

DBU students serve through Beach Reach and Habitat for Humanity

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DALLAS—While many college students enjoyed rest and relaxation during spring break, student teams from Dallas Baptist University served others and shared the gospel on South Padre Island and at a construction project in Colorado.



Chris Holloway, director of global missions at Dallas Baptist University, led about 80 students to serve on South Padre Island as part of Beach Reach. More than 80 DBU students loaded into vans and traveled to South Padre Island, where they ministered to college students through Beach Reach. Chris Holloway, director of global missions at DBU, led the volunteers as they shared the love of Christ with spring breakers, providing van rides and serving pancakes.

Relying on God

“Beach Reach pushed me to the limit like I have never been pushed before,” said Luke Schlenker, a freshman from Albuquerque, N.M. “Our team had to rely on Christ for strength to get through the week. But it was amazing to see how we—though absolutely exhausted—were having a better time than the students who were there to party. It was such

evidence that the Lord satisfies unlike anything else.”

Parker Lansford, a sophomore from Morrison, Okla., echoed that sentiment.

“I was stretched to the point that I could do nothing but rely fully on Christ—physically, mentally and spiritually,” Lansford said. “Time and time again, I saw the faithfulness of the Lord in how he sustained my every need and the needs of our team. Without fail, whenever I was feeling discouraged or at a loss for words, the Lord would speak through one of my teammates to bring me encouragement.”

Spreading the gospel

The DBU teams provided rides around the island, using that service as a platform to present the gospel to people their age who were spending their week carousing.

“My heart broke for the students who got on our van, because that easily could have been me had it not been for those who shared the gospel with me earlier in life,” Schlenker said.

Other participants emphasized God’s faithfulness in providing strength and guidance.

“Beach Reach was a challenging week that forced me to fully rely on the Lord,” said Student Body President Stephen Boyd, a senior from Henderson, Nev. “We made it our goal to share the gospel with each person who set foot in our van, and we learned to rely on the Holy Spirit as he used us as vessels to share his message.

“I am thankful for Beach Reach and the overall culture of service that DBU cultivates. The fact that 81 students would give their spring break to serve in South Padre is reflective of the selfless, generous attitude that the DBU

faculty has instilled in us as students. Beach Reach is just one example of seeing those convictions lived out in our community and world.”

Changing lives

Holloway emphasized the difference Beach Reach makes in lives—not only among recipients of the ministry, but also among the volunteers.

“Beach Reach has been such a blessing for us at DBU,” he said. “It amazes me how the Lord rescues in the darkest of situations. Our students and staff who participate have a fire lit under them to share the gospel not only in South Padre, but also wherever they go. I cannot wait to see what the Lord will do on our campus and in our community from the lessons learned at Beach Reach.”

Habitat for Humanity in Colorado

While some DBU students served in South Texas, another team traveled to Woodland Park, Colo., where they worked with Habitat for Humanity, helping construct two houses, as well as renovate the Habitat office.

“God truly opened the door for this opportunity to serve, and it was incredible to see the fruits of our labor right before our eyes,” said Becky Palacios, a junior from Sulphur Springs.



A team from Dallas Baptist University worked on Habitat for Humanity projects in Colorado. (Photo / Seth Pittman) “I worked mostly on insulation and drywall, but it was so wonderful to work together with my fellow classmates. We were able to learn how to do most of the tasks together and figure out how to work as a team. Overall, it was wonderful to see what we were able to accomplish as a service to others and for the Lord.”

Temperatures during the week often fell below freezing, but the students worked fervently, installing siding, insulation and drywall for the two homes and painting new logos and making repairs in the Habitat office.

“During the Habitat trip, God made it evident that serving others does not necessarily require extraordinary skill, but rather takes the willingness to sacrifice your time,” said Aubrey Wolsfeld, a junior from Wheaton, Ill.

“I spent most of my time working in the Habitat office performing seemingly simple tasks such as reupholstering furniture and painting, but it was incredible to see how much it meant to the individuals we were serving.”

Emory Cothen, a senior from Beaumont, called working with Habitat “one of the most defining and enjoyable parts of my DBU experience.”

“It is a great example of practical ministry that meets people where they are and provides for some of their basic needs,” Cothen said. “This experience is a clear picture of what the Body of Christ should be doing—giving their time and resources to others for the sake of the gospel.”