

ETBU students learn introductory lesson in service

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MARSHALL—Before they attended their first class, incoming students at [East Texas Baptist University](#) in Marshall learned a lesson about service.



East Texas Baptist University incoming freshman Ashli Glenn of Ennis cleans a wall at Moore Elementary. Teams of new students at ETBU spread out over about a dozen locations in Marshall working on service projects. (PHOTO: ETBU / Mike Midkiff) More than 200 new students fanned out to about a dozen locations throughout the Marshall area Aug. 22, working on community service projects as part of the school's Welcome Week activities and its ongoing ETBU Cares initiative. Freshmen, led by upperclassmen leaders, served in a variety of ways.

"We try to find locations where we can have a group of 10 to 20 to serve in places that will make a difference," said Lisa Seeley, director of the ETBU Great Commission Center.

Most of the ETBU student teams worked at public elementary schools in Marshall. Students serving at Moore Elementary shoveled rocks off the sidewalk by the playground and wiped down walls inside. At Travis Elementary, volunteers spent most of their time sorting and organizing books.

“I love serving and believe it is a great thing to do,” said Carrie Sparks, incoming freshman from Labelle, as she sorted books in a hallway at Travis Elementary. “I think it is a good to get out in the community as college students to show other people that we do care and want to make the community better.”



ETBU incoming freshmen students Carrie Sparks of Beaumont (sitting left) and Aaryn Honeywood of Paris sort out books at Travis Elementary. (PHOTO: ETBU / Mike Midkiff) Freshman Aaryn Honeywood of Paris sat next to Sparks on the floor, sorting books.

“When I found out what we were going to do, I was excited to be helping teachers get ready for the start of school,” Honeywood said.

Moore Elementary second grade teacher Tiffany Stevenson, an ETBU

graduate, felt particular satisfaction as she watched the students work at her school.

“It is so neat to see this, because when I was at ETBU as a freshman, I did the same thing but over at Lee Elementary,” she recalled.

At Washington Early Childhood Center, student volunteers assisted another ETBU alumna, Crystal Pritchard, Head Start teacher. The student team helped prepare her classroom for the first day of school.

“They are making popsicle sticks with jewels on them, car tag numbers, placing crayons in individual school boxes and tags for the students bags,” said Pritchard, who has taught 15 years. “What an awesome experience for me to see the students come and volunteer their time. This is a tremendous help.”



This group of ETBU students at Moore Elementary removed rocks from the sidewalk next to the playground. (PHOTO: ETBU / Mike Midkiff) In addition to working at elementary schools, student volunteers served at First Baptist Church in Marshall, My Friend’s House shelter, Ward Plaza Apartments, Boys and Girls Club of Hallsville and Dayspring Ranch, a therapeutic equestrian

center.

Junior Cheyenne Summers of Hallsville served as a student leader during Welcome Week. After a meaningful experience as a freshman, Summers also worked as a leader last year, taking a group to Mission Marshall to organize the food pantry and clean the lobby.

“In going out and serving others in the community, I am learning how to be a servant leader and how to show the gospel wherever I am,” Summers said.

Scheduling a day for service projects helps incoming students “start off on the right foot,” Seeley noted.

“I hope by the time they graduate, serving others will be an integral part of their life, and it will become a habit,” she said.

“As Christians, we are supposed to put feet to our faith and be out there serving those who are less fortunate than us.”