

ICCF | Brandon Baum

The 15-minute drive to work every morning is usually classified by most as a short drive. But in those 15 minutes, I would be transported to a much different world than the one I live in. I have been thankful to be a part of the Glenn VanNoord program because it has been a way for me to see God's work with my own eyes. This was my first time working in a ministry position and I really appreciated having a meaningful purpose for my work, and I loved feeling like I was doing real work for God's Kingdom here on earth.

This summer I have had the privilege of being a part of ICCF Community Homes. ICCF is a nonprofit organization that builds or rehabs houses and makes them available at a more affordable price to lower income families. I did a number of things during the summer, but most of my work was around preparing for, and helping a variety of volunteer groups as they serve the community. We would gather supplies and then help groups with housing rehab projects, such as drywall, building furniture, painting, demo, yardwork and beyond. I enjoyed the physical work, because completing a project is always satisfying and working with groups was fun, just to get to know new people.

By working in this ministry I learned a lot of practical skills, but the impact on my faith journey was seen through a few significant things. First, I was impacted by my supervisor Sheryl Baas. She demonstrated that leaning on the gifts that God gives us, we can have a huge impact. She works many hours serving the poor in Grand Rapids, and I was inspired by her faithfulness and her commitment. I was also very impressed by the many volunteer groups that helped this ministry throughout the summer, their selflessness spurred me to want to be more giving of my time in talents, as I saw how they were used by God to make a difference in the lives of people. I was also blessed when I had the opportunity to meet the people that work moving into the houses that we were working to renovate. The gratitude and thankfulness made the hard work very rewarding. I loved that I got to be a small part of the work that God is doing in Grand Rapids, by providing housing to those less fortunate.

As I continue in my life, growing and growing my faith even more, this experience will certainly have an impact on the way I live. The inspiring attitudes of the people I surrounded myself with along with the care of volunteer groups that work just because they want to help out their neighbor. These aspects all have an impact on the way I want to carry myself in the future because it shows the perfect example of "loving your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) the way God wants people to help each other.

Overall, through a daily short 15-minute drive, but a considerable change in the condition of living. I have learned life lessons, and skills, and have been face-to-face with the work of God. I have understood the blessings I have that may not be accessible by most. And the love and impact people have for one another.