Portland

2 Alternative Spring Break Sessions in Los Angeles

1 Study and Serve Session in Guatemala

Support SSP Financially

- ▶ Donate online on our website: www.sierraserviceproject.org
- ▶ Donate with the enclosed envelope
- ▶ Ask your employer to match your donation or to donate in-kind goods

Other ways to Support SSP

- ▶ Donate a vehicle. If you have a used vehicle that you no longer need, we will put it to work in our fleet, saving us the cost of renting vehicles each summer
- ▶ Donate tools. SSP always needs replacement power and hand tools
- ▶ Volunteer in our Sacramento office

Inside the *SSP Report*

- ▶ A message from new Board President, Kathy Platnick
- ▶ 2011-2012 in review, snapshots and fun facts
- ▶ Information on programs during the school year in Portland, Sacramento and South Los Angeles
- ▶ 2013 summer site locations
- ▶ Announcing Study and Serve program in Nicaragua
- ▶ Donor and volunteer acknowledgement

Stay Connected

Inside the Margins is SSP's new monthly e-newsletter; look for it in your inbox or subscribe on our website. You can also stay connected to the SSP community by following us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and You Tube.



▲ Work team in South Los Angeles with the Zuniga family who were in need of a safe wheelchair ramp for their son, Daniel.

The SSP Report

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To our generous contributors: Thank you for making a difference.

Sierra Service Project would like to thank all of the individuals, businesses, churches and foundations who have contributed to our success this year. Donations of all types made up 14% of the Sierra Service Project budget in 2012. We could not provide affordable opportunities to serve without these generous donations. In 2012 we were able to provide over \$10,430 in church discounts & scholarships to individual teens and young adults, enabling them to participate in the magic of SSP. Without our donors this would not have been possible.

2012 Donor Acknowledgements

All donations from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012

Endowment Donations

Jane Bishop In memory of Darrell Bishop The Cavin/Gudger Family Fund	Chris, Rachel, Rick & Toni Eaton In memory of Andrew Eaton	James & Rev. Heather Leslie Hammer In memory of Eric Hammer Steven & Pamela Kepler	Lynnewood UMC Alternative Christmas Giving 2011 Margaret Jean Rambikur
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Roofing Level \$1,000 & over

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▲ 2013 Board Members and Staff

2012 Board Members Contributed Over \$12,500

A special thank you to our 2012 Board of Directors who have dedicated their time, finances & vision to support the Sierra Service Project & its continual growth.

Brent Alspach, Rev. Alissa Bertsch Johnson, Sabrina Bishop, Deb Davidson, Rev. Katie Goetz, Sarah Nordwick, Chloe Parker, Nanci Paulson, Dennis Pedersen, Joanne Poff, Mark Rehfield, Stephanie Craig Rushing, Rev. Melissa Rynders, Kathy Platnick, Dennis Sandstrom, Lizzie Smith, Austin Welch & Toua Yang.

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