

Indiana Campus Compact Student Mini-Grant Narrative Report
Operation Foundation Project Anderson 2015

Impact

The mission of Operation Foundation Project Anderson (OFPA) is to restore and rebuild the relationships and neighborhoods of Anderson, IN. From the beginning of the planning process to the conclusion of the project, efforts are directed toward *forming new and meaningful relationships* and *growing established relationships* from past projects. We were able to accomplish this with our community partners, co-working volunteers (both students and community members), and the neighbors we served. We were also able to complete over 25 service projects that helped restore and rebuild the west side neighborhood in the inner city of Anderson.

Primary Activities

During the week that OFPA complete their projects (April 20-25, 2015), we were able to:

- Paint the interior and/or exterior of 5 homes
- Complete yard work on 6 homes
- Remove and haul out trash and waste from 3 homes
- Rebuild and paint a wheelchair ramp
- Build and till four gardens
- Cut and stack wood
- General trash removal and pick up

Over 250 Anderson University students served during the week. They were joined by four faculty, five staff, four local youth groups (85 youth, 10 youth leaders), and two groups from businesses (15). Together, these students and adults completed 27 service projects. Although 25 households and two businesses and organizations were served, those who were indirectly served, numbered into the hundreds. With the beautification of the neighborhood, a community is

served. People feel better about the place they live in, and community stakeholders benefit when neighborhoods are more desirable to move in to. We witnessed this to be true during our project.

Great Stories

There were many great stories that occurred during the preparation and execution of the OFPA project. Two particular stories will long be remembered by those who participated. One of the homes we served was an African American family who had little resources but big hearts. We were able to do lots of yard work for them because of the tools we have. We spent a full day cleaning up their house and yard. We were able to till a large garden for them too. At the end of the day, the family was so moved and thankful, they offered to prepare dinner for those who had worked with them that day. We enjoyed a wonderful evening of barbecue and fellowship with them a forged a friendship we hope to maintain in the future. We were also able to serve a family where both parents had physical disabilities. We were able to completely rip out old and moldy carpet, paint walls, repair their wheelchair ramp, and till them a small garden. Without our help, these folks would never have been able to afford these services which they so badly needed. It was such a blessing to meet such simple, yet very important needs for these folks. Partnership with a neighborhood church was wonderful too. Partnering is such a meaningful way to enter into the community where the people you want to serve are people you haven't ever met. Partnership helped us learn and respect the people we served.

Lessons Learned

Communication, communication, communication. This was the lesson learned time and time again. Communicate often. Communicate in various ways. Communicate before, during, and after the project. Communicate with co-leaders, finance team members, students, community partners, project recipients, and AU staff. When something would go wrong...it was usually because something wasn't well communicated-or communicated at all.