

YOUNG VINCENTIANS AT DISMAS HOUSE...



Given the success of our initial retreat, we once again brought Young Vincentians from the Diocese together to pray and reflect on our shared ministry on Saturday, May 31, 2014, the feast of the Visitation. Our goals this time were to offer another diocesan-wide experience that: enhanced the students' relationship with God through a backyard liturgy, created a beautiful outdoor living environment at Dismas House (one of the Society's transitional houses) as a service project, and united them in fellowship through a Commissioning Ceremony.

What occurred that day was a transformation! After beginning with the special Eucharist celebrated by Reverend Lachlan Cameron, the flower beds were filled, the meditation garden was groomed, and the yard now offered seating for the residents as well as a sanctuary for birds. In very short order, the young people and other adult volunteers produced a beautiful place for the men to feel supported and valued just as we remembered how Mary offered support and esteem to Elizabeth. Father Lachlan's homily which spoke of experiencing Christ through the Liturgy and then bringing Christ to others came to life. Once the work was completed, Zack Singleton, Director of Dismas House, also provided an overview of its ministry and how students can remain involved.

Dismas House—named for the good thief crucified with Jesus - was created by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to provide men recently released from prison with a structured and supportive place to live. Here, they



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES!

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can start anew and begin to rebuild their lives. Residents learn the important life skills they need to secure employment, regain their independence and positively reenter society.

Of course, this youth event at Dismas House would not have been possible without the generosity of many community members. Fortunoff Backyard Store donated the beautiful patio set; Titan Realty and Construction gave a teak bench for the meditation garden; and Patio.com, a backyard lounge chair. Atlantic Nurseries of Freeport and Hicks Nurseries of Westbury also generously donated all of the planting materials. We are so grateful for these donations as well as those from the Michael J. Grant Funeral Home and the Robertaccio Funeral Home.

Yet, it was the efforts of the Young Vincentians who attended that really enabled us to make our intended landscape design a reality. We are so appreciative of their participation in this activity! The Young Vincentians were able to experience the Liturgy in a different setting, serve the residents at Dismas House - who, as ex-offenders, are often forgotten or ignored by society at large - and truly appreciate what a difference they can make in other people's lives by connecting the two pieces and putting their faith into action. What a difference a day makes!!