

Students wind up summer awed by God's power

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Even expecting the unexpected didn't stop Texas Baptist student summer missionaries from being awed by seeing God work in surprising ways.

More than 380 Texas Baptist college students served as missionaries this summer in 25 Texas cities, 14 states and 30 countries, spreading the gospel.



Jacob Townsend, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, served in South Asia with Go Now Missions.

Brenda Sanders, who leads the [Go Now Missions](#) program, said God used these students to introduce people to Christ's love.

"In the midst of these students' faith journey as student missionaries, they see God do some amazing things," Sanders said.

"They come away with more than a photo album full of pictures. They come away with a realistic picture of what it means to take the gospel to a hurting world. Ultimately, our goal is to teach them that missions is not a

trip, but a way of life. We want them to walk away ready to be missionaries on their campus, jobs or homes."

In Alaska, many people are hesitant to talk about spiritual matters, said Sarah Miller, a Texas A&M University student who served there this summer. Christians must build strong relationships with individuals before they have the opportunity to share their faith, making evangelism efforts slow.

The same Christian volunteer missionaries have re-turned year after year to build those relationships, Miller said. This year, God used those relationships to break through to people's hearts. During the salmon fishing season, Miller and other volunteers passed out hot chocolate, water, lemonade and hot dogs in an effort to foster relationships. Through that effort, more than 30 spiritual decisions were made for Christ, a result that overjoyed Miller.



David Morgan, a student at the University of Texas at Arlington, served with Go Now Missions in West Africa.

(?PHOTOS/Courtesy of Go Now Missions/BGCT)

Nina Monk, a Stephen F. Austin State University student, unexpectedly encountered God's healing in her own life as she served in the [Hospitality House in Huntsville](#), an outreach to families of prisoners. As she visited

with families and the leaders of the ministry, she resolved the emotions she has held about her brother, who is in prison. The experience helped Monk grow as a Christian.

"It really brought a lot of healing to me to know that I'm not alone," Monk said.

The families of people in prison are a population that needs ministry, Monk said. They are dealing with the difficulty of not having a child, sibling or parent with them, and they struggle with the variety of emotions that come with that.

"They're all hurting," Monk said. "A lot of them are ashamed of what has happened in their families. A lot of the moms feel guilt that they could have done something different. A lot of wives feel like, 'He didn't love me enough.' Kids feel like it's their fault."

Kelley Mathis, a University of Texas at Austin student, said her summer serving in Del Rio revolutionized the way she thinks about mission work. She learned that God was working whether one person or many showed up for a ministry. God cares about each person, she learned.

"Missions is not at all the tear-inducing picture slide show with soundtrack music that I guess I thought it was," Mathis wrote in one of her weekly updates. "Missions is watching God somehow overcome our imperfect ability to love people."

For Kati Kunetz, a Texas State University student, her missions experience in Thai-land broadened her perspective of the world and God.

"God is the same everywhere," Kunetz said. "I had heard that before, but it is different to say it than to experience it."

By serving on college campuses in another country, Kunetz gained insight

into what it is like to be an international student in the United States. She understands what it's like to be different, to struggle with the language and not have many relationships in a new city.

That knowledge pushed her to want to lead outreach efforts to Texas State international students in the fall, a task she did not expect before this summer.

"I really think (mission work) is something that everyone should do in their lives," Kunetz said.