

Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service (HOMES) Scholar Review (available on Robertson Connect)

Ben Rees (2022)

I spent my summer working in Whitesburg, KY with HOMES Inc. HOMES was a new organization that we were partnering with but is very established in the Whitesburg community. HOMES Inc. is a organization fighting against housing unaffordability in Appalachia by connecting low-income families with different grants and low-interest loans that they are eligible for to provide necessary repairs on their existing homes or new construction to give them a safe and reliable place to live. With this money, they provide the contracting work on these homes. I spent the first half of my summer with the construction crew doing work on the houses (it was primarily rehabs rather than new construction). The second half of the summer I reduced the amount of time I spent doing construction and spent more time in the office working on an independent project to help develop HOMES's identity as a people centered organization and developed advertisement content to help initiate the expansion of HOMES into Western Virginia.

I really enjoyed the first half of my summer. I was given the same responsibilities as all my coworkers and the time we spent in the field together helped me develop relationships with a group of guys with an entirely different background than mine. The second half was great because I had the freedom to work on any project I could think of to help assist HOMES in its mission. One of the great things about HOMES is the flexibility Seth (my mentor) gave me in directing my own summer experience but he was willing to offer structure and advice whenever I needed it.