



Mission possible

A Detroit program brings together youth from across the country.

For Presbyterian youth who will serve in Detroit this June, “Abounding in Hope” is more than a theme for the 221st General Assembly (2014). It’s a mission they’ve chosen to undertake.

For the last several summers, the Presbytery of Detroit has hosted a weeklong Youth Mission Blast. Youth groups from all across the country stay in Metro Detroit Presbyterian churches and work with youth on a “mission possible” (if they choose to accept it!).

Each day of Mission Blast, the youth learn about local needs and receive a mission challenge. Accepting the challenge to “feed the hungry,” they’ve made lunch for families at Ronald McDonald House, sorted food at a food bank, and worked in community gardens. To “give a hand up,” they’ve landscaped at Habitat for Humanity homes and raised money through car washes.

Michael Barconey, a youth leader, explains why Mission Blast matters to young Presbyterians: “Mission Blast not only provides an opportunity for youth to be a part of a multicultural experience [but] allows youth to ‘be the body of Christ.’ For one week, we serve God’s people. We learn about ourselves as well as about those who are different from us, and we grow in our faith.”

Barconey, who also is the Presbytery of Detroit’s young adult advisory delegate to this year’s General Assembly, says that “hosting youth from different parts of the country gives us an opportunity to welcome our young brothers and sisters in Christ to our home. It is icing on the cake when we connect at other PC(USA) events such as Triennium. I believe connecting youth to the larger church is vital to our denomination’s survival.”

Because it overlaps with General Assembly, this year’s Mission Blast promises to be particularly meaningful. Youth will be able to attend GA opening worship or sing in the youth choir. Likewise, GA attendees can join youth in this year’s mission possible—“feed the spirit”—by helping to make and pass out lunches to hungry neighbors.

GET INVOLVED

For more about this and other opportunities from the Presbytery of Detroit and the Committee on Local Arrangements: presbyteryofdetroit.org/cola



Youth Mission Blast participants from all across the country gather around the Detroit memorial to boxer Joe Louis, a fist aimed at racial injustice.

Presbytery of Detroit youth also will reconnect with youth from First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, at this year’s Mission Blast. During a 2012 summer mission trip, Detroit and Sarasota youth served together in New Orleans. As part of the Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans (RHINO) ministry of St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church, these youth weeded a community garden, painted a group home, and worked—and danced—with adults with mental disabilities.

Asked what he wants other youth to understand about Detroit, Barconey replies thoughtfully: “We can’t judge a book by its cover. We need the experience of meeting the people of Detroit as opposed to getting all our information from the media.” Mission Blast participants will do just that as they spruce up a senior citizens’ home or do rehab work at Detroit’s only official youth baseball diamond. They’ll form personal connections that spread and instill hope.

In doing so, Mission Blast youth will personify the GA’s message of abounding in hope: youth coming together from across the nation, with different racial, social, and economic backgrounds, to show Christ’s love to a city searching for and embracing hope.

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