

FaithBIT



Mountain Mama

Reflection by Abby Bracke

As a chaperone on the high school mission trip this past June, I had the pleasure of listening to the John Denver classic, “Take Me Home, Country Roads” countless times in our 15-passenger van. I always sang along with the teens and this always brought a smile to my face. This song became the theme for our trip.

One of the lyrics in the song refers to a “mountain mama”. While in West Virginia for the week, my small group had the opportunity to meet a woman named Ms. Priscella, whom I would eventually refer to as “Mountain Mama.” Meeting her was not on the agenda for the week but rather an opportunity that presented itself... a God moment.

My small group was assigned to work in a local elementary school, reading to children and helping the overworked custodian. On our second day there, a local woman told me about another volunteer opportunity the following afternoon... the chance to help distribute food at a local food pantry. Ms. Priscella owns and operates this food pantry that provides food to over 6000 people every month. Some of the food comes in via donation but any needed food items (i.e. eggs, milk, apples) that are not donated Ms. Priscella purchases using her husband’s social security check.



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- Abby Bracke

When our small group arrived at the food pantry the next day, I was in awe at what God was allowing our youth to witness. Smiles on the faces of the mostly elderly people whose cars were loaded with food by our teens. Homeless men, whom Ms. Priscella allows to live in her campground, worked right alongside our youth. Aisle after aisle of clothing available to anyone needing it. She told us her story of how she started the food pantry and why she continues to grow it larger each month. Ms. Priscella quickly proved herself to be the most passionate, selfless person I have ever met. What an inspiration she was to the youth in our group...and myself

On our road trip home, every time the song “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” would come over the speakers, I would smile and think of this amazing woman I met in the mountains of West Virginia. Meeting Ms. Priscella allowed me to realize that surely there are similarly amazing people in our own community doing similarly amazing work. I just need to find the “mountain mamas” here in Minnesota...or become one myself.