

ETBU students spend spring break on mission

March 21, 2017

MARSHALL—East Texas Baptist University students spent spring break demonstrating the love of Christ by serving people in the jungles of Belize, in a storm-damaged area of South Louisiana and on the beaches of South Padre Island.

“We are grateful to have committed Christian servant leaders in our East Texas Baptist students, who are willing to sacrifice their vacation time for the blessing of others,” President Blair Blackburn said.

Water ministry in Belize

Lisa Seeley, director of global education and the ETBU Great Commission Center, led 10 students to recover water wells and share the gospel of Jesus in Belize. The team worked in Otoxha, a remote jungle village without electricity or running water.



East Texas Baptist University students served during spring break in Belize recovering wells and sharing the Good News of Christ. “Seeing how different our cultures are was eye-

opening,” sophomore Abbey Sturdivant said. “Even though we are so different, we are all equal in the eyes of God.”

ETBU partnered with Hope Springs Water—an Athens-based ministry—to support the organization’s mission of drilling and reclaiming water wells and teaching public health and hygiene-related practices.

During their time in the jungle, the ETBU students slept in hammocks inside a thatch building. The students were impressed by the generosity of the families in the region.

“The families in the Belize jungles have so little, yet they were so willing to share with us,” freshman Cristal Monzon-Hernandez said. “We were blessed beyond belief by the people of Otoxha as we sought to be a blessing. God is truly at work in the hearts of the people of Belize.”

Home building in Louisiana

In Slidell, La., ETBU students participated in Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge. The group worked with the East St. Tammany Parish Habitat chapter to help build a home. Students hung floor joists, decked flooring and framed walls on an elevated pier and beam home that will be above flood level once completed.

“The work is more strenuous than anticipated but is very rewarding at the same time,” sophomore Joe Soto said.

Slidell sustained serious flood damage due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012, and it suffered another setback from floods last year.

Before Katrina, the East St. Tammany Parish Habitat chapter only built one or two houses a year. Due to an increase in volunteers and financial support, the chapter has been busy building 50 to 60 homes a year in

Slidell for families in need of quality housing.

“Overall, this experience has been challenging, but it’s worth all the hard work,” sophomore Jake Williams said. “It’s awesome how our work this week will impact a family we’ve never even met before and to provide them with a quality home.”

Beach Reach on South Padre Island

On South Padre Island, 40 ETBU students ministered to other college students in conjunction with the Texas Baptist Student Ministry’s Beach Reach mission. The ETBU students worked late at night and into the early hours of the morning, giving rides and feeding pancakes to other students who had indulged in all-night parties.

God presented ETBU students scores of opportunities to minister and to share their faith in Christ as they helped students remain safe during spring break, BSM Director Marc Yates said.

“Throughout the week, ETBU students planted seeds in the hearts of the students with whom they shared the hope of the gospel,” Yates said.

Kelsey Dagle, a junior at ETBU, described an encounter that confirmed to her why she was on the mission trip.

“A group of six people got on our van, and immediately the conversations were spiritual,” she said. “We didn’t do anything. God was already doing a work in them

“By the end of the ride, which was well over an hour, four of the students rededicated their lives to the Lord. Praise God for his faithfulness to his promise, not only to me, but to all of us Beach Reachers, that he is present and moving on the island.”