

The Story of a “Day on the Hill”

On our Culturing Compassion weekends, students engage in activities of direct service (e.g. distributing food from the Caritas Food Shelf; preparing meals at Place of Hope).

They also learn about the importance of addressing decision-makers about underlying causes of poverty and homelessness (e.g. low-wage jobs; high costs of housing, health care, and child care; reductions in funding for government programs that address such causes).

In April, 2007, Maddie Gray and Tara Dykema, 9th graders from Atonement Lutheran Church, decided to take advantage of that possibility, by participating in a “day on the hill” sponsored by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (*see www.jrlc.org for more info about the JRLC*).

Accompanied by Karen Vann, director of faith formation at Atonement, they visited the offices of Senator Tarryl Clark, Representative Steve Gottwalt, and Representative Larry Haws. They also had conversations with other participants in the day, including Bishop John Anderson, and Mark Peters (policy specialist for Lutheran Public Policy).



Maddie Gray and Tara Dykema review a piece of legislation, as Marie Reigstad (legislative assistant to Senator Tarryl Clark) explains and Karen Vann listens

“I learned a lot about legislation and the high pressure that is involved,” shared Maddie. “It made me really think about what's important.”

“I think it’s a great opportunity for youth,” added Tara. “I learned so much about what the real issues are. I thought it was amazing how they really listened and took us seriously. I appreciated that our opinions really meant something to them.”