

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Ben, foreground, poses for a picture with other young people from Holston United Methodist Home for Children and friends they made during their recent trip to Guatemala.

'We No Longer Feel Like The Least Of These'

"I have been praying for an opportunity to take our kids out of the country on a mission trip since I came to Holston Home," said Abel Carrico, the director of Christian Life at Holston United Methodist Home for Children.

"When Bradley [Williams] approached me this spring with the chance to take a few of our students to Guatemala, I praised God for an answered prayer!"

The group of students, and a few staff members, including Bradley Williams, president of Holston United Methodist Home for Children, joined a larger team from Fairview United Methodist Church, according to a news release from the organization.

After weeks of preparation and fundraising, they were ready to board the plane. "We spent the week doing construction and leading vacation Bible school for the children," said Nate, a Holston Home student. "My favorite was VBS, though, because I really enjoyed playing with the kids."

This was the first trip out of the country for all of the Holston Home youth, according to the release.

While all of them come to Holston with their own stories, it was the first time to be faced with the stories of orphans around the world.

"This experience changed my life," said Ben, who has been at Holston Home for two years.

"Each one returned with a story of how they saw God move in their hearts and in the hearts of others while they were in Guatemala," the release says.

Shannon, who loves children and wants to teach pre-school one day said, "Because of my trip to Guatemala I now know what God wants me to do with the rest of my life."

"Sometimes in life we feel like the 'least of these' and then we get the opportunity to go and help someone else. We no longer feel like 'the least of these' because we are blessing others," said Carrico.

"Many children who come to Holston Home carry the weight of world on their shoulders," the release says.

"They come broken and abandoned and most of the time feeling like the 'least of these.'"

Taking a trip to Guatemala is only a piece of the picture that HUMHC wants to paint for the youth that come into their care.

"Serving others has an incredible way of allowing our students to see the bigger picture, to become others-focused, and begin the process of changing their own stories," said Williams.

"If it hadn't been for the people who helped us get there, I would never have figured out who I am," said Shannon.

For more pictures and videos of the trip, please go to Holston Home's Facebook page: *www.facebook.com/HolstonHome.FCA*.