

2017 Summer Service Experience “Help Jesus in Disguise”

“Help Jesus in Disguise.” For the eighteen high school students, participating in the SND Summer Service Experience, this was their daily prayer focus as they set out to volunteer at four unique service sites in the greater Cleveland area.

For the twelfth year, Sister Mary Lisa Novak assembled a support staff of Sisters of Notre Dame, several Notre Dame College students, and adult chaperones to guide high school students through four days of prayer, sharing, and daily service activities.



Besides Sister Mary Lisa, the Chardon province sisters involved included Sister Mary Lisette Petelin, Sister Mary Roseanna Mellert, Sister Maryann Cirino, and Sister Mary Patricia Griesmar.

The SND Summer Service Experience is designed to introduce the students to “Sharing, Witnessing and Living the Charism and Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame” through introducing them to those in need and teaching a valuable life lesson about service.



Sister Lisa offered that it was refreshing to hear the students’ spontaneously wanting to share what they experienced each day in dealing with the clients at the various service sites. “They were so enthused with what they had been able to accomplish and the energy of really being of help.”

Students involved are from Clearwater Central Catholic High School, Florida, Cleveland Central Catholic High School, and Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School, Chardon. They gathered on Sunday, June 18, at St. Leonard’s Youth Retreat Center in Avon, Ohio. There they were provided explanations on the sites and service to be performed over the next three days.

The theme “Help Jesus in Disguise” resonated as they worked with clients at the Office of Migration and Refugee

Services; The West Side Catholic Center, a site offering meals, clothing, and programs for the homeless; Bishop Cosgrove Center, the largest homeless center in downtown Cleveland; and Blessing House, a children’s crisis care center in Lorain, Ohio.

Sister Lisa smiled as she explained, “They were happy and satisfied that together they did help Jesus in disguise both at the service sites as well as back at St. Leonard’s during their time together playing, doing their little duties/chores, and group prayer and reflection. ‘God is good and He does take care.’ They got it!”

