

Texas women use music as tool to share the gospel in New England

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WATERBURY, Conn.—This summer, 70 members of the [Singing Women of Texas](#) combined to form one choir and present eight concerts in six days, singing for a host of people across New England.

The Singing Women of Texas presented concerts at churches of all sizes during their tour of New England.

But don't call them performers—or even singers for that matter. When pushed to brag about themselves, they reluctantly acknowledge their vocal ability, quickly noting it's a gift from God. Their voices, the songs and the concerts are simply tools to share the gospel with others, they insist.

“We were not just the Texans who came to sing,” said Tim Studstill, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas music and worship team. “We were the Texans they invited to spend the day with the community. We were there to expand the churches' ministry.”

Kay Payton, director of the Central Texas chapter of Singing Women of Texas, said music is a way New England congregations penetrate communities. By inviting the Texas choir to their cities, the churches created avenues through which they could share the gospel.

The group performed at the University of Connecticut—an event promoted by several churches—on the streets and in nursing homes. In each case, the choir either helped strengthen a church's ministry or expand it to touch the

lives of people in the community.

“The coolest thing about the trip to me was every church we sang at has a ministry where they perform for the community,” Payton said. “That’s how they get into the community and let people know what they’re about.”



The Singing Women of Texas present a concert at a retirement home during their tour of New England.

Payton and Studstill said the people who came to the concerts were excited by the concerts. In addition to sharing the gospel, the choir also helped raise money for mission work, including church-building efforts in Haiti and a boutique that provided free head coverings for women battling cancer.

“It was amazing,” Payton said. “People just loved listening to us. They were very generous in the donations everywhere we went. They complimented us. They seemed to be not used to large groups of people singing. We had 70 women. They were amazed by a big group like that.”

The Singing Women of Texas’ trip is one of several ways Texas Baptists are contributing through a convention-facilitated partnership in the region. Several Texas Baptist congregations have partnered with New England churches, particularly in Connecticut and Boston recently.



Working on a sewing project during the Singing Women of Texas tour of New England are (foreground, left to right) Treasure Brasher, Singing Women of Texas Panhandle; Colleen DeVries, Singing Women of South Texas; and Glenda Price, Singing Women of North Central Texas.

The women's trip, planned by the BGCT music and worship team, strengthened relationships started when the Singing Men of Texas sang in the area five years ago.

"This was a great trip," event coordinator Karen Witcher said. "The people of Connecticut knew us, and we knew Texas Baptists, allowing us to pick up ministry right where we left off—seeking to share the hope of Christ in the Northeast."

The women's choir tour strengthened the ties between group members, Studstill said.

As the trip progressed, choristers bonded with each other. They grew in their musical abilities and were able to see how Baptists in another cultural context ministered. They now can take those strengths and experiences with them as they minister in their home churches, he said.



Sylvia Wehmeyer from First Baptist Church in Canyon Lake works on a craft project during the Singing Women of Texas tour of New England.

"They were able to grow deeper in their faith by experiencing a different culture even though it was in the United States," Studstill said. "They prepared for this mission trip to minister on the streets, in nursing homes, in churches. They strengthened their skills, and they can now take those skills back to their congregations and minister there."

For more information about mission opportunities in New England, call Texas Baptists' Director of Texas Partnerships at (888) 244-9400.

For more information on the Singing Women of Texas, contact Witcher at karen. witcher@texasbaptists.org or look for information on regional groups online at www.texasbaptists.org/music.