

Missions Work in Belize

By Kai Mays

While most students went home over spring break, a group of eight students spent their break in Central America giving back to the community. On the 10-day trip to Belize, students volunteered at a Nazarene primary school, a Nazarene church, a high school, held Vacation Bible School for the primary school, and hosted a worship service while inside the church.

On the week and a half trip, students provided manual labor for the schools along with a mural painting for the children's room in the church. Josiah Munro, a junior RA in Oakwood, happened to make one of the eight on the Belize trip. When asked about the work they did, he said, "The work wasn't too much; it was kind of enjoyable for us. However, what was amazing was that we were able to give the community a break from their responsibilities and work while sharing the mission of God at the same time."

Outside of helping with renovating, the missions team was also there to spread the news of God. When the team shared their testimonies, Munro said that he was able to see God moving in them.

"Our testimonies gave them hope for their future and to trust God's path. They were impacted in understanding that there is more to life than what we, as humans, understand," he

said, "there is a God whose plan is better than anything they can think of or imagine." Not only were they able to help with serving the community, but they also touched the lives of others by spreading God's word, and that is the greatest mission of all.

Although these eight people were sent to impact the community, the community also impacted the lives of the students. While working and serving in Vacation Bible School and church, Munro said, "This trip allowed me to understand that God is very powerful and limitless, to the point where he can and currently uses people from all over the world with different backstories to accomplish the same mission."

If you feel called to serve God and go on a missions trip with the school or want to find out more information, contact Rev. David Mills at davmills3@mvnu.edu.

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"What faculty member led the 2024 spring break trip to Iceland?"

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Students Go

GLOBAL

Spring 2024 Belize Trip

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Iceland Spring Break Trip

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— Josiah Munro

THE VIEWER

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MVNU's All American and One of the Nation's Fastest

By Kai Mays

Many people at Mount Vernon Nazarene University know Evan Hodkinson as a chapel speaker, SGA VP of spiritual life or that he runs track. Evan isn't just a track runner — he's the second fastest 1,000-meter dash sprinter in the nation.

Hodkinson's achievements started in early February when he found out he made it to nationals. When asked about his early qualification, he said, "I was super excited. I made it to nationals last year, but this is the first time I've qualified early." Hodkinson left with his team the last week of February and headed to Brookings, SD, to nationals.

The team arrived in Brookings a few days before it began to familiarize themselves with the climate and track. Hodkinson said he "wasn't nervous at all when he got there. I was really excited and had a lot of fun with the team. It wasn't until we got to the facility that the nerves started to kick in." This time, Hodkinson wasn't going to settle for average; he trained over a year to get here. One of his key components was his pregame. "I was really focused on giving this race to God," he said. "I gave him everything — my nerves, fears, anxieties. I spent a lot of time in prayer before the race."

When his event got called up, Hodkinson was focused and ready to run. The gun sounded and everyone took off. "When that gun went off, I was locked in. I tried to get into a good position, and I did. I was running in the second and third lane for most of the time.

With about 200 meters left, I knew I needed to make it to the front, and that's when I



started praying Isaiah 40."

Hodkinson was able to make it to the front of the pack and finished second in the nation. Not only did he place second, but he also received All American status and beat his personal record by two seconds. "I was overjoyed when I finished. I was seated sixth going into the race, so the jump was incredible. I had felt so much relief after finishing, and that's when my teammates and coaches came over and it turned into celebration."

Hodkinson finished his season with a bang and continues to set new records. However, he doesn't want to stop here. "My goal for next year and the year after is to be national champion and to be all American in outdoor track and cross country," he said. With next year's nationals on the horizon, Hodkinson continues to train to use the gift God has given him.

Students Find Community Between Cultures

By Abby Almodovar

As campus closed down and classes wrapped up, a group of Mount Vernon Nazarene University students and faculty took full advantage of spring break and traveled nearly 3,000 miles to Keflavik, Iceland. Through an organization called Compass Path, they worked at a Salvation Army location from March 1-10.

Faith West described these 10 days as both people-oriented and transformational. The students helped clean the building, work the thrift store, and serve lunch. Most importantly, they interacted with refugees from places like Venezuela, Ukraine, Palestine, and Colombia who attended meals and community events.

West explained that many of the volunteers in Iceland were refugees themselves and that witnessing their hospitality was touching. These volunteers were in a difficult phase of waiting, "But they chose to come out and work, to do something constructive and serve their fellow person." West considered, "It challenged me — because if these people can do it, what does that look like for me?"

One Venezuelan couple who attended meals throughout the week had a particular impact on both West and Delaney Brinkman, a student who translated Spanish for them. After having a conversation about food, the young wife returned the

next day to bring each student their favorite snacks.

Brinkman and West both expressed their gratitude over this memory, and West commented, "It was just really sweet. These people are living in dorms, and they don't have a lot — they had to give up everything to come to Iceland and start a new life. For this person to take time out of her day and spend money on us was beautiful."

Throughout her time in Iceland, Brinkman witnessed firsthand the value of language. "A lot of the refugees there were learning the languages of other refugees so that they could better meet their needs and talk to them," she reflected, "It's also helped me to learn more about my Spanish-speaking gifts and ways that I can use them."

West, who did experience a communication barrier, expressed that she learned "the importance of sitting with people and sharing space, even if you don't speak the same language. A lot can happen by just being together, and it just showed me how we can demonstrate the love of Christ without necessarily speaking the same language."

