

Pastor's wife finds her service niche in literacy missions

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By Carol Gene Graves

Baylor Center for Literacy

WACO—Despite growing up a pastor's daughter and becoming a preacher's wife, Judy Hughes of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Waco never found her niche for Christian service until she discovered literacy ministries.

She found literacy missions 14 years ago, but her passion to share Christ with others while teaching them English continues to grow, she insists.



Judy Hughes
of Emmanuel
Baptist
Church in
Waco teaches
English to
Silvia
Hernandez
(left) and
Juana Loreda.
(Photo by
Carol Gene
Graves/Baylor
Center for
Literacy)

Maurine Frost, former director and long-time volunteer at the [Center for Literacy](#) at Baylor University, challenged Hughes: “Do you know that within a one-mile radius of your church, there are 900 people who do not speak English? Do your own survey if you don’t believe me.”

Hughes and friends walked 36 blocks around the church to find 75 people who did not speak, write or understand any English, and a ministry soon was birthed.

Before long, the church’s programs were attracting Hispanic adults and internationals, along with their children and spouses. The church now offers English-as-a-Second-Language training, graduate equivalency degree preparation and the test of English as a foreign language, which an international student must pass to enroll in a college or university in the United States.

While parents receive ESL instruction, children enjoy 45 minutes of mission

stories followed by 45 minutes of homework tutoring. Baylor students from Baptist Student Ministries volunteer to tutor younger students and forge relationships with children.

“It dawned on me that just putting a check in the offering plate is not missions,” Hughes said. “Through literacy missions, I can touch the world from Emmanuel and Waco. ... When a student from another country accepts Christ during literacy classes, I am excited. When the student returns to his or her home country, I can know there is someone in that foreign country continuing to spread the gospel because of what I’ve done here.”

Hughes leads a 16-hour workshop to train ESL teachers in the Waco area. She serves as literacy consultant to the [Waco Baptist Regional Network](#) and trains ESL trainers throughout Texas and beyond.

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