

# BIG SKY. BIGGER MISSION.

JULY 2-10, 2024

**Who Can Go:** Any current and active high school member of our youth group that is interested in going. There will be additional requirements outlined in this packet for what a student must do in order to go. It should be noted that our first and primary reason for going is to serve others and, at times, get dirty doing it! Yes, we'll do some exploring and some fun stuff too while we're out there. **However, if you're primarily coming for "the fun" or to use this as a vacation, this probably isn't your trip!** It's a very fun trip, but our primary mission is to "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13).

**When Are We Going:** July 2<sup>nd</sup>-July 10<sup>th</sup>

**Where We Are Going:** We are planning on flying into Kalispell, MT. Depending on ticket availability, we MAY have to fly into Missoula. It is about 2 hours south of Kalispell. We'll primarily be working in the Flathead Valley in the Kalispell area. We'll also do some group activities in Glacier National Park and the Flathead Valley.

**Cost:** The cost will be \$500 per person (including adults). We will have opportunities to help you raise your trip costs! Another highly effective tool for raising your money is by writing letters to people to help raise the money (We've had multiple people write just a few letters and get their whole trip paid for!). We are happy to give you some tips on how to write an effective fundraising letter. We **never** want money to be an issue, so we'll try and help you as much as possible! However, if you still come up short after participating in these opportunities, please let us know and we'll work to make things happen! Also, plan on having to pay for luggage on the flight (\$30 each way), one meal a day, and any money you want to spend on souvenirs.

**Deadline:** Because the area fills up so much during the summer months and because of the complexity of planning such a trip, the deadline to sign up for this trip will be December 31st, 2023! **Everyone must pay a \$100 non-refundable deposit by December 31st...TO ENSURE YOUR SPOT IS NOT DROPPED, THIS SHOULD BE PAID (PREFERABLY ONLINE) WITHIN 24 HOURS OF SIGNING UP! WE WILL NOT GET A TICKET FOR ANYONE THAT HAS NOT PAID THIS DEPOSIT!!!** **If someone wants to come after this date, it will only be IF we can get a plane ticket AND have room for lodging, etc. There will also be a \$100 late fee for anyone that signs up after December 31st!!!**

**Where We'll Stay:** Bigfork, Montana. We will stay in the same condos (The American) as the last 3 summers.

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**What We're Doing/Who We're Working With:** We will be working again with Lighthouse Christian, a home/farm for special needs adults. One of the unique things about the facility is that by being on a farm, the residents help with chores on the farm. We'll do farm work, repairs, building projects, teach the residents and do special activities with the residents.

This year, we will be with them a 3<sup>rd</sup> day for a field trip. While not final yet, we've got some opportunities with Flathead Food Bank, Samaritan House, and the Kalispell Warming Center. We'll share more details closer to time on final plans there.

**Leadership/Teambuilding during the trip:** We also want to take advantage to be away from the day to day distractions we live with when we're home! We plan to do some hikes (nothing that you have to be an expert hiker to do) and some other activities to help us grow closer as a group. We'll also spend some time seeing the sights in Glacier National Park. This year, we'll get to experience the Bigfork Fourth of July parade and festivities as well as a fireworks show! There will be multiple service and leadership expectations while we're on the trip. Examples include delivering a devo, helping cook meals, teaching residents at Lighthouse Christian, helping clean after meals/activities, etc. While we'll spend a lot of time serving, it's also our goal to use this as an opportunity for some leadership training and growth within our group---we've got some great high school students that have some amazing leadership potential!

**Expectations/Requirements to go on the trip:** **Any student that is coming on the trip must currently be an active high school member of our group and must remain active within the group.** There will be multiple service and leadership activities announced which students will be required to participate in. As we've done in the past, we've also required those coming on the trip to work at least half of the VBS workdays and to work VBS in June. We also expect students coming on the trip to be regularly attending and leading within Bible classes and active within the group. Examples of leading and being active within the group/class include (but are not limited to): participate in youth led worships, leading prayers, song, or reading scripture in Bible Class, reading scripture on Sunday Morning Worship, and leading children's church, etc.) **Our philosophy is very simple: If you're not active within the group or are not leading and serving here, then chances are you're not going to be active or lead and serve 2,000 miles away from here!**

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**Parents/Chaperones:** Space on this trip is always EXTREMELY challenging. We had to get extra condos last year to house all the people and this added thousands of dollars to the trip expense. A major reason we had to get the extra condos was to the large number of parents that came on the trip (we had more than what we actually needed). Since this trip is primarily for the teenagers, space for parents will be EXTREMELY limited. The **current** plans are for us to only take 4 parents in addition to our kitchen crew. If you are coming as a parent, we want to warn you that the days are VERY LONG and we will heavily rely on you to help us with the kids (especially in the driving department!). Our plans are to prioritize parents wanting to come according in the following order: 1.) Parents who have never been before. 2.) Parents who have only been once. 3.) Parents who have been more than once. Ultimately, Daniel and Katy reserve the right to adjust the parent list too based off the needs of the group (some projects may need certain skillsets, experience with leading a large travel group, experience with air travel, rooming breakdown, etc.). We also will expect parents coming to be involved with the group at other events throughout the year. It makes things MUCH easier when we have parents who have built relationships with the teens and who are used to working with us and how we do things, etc! If we end up not having the space for parents and you still want to come, we will be happy to share flight information and lodging that will be close to the group and you can make your own arrangements. We've had some parents do this in the past and they still could participate in things, they just weren't technically on the church's part.

**Meeting Expectations:** We will have several other meetings before the trip. We will make every effort to advertise the meetings in advance. THE MEETINGS WILL BE IMPORTANT AND TEENS ARE EXPECTED TO BE AT THE MEETINGS. A parent being at the meeting instead of the teen is NOT the same as the teen being at the meeting (although we do encourage parents to come to the meetings with your teen)...We expect teens to be at the meetings! If a teen absolutely cannot make a meeting, they MUST let Daniel know ASAP BEFORE the meeting. **If a teen misses multiple meetings or doesn't let Daniel know they'll be missing meetings, they will not be allowed to go.**