

YouCan Missions Promotes Learning, Leadership And Love

SAMANTHA TEETERS
mayville@dodgecountypioneer.com

Eleven years ago, Mayville Middle School teacher Julie Boelter was a youth director at a church in Fond du Lac when she took a group of people on a mission trip to Belize. What has morphed over the past years is a relationship between two communities that are nearly 3,000 miles apart.

That relationship resulted in the birth of YouCan Missions, a not-for-profit organization that believes

that 'YouCan' make a difference in the lives of others. Many in the area will recognize the group from their spring shoe collection drives the last couple years.

The YouCan mission strives to make a difference through: providing cross-cultural, intergenerational mission opportunities between the Cayo District of Belize and Wisconsin; distributing shoes, hygiene items and school supplies to students, schools and com-

munities in need; and providing educational opportunities to student leaders who are passionate about learning and making a positive difference in their community.

"We formed YouCan Missions around nine months ago, but we're not brand new," Julie said. "It all started in 2006 from a youth mission trip we took out of Ascension Lutheran Church in Fond du Lac."

Julie started going back to Belize on her own after that trip in '06. She just couldn't stay away.

"This was our fourth year doing shoes," she said. "Speaking at a Theresa and Allenton joint Lions club meeting in 2013, someone approached me at the meeting and said he had more than 1,000 shoes in his barn. He asked if I thought Belize could use them."

Julie's Belizean counterpart owns a cargo company, so that connection aids the organization in the shipping process.

"There were 50 different schools, churches, service organizations and businesses that teamed up this year to collect shoes

for Belize," Julie said. "And countless individuals. Over 200 volunteers here get the shipment ready to go. And then another one of our teams makes sure the donations get to the right spot."

"This doesn't happen with just one or two people," Julie said. "This takes hundreds."

This year, YouCan shipped 2,700 pairs of shoes, lots of socks, hygiene items, and school and classroom supplies to Belize. The entire process results in nearly 300 pairs of hands that get their hands on the shoes and other items. The hands belong to volunteers in both the U.S., as well as in Belize. It costs nearly \$6,000 to ship everything down.

YouCan works with the Scouts of Belize. It's an organization made up of male and female youth between the ages of eight and 21. It's much like scouting here in the U.S. It is just boys and girls combined.

"We partner with the Santa Elena Jaguar Scouts Troop #27 in Belize," Julie said. "These are their country's devel-



YouCan MISSIONS



Corinne Neumeyer helps a young man find the right pair of shoes during the YouCan Missions trip in June. (submitted)



The Mayville School District welcomed the new teachers of the 2017-18 school year. Pictured are, from left: Bradley Seegert (HS Science); Matthew Schultz (HS Science); Anna Witan (HS Spanish); Agnieszka Mosio (7th grade Science); Carmie Milkie (MS Special Education); Cynthia DePrimo (HS Business); Ameer Hauke (PV Special Education); Mike Servais (7th grade Social Studies); Scott Hilber (HS Special Education); and Jeffrey Erdmann (HS Math). (Sam Teeters | Dodge County Pioneer)

oping leaders. At YouCan Missions, we pour a lot into this group. When we take a group down to take shoes or build a school, we are side-by-side with the Jaguar Scouts.

"It is truly a cross-cultural mission," Julie continued. "It's not just us going there and having a one-way interaction. It's truly an exchange. We obviously are giving to Belize, but they are giving back to us in the process."

While the team was in Belize, they traveled to four schools and one village to deliver shoes. They also made specific deliveries to an elderly home and a police group. Every single pair of shoes was distributed.

"We set up almost like a little shoe store," Julie said. "Boys on one side, girls on the other. There are always two doors. One is an entrance, one is an exit. They'll get their foot sized, and then the volunteers will help find the shoes that fits that child."

"We want to make sure that the shoes are a little big so that they can fit into them for the next school year, because a child should not technically be allowed to go to school unless they have a pair of shoes on their feet," Julie continued. "There were several places we went where kids came in without a pair of shoes at all. Or broken flip flops. Or

nothing but uncomfortable rubber rain boots in an extremely hot, humid climate."

Julie explained that YouCan Missions is open to anyone who is interested in giving their time and talents. Volunteers who travel to Belize do all their own fundraising to pay for their trip. YouCan raises funds to cover shipping costs of the donated materials only. Anyone 13 years or older is welcome to be on one of the teams to Belize. For more information, see www.youcanmissions.org

"Because we are so ecumenical and there are so many Christian backgrounds coming with us, I think our purpose in life and what we promote as an organization is to love God and to encourage as many people to do that as well," Julie said. "I believe there's no greater way to experience the heart of God more than when you're on a mission trip. It's about sharing love and hope. And those are powerful things."

The Jaguar Scouts from Belize have made the trip north to Wisconsin twice in recent years, as well. They come and serve with us in our community just like we do with them in their community in Belize. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for those youth and an incredible learning experience.

YouCan's most recent trip down to Belize this past June 15-22 included a group of 23 local volunteers, mostly from the Mayville area, including Dave Westphal from Mayville's True Value Home and Hardware.

Dave has been to Belize for a mission trip before.

"This year, all of the connections became so much more clear to me," Dave said. "It has a family feel when you're there. You feel a part of the community. We go to these schools and see how engaged the principals and the teachers are in encouraging us to come back. It makes such an impact on our students."

