

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eugene

Western Regional Youth Event

Montana

July 6-10, 2010

"I was the only Eugenean who went to the Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE), so when I drove to Portland to meet the slightly larger youth group who had "adopted" me, I wasn't sure who I was supposed to talk to.

The chaperones loaded me into a van and told me to go sit by Emilie, who was perfectly happy to talk to me on the 20-hour ride from Portland to Billings. Emilie was my first friend, but soon I would have more.

When we arrived at Billings, we were taken to the university, where I learned that I would be sharing a dorm room with Elana.

We rushed out of the car, ate lasagna for dinner, and went to the auditorium, where evening worship was taking place. Several pastors came to talk about how youth are powerful and how we should "reach beyond the big sky." After worship we had some free time during which I got to know my dorm partner Elana.

The next day brought mission trips. My mission trip was called Food Bank. I lifted 40-pound apple juice boxes with Tim, who introduced me to all his friends, including Jasiah, Alex, Devin, Megan, David, and Bailey.

The next day was the workshop day. I had Drumming Circles, Hate Groups 101, and "It Says That" (Violence and Humor in the Bible). I enjoyed all of them.

On the final day we broke off for small trips. Emilie, Bailey and I went to Geyser Park, where we played laser tag, bumper boats, and go-karts. In the evening we had a chance to celebrate another successful WRYE week. I was sad to leave WRYE and all my new friends, but I will always remember them.

At the Western Regional Youth Event we had good food, friends, and encouragement to follow God "beyond the big sky."

Sarah

Member, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eugene