

# Living Faith



Dear Faith Shapers,

As summer approaches that means a lot of parents and caregivers will be looking forward to the days of relaxation and play with their children. But they will also be looking for ways to help engage them. One way some congregations in the Roland-Story City community have helped families with teens is by offering a summer program called Summer Stretch. This service program invites middle school and high school youth to participate in service projects around the community to serve those in need. Continue reading to find out ways you can start something similar in your own community, or to find ways your own family can help serve those in need.

Kristin Johnson  
Associate in Ministry

## **Summer Stretch's Vision:**

A gospel centered approach to community service connecting churches of various denominations and youth organizations.

## **History and Purpose:**

Summer Stretch began with one congregation in Burnsville, MN, in 1992 and this year will be a cooperative arrangement of 75+ congregations from various denominations in MN, WI, and IA, bringing several thousand middle school youth together one day a week to serve in their communities as servants of Christ and to have a lot of fun doing it! Summer Stretch allows youth to participate in small groups, to sample a variety of places to serve, to have fun together, and to make a difference in Jesus' name. It's also an opportunity for high school youth to mentor small groups and to lead by example. And, Summer Stretch welcomes adults to help make it all happen by dividing up driving and supervision responsibilities into short, manageable time periods.

## **Typical Summer:**

Four to Six weeks of programming (one day per week) with a final day trip to Adventureland in Altoona, IA (or ValleyFair for those in MN).

## **Typical Day:**

9:00am—Youth arrive  
9:30am—Depart for service sites  
12:15pm—Service site check out  
12:30pm—Lunch at church  
1pm—Bible study  
1:30pm—Afternoon Activity (Water Park, Field Games, Swim at Lake)  
3:30pm—Depart and team check-out

The total cost for this program varies between programs but most charge a fee that includes all materials needed for the worksites, a Summer Stretch t-shirt, snacks provided during the morning, the afternoon activities (Water Park and more), and tickets to Adventureland.

For more information contact Kristin Johnson at:  
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# Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.



Random Acts of Kindness Kids are great imitators of what we do. If you want to make a difference in our world, try a small act of kindness. Small acts of kindness amount to a huge difference, especially when we teach kids to do service and develop compassion for others. Lead by example and help your kids recognize moments when we can serve others.

## Various Ways to Serve Your Community As an Individual, Family or Group:

- Global Health Ministries
- local food shelf – donate, sort food, etc.
- fire station/police station/city hall – deliver treats
- Feed My Starving Children
- cemetery clean up – columbarium – crematorium – learn about life, death, eternity
- school or church – custodian help; wash walls, fill glue bottles, test markers, sort bins,
- park clean up
- Lutheran Social Services ½ day projects
- Good will
- Salvation Army
- Senior centers – push wheel chairs, take walks, play cards/bingo, etc.
- women’s shelter – play with kids
- visit elders of church or community – build relationships, bring home made cards
- 80 and older list – send cards
- build bird houses, little libraries, etc.
- Go through the drive through and buy lunch for the person behind you
- Leave a thank you note in a public bathroom for the person who cleans it
- Write and send a note to a military member who is deployed

Another great service project is helping with your congregation’s quilting group. One of the many work-sites for the Roland-Story Summer Stretch program is where the youth learn to tie quilts. They first learn about the quilts they will be helping to make and where they will be going. They then get to work cutting, pinning and tying the quilts. The youth not only enjoy their time learning this new skill but they also enjoy getting to know the men and woman who are a part of the quilting group. They exchange stories and laughter. The relationships that are built during this time is truly wonderful. And every year we hear back from the youth that it is one of their favorite work-sites.

## Quilting With Love

