

Faith in Action

at Ss. Faith Hope & Charity



Literacy Wagon – Diocese of Yakima, Washington

Over the past four years, Faith Hope has sponsored, through Catholic Extension, the Literacy Wagon of the Diocese of Yakima, Washington.

The \$100,000 committed comes from the charitable funds portion of the Capital Campaign.

The Literacy Wagon is truly a blessing to the children of migrant farmworkers. It is estimated that migrant workers comprise 72% of the farm work labor force in the U.S. Each summer, migrant workers come to the Yakima Valley in Washington State to harvest apples and cherries. These workers and their families, most of whom migrate for the summer from California, live in camps that are isolated from the surrounding communities. The season can stretch from April to October and the children are missing vital time in school. In response, the Literacy Wagon, a mobile summer education team, brings books and education to these children, helping literacy, fluency and vocabulary while their parents work in the field. The program supports as many as 150 children each summer. Seminarians from the Diocese of Yakima lead and organize the Literacy Wagon, in collaboration with religious sisters and volunteers.

The money contributed by Faith Hope bought, among other things, a much-needed van so that they could carry literacy materials from camp to camp.

In 2017, parishioner Charlie Snell and Fr. Matt Heinrich went to Yakima as the program was just being initiated and the parish made its multi-year commitment. In 2018, parishioners Laurie Farrell, Melissa and Catherine Howlett, Jean Stamatis, and school librarian Holly Rumble went to Yakima along with Fr. Marty. They were able to visit the camps, read to the children and see the operation of the program we were supporting. As Laurie Farrell has said, “Those days in Yakima put faces with the hands, feet, breaking backs and hearts of those who work to put affordable food on my table.” Our contact continues. Recently, the 8th graders of the Religious Education Program and School wrote notes of hope to support the migrants during this time.



As Fr. Marty said during his visit,
**“The Church isn’t just in buildings;
it’s wherever people gather.**

Church is in this pavilion here on these campgrounds where we gather around the Eucharist. Church is leading kids in simple games or feeding them lunch.... That’s Church.”

For more information about The Literacy Wagon, go to www.faithhope.org/ParishCommunity/FaithInAction.