

Laura Steed '08

Service-learning can be a life-changing experience. In the summer of 2005, Laura Steed received monetary assistance from the University of Indianapolis Greyhound Adventures fund and went to work with the Appalachia Service Project doing emergency home repair. “We worked on homes in rural Appalachia to make them warmer, safer, and dryer,” she said. She loved the experience because she was able to help people live more comfortably. “I created and enjoyed many friendships with the homeowners,” she said, “and I still keep in touch with them.”

When Laura returned home, she realized that she wanted to change how she lived. She trimmed down her possessions, began to think twice before spending money on material goods, and became a vegetarian. “Throughout the summer,” she said, “I observed how simply others lived. People were living without running water! I started looking at my own life and realized how much unneeded ‘stuff’ I had. I believe I’ve simplified my life since this summer, but I also know I have more to go.”

Laura is a member of the Peace and Social Justice group at the University, an organization that focuses on service-related activities. “Last semester we raised money for hurricane relief and collected clothes on campus for a women’s shelter,” she said. “I’ll be going on a mission trip to New Orleans during spring break to help with hurricane relief. We’ll be removing carpet, walls, and floors, as well as rebuilding, and I’m really eager to help.”

Laura, a youth ministry major and a United Methodist Youth Leader Scholarship recipient, feels called to go into ministry after college and to continue to volunteer. “Volunteering is important to me because I feel that we are all called to serve others,” she said. “Jesus helped the poor and the lame



as an example to how we should live. It is also important because there are so many people who need help. You don’t need to go to the Appalachia Mountains to help people, either. There are many homeless and hungry right here in Indianapolis.”

As Laura continues her studies at the University, she will also continue to serve others. She spends time at the Boys and Girls Club of Indianapolis working as an after-school tutor. “It’s amazing to see how much you can cheer up a child’s day when you help them finish their homework,” she said. Laura hopes that people take time to help others and make time to volunteer. “I want to encourage others to volunteer and understand that no matter how small the act, it never goes unnoticed,” she said. “By uniting together, we can change the world. By showing someone just a little love, we can change their world.” —Jennifer Huber

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