

## **MINGO COUNTY – APPALACHIA MOUNTAINS**

### **Demographics**

The breathtaking Appalachian Mountains, extending from Georgia to Maine, are scattered with many rural towns. This “village in the woods”, with a population of approximately 470 residents, is located in one of the richest coal areas of West Virginia. It is the youngest town in the youngest county of the state, near the Kentucky border and less than two hours from Charleston. The heart of Appalachia is rich in natural resources. Because 72 percent of the land and 80 percent of the mineral rights in the 80 counties that make up this area are absentee-owned, these resources provide little income for this community. Thirty-four percent of the total population lives below the poverty line, including nearly 50 percent of all residents under age 18—a group that your students will serve through a variety of activities at Kids Club. Because of the terrain in Mingo County, many of the homes and trailers also are in need of repair because of flooding. In spending time here, your group will most certainly be blessed by the warm welcome of the Appalachian people.

### **About the Ministry**

We focus on two primary areas of ministry: children and home improvement. Our work with children consists of a hands-on program led by your youth, known as Kids Club. Kids Club offers high-energy games, crafts, skits, songs and interactive lessons all designed to help kids learn about Jesus. Work projects include minor home repair which may include painting projects, building or repairing porches and wheelchair ramps and, if the need arises, help with flood relief. The ministry work we do in Appalachia is different from our other mission sites. Because the process of building relationships is of the utmost importance this region, your youth will work in one area of ministry for the entire week. Adult leaders will separate youth into ministry groups, and the youth in your group will be mixed with the youth from other groups for their week of service. Due to multiple church groups and varying needs of the community, we cannot confirm until all groups arrive on site exactly what service your youth will be involved with. We ask that you come to serve with a willing and flexible spirit.

### **Activities**

Evening activities during a YouthWorks week are designed to give participants insight into the lives of local residents and the culture of the area. A list of evening/cultural activities we have done in the past include: attend a community dinner at Town Hall; attend a bluegrass concert; attend a local church service; and spend the evening at a community friend's home. These examples are subject to change due to weather or availability. In case of change, suitable substitutes will be provided. We try to arrange for free evening activities, but from time to time, an additional cost may be required for an activity. Please plan to bring an additional \$10 per person to cover any extra costs. We will confirm the details closer to your trip.