A group of Seton Saints and chaperones went off the grid this fall and spent some time in Liberty, Kentucky for a mission trip where they spent five days immersed in service and selfless work within the Liberty community. Various groups were assigned specific jobs throughout their time there. Seton junior Emma Harmeyer was in a group that worked on two different family farms, planting garlic on one and shelling beans on the other. “It didn’t seem like much at first,” said Emma, who was attending Liberty for the first time. “But at the end of the day I stepped back and looked at how much progress we had made, and I realized how much we had helped them. That family had many beans to sell throughout the upcoming weeks.”

The families at each of these farms were appreciative and kind. “They cooked us a delicious lunch and showed us the beautiful creek on their property,” explained Emma. “I felt very blessed to have worked on both of these farms and to have met such Christ-like people.”

In addition to the hard work put in by the Saints, they also had some downtime to enjoy the simple beauty of the area and of one another. “It was great to have some activities like group talks, listening to people sing, playing games, having a talent show and going to church that helped me build relationships and see God’s goodness all around me as I grew in my faith,” said Emma.

This was also the first trip to Liberty for Seton math teacher Gina Rider. “I enjoyed every moment spent with the 24 girls and other chaperones,” said Gina. “We spent time together shoveling sorghum in the field of a local farmer, shelling beans in the loft of a barn and sharing meals on the porch of a Mennonite family. I felt incredibly proud of the girls as they each brought their own God-given gifts to share and embraced the simplicity of the Liberty lifestyle.”

Emma feels that the experience of going to Liberty is one that helped refocus on the gifts in her own life and how much she can share with others. “Getting to do service around the Liberty community was a gift to me and the people who lived there. The work we did wasn’t always easy, but it is rewarding to know we made a difference. The families there were grateful to us for the positive energy that we brought.”

She could feel God’s presence all around her. “It gave me an entirely new perspective on my life and helped me connect with God in times when I really needed him,” Emma explained. “Whether it was through nature, inspiring stories I heard, singing or witnessing the kindness of people around me, I could feel God’s presence more than I ever had in my entire life.”
Bayley, where residents, staff, and volunteers celebrated the 14th annual Mission Award at a special Mass led by Fathers Rey Taylor and Paul Hurst. Attendees honored past winners and the current 27 nominees, staff members from a variety of departments at Bayley, who are recognized for truly serving Bayley’s mission. Congratulations to this year’s award recipient, Tina Clark from the Purchasing Department!

DePaul Cristo Rey High School where every week a group of students volunteer at the St. Francis Seraph Ministries Dining Room in Over-the-Rhine. They prepare and serve dinner to those who need a meal. Campus Minister Julie Murray organizes and leads a new service team to the site each quarter.

Mount St. Joseph University where Student Services has contributed $1.5 million in volunteer services to the Greater Cincinnati area since 1994. The University was chosen by the Cincinnati Business Courier as one of the Best Places to Work in the city. The choice is based on surveys taken from staff and faculty. Mount Saint Joseph University and Northern Kentucky University have offered assistance to transferring students from Cincinnati Christian University who face uncertain futures due to the closure of their school. The Mount is offering 50 percent tuition assistance through scholarships.

St. Joseph Home where in early January the staff and community gathered to celebrate a rare and happy occasion – a resident being discharged! Hailey, age 4, was discharged from the Pediatric Ventilator Unit after living there since she was just 8 months old. Residents come to the Pediatric Ventilator Unit with a variety of medical diagnoses and usually an unknown prognosis of progression due to their young age. Hailey was dependent on a ventilator 24/7 upon arrival, but with the support of the medical team, care staff and therapists on-site, now only requires the ventilator at night.

Hailey saw her first steps, learned to say her first words over her trach, and left for her first day of school at St. Joseph Home – all incredible milestones that the community won’t soon forget.