



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Louise Ward  
YouthWorks!, Inc.  
3530 East 28<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
800.968.8504  
[www.youthworks.com](http://www.youthworks.com)

## YOUTHWORKS REACHES OUT TO 69 COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND PUERTO RICO

For nine weeks this summer, 35,000 junior high and high school students, as well as families, from all over the United States and Canada will cross borders of culture and race during week-long mission trips! YouthWorks mission sites will be filled with nearly 70 participants to spend four days doing ministry work by volunteering with social service organizations, facilitating a children's program, visiting the elderly and painting homes.

Mission opportunities are organized with the abilities and interests of youth in mind. Often groups will scrape, paint and do minor repairs to community homes or work with children at a YouthWorks Kids Club. A hands-on, high-energy afternoon program offering games, crafts, skits, songs and interactive lessons all designed to help kids learn about Jesus. In urban areas, youth serve alongside local organizations to volunteer with children, elderly and homeless populations. "While work projects are significant activities during the week, they are just the beginning of what we try to provide for our youth participants," remarks Paul Bertelson, founder and president of YouthWorks. "We want these students to interact with the communities they serve because there is just as much an opportunity to learn as there is to give."

Established in 1994, YouthWorks coordinates all the details of a well-rounded mission trip. The YouthWorks staff facilitates the mission experience by arranging housing, preparing service projects, planning cultural activities, leading devotions and worship services, as well as purchasing food and supplies.

YouthWorks!, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a multi-denominational youth mission organization dedicated to providing Christ-centered, youth mission opportunities to churches and faith-based groups in North America.

For more information, visit [www.youthworks.com](http://www.youthworks.com) or call 1.800.968.8504.

## 2009 YOUTHWORKS MISSION SITES

### Alabama

Bayou La Batre  
Birmingham

### Arkansas

Marvell  
Ozark Mountains (Boonville)

### Arizona

Navajo Reservation

### California

San Diego  
San Francisco

### Colorado

Cortez  
Denver

### District of Columbia

Washington, DC

### Georgia

Atlanta  
Savannah

### Kentucky

Louisville

### Illinois

Cairo  
Chicago  
Quad Cities

### Louisiana

New Orleans

### Maine

Coastal Maine (Calais)

### Massachusetts

Lynn/Boston

### Michigan

Benton Harbor  
Sault Ste. Marie

### Minnesota

Cass Lake (Leech Lake Reservation)  
Duluth  
Minneapolis  
Red Lake Reservation  
St. Paul

### Missouri

Kansas City  
St. Louis

### Montana

Blackfeet Reservation  
Crow Reservation  
Northern Cheyenne Reservation

### Nevada

Las Vegas

### New York

Adirondack Mountains (Chestertown)  
Brooklyn  
Niagara Falls  
Queens

### North Carolina

Coastal Carolina (Swan Quarter)  
Raleigh/Durham  
Smoky Mountains (Taylorsville)

### Ohio

Cincinnati  
Steubenville

### Oklahoma

Osage Reservation

### Pennsylvania

Mon Valley (Monessen)  
Philadelphia  
Schuylkill County (Mahanoy)

### South Dakota

Lake Traverse Reservation (Sisseton)  
Martin  
Pine Ridge Reservation  
Rapid City  
Rosebud Reservation

### Texas

Carthage

### Tennessee

Chattanooga  
Newport (Rural Tennessee)

### Vermont

Rutland/Green Mountains

### Virginia

Eastern Shore (Onancock)

### Washington

Yakama Reservation

### West Virginia

Charleston  
Delbarton  
Lincoln County  
Logan

### Wisconsin

Green Bay  
Milwaukee

### Wyoming

Wind River Reservation (Fremont County)

### Puerto Rico

Arecibo

### Canada

Thunder Bay, Ontario  
Toronto, Ontario  
Vancouver, British Columbia

## *YouthWorks' Facts*

### *The Purpose*

The core purpose of YouthWorks is to provide life-changing, Christ-centered youth mission opportunities to youth entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade to graduating seniors, as well as families at select communities. By crossing borders of race and culture and moving outside of their comfort zone, participants have the chance to both give and receive the love of God through meaningful interaction with community members.

### *What is YouthWorks?*

YouthWorks!, Inc., is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides youth mission opportunities for churches and faith-based groups.

The roots of YouthWorks can be traced to the organization's president, Paul Bertelson, formerly a youth minister and missions pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, Minnesota. Before establishing YouthWorks, Bertelson led his own youth group on several mission trips, which led him to recognize a need for affordable, life-changing mission experiences. Bertelson envisioned a ministry that planned the details for the youth leader, allowing youth leaders to serve alongside their teens. In 1994, YouthWorks began offering week-long youth mission opportunities to churches nationwide.

During the first summer of operation, the organization brought over 400 participants from 35 churches to two mission sites in Pine Ridge, South Dakota and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Fifteen years later, YouthWorks has grown from the two original mission sites to 69 sites in Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico. An estimated 2,000 groups, with 35,000 participants across North America will participate this upcoming summer.

YouthWorks coordinates all the details of a well-rounded mission trip. The site staff facilitates each mission experience by making housing arrangements, preparing mission projects, planning cultural activities, leading devotions and worship services, as well as purchasing food and supplies. Additionally, these four full-time summer staff members are responsible for managing site operations, leading evening cultural activities and acting as liaisons between the host community and YouthWorks participants.

### *How does YouthWorks differ from other organizations?*

YouthWorks concentrates its efforts on building relationships, and is eager to point out that it is *not* a work camp. The goal of the organization is to have a positive and relational presence in communities for the entire summer. In addition, YouthWorks desires for participants to learn much from the host community as they give in service.

It is YouthWorks goal to establish long-term relationships with communities by returning to the same sites each consecutive summer, whenever possible. YouthWorks also started GreaterWorks, an internship program that enables interns to serve year long with local organizations in a few of these same communities throughout the year and into the next summer.

***How much does a YouthWorks trip cost?***

Cost varies from site to site, but trips start around \$200 per person. The participation fee includes lodging, meals, project supplies, evening cultural activities, mission site leadership, a t-shirt, as well as promotion and preparation materials.

***How does it work?***

For nine weeks during the summer, most YouthWorks mission sites will be filled with nearly 70 participants from all over North America. These groups spend four days participating in service projects, working with children and elderly and experiencing memorable cultural events.

***Where does YouthWorks bring participants?***

For the summer of 2009, youth participants will visit 69 different rural, urban, Appalachian and American Indian reservation mission sites in Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico.

***Does each group need their own adult leaders?***

Yes. YouthWorks asks that there is one adult for every seven high school students, and one adult for every five junior high participants.

***Can an individual go alone on a YouthWorks trip?***

The minimum number of participants per registered group is five; this number includes an adult leader.

***Is transportation included?***

Each group is responsible for their own transportation.

***How are sites chosen?***

YouthWorks first evaluates a potential community's needs and whether the skills of teenagers are sufficient to meet them. The staff takes into consideration whether or not a community is willing to welcome and accommodate nearly 600 students over the summer, and if appropriate housing is available.

***How do participants serve at a site?***

All projects are designed with the abilities of youth in mind. At some sites, groups will scrape, paint, weatherize homes and do minor repairs. If a group has specialized skills, the YouthWorks staff tries to customize appropriate projects. In urban areas, youth serve alongside local organizations, volunteering with children, elderly and homeless populations. YouthWorks also hosts a Kids Club at most of our mission sites; teens are given the opportunity to both prepare and lead the Kids Club for local community children.