

# snapshot.

a glimpse of Life!



April 2010

## Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Alaska Road Trip

and Bush



Bob Lenz

God continues to call us to Alaska. Our trip there in February and March was our second one of the school year. Through a sponsor's commitment to bring us in and our supporter's generous giving, we've been able to reach people in some of the most remote areas of Alaska – places that even the Alaska Iditarod Sled Race doesn't make it to.

For the first time we went above the Arctic Circle and beyond, to the northernmost city in North America – Barrow. We had over 300 people come out to a rally in Barrow and saw 73 receive Christ. The love of Christ warmed their hearts, despite temperatures that dipped down to 36 below zero (not counting the wind chill – and believe me... it's windy in Alaska!)

There are so many stories and so many things to share that it's hard to know where to start. But the one that stands out most to me is a girl I met named Heather.

Heather's life became filled with clouds of depression when her best friend since kindergarten died as a victim of a murder suicide at the young age of 15. It had been just six months earlier. Since then Heather's life became more about survival than living. She just kept trying to make it through another day. Loss, sadness, anger and confusion continued to darken her life. It made the long winter days in Alaska seem even darker and more hopeless.

She clung to one last hope for existence at an alternative school. But after classes she retreated to her room where she would escape daily through drug use, an effort to just somehow cope and survive. During our program something broke through the mask and shell of protective layers that had built up around her heart, and something touched her.

With tears, she ran out of the room during the middle of the program. I wanted to run after her but I had to finish sharing my message with the other students, many who had hurts of their own. As I finished, I looked to the back wall and saw that Heather had returned, listening intently from the back of the room. Afterwards, she came up and we talked. That's when I heard her story. We cried. We prayed. And healing began.

I told her that talking about this was just the first step of a journey towards healing and dealing with the grief. I shared with her that God cares, and people care, and that's why we came in the middle of winter during the darkest days of the year, so that we can bring the light of hope.

There are so many people in her community that care, but because of her pain she couldn't find them. So I got to connect her with our sponsor who is also a Christian counselor. Before we left they set up an appointment. We hugged with tears streaming down our faces. My heart swelled with compassion for her and so many others facing unmentionable heartache and pain. And despite the many difficulties we faced in making the trip happen, it paled in comparison to the glory of God's grace and mercy in the life of just this one girl. I can only say, "Yes, I'm ready to do this all over again."

And there are so many more stories like hers.

### SNAPSHOT OF ALASKA TRIP

- 7 days of flying
- 4 moose sightings
- 15 programs
- 6 towns & villages
- 27 meals shared
- 252 responses to the gospel
- 134 new believers
- Priceless

I don't normally like stats, but to keep this snapshot from becoming a book, I would like to share a few to give you a glimpse and taste of our last trip...

#### **FAIRBANKS, AK**

- Preached for two Sunday morning services

#### **NUIQSUT, AK**

- There are only 80 total students in school from Pre-K – 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- The principal is originally from Wisconsin
- He came out wearing green & gold to make us Packer fans feel at home
- There's only one church in the entire town
- 109 came out to the rally from the village (1/4 of the entire community!)
- Many elders were represented
- Many responded to the gospel and many seeds were planted

#### **BARROW, AK**

- 300 in attendance at the rally (73 received Christ)
- An extra pizza party was held for recovering addicts and their families
- There are 30 kids in an alternative school, where they just had a suicide one month earlier
- Gave out faith-based "Why Suicide" booklet to each student for follow up
- Over 90 came out to an after school Junior High program

#### **NORTH POLE, AK**

- Had a photo taken with the "real" Santa Claus ☺
- Green Bay Packer, Daryn Colledge #73, was from this town so we had a great "in" with the school
- 400 attended the rally and over 80 responded to the gospel – 43 for the first time

#### **GLEN ALLEN, AK**

- After 3 failed attempts of trying to get here during previous trips because of weather, we finally made it!
- 100 came out for a rally and 12 responded to the gospel
- I preached for Sunday services to a church packed with many visitors

#### **ANCHORAGE, AK**

- Our last day brought us to an alternative school in Anchorage – it give kids one last chance to finish High School
- This is a school we spoke at previously, where we were introduced to what a couch surfer was – a homeless high school student that sleeps on a friend's sofa
- These kids have pain so deep and walls so high, that even with AJ it was hard to get them to crack a smile
- But we brought hope and let them know that people still cared.
- We ended our trip with a program at a Christian school where we got to challenge students not to just shine light to their church, but to reach out into the community

After a week of missed flights, cold weather and ups and downs our team was tired, drained, satisfied, depressed, and yet so thankful. Between December – March we've spent nearly 2/3 of a month in Alaska. Add on to that many more weeks in between spent in other communities around America and it makes for a difficult time away from family and a familiar bed. But we're ready to do it all again. Why? For me, it's worth all the effort, work and money when just one person really receives the message. Knowing that so many more did makes my heart soar all the more.

For the Kingdom,

*Bob Lenz*

**International Speaker**

***You can be a part of reaching young people with messages of hope and the love of Christ!***

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