

# Local need prompts stay-at-home mission trip for Lolita church

March 29, 2012

LOLITA—Members of [First Baptist Church in Lolita](#) discovered spring break mission trips don't have to be far away to be fulfilling, Pastor Dennis Phariss said.



Volunteers (left to right) Carol Roome, Joey Bonnot and Jonathan Ainsworth from First Baptist Church in Lolita cut boards to repair rotting lumber in a church member's home.

Toward the end of last year, a church leadership team set a goal of intentionally looking for opportunities to expand the congregation's ministry outside the walls of the church, he noted. Initially, the focus was on a possible mission trip to help in ministry along the border of Mexico.

Soon, however, the focus grew much closer as the church learned about the needs of a mother and daughter within their own membership.

"They are really quiet, and no one knew of their need," Phariss said. "And they're not the type to say."



Volunteers (left to right) Justin Johnson, Chris Meir and Sharon Bonnot from First Baptist Church in Lolita pressure-wash siding for a needy church member's home.

After the need became known, however, a project in Lolita was the only consideration.

"Before we went across the state, we figured we'd better meet the needs across the street," Phariss said.

The woman's husband, who does not attend the church, has not been able to work the last two years due to medical problems including a brain tumor that was removed. That had limited the family's physical and financial resources to maintain their home.

Initially, the belief was that most of the problems were due to a shifting of the home's foundation due to drought.

During the three days the congregation worked on the home, they replaced the ceilings in three rooms, sealed a two-inch crack in the foundation, replaced rotted lumber and pressure-washed the outside.



Joey Bonnot and Carol  
Roome from First  
Baptist Church in Lolita  
work on repairing the  
interior ceiling of a  
church member's home.

Work remains to be done, however, and Phariss said those projects will be taken care of soon.

"We went out there expecting a nice, little chicken-fried steak, and what we discovered was a 24-ounce sirloin," he said. But it's not more than the congregation can chew.

The church of about 70 members had 20 helping during three days of work.

"Basically, if they didn't have to be at work, they were there," he said.

The congregation already has made plans for a workday at the South Texas Children's Home.

"We've discovered this church has a passion for getting out and helping and we need to continue to tap into that," Phariss said.