

A yellow spotlight graphic with a black beam of light shining down on the text.

Northern Great Lakes Synod Youth Ministry Spotlight

Finding Purpose – a story about Charlie

Charlie Smith is eager to use her creativity and unique style to make a difference in the lives of children. Growing up as a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Negaunee, Charlie credits her mom and Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp as having the strongest influences in her faith life. Charlie leads an active prayer life and finds meaning in helping others. Throughout middle and high school, Charlie was able to participate in multiple trips with other youth in her congregation, including a mission trip to North Carolina and the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. She also attended Quake (a high-energy faith conference for youth) every year that she could.

Charlie's first Quake event in Minneapolis, MN left a lasting impact on her. She wasn't quite sure what to expect and was looking forward to experiencing the sights and activities that a larger city had to offer. Charlie reluctantly went along with the group's service project of packing meals for the nonprofit, Feed My Starving Children. At the start of the day, Charlie wished that she was doing something more exciting, like visiting the Mall of America, but she soon felt a sense of calling to help people. She still remembers the distinct scent of the

protein packs and the friendly competition to see who could pack the most meals. As Charlie has grown in her faith and as a person, that experience has stayed with her. She now feels that helping kids is her purpose in life.



Charlie plans to help kids by being a counselor at Fortune Lake this summer and hopes to have an accounting career that allows her to share her gifts and resources to help less fortunate children. She dreams of being able to fulfill wishes for kids, like fulfilling requests on an angel tree at Christmastime. As a high school senior, Charlie leads a busy life, but continues to prioritize her faith and recall experiences she's had within the Northern Great Lakes Synod to make this world a better place! Charlie would like everyone to remember that being different is ok and if something makes you happy (like changing your hairstyle or color!) you should do it.