Special Events
Homecoming
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At 7:00am on the blustery cold morning of March 7, 1999, 27 Ursinus students, along with Co-Advisor CoCo Minardi, boarded a bus heading south. However, unlike many of their peers, these students were not heading south to Florida for some sun and relaxation. These passengers of this 12-hour-long bus ride were destined for a very small rural town in Kentucky called Chavies. Here they would spend their spring break working with the Appalachia Service Project helping to build and repair the homes of economically challenged families in the area. While some participants knew what to expect, for the majority of students this was a new experience. Soon everyone would find out what lies ahead: a small town consisting of a few houses and a BP gas station and mini mart, cold showers, Wismer-like food, crowded sleeping quarters, loud snorers, little sleep, hard work, chores, big hills, poorly running vans, new friends, friendly local people, interesting conversations, puzzles, board games, a sense of accomplishment, fun, and ultimately a rewarding experience most participants will remember for a long time.

While in Kentucky participants were divided into five work crews, or teams. Each day the work teams awoke by 7:00 am to eat breakfast, make and pack lunches, do chores, and travel to their respective work sites by 9 am. Each team worked until about 4:00 pm each day battling the bitter cold, and in some cases, even snow. Four of the teams helped to repair existing homes. Some of the projects they completed included installing insulation, replacing support beams, digging drainage ditches, and reflooring. However, the hardest challenge of these groups was to replace several mobile home foundations. This consisted of replacing the rotting tree trunks now holding up the houses with much sturdier cinder block columns. This was not easy work and required many hours of digging holes and adding support beams in small confined areas, but it was well worth it. Each of these groups had the opportunity to form a relationship with the family whose house they were repairing. During the week the students grew close to their families and both learned a lot from each other. “It was really hard to say goodbye at the end of the week,” said Jessica Kilian.
"Cloud Nine"
Our New Bookstore
February, 1999

Jon Volkmer addresses the attendees.

Photos by Paolo Tagliamonte