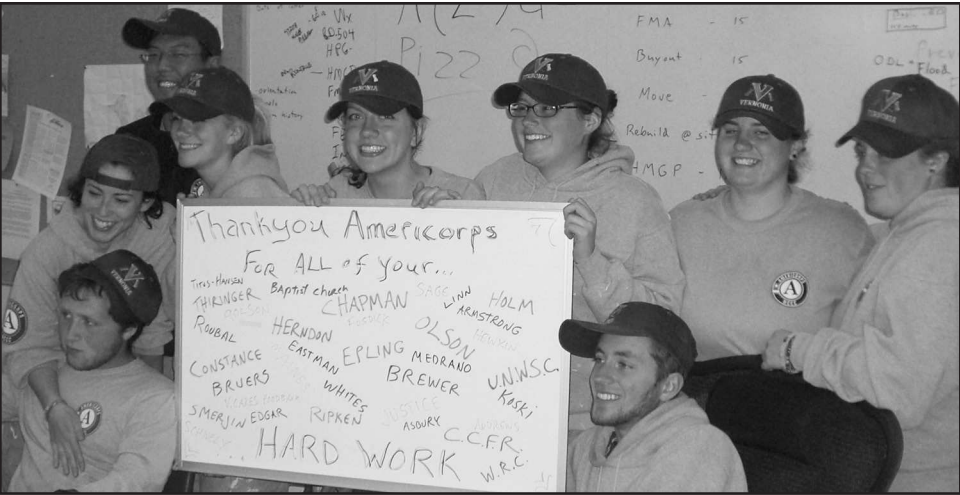


Some Friends Leave, New Friends Arrive

By Scott Laird

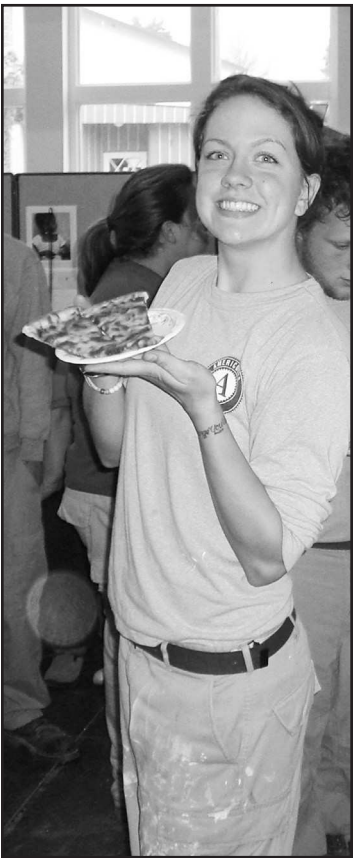
The AmeriCorp Blue 4 Team that had been working in Vernonia for six weeks left in late May. The team received a warm send off from Columbia County Flood Relief Staff, especially Robb Wilson who worked closely with the team as the local liaison and advising them on projects. The team, made up 18-24 year olds who work for one year on community projects as part of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, assisted on thirty-seven separate



projects while in Vernonia. “Some projects only lasted a few hours, on others they spent hundreds of hours,” said Wilson. The team assisted local residents who were damaged by flooding with painting, dry wall installation, removal of damaged insulation and various other needed tasks. At their going away pizza party, many of the team members expressed how deeply affected they had been by their work in Vernonia. “Working in Vernonia has changed my life,” said team member Kelly Comley.

But all is not lost for Vernonia. In mid-June Blue 1 Team arrived with a fresh crew to work for six more weeks assisting with flood relief. So once again keep an eye out for those gray sweatshirts - and say hello to some people who are here to help Vernonia rebuild.

Vernonia said goodbye to AmeriCorp Blue 4 Team with a Pizza Party.



Compassion First (continued from page 1)

“We have tried to help with what we call ‘unmet needs’, where people didn’t have insurance or don’t have the financial means to do the repairs they need.”



Michael Do hard at work in Vernonia.

Pringle and his crews have coordinated with Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) to work on about fifteen projects, some of them small, like putting back together a shower and hot water heater, to a project they were currently in the middle of: raising a used manufactured home up onto a newly constructed foundation. They provide both skilled and unskilled labor and make a practice of teaching volunteers new and useful skills while they are on a project. “Some projects have been very complex, other very simple,” said Nancy Pringle. Nancy has extensive experience through her time in Mississippi and acts as the Disaster Case Worker for Compassion First.

They run a very professional organization, taking referrals from CCFR, interviewing the potential client, verifying their needs, and signing agreements with the homeowner that includes a detailed scope of what the project will include. The idea is to restore the home to code and to pre-flood condition, providing a safe, dry, and secure place to live again. Compassion First has over 2,500 hours of verified volunteer hours of labor here in Vernonia so far. They have had teams of workers here most weekends and sometimes three and four days during the week.

“We are just a bunch of folks trying to show our Christian love for our fellow human beings,” said Pringle about why they are here.

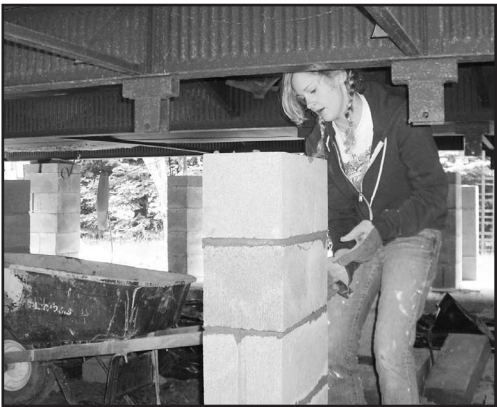
Michael Do had an especially interesting story to tell. A member of the Beaverton Foursquare Church and a Biblical Studies student with an interest in Youth Ministry and Mission Work, Michael went to Mississippi as an eighteen year old to help with IT and documentation. He found a need for Certified Air Conditioning installers, so he studied and passed the test. He then learned about plumbing and electrical work, and he was soon overseeing all contractors in those fields in the area where Compassion First was working. He worked in Mississippi for eighteen months and has brought his skills and knowledge to Vernonia as the lead on numerous projects here. “We have a saying,” said Michael about his service work. “‘We are showing God’s love through our hands, not shoving it down peoples’ throats.’ We show up, work and provide service and wait for people to open up to us, and then we share our message.” Do is currently part of an AmeriCorp placement for eleven months with Compassion First.



During the month of June, large teams of workers were in Vernonia, as part of a “Season of Service,” a three month precursor to “Portland CityFest”, August 22-23, which includes a gathering and visit by Louis Palau. During the “Season of Service” Christians from all denominations are encouraged to

work together to minister to their communities through relationships, service work and strategic outreach. “We want to try to show that Christians can be for something, not against everything,” said Pringle.

Compassion First is making a real difference in the lives of Vernonia’s flood victims. They have eased the burden on CCFR’s staff by assuming the lead role on some complicated projects and by helping with funding issues by providing donated labor, tools, and experience. And they are helping people get back into their homes, one at a time.





Uncle Sporty says:

Happy 4th of July... Give Peace a Chance!

Sporty's carries
hunting, camping
& fishing supplies!



New & Used,
Buy, Sell, Trade
& Consignment.

★ ★ **SPORTY'S** ★ ★

The friendliest outdoor store in the US of A!

275 West Columbia River Highway, Clatskanie • 503-728-2712