

History of WorkCamp

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food this day, and one of you say to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” James 2:14-17

In the mid 1980's, several parishes began participating in non-denominational Work Camps around the country. Inspired by the Word of God to better the lives of those in need, the young people from these parishes were rebuilding homes in disrepair. The experience invariably changed the hearts and perspectives of all involved.

Encouraged by these experiences and recognizing similar needs closer to home, a few youth workers sought to bring the WorkCamp experience to the Diocese of Arlington in 1989. Their efforts produced an experience of serving others that was both Catholic and customized to the culture and needs of young people. Scripture, the sacraments, and Catholic Social Teaching were integrated with challenging home repair projects, music, and shared stories of faith. Since that time, the Diocese annually sponsors a WorkCamp in areas within its boundaries.

This summer, young people and supporting adults will again have the opportunity to serve residents who are in need of home repair services. Along with Diocesan Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries, youth workers and volunteers from local parishes will provide the leadership and planning to make WorkCamp happen. Starting as early as eighteen months in advance, these volunteers work closely with skilled contractors and representatives from social service agencies to ensure that the best services are delivered to those in need.

WorkCamp is the highlight of many parish Youth Ministry programs. Stories from past participants reflect the profound faith experience encountered there. Once again, we will embark on the life-changing WorkCamp experience, and we seek young people and adult leaders to join us.

