

Why does campus ministry hold events to attract students?

The college students were having so much fun that they did not want to quit. That's what happened at the Second Annual Field Day at the Range Event at the Grove City Sportsmen's Club this October.

Grove City College and Slippery Rock University students had met at 1 PM intending to stay until 5 PM. But that is not what happened. They did not want to leave! They wanted to continue trapshooting, obviously their favorite shooting activity. Although it was dusk, the gun flashes of happy shooters lit up the sky until 7 PM.

What a day! The event was so popular that a third is being scheduled for next spring. The event was special because the students had a chance to enjoy being together, and were getting to talk to campus pastor, Rev. Jacob Deal and with church members Peter Rigney and Ed Geidner, who had done all the work preparing and cleaning up the spent shells. And of course the pizza lunch brought by Mrs. Rosemary Rigney was a hit. The lunch was big enough to be shared with a group of Grove City College students who had wanted to participate but could not due to previous commitments.

If you think that it was only the students who didn't want to stop you'd be very wrong! Pastor, Ed, and Peter struggled to call it a day.

Now comes the real question: why should All Saints campus ministry put so much effort into an organized event like the range event as well as staging our monthly student meals? Why not just post an invitation on the church sign or on the web inviting college students to worship and to Bible class? As you can guess, bringing students to church is a gradual process which begins with being able to establish a time to show them that they are welcome, safe, and cared about-that no one will pressure them to join the church. This is best done at events, meals, transportation to wherever is needed. As deceased All Saints member Frank Yerkins used to say about church meetings, "Feed them and they will come."

The students who spent the long afternoon at the range were not looking to become gun experts. They did appreciate the patient instructions teaching gun safety so they could feel comfortable with shooting. Really it was fun. One student was elated to shoot his over and under shotgun which had been a special gift from his father. Another student amazed herself and her boyfriend by being a great shot. Everyone laughingly adjured her boyfriend to take note of that fact. Two others had never touched a gun in their lives. Their hands trembled when they first did so. They left feeling glad to be confident and no longer afraid of guns. This range event helped the students to bond with All Saints.

It is very tempting to want big numbers at events, but a visit from a student who recently attended a small event at All Saints reminded me that just having one student to ask questions is wonderful. This student had come to talk after the free student meal. She talked, but was distant and guarded. And then she asked to stop by-again several times just to talk and

to see if I'd taken a photo of her at the meal, a photo she could have. She liked the one I gave her. And then she stayed to tell me about her goals and her past experiences. She said she needs someone who will point her to God because she cannot see that she is a worthwhile person. She believes she is not smart, nor attractive, nor good. An adult has told her that she is worthless. What an opportunity to assure her from the Bible that she is worthwhile. She is a Christian who attends a church of another denomination, but she'll come here to have encouragement. She will be at our next meal and will bring her friends.

All Saints campus ministry realizes it is the Holy Spirit who opens hearts to faith. We do not take credit for God's work. However, we have found that events like the range trip are times we can share our Christian faith. We are confident that God can heal wounds as troubling as poor self-worth because with Christ everything is possible. It is our joy to share God's love through events with college students.



