

Neighborhood Disciple-maker

Since becoming a youth pastor, my dream has been to take my students on an international mission trip. But year after year, something always makes pulling off such a trip difficult, and there are tens of thousands of youth ministries that are in a similar position.

So what do we do?

I imagine that many youth ministries embark on a mission trip within the U.S.A., and we're no different. We are gearing up to spend a week in Denver, Colorado, this summer with an organization called [City Connexx](#).

Mission trips, whether international or in-country, are the bread and butter of youth ministry. However, too often, we're so busy looking "out there" for mission opportunities that we forget that we are surrounded by people in our own neighborhoods and cities who don't know Christ and to whom we can be a vessel of God's grace.

To help find a balance between "out there" and "right here," we attempt to have one local service project each quarter, so our students' eyes can be opened to the needs that surround them every day.

Over the years, our youth group has served at a variety of places, spreading the love of Christ and being light to our neighbors. I am thankful for these opportunities*, and I look forward to many more occasions to remind my students—and myself—that God calls us to invest deeply not only in the lives of people who live far away, but also those who live in our own neighborhoods.

"In your going, make disciples" [some have said](#), reminding us that no matter who we are or where we live, our neighborhood is where disciple-making begins.

* *Some neighborhood mission opportunities/ides include:*

Church Outreach	Events	Afterschool Programs
Food banks	Salvation Army (bell-ringing or something else)	
Clothes Bank	Creating Crisis Care Kits for Disaster Relief	
Nursing Home	Elderly/Needy Person's Home for Yard or Housework	
Homeless Shelter	Places and Ministries Unique to Your Location	

C. R. Cook
Mission Connection Youth Editor

