

Students build home in Jamaica over spring break

Spring break is often a time for students to travel and have fun, but a trip to Jamaica for some local teens was about more than hitting the beaches. Instead, they built a new house for a family in need.

The students from Maumee Valley Country Day School made quick work of the project, completing it in a matter of days, even though some of the teens had never even picked up a hammer before. In the end, a Jamaican family had a brand new home and the students have a new appreciation for life. About an hour from the beautiful beaches of Montego Bay, Jamaica is a small mountain village called Copse. That's where the students spent their vacation building a house for a single mother and her three children. The students quickly learned that life in the small town is a world apart from life as they know it. "They sleep in the dirt," says senior Alex Karcher. "There are shacks with rusted and leaky roofs everywhere. There are goats everywhere that are skinnier than you can imagine, because they can't provide for themselves let alone the livestock that feeds them." Karcher helped organize the trip. He's been on a number of other mission trips with his family, but for others there were a lot of firsts in Jamaica. Zayd Safadi had never even used a hammer. "I was nervous at first with the hammer and saw, but then I discovered I had skills I didn't know I had," he says. The team of students, parents and teachers built the home in less than three days. "It wasn't my first experience building stuff, but it was my first time with such a large project that is so influential on someone's life," says junior Dylan McDonough. The town has no running water, so villagers walk a mile down a hill and back carrying buckets, something that profoundly affected the students. "It was a bit shocking at first to see how little they had, and it made me appreciate the things I have." After paying for the new house and everything in it, the students had some money left over. After seeing the water problem, they knew exactly how to spend it. "They have these giant plastic water tanks. We bought one for them and then gave them the money to fill it up for the next couple of months." Even in the midst of the extreme poverty, the students noticed how happy the people were. "It was awesome to see you can be happy with the little things in life. They were always smiling and playing around." This is just one of a number of community service projects done by students at Maumee Valley Country Day School. The students hope to make it an annual trip. The students all paid their own way and raised more than \$8,000 to build the house and furnish it. The trip was part of the "Homes of Hope Project." To learn more, visit ywamjamaica.org. Source: www.13abc.com