

*Gracious Gifts, Graciously Received,
Because of God's Gift of Grace at Easter*

by Elsi Dodge

“What amazed me was how uncomfortable it was!” a high school senior admitted after a night in a sleeping bag, on a cardboard box, in a spring storm. “I kept waking up! And the rain was dripping in my face!”

About 40 teens from the First Presbyterian Church youth group tried to relate to part of the homeless experience before working all day to help homeless and needy folks in Boulder County. They comprised about a third of the volunteers at the 13th Boulder Footwash.

Traditionally held the Saturday before Palm Sunday, the Footwash is the final activity of the season for the Lamb's Lunch outreach—a hot communal meal and fellowship, with opportunities for prayer, Bible study, and gifts of clothing and other necessities—held each Saturday starting in November.

This year's Footwash saw more than 100 volunteers representing ten churches: Boulder Chinese Baptist, Boulder Valley Christian, Calvary Bible, Christ, Discovery, First Baptist, First Presbyterian, Flatiron, Northern Hills, and Rock Creek. In addition, we had helpers from Saint Benedict Health, AmeriCorps, the CU chapter of the Colorado Public Interest Group (CoPIRG), and Gideons International.

These workers set up tables and booths, washed and cut hair, cooked and served the meal, cleaned up the kitchen and meeting rooms at 1st Pres, cut guests' nails, provided health screenings and advice, handed out clothing and gift bags, dyed Easter Eggs, sang and played instruments, talked about Christ's work in their lives, prayed for the outreach as a whole as well as for individuals, painted faces, addressed cards and letters, and talked and listened.

“I was impressed with how appreciative everyone was!” a manicurist commented.

“It feels good to really help people,” a teen added.

“Our new pastor spent several hours washing pots and pans,” said a woman on the cooking crew.

“It gives our children the opportunity to serve,” said a father, turning to chase after his preschooler.

“I hadn't known how many homeless people are around,” a woman said thoughtfully, looking at the more than 100 guests in the lunch line.

The Lamb's Ministries will continue to offer Thursday Bible study, clothes washing, clothing handouts from the First Presbyterian Church Deacon's Closet, and prayer and fellowship throughout the rest of the year. The Lamb's Lunch will begin again November 7, 2009, with next year's Footwash set for March 27, 2010.