

Church Youth Excel in Service

The lazy, hazy days of summer did not apply for the Poughkeepsie United Methodist youth. Where many kids look forward to the summer to relax from a long school year, the Poughkeepsie UMC youth put their efforts in preparing and attending four different mission events – 3 mission trips and a Vacation Bible School. In July, a team of 31 went to Philadelphia, PA, sponsored through **M-Fuge Summer Camps**, to minister to that community. This is the eighth year that Poughkeepsie UMC has sent a team down to Philadelphia to service the community in a variety of ways, such as cleaning parks, visiting nursing homes, playing with disabled youth and many kids of all ages. The Poughkeepsie UMC youth were flexible and pretty much did what they were assigned to do. August was also a very busy month for the youth. A team of 13 went to Ensenada, Mexico for the eighth year, sponsored by **Mexico Outreach**, to mission to a small church by providing a Vacation Bible School program with crafts and games. The average VBS attendance was 60 youth which provided for very full days. The best part of this experience is playing and bonding with the Mexican youth. It's amazing what a week of showing them God's love will do. They greet us each year like we never left them. Also in August, a team of 25 PUMC youth ministered locally to the City of Poughkeepsie through a second year program called **Bridge Builders**, which was originated by Poughkeepsie UMC. Through this program, youth from seven churches in the area combined skills and resources to provide service by playing with children in parks, painting picnic tables and benches, visiting the elderly in nursing homes, staining decks at the orphanage, building and planting a garden at a housing facility to name a few. This is an excellent example how churches can come together, regardless of denomination, and work towards a common goal to better the community in which we all live in. Hopefully by having the youth from all the churches involved will ingrain the servantry attitude in them that Jesus calls all of us to have and will make serving more of a habit. Poughkeepsie UMC also provided a **Vacation Bible School**, which has been a long tradition, and a number of youth assisted in administering the daily message and associated crafts and games. Please keep in mind that although these events occurred in the summer, there are many months of preparation and fundraising to go through to make these events possible and successful. The Poughkeepsie UMC youth and all the youth who participate in missions are great kids and should be held up as the 'examples' and not the 'exceptions' of our youth today. So as the summer comes to a close and the school year is starting, the youth will have a couple of months to recuperate before the planning cycle begins for next year's events.

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