

For a week each summer, youth and adult leaders from Salem spend a week at workcamp. Workcamp is an experience where hundreds of students from youth groups across America come together for six days to repair and transform homes—and to strengthen and transform their own faith. In 2015 10 people from Salem went to Millersville, MD for workcamp. Below are reflections on the week from two of the campers.

Haley Danowski's reflections on Workcamp 2015:

This being my 4th time at work camp, I found myself to be very comfortable, very quickly. This year especially, I was able to practice my leadership skills. As work director, I had an opportunity to focus on building relationships with every single person on my crew as well as communicating with the other crew at my site. My task this week included replacing an already existing porch located behind a ramp that was built during a work camp 2 years ago. There seemed to be more complications than first imagined because once the plywood was up, we discovered rotted wood with lots of water damage and the porch to directly expose our resident's basement. To solve this we added new joists under the foundation along with many waterproof layers on an angle to ensure a long-lasting fix. This work camp was very gratifying considering my amazing resident, Harriet, was married to a soldier, with whom she travelled the world with. She had a great connection to our sponsor church, making any unfinished jobs easy to be completed after we left. Thank you all for supporting me and my friends to attend camp this year, these opportunities create lasting memories, forever friends, and stories to share with you.

Hannah Wilkins's reflections on Workcamp 2015:

This was my fourth Workcamp, making me the second most experienced on my crew after an 18 year old girl. The 2 adults and 2 15 year olds on my crew had never been to Workcamp before. Our job was to paint 4 rooms, replace the railing on the handicap ramp, and replace steps going up to the porch for a very deserving resident. Sharlene Thomas was so unbelievably welcoming to us. She loved us from the very beginning greeting us with hugs. Sharlene was a very busy lady who had just gone back to school to get her CNA while taking care of her husband Thomas who was paralyzed from the waste down by MS. Despite all her troubles (including a broken down car), and her husband's medical expenses with an upcoming surgery, she was easily the most positive person I have ever met. She joined us everyday for devotions and always encouraged us while we were working. She made sure we stayed hydrated in the 90 degree weather and humidity by forcing water on us and insisting that we eat lunch inside with her in the air conditioning, which is not a Workcamp norm. When we finished on Friday, she was so grateful she cried into my shoulder and told her how much we had meant to her. Sharlene made all the long days and nights of less than 6 hours sleep worth it. She made the long lines at the showers and the long drive there worth it. People always ask me why I would spend money and use my own time to give back to someone else for a week. Sharlene is why. We made a difference in her life. We were the hands and feet of Jesus for a week and that is an amazing feeling. Sharlene often told us how amazing our service was and every single member of our crew agreed that what we got back was even more than we gave. I want to thank all of you, Salem, who gave us the opportunity to do this by supporting us through our fundraising. You gave us the ability to change people's lives for the better and I will always be grateful for that.