

A group of people in historical attire are pushing a wooden cart through a muddy stream in a forest. The cart is loaded with supplies, including a blue tarp and a pink bag. The people are wearing white shirts, blue bandanas, and brown skirts. The scene is set in a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

This time, "go bring them in" meant rescuing us.

Stuck IN THE STORM



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By Olivia Macpherson

On that August morning in 2015, I felt particularly lethargic after getting off of a bus I had been in for 10 hours coming from Ontario, Canada, to a wilderness in Maine, USA. But I did feel some exuberance as I glanced toward the handcarts lined up in rows.

My friends and I stuck together as we knew we would soon be split into our “families” and companies. I love my friends, yet I was excited to meet new people from all over the eastern region of North America. Each of the youth was given a coloured* or patterned bandanna connecting them with a corresponding colour beside their handcart.



When it was my turn, they assigned me to my family and gave me a deep red bandanna. I ran to search for the handcart with the same bandanna. As I ran I noticed the shining sun and how stunning the weather was and felt absolute glee.

I met my Ma and Pa, three brothers, and two sisters and listened to the leaders' opening remarks. The theme of the trek was "Go Bring Them In," in reference to people who went and rescued companies who needed aid back in the pioneer days. I must admit that at that time I didn't really understand why this theme was chosen or how it related to us. A prayer was said asking that we would continue to have good weather, and we were finally off!



We worked as a team and learned quickly that communication was vital. Those in the front must warn the others of rocks or holes. To distract us from the deathly heat of the sun, the three of us in the back began singing Disney songs quite loudly. We all bonded quickly and laughed a lot. Things were off to a good start.

Going into the second half of the day, our water bottles were being emptied fast. The August heat and humidity were not our friends. Still, we remained cheerful.

One of my brothers, Ian, who is tall, looked ahead and pointed out rainclouds. We all inwardly begged for rain because we were so hot and sweaty. A rain shower was sounding

great right about then. Soon the captain of our company called for our rain ponchos to be put on. As the clouds drew nearer, they seemed to get darker and darker. The first raindrop came down as hard and fast as a bullet, warning us of what was to come.

Ten minutes later we were engulfed in a horrific storm. Heavy wind and rain made the pathway slick under my feet. My skirt soon became weighted with water. I jumped as a boom of thunder seemed to shake my bones! For two hours the weather never lightened one bit. Lightning flashed. Trees swayed in the wind. Everyone became covered with mud. The leaders started thinking that we wouldn't be able to camp outside that night.





After reaching the field where we were meant to camp, I was exhausted. But it soon dawned on me that I wasn't scared, and the other youth didn't seem to be either.

The fire department had been called to evacuate us in buses. I felt strength and comfort that everything was going to be OK. One fireman said, "I've never seen a group of young people behave this way in this type of crisis—ever. It's miraculous!"

The people of the nearest town in Maine came to our rescue. They let us stay in an empty university dorm building and offered up their own washers and dryers for our clothes! It felt incredible to get into new warm clothes and get grub into my stomach.





That night the food was the best I had ever tasted. The people of the town just kept offering their services.

A town official met with one of our leaders and said in slight disbelief: “Ten years ago over 100 emergency blankets were donated to our town. The weird thing is, they were donated by your church!”

Humility overcame all of us! The theme for our trek was “Go Bring Them In.” Yet we were the ones who had been brought in. We had been rescued.

We headed out the next day as the sun finally came out. Paths had been flooded from the first day, and the rest of the trek was hard. But we all treated each other with kindness, because we had learned that kindness should never be overlooked. We would never forget that.

I’m sure everyone says this, but my experience was special. It was an amazing growing experience for me, and my testimony was strengthened. The blankets showed us that when we serve, the service can come right back to us. This gospel is true. The pioneers sacrificed so much for us. I know my Saviour died for me, and I wish to serve and continue to try to love as He did. **NE**

The author lives in Quebec, Canada.

* Canadian spellings have been preserved.