

## Choir gets to work helping out in Pensacola

Erin Kourkounis • ekourkounis@pnj.com • June 16, 2010

Lynsey Richardson, 18, spread scraps out of paper on the carpet Tuesday at the Salvation Army Community Center on North Q Street.

When put in the right order, the words written on the scraps formed a Bible verse.

Children swarmed around Lynsey and began working together to put the words in order. She beamed when they figured out the verse, which they were taught the day before.

"We wanted them to get involved, and we wanted them to have a challenge so we weren't just telling them the verse," she said. "They remembered it from yesterday, which was so cool."

Lynsey is one of nearly 150 members of the Chi Alpha Choir, from Hunter Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., who are in Pensacola this week to perform and do community service.

Chi Alpha — which means "Christ First" — is made up of high school students and chaperones. They arrived Sunday to a welcome party at the Homewood Suites hotel. They will stay in the Pensacola area until Friday.

Throughout the week, the choir members will do community service projects at area organizations including Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, Habitat for Humanity and the Ronald McDonald House.

The group volunteered at the Salvation Army's morning day camp on Tuesday. They held Vacation Bible School sessions and organized activities and art projects for children in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Yvonne Warthen, a Salvation Army volunteer coordinator, said she could not have asked for a more well-rounded, enthusiastic group of children.

"For the past two months, our focus has been, 'The oil's out there, what are we going to do?,'" Warthen said. "These children came from outside this area

and brought joy. Their very energy and spirit has been a blessing."

Brent Fullenwider, 16, was part of the choir's recreation volunteer group on Tuesday.

"We take them out there and we'll try to get a football or baseball game started," he said. "They catch on pretty fast."

Brent said his favorite part of the trip has been working with the children and setting an example for them.

"As the week goes on, you tend to grow closer to the kids," he said. "They feel more comfortable around you."

Carneisha Cain, 17, said her time in Pensacola has been fun and rewarding so far. Mission work does not only benefit those in need, she said, but also those doing the work.

"High school is a time when you're trying to find out who you're trying to be in life," Carneisha said. "Being in Chi Alpha helps you to grasp the real meaning of life and why we're all here, which is to serve God."

### Advertisement



**Mom Dilemma #36:**  
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

momslike.me.com  
where Local moms meet



[Purchase this Photo](#)

Lynsey Richardson, 18, helps children with a Bible verse activity at the Salvation Army's day camp in Pensacola on Tuesday. Richardson is a member of Chi Alpha Choir, which traveled from Birmingham, Ala., and will be doing community service and performing concerts in Pensacola throughout the week. (Erie Kourkouris/ekourkouris@pnj.com)

#### Chi Alpha performances

-- 6:30 p.m. today at First Baptist Church in Milton, 6797 Caroline St.

-- 5:30 p.m. Thursday at Immanuel Baptist Church in Pace, 4187 U.S. 90. The concert is in conjunction with WOW Radio's Summer Block Party.

These performances are open to the public.

Advertisement

**USA TODAY**  
**AutoPilot**   
 The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®  
 Presented by:   
**SEE HOW IT WORKS** »