

Faith Forry ministers on the streets

By **TABITHA GOODLING**
Sentinel correspondent

At the age of 12, Faith Forry, of McAlisterville, recognizes that people of all social statuses need grace.

The seventh grade student at East Juniata High School is unashamedly Christian, and wants everyone — the rich and the poor — to experience the peace she knows from a belief in Jesus Christ.

At age 11 she began attending ministry trips to the streets of Kensington near Philadelphia — an area widely known for its extensive crime and drug users. Since November, 2010, Faith has made five trips to the area with her mom, grandmother and other youth and adults from her church, Faith Xpressed Church in Mifflintown known as FX.

“In (Kensington) I learned people’s stories. I realized they are people. Although they are in complicated situations, they are still people,” Faith says.

The church group meets the Thursday before each trip and prepares lunches and packs toiletries to hand out on the streets. The group leaves early Saturday morning and sets up a grill to make hot dogs.

“Getting out of the van the first time always makes me nervous,” she admits, “But once I get out of the van, I am fine.”

While ministering on the streets, the women and younger church members are told by church leaders to stay in a group with male members nearby for the sake of safety.

The experience on the streets of Kensington is no longer surreal to the 12-year-old. Used syringes are visible on every sidewalk and gutter. Drug deals are made in broad daylight feet from where the church group stands. Robberies are everyday occurrences. The “normal” of this area helped Faith recognize this is the life these people know — the only life they have ever known.

Faith has offered prayer to the people who come out to accept the free food. She has prayed with a man struggling with his marriage. Faith and the others who stood with her are doubtful he knew that a 12-year-old was praying for him.

The group travelled to Kensington during the hurricane



Sentinel photo by TABITHA GOODLING

Faith Forry, 12, of McAlisterville, has made several trips to minister to people on the streets near Philadelphia. **See photos of her experiences on Page 28.**

that swept up the East Coast this past fall. As the rains poured, she helped pass out bags of lunches at LOVE Park.

“There was a (homeless) woman there on a bench and we gave her food. She asked me if I was German, and I told her I was, and she called me ‘very beautiful German girl.’ Each time she sees me she calls me the beautiful German girl,” Faith says with

a chuckle.

The faces she has seen and the voices she has heard in the Philadelphia area help her to have even more compassion.

Faith’s mother, Paulette, says her daughter had a compassionate heart at a young age. Teachers would tell her how Faith befriended lonely children at recess.

Faith is now in junior high school and the peer pressures await her. Her peers are also

less understanding about religion.

“(Kensington) has helped me be more compassionate at school. I really don’t care what people think about my beliefs. I talk about church all of the time, and I invite people, too.”

Long before the trips to Philadelphia, began Faith expressed another idea for her church as a witnessing event.

“I suggested we go to a mall or street corner around the hol-

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idays to talk to people and pray with them,” she says. The target group she had in mind, however, was different. She was not looking to reach the poor and the drug addicts.

“Since we reach the poor with the Gospel why not reach the people who are well-off, too?”

Faith hopes an event like this will take place in time for the 2012 Christmas season.

“I’m so thankful for what I have,” she says, and admits anyone can end up in a dire situation and could need a hand of grace instead of a look of disgust.

Like most girls her age, she enjoys hanging out with her friends and has a love for baking brownies and going to the mall.

She turns 13 this month and sees her future as doing something she loves, like teaching and living somewhere like Colorado.

Faith realizes different situations land people in unexpected places in life.

“My favorite thing is to go to the parks and sit with the (homeless) people. I don’t exactly plan on becoming homeless or a drug user or a prostitute, but I can now see how someone like that could be me.”

Faith plans to return to the Kensington area on several more occasions.