

The Montreat College Student Voice

W H E T S T O N E

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Mission Team Wades in L.A. Poverty

by Tim Tyson

The twenty-two member Spring Break Los Angeles Mission Team, headed by Chaplain Bill Cain, set off for California on March 5.

The group of faculty, students and alumni partnered with eight local ministries for their ten-day stay, participating in everything from inner city after school programs to grocery distribution. Center for Student Missions (CSM) facilitated the mission package.

Before unpacking, the group of weary travelers shuttled off for a 2-hour prayer tour through the guts of downtown L.A. This set the perspective for the week and represented the group's first real taste of the West Coast's largest city.

"Seeing so many people live in fear broke my heart. They can't even sleep at night," shares sophomore Jan Bostic.

Most homeless people sleep during the day, when the streets are safer.

The mission team enjoyed the security of housing off the streets but encountered less-than-ritzy accommodations. The twelve girls shared one sparsely furnished apartment with eight mattresses, and one bathroom; the ten guys lived in similar conditions.

The week's ministries concentrated on addressing the problem

of poverty and its solution. Student Jessica Pazur sums up, "It's terrible and sad, but it's a beautiful thing to watch so many people that have committed their lives to helping them [the poor]."

Downtown L.A. is broken into districts. The government, financial, street vendor, garment, and jewelry districts sit shoulder-to-shoulder. One district nestled tightly with the rest, dubbed Skid Row, consists of a 10-block area.

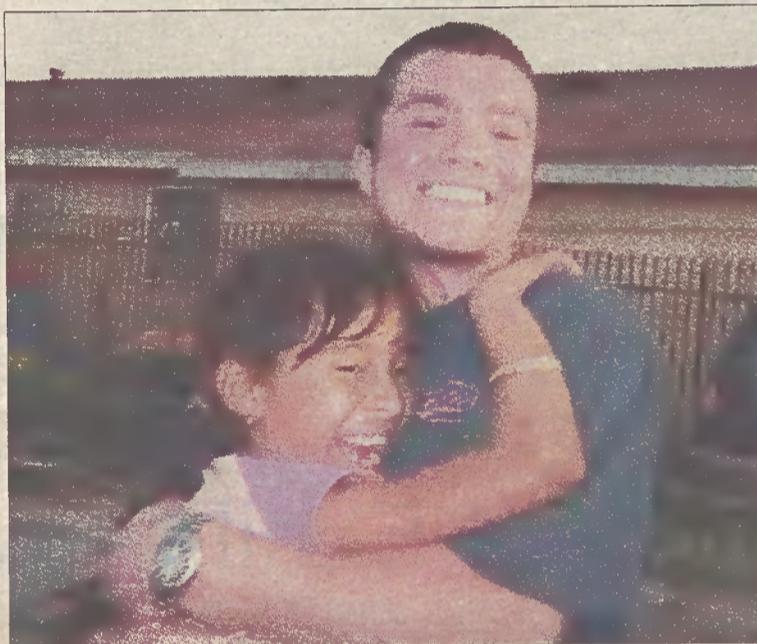
For the last two decades, Skid Row has become the main confluence of the homeless and downtrodden.

According to Jeff Thomas, Pastor of Central City Church, located in the heart of Skid Row, it is illegal to be homeless and loiter on the streets of the city. This law is enforced throughout the entire city except for in this 10-block region.

Two decades ago, the homeless demographic was older middle-aged males with an alcohol addiction. Today the majority of the 10,000 homeless are single mothers and young males with heroin addictions.

Skid Row was one of the major areas where the group focused their ministry efforts, basing many of their operations out of Central City Church, but

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Freshman Stephen Cain hugs on of the children from The Lighthouse, an after school program located in Watts, CA. Cain, with other students and faculty from Montreat, visited Los Angeles over Spring Break for the school's annual mission trip.

Community Launches Youth Center

by Kortney Blythe

Volunteers led by local retiree Dr. Gene Rainey, kick off plans to open a \$350,000 community youth center in Black Mountain for Owen Middle and High School students.

The 6,000 square foot center will be located on the corner of Old 70 and Lake Eden Drive in front of the Swannanoa Valley Youth Academy. Plans include an outdoor skate park and indoor pro shop, entertainment theatre, game room, computer lab, and concert area.

The center will boast activities such as pool, ping-pong, open mic nights, artwork displays, tutoring, career training, and movie showings on weekdays from 3 until 9 pm, with extended weekend hours.

The final center could take up to 18 months to finish. In the meantime, Shawna Coulson, youth leader at St. James Episcopal Church in Black Mountain stresses, "These kids need a place to hang out like yesterday. We've

lost kids lately to overdose. The more time that passes, the more risk for the youth."

The Step House (formerly Black Mountain Health Food Store) has been offered as another possible location for a temporary center. Step House owner John Palmeroy is willing to rent out the property while the final structure is underway.

Initial talks with Montreat College Senior Advancement

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What's Inside
2002 Grad writes from Iraq



VERSE
of the **WEEK**

"...but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

- John 4:14 NIV

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