

Mission Tuesday #98

"He who oppresses the poor reproaches, mocks, and insults his Maker, but he who is kind and merciful to the needy honors Him." Proverbs 14:31 Amplified

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done." Proverbs 19:17 NIV



Reflecting on my time at Mission of Hope this week, I feel very blessed to have had the privilege of working there...helping the poor and the lonely, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked (or cold), having conversations with the hurting, and showing compassion to others. That's what we do at Mission of Hope.

If you live around this area, I don't need to tell you that winter is in full swing. The temperatures outside this week have been beyond frigid. Many people have come in needing warm clothing, gloves, hats, scarves and blankets. I can't imagine spending my days and nights outside, especially this week. One man shivered as he came in, and I noticed ice in his beard. You could almost see him thawing as he drank a warm cup of coffee, with a smile on his face.

I had the honor of meeting with one of the student coordinators of a local college on Wednesday. Their first year students are required to do some sort of community service, and some of them came to Mission of Hope last semester. This group of students was hard-working and were a pleasure to have at the Mission. She shared with me some of the students' reflections as they wrote about their time at Mission of Hope. Below are some excerpts...

"I remember the very first time I went to Mission of Hope. At first I was a little bit nervous. I didn't know what to expect or what exactly I would have to do, but once I got there my nervousness went away. I was greeted by a very friendly man, but I never learned his name. He talked to me for over fifteen minutes about life, college, and love. It surprised me that someone there was so friendly to someone they didn't even know. That's when I realized that my previous thoughts about homeless people were wrong. I know this sounds terrible, but I will tell you anyway. Before going to Mission of Hope I felt bad for homeless people, but thought of them as weird and dirty. After serving here, I learned that this was not true at all. They are very friendly, nice people, probably even more friendly than many other people I know in my life."

"Throughout the service learning process, I have learned not to take anything I have for granted, because at any moment everything can be taken away. I have learned this because the people that visit mission of hope are prime examples of this misfortune. There are many people that go there and seek help, not because they are lazy, but because they are in dire need of support. I've

learned that mission of hope is a great establishment that tries its best to meet the needs of everyone that walks through its doors. The clients I served are people who need help, and I have learned that helping people is an awesome thing. I have had the opportunity to meet some amazing people that on a normal day I would just walk right past.

I don't think anything that I have learned in the classroom has directly affected the service I performed but rather the opposite. I have gained appreciation for everything that I have. I do not think it is truly possible to get real life experience, or "street smarts", in the classroom. That's why service learning was great. It allowed me to get out into the community, hone my people skills, and positively affect the area surrounding my new home."

"I was fortunate enough to work at Mission Of Hope, a building that serves food to homeless, jobless, or just down on their luck people. It was a great experience to be able to talk to, work with and understand the people that go there. Some of them have great stories to tell from which one can learn. Others just need someone to talk to, and I was glad that I could be that person. Mission of Hope is also a Christian Mission, so it has a great atmosphere there. It has church on Sundays (which are quite good by the way) and also has some support groups. It is such a blessed place. Working there reminded me of home because I had done much of the same work back home, and even in other countries. Being able to help people with such a basic thing as putting food on their plate gave me such a full feeling inside. What I learned from my service learning that I can apply to school is a simple lesson: just keep going. Some of these people are homeless, jobless, sick, in debt, and such things that would make a person give up, but they keep coming back, they keep trying to get jobs, they ask for prayers and help each other out. Something I hope to strive for is that level of relentlessness, of being brought to my knees, but not out of the game.

When it comes to the future and my service to the community, I hope to continue being able to go to Mission of Hope, because it is such a great environment, and could use the blessing of more volunteers. It really lessens the burden on the shoulders of those who are there constantly."

Wow...reading their reflections brought me to tears. These are young people in their late-teens or early-twenties, and they "get it." Their hearts have been touched, changed and transformed by what they experienced at Mission of Hope and in what God is doing there. Based on what they wrote, their lives will never be the same! Thank you, God!

This was a touching experience for me this week! I am again reminded that God is at work in ALL hearts through Mission of Hope...in the people we serve, in the volunteers, in those doing community service, and in the members of our staff!

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done."