



2023 RECRUITING PRESENTATION

[oymt.info@gmail.com](mailto:oymt.info@gmail.com)

[www.oymt.info](http://www.oymt.info)

# Orthodox Youth Mission Team





# Our Mission



**Mission:** Give youth an opportunity to put their Faith to work.

**Vision:** Offer an Orthodox communal setting where youth and adults can encounter Christ and deepen their personal relationship with Him through mission and service, inspiring a lifelong desire to serve God in their homes, parishes, communities and throughout the world.

- Living the liturgy by witness and action.
- Building relationships with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit; each other; and those we serve.
- Strengthening the Church by raising up youth leaders who can be the Body of Christ serving in their parishes and communities, now and in the future.





# Our Accomplishments



OYMT is entering our fourteenth year of service and preparing for our twelfth mission trip!

2010

OYMT founded out of Holy Trinity Danbury by Susan Sulich, Beth Rzyk, and Fr. Luke Mihaly.

2012

First solo mission trip with Appalachia Service Project.

2017

Mission trip with OCMC to Napaskiak, Alaska.

2018

First ASP trip to fill an entire volunteer center (~80 participants).

2022

Reunion gala celebrating our tenth mission trip.





2011 - Summers County, WV



2012 - Johnson City, TN



2013 - Wayne County, WV



2014 - Mingo County, WV



2015 - Martin County, KY



2016 - Wyoming County, WV



2017 - Napaskiak, Alaska



2018 - Johnson County, Tennessee



2019 - Knox County, KY



2022 - Clay County, WV



2023 - Greenbrier County, WV

Almost 200 Youth and Adult Leaders have come through our program, the majority returning for at least a second year! 100 from CT, NY, & NJ and 100 on satellite teams from across the country.



# Current Team Leadership



**Fr. Luke Mihaly**

Priest

Parish: Holy Trinity Danbury

padreluke@aol.com



**Susan Sulich**

Team Coordinator

Home Parish: Holy Trinity Danbury

ssulich@yahoo.com



**Lexi Klimaszewski**

Team Coordinator

Home Parish: St. John's Bridgeport

lexiklim@aol.com



And dozens of dedicated Adult Leaders throughout the years,  
including several who have been with us since the very beginning!





# Opportunities OYMT Provides

## Pan-Orthodox Youth Connections

A multi-jurisdictional team from the start. Building these connections before college is crucial!

## Accessible, Short-Term Mission Trip Experience

Provide missions experience for youth before college, in a youth-centric setting.

## Opportunities for Local Service

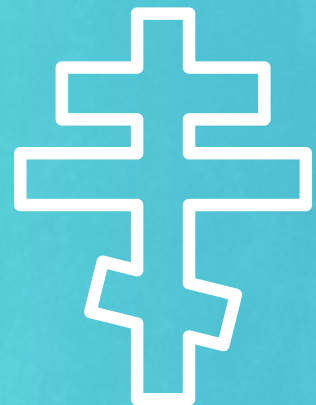
Local service is built into our training, including sensitivity trainings and construction days.

## Outreach Within Each Participating Parish

Membership is year-long and allows youth to collaborate and serve within each other's parishes.

## Leadership, Mentorship, and Strengthened Faith

Older youth mentor and guide new members. All involved strengthen their Orthodox faith!





OYMT picks up where camp leaves off, by providing opportunities for youth to put their faith into action and build connections with other Orthodox youth across jurisdiction!





# Why Short Term Missions?

Traveling to a disadvantaged area allows youth to gain authentic missions experience and get out of their comfort zones.

Appalachia Service Project provides an accessible, yet challenging, structured service opportunity designed for youth.

ASP's approach to "relational ministry, with construction on the side" aligns with our Team's ministry values.

Local service is equally important, but stepping into another area of the country stretches youth and allows them to grow.

Mission work is incredibly rewarding and bond-building. Our youth build life-long friendships across Orthodox jurisdiction!







# Why Appalachia?

ASP Serves in Central Appalachia, in West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Food deserts & food insecurity

16% poverty rate

Limited access to healthcare and education resources

Vulnerability to destructive flooding & severe cold

Resilient, faithful, kind people with a rich culture and strong communities!

Fewer job opportunities & high disability rate



# ASP Fast Facts

- **Founded in 1969 by Tex Evans.**
  - OYMT participated in ASP's 50th Summer of Service in 2018!
- **Mission:** A Christian ministry, open to all people, that inspires hope and service through volunteer home repair and replacement in Central Appalachia.
- **Motto:** Making homes warmer, safer, and drier.
- **Where ASP Serves:**
  - **June – August:** 20–30 communities across Central Appalachia. Schools, churches, etc. serve as summer centers for volunteers and staff.
  - **September – May:** ASP operates from permanent facilities in VA and TN to provide critical home repair and replacement in Appalachia.
- **Each Year:**
  - **More than 25 communities** are served.
  - **More than 350 families** are impacted.
  - **More than 3,000 repair projects** are completed.
  - **More than 20 new homes** are built.
  - **More than 15,000** volunteers serve with ASP!



# A Year With OYMT



OYMT membership provides year-round opportunities for service, connection, and fun!

August - November

Focus on parish outreach, welcoming new members, local service, and bonding!

October

Fall Service Day - an opportunity for middle and high-school aged youth to try OYMT out for a day.

December

Roster for the upcoming summer mission trip finalized; trip fundraising begins.

January - June

Monthly safety, sensitivity, and stewardship training; fundraising; team bonding.

July

Annual mission trip! Goal is to add additional trips in the future.





# Before the Trip



- Monthly Sunday sessions.
- Safety, Sensitivity, and Stewardship training.
- Tool training and two construction days.
- Learning about the area we will serve.
- Fundraising and trip preparation.
- Opportunities for local service built in.
- Bonding and team building!