"The first year is life-changing and eye-opening and overwhelming," Julie said. "And the subsequent

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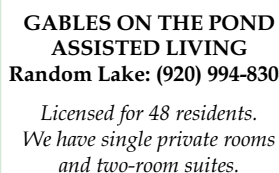
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trips you begin to experience the family feel and the direct connection. I used to do a lot of mission trips and they're not all like that. This is special."

Julie feels the connections made are core to the experience.

"The scouts regularly facetime and use Facebook and Snapchat

to connect with the people who have been on these trips," Julie said. "They're friends."

"It's like a modern-day pen pal, whom you've actually met in person," Dave added. "YouCan is about the shoes, but it's really more about the relationships."

Dave recalls that one principal said that some of their students have no

shoes, and they don't come to school every day because they're walking on gravel and it's so hot and painful.

Julie met with one of those principals and he said the children wear the shoes that are given to them from YouCan Missions daily.

"It's so cool to be in the communities and see kids walking around with the shoes we've given them on their feet," Dave said.

When the group from Wisconsin travels to Belize, they stay in a hotel in Santa Elena that's owned by members of the church that the group partners with down there. They are hosted by families, and they eat in their homes.

"The set-up down there is pretty phenomenal for us," Julie said. "It's really evolved over the years. Our first trip down with Ascension, we hired an organization to coordinate it. In 2009 was a huge leap of faith for us as it was the first time we did the trip

completely on our own."

Julie has found support both back home and in Belize to encourage her to continue with the YouCan Mission vision. To date she has led 11 of these cross-cultural mission teams made up of Americans and Belizeans. Nine of them have been to Belize and two in Wisconsin.

"The Theresa Lions Club really supports what has become YouCan Missions," Julie said. "And Rob Selzer from the Allenton Lions Club was the one with the barn full of shoes. Lions is where the shoe idea came from. Lions has been a huge inspiration."

Julie is also grateful to Ascension Lutheran Church and all the local businesses, schools and organizations that have helped in the shoe collection process and those individuals who have given their time preparing the shoes and other supplies for shipping.

Julie's counterpart on



This group of school children in Belize admire the shoes they were able to pick out during the YouCan Missions trip. YouCan volunteer and Mayville graduate Hailee Bartz took many amazing photos capturing the experience on the trip this past June. (submitted)



Theresa native Julie Boelter (left) and her Belizean counterpart had the opportunity to represent the Lions Club organization in this year's Theresa Firemen's Parade. (submitted)



The Mayville High School marching band attended the annual week-long band camp to learn routines and rehearse for upcoming performances. The band is seen here in formation on the football field. (Sam Teeters | Dodge County Pionier)

the Belize side of YouCan Missions is Cecilia Flowers. Cecilia was able to travel here this summer, and both Julie and Cecilia had the pleasure of riding on the Lions Club float in the Theresa Firemen's Parade in June.

"You can make a difference," Julie said. "I always say that to the kids in my classroom. That's really what this is all about."

"Donating a pair of

shoes or socks, your time or your money, those are all examples of a mission experience," Julie said. "That's what's really special about our organization. I think we need more of that in our community. It's a community helping another community. That's such a special part of life - there has to be more of that in the world

LEFT:

The YouCan Missions group 2017 during their visit to Belize to deliver donated shoes, socks, school supplies and hygiene items earlier this summer. (submitted)

MEET THE NEW TEACHER

Position:
Science Teacher

School:
Mayville High School

Where Do You Live?
Germantown

What made you decide to become a teacher?
The love of seeing people learn.

Family Info and Interests or Hobbies:
My wife's name is Denise, and we have three children: Matthew, Hunter and Paige. I love fishing and hunting.

Where did you complete your education?
UW-Milwaukee - B.A. in biological aspects of conservation; Concordia University - Secondary Education Certification



Bradley Seegert

Past Experience:
Nineteen years teaching in total; one year at Cudahy; 18 years at Greenfield

What do you look forward to the most about teaching in the Mayville School District?
Sharing my passion of the outdoors and science with my students. Having the opportunity to get to know and learn about my new students.



Mayville School Days

Mayville High School
Mayville Middle School
Parkview School
Tuesday, Sept. 5
☞ First Day of School.

St. John's Lutheran School
Friday, Sept. 1
☞ No School.

Monday, Sept. 4
☞ Labor Day - No School.

Wednesday, Sept. 6
☞ Chapel, 8:10 a.m.

CONSISTENT ADVERTISING PAYS!



TALK OF THE TOWN

To have your event or meeting included in Talk of the Town, email your information to frontdesk@dodgecountypionier.com


Thursday, August 31
"Knit Night", Loose Ends Yarn Shop, 4-8 p.m.
Bingo, Mayville Legion, 134 S. Main St., 6:30 p.m.

Friday, September 1
Sheepshead, Mayville Senior Center, 1-4 p.m.

Sunday, September 3
Limestone School Museum, N. Main & Buchanan, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 6
Sheepshead, Mayville Senior Center, 1-4 p.m.

THE MEETING PLACE



To have your meeting included in The Meeting Place, email your information to frontdesk@dodgecountypionier.com

Neosho-Mayville-Horicon Lodge No. 108

Neosho-Mayville-Horicon Lodge No. 108 will meet on Tuesday, September 5 at 7:30 p.m. at 128 East Anthony St, Hustisford.

Weekly Meetings:

Monday:
AA, St. Paul Church, Mayville, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday:
PAVE, 10-11:30 a.m., call 920-887-3810.

AA, St. John's Browns Corner, 7 p.m., call 920-210-8992.

Thursday:
PAVE, 6-7:30 p.m., call 920-887-3810