

German Students Learn From Two-Week Building Project

Eleven students from the Dortmund Germany area have just spent two weeks in New Jersey, learning first hand about life in urban New Jersey and the challenges facing many US cities.

“Our students come here to learn, to meet local people and to see first hand how they live and the challenges they face in everyday life in Newark,” said Pastor Ulrich Strunck who has been leading groups of students here for more than 10 years.

“We want to provide our students with a full view of life in Newark and let them experience the satisfaction of contributing to the construction of these homes. We know how badly people need affordable housing like this and in two weeks time working here our students will see a lot. This year our students are working at Stony Point Presbyterian Center and at Habitat for Humanity Newark,” Strunck said.



Laying the floor for the second floor and figuring out how to get from the now complete level of the house back to the ground was a challenge for Jason Ramsey and this hardworking, but smiling, crew of students.

“Our young people will benefit from this experience by understanding problems of people in other parts of the world; not just intellectually but from a practical point of view as well,” continued the pastor. “They also will see the fruits of their labor and what they can accomplish in this Christian environment. They can see just how much they can do.”

The group is led by Pastor Strunck and his wife Erica Strunck. He retired after being pastor for 18 years at Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Eichlinghofen in Dortmund and before that he worked as a pastor at the Euvopeau Parist in Luxemburg. Erica, is a minister responsible for programs for the blind at Dortmund. They also give lectures in the New Testament at Mbandaka in the Congo where Millard Fuller worked in the 1970's. It is there, in the Congo, the long-standing relationship with Habitat for Humanity and Reverend Strunck first began.

Dortmund is an industrial and mining area in Germany where a technology park was established nearly 20 years ago and the economy has been transformed to more modern types of companies. The University of Dortmund boasts of over 24,000 students. The Dortmund area shares some of the same challenges that people in Newark are facing. The German government via the Central Protestant Youth Organization financially supports the visit.



Three of the boys work to place fence posts in the ground before the fencing materials can be hung. The students worked on a variety of different projects during their two week visit to HFHN.

Two of the students, Stephanie Gast and Hanna Rode are on their second visit, having made a similar trip in September 2004. Joining them this year are Alexander Gast, Dominik Gast, Sebastian Kessler, Simon Hohberg, Franka Spiekermann, Thea Jungnickel, Caroline Schlueter, Annika Ruhmhofer and Katharina Peter.



These two students, who are shown checking their email messages from friends back home, are on their second visit to Newark to work on Habitat houses. They are Stephanie Gast (left) and Hanna Rode.

The students have been working on a number of projects including laying the second floor of a home under construction and installing fencing. They resided in the Memorial West United Presbyterian Church and worked on some projects there as well.