

August 16, 2010 - United States – Summer for the kids, and a growth opportunity



(ANS – San Francisco) – Brian, an American boy, and Esther, a young Spanish volunteer, have spent some weeks of their summer leading two summer camps, one at Corpus Christi Church in San Francisco, and one at Camp Savio in Bellflower -- two experiences of service, but also personal growth.

Brian Sarracino Aguilera is a young leader from Corpus Christi. This year he took part for the first time in the summer camp organised for children and adolescents who are city-bound during summer. The camp, which is really a home, church, school, and playground for everyone, enabled him to experience fully the authentic Salesian spirit.

The camp was a home where leaders and campers helped one another, and where the affection of the Salesians and others in charge, says Brian, "was returned tenfold by the campers". It was a school where everyone learned to go beyond his or her limitations and learned lots of new things in an enjoyable way, like during "Science and Discovery" workshops. It was a church, thanks to the opportunities for prayer over the days, from the "good morning talk" to evening prayer. And clearly it was a playground where groups of youngsters, starting with the smallest ones, then gradually others, took part in the singing, dancing, sports, theater, music, outings, and more.

Esther Vaquero, too, the young Spanish girl, who came to the U.S. for a month's experience as a volunteer, sees her time among the young people at Camp Savio as unforgettable: "Camp Savio is where teenagers can understand who they really are, get a chance to help the younger ones, and show them how to enjoy themselves respectfully and responsibly."

Esther confesses to being a bit afraid when she first came to the U.S.; but the Camp Savio experience helped her. A happy atmosphere, sharing, games, and dialog quickly helped her communicate with others. Being a leader also helped her to pray more deeply, take part with greater enthusiasm and depth at Mass and other celebrations, "renewing my relationship with God and understanding more profoundly the role he plays in my life."

Having experienced Salesian spirituality in practice, Esther has now made the oft-repeated line of Juan Carlos Montenegro, coordinator of St. Dominic Savio Parish's youth ministry program, her own: "We can make a difference in the lives of these youngsters."