# A Typical ASP Trip



- 9 days, 8 nights in July (Saturday – Sunday).
- First Saturday = travel day. Night spent in a hotel.
- Liturgy on Sunday, then continue on to center.
- Six nights at the volunteer center (Sun – Sat).
- Five construction days at the worksites (Mon–Fri).
- Travel day Saturday with fun activity.
- Liturgy on our way home Sunday.

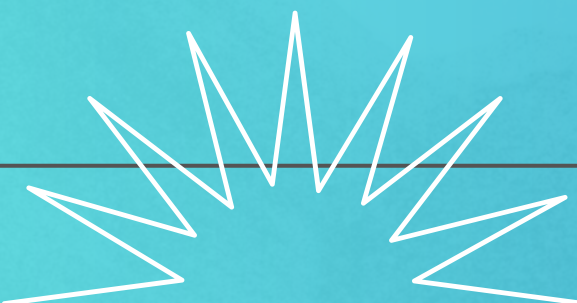




# On the Way Down



- Saturday is spent traveling.
- Arrive in Virginia in the evening and share a meal.
- Opportunity for relaxation and bonding.
- Van decorating!
- Liturgy Sunday morning.
- Hosting parish always puts out a beautiful spread!
- Receive the trip's T-shirts and continue to center.





# The Center



- Typically a school or former school in the County.
- Four college student Center Staff members.
- Separate sleeping areas – no purpling! Sleep on air mattresses in gym or classrooms.
- Common meals prepared by local cooks.
- Local maintenance staff, but daily chores for all volunteers.
- Plenty of space for recreation and bonding!
- May or may not have air conditioning, indoor showers (typically have hot water), or cell service.





# The Worksites



- Work crews of 2 Adult Leaders & 5-7 Youth.
- 1-2 work crews assigned to a home for the week.
- Youth participate in roofing, drywall, siding, flooring, porch/ramp, demolition, painting, and other projects!
- Absolutely NO power tool use without adult supervision.
- Life-long relationships built with homeowners.
- Youth take responsibility for tool gathering & maintenance, worksite safety & stewardship, and packing lunches & water for crew & homeowners.







# It's Not All Work!



- Each morning starts with a Devotional (Devo).
- Center Staff run nightly Evening Gatherings.
- Culture Night on Tuesday! Family Picnic Thursday!
- Friday evening Share Circle/God Moments.
- Theme Days!!
- Opportunity to learn about being on Staff in College.
- Morning music wake-ups; sing-alongs.
- Warm & Fuzzies!
- Fun structured & unstructured evening activities, ball games, cards, etc.







# OYMT's Personal Touches



- Daily Prayers every Morning & Evening.
- Sundae Monday!
- Focusing our Devos on Scripture.
- Youth send postcards to our supporters back home, and write reflections on their week.
- We leave each home with an icon and enjoy sharing our Orthodox faith with everyone around us throughout the week.
- When possible, we fill our entire Volunteer Center with our Team & satellite teams (60-100 people)!





# On Our Way Home



- Friday night = clean up & pack up.
- Saturday breakfast somewhere in the county.
- Saturday = travel day. Night spent in a hotel.
- Fun activity that allows the team to relax together and solidify the bonds they built on the trip.
- Liturgy and coffee hour Sunday morning.
- Arrive home Sunday evening!





# Experienced Youth Trips



- In summer 2017, we took our older, returning Youth to Napaskiak, Alaska for a 12 day mission trip.
- OCMC rarely allows youth without their parents!
- Hosted a Vacation Church School (~ 50 kids!), laid a church foundation, and installed a cupola.
- Countless opportunities for liturgy, song, visiting villagers' homes, ministry, and incredible experiences!
- Opportunity for older Youth to experience a more "adult" short term mission, building on ASP experience.
- **COVID was a setback, but goal is to provide more trips like this for experienced Youth members!**







# Goals for the Future



<b>Grow our team!</b>	<b>New Youth AND Adult Leaders (&amp; Clergy!)</b>
<b>More local service opportunities.</b>	<b>Bonding activities throughout the year.</b>
<b>Additional trips.</b>	<b>Raising awareness of our work in the area!</b>



# What Can YOU Do?

OYMT has a place for everyone!  
The support of the ENTIRE  
parish is crucial for our work.

Age 13-17 = Join our Team as a  
Youth Member!  
Participate in the 2024 Trip, or  
try out our Fall Service Day.

Age 25+ = Join our Team as an  
Adult Leader! The more Youth  
who join, the more Adult  
Leaders we need.

Age 18-24 = Reach out to us!  
Youth Leaders must have OYMT  
or other mission experience, but  
we have a place for everyone!

Parishioners = Help your Team  
members fundraise, raise  
awareness of their work, and  
pray for our Team!







# How to join our team . . .

Reach out with interest by **November 1st!**

[oymt.info@gmail.com](mailto:oymt.info@gmail.com)

Speak to Susan or Lexi over email, phone or in person.

We're happy to answer any questions!



- All members sign an annual covenant affirming their commitment to the Team and that year's mission trip.
- Youth must complete 8th-12th grade in the school year before an ASP trip.
- Cost per trip per Youth is \$350, paid in two deposits.
  - Scholarships are available – no Youth will EVER be turned away for inability to pay the volunteer fee.
  - Fee is nonrefundable if Youth violates covenant (e.g., sent home from trip)
- Adult Leaders do not pay a fee as they generally must take off work to participate.
- Participation in team fundraising is mandatory to cover other expenses.
- All members are given an annual schedule of trainings. These are essential and attendance must be made a priority!
- **Each trip's roster must be finalized no later than January 1st.**



# Questions?

Stay in Touch:

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