



June 6, 2005

Rescue Mission Provides Scholarships for Dogwood Acres *Twenty Children Attend Christian Summer Camp for the First Time*

School's out! It's time for summer camp. The hiking, the swimming, the exploration . . .

The fees?

When Bay District Schools reported the number of homeless children enrolled, the Rescue Mission was shocked. More than 300. The Mission knew there must be more than twice that many in poverty.

"We had already seen increasing numbers of homeless families seeking assistance. We were prepared because we knew about the national trends," said Amanda Bawn, Director of Development for the Rescue Mission. "We opened a women's shelter a few years ago and last year we opened Bethel Village, a home for women and children to help homeless families get back on track."

They wanted to find more ways to reach this population. But with limited facilities, they knew they could only reach a few at their own campus.

And it clicked. The Mission had just learned about a camp the Presbyterian Church operates, Dogwood Acres, located in Vernon, Fla.

"Packing up and leaving for camp was the highlight of my summer every year as a child," Bawn said. "What I came to realize is, it took money to send me to camp. I thank God my parents could pay. Otherwise I would never have experienced what I did. It helped make me who I am today."

The Mission wanted to provide this opportunity for homeless and struggling families. They asked for funding from its donors to meet the need. Enough funds came through to send 20 kids.

Bay District Schools and Life Management Center made referrals to the Mission, who coordinated transportation for some of the kids.

"We plan to continue the program next year. There are even talks about planning a special week of camp just for the homeless and foster kids that we refer," said Bawn. "This way the Mission will have more opportunity to become involved with the campers one-on-one. It's great ministry and we're proud to be a part of it."

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STORY IDEA

Ride along with the Rescue Mission as we take one of these special kids to camp Sunday, June 19th at 2 pm. Get a first hand interview with the family and the little girl our community has reached out to help!

Please call Amanda at 624-6278 for more information.