

ILLINI LIFE IN MEMPHIS

Spring Break 2013

A Review

On an unseasonably cold Sunday morning in March, our 35 member team of students, community members, and church staff gathered at a gas station just off of Interstate 57. We stood in a circle, heads bowed and eyes shut tight, and prayed for the upcoming week in Memphis, Tennessee.

"Lord, I pray that they would have eyes open to where You might be doing something very powerful," came from the mouth of Wayne Wager, one of our pastors. We nodded in agreement, wanting to be changed and touched on our mission trip. Minutes later, our team was off, crammed into cars and caravanning down south. Our hope was to grow closer as a ministry and bring glory to our Savior by serving His Kingdom. We were ready to partner with Service Over Self, ready to repair the homes of poverty-stricken families in the inner city of Memphis, ready to grow, and ready to glorify.

Through the week on rooftops, our great hope was fulfilled.

This is how it happened...

Melanie Stone
Sophomore in Media



A week in inner city Memphis with Service Over Self

After being involved with Illini Life since this past fall, I finally feel that I can call I-Life my church after taking my first big jump into this ministry by going to Memphis. I didn't have very many expectations heading into the trip, except that I really wanted to branch out and get to know other I-Lifers outside my Home Fellowship. This hope of mine was met immediately with the road trip down there when I had the chance to spend hours in a car engaging in some deep conversations with three ladies whom I've never talked to before. This car ride made me realize that I-Life is full of loving and genuine people, and God put Memphis on my heart so that I could finally get the opportunity to meet the people of His church. From that point forward, I challenged myself to truly put myself out there and take interest in others' lives... because that's the only way real friendships form. A huge blessing of mine in Memphis was my team. Can I just say that I hands down had the best team?! If you ask anyone else, they would probably say the same thing but that's what was great about Memphis – you spent so much time that week with your team that there is no way that you couldn't bond with them. Who knew that being harnessed up on a roof along side each other would bring about some great conversations and definitely a lot of fun? I formed some relationships on my team with people who I'll be spending my summer in New York with, a friend who is living two blocks away from me next year, and people who I never would have expected to connect with. In addition to the time with my team, there were plenty of other opportunities to get to know people – meal times, late night talks, bunk bed interactions, and the ride home. The purpose of going to Memphis was to serve, but I came back feeling that Memphis served me more than I served it. While learning about our homeowner's huge heart, living the SOS mission, and bonding with my church, God not only showed up in my time in Memphis, but He showed up BIG. God surely blesses those who are serving in His name in ways that you'd never expect. My time in Memphis was definitely worth taking a week that I could have spent at home with my family but instead choosing to spend it in service with my newfound friends and a church that I now call home.

Cassie Warner

Sophomore in Applied Health Sciences



Through my week at SOS in Memphis, God humbled me and broke me – He is putting me back together again, one piece at a time. He is building a new man, a better man, the one He always intended for me to be. May I continually trust in Him to bring this vision, His vision, to completion.

David Bostwick

Community Member





Dave Wheeler
Community Member

For about half of my childhood, the roof of our house leaked. It was very rewarding for me to help meet this physical need a shelter for another person. Throughout the week, I thought often of how the love of Christ was being shared outside the house through service and inside the house through actions and words. I'm convinced that if we hadn't had many gracious men and women who took the time to get to know Mr. Walker there would be a giant hole in what we hoped to accomplish this week. And, if we had only spent time with Mr. Walker he wouldn't have a finished roof over his house.



Andre Britten
Community Member

One of the highlights of the trip for me was meeting my team's homeowner Juanita. She was a very loving, warm, passionate woman. She welcomed us into her home and into her heart with open arms. Two things stand out from my time with Juanita. Though she welcomed us in, it is a major source of frustration to her that white people have to come to their neighborhood to try to improve it. It just kills her inside that her people won't take care of the neighborhood. Instead they steal from one another among other things. As the only black member of my team, I felt compelled to be a support for her and express how I myself as a young black man have felt those same frustrations from time to time. I felt no matter how much love and Christ was in us, the rest of my team couldn't identify the same way as I could.



#ilifememphis

With the ability to catalog and share an experience online available at the press of a button, we took every opportunity to live tweet our adventure. Here are some highlights from team members



Casey Summers
@caseysum

Please be praying for I-Life as we head out Sunday to Memphis to serve the community alongside SOS



Chris Ridgeway
@ridgewaychris

The roof. The roof. The roof is on **#ilifememphis**



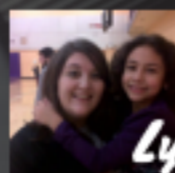
Andre Britten
@andrebritten87

Cassie and Jake stripping shingles like mad men and women



Courtney Cimo
@courtneycimo

It's sunny in Memphis which means its time for some SPF 30



Lyndsey Hennings
@lyndseyhennings

I asked our home owner what his weekend plans are and he said "chilling with my new roof"



Drew Smith
@drewd0gg

The amount of work done this week has be through the roof!



Elizabeth Baker
@lizabethblake20

Glad to be home but sad that **#iLifeMemphis** is over.

What did we do?

Where did your gifts go?

Sun Mar 17

Travel Day; SOS Welcome

Mon Mar 18

1st Work Day; Exposure visits to homes of people living in the neighborhood on mission

Tues Mar 19

2nd Work Day; Continued work on removing and replacing roofs

Wed Mar 20

1/2 Day of work; Civil Rights Museum visit; dinner with homeowners

Thurs Mar 21

Last work day; Completed projects

Fri Mar 22



70% | Construction

Materials & Lodging

administered by Service Over Self Ministries
(sosmemphis.org)

10% | Food

9% | Admin

9% | Travel

2% | Civil Rights Museum

We thank you for your generous giving to this project and for your prayers that made the trip possible. Our trip was truly blessed by all your partnership and we are amazed at how God used us to make this trip happen. The surplus funds raised for this trip will be used towards future missions projects of Illini Life.

- Alan Hable & Nick Modrzejewski (trip leaders)

