



NGLS Youth Ministry Spotlight

No Act Too Small – a story about Mylee

Mylee Tusa is a high school senior with a full schedule. In addition to her busy school life and extracurriculars, she is also involved in her home congregation of Calvary Lutheran Church in Quinnesec, MI. Like many young people in our synod, Mylee often has opportunities to join in with youth groups from other conferences. This past summer, Mylee joined a group from the Superior Central Conference on a service trip to Lutherock in North Carolina, a NovusWay outdoor ministry site that sits on over 750 acres of land. Lutherock and the surrounding areas are still recovering from the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene after it made landfall late last year. The group didn't know what to expect when they got there, only that they would be lending a hand wherever they were needed.

When they arrived at Lutherock, there was an adjustment period. The camp was much larger and more rustic than what the group was used to, and even simple things like meals required walking long distances. The service projects the group completed in their time at Lutherock varied from day-to-day. Some days saw them doing physical labor such as staining a fence or hauling large logs and debris left behind from the storm. These tasks were challenging for the group, not only because they weren't used to such strenuous work, but also because it was difficult for them to connect what they were doing with the image of helping the communities of North Carolina they had in their heads. How

did staining a fence or hauling wood help anyone? The group also spent a day working at a local food pantry, where it was more obvious to them that they were making an impact. Mylee also had the opportunity to spend an hour offsite to help an older couple who had to move due to the effects of the hurricane. It was easier to see the connections with this type of work. When she was face-to-face with the people she was helping, she felt as if ***she could actually see that what they were doing mattered.***

Throughout her time at Lutherock, Mylee learned that ***even the smallest amount of service makes a difference in the lives of others.*** Later in the week, she learned that the fence they had stained belonged to what would be a new home for a family displaced by Hurricane Helene. While hauling wood is a daily task for Mylee at home, the work she and her peers did at Lutherock was part of the process of clearing trails that their campers use daily. While it wasn't glamorous, the importance of safe and accessible trails was obvious to Mylee. The group returned home at the end of the week, but Mylee continued to reflect on her experience, going as far as writing her senior essay about it. Her trip showed her firsthand that we make an impact when we serve others, even if we can't see it at the time.

