

Volunteers seek to ‘Ignite Hope’ in Amarillo during morning of missions

October 27, 2011

AMARILLO—Sparks of hope spread throughout Amarillo as Texas Baptists participated in 12 mission endeavors across the city, taking the message of Christ to places like a community center, children's field day, high school lunch and college campus during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.



A Texas Baptist volunteer reads to children at City Church in Amarillo. (PHOTO/Robert Rogers)

Members of Iglesia Bautista Fuente Viva in southeast Amarillo joined with 12 volunteers from Houston, Kerrville, Lubbock and Fort Worth to provide a free lunch for students at Caprock High School, just two blocks from the church.

Freddy Pavez, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Fuente Viva, said the event provided opportunities to plant gospel seeds and to pray for students. Volunteers engaged students and strived to minister to them.

"This is our way to get involved with missions and evangelism," Pavez said. "I want them to know that we are here, and we want to face them with the truth."

Before the lunch took place, the volunteers went door-to-door in a neighborhood near the church to pass out Texas Hope gospel compact discs.

"It's exciting to put the gospel in their hands," Shelby Smith said.



Uriel Avalos, a student at Amarillo College, receives a hamburger from Texas Baptist volunteers during a cookout sponsored by the school's Baptist Student Ministry. Volunteers served about 450 students.

(PHOTO/Eric Guel)

When asked why he participated in the outreach effort, Smith said missions and evangelism is at the core of who a Christian is, and therefore, a passion of his.

"How can people claim to be Christian and not have a burden for the lost and a passion for sharing the gospel?" Smith stated.

[Amarillo College Baptist Student Ministry](#) partnered with 10 BGCT annual meeting volunteers, as well as members from [Trinity Baptist Church](#) and

[Paramount Baptist Church](#), to spread hope to college students on the campus.

They held a free burger cookout near the center of campus. More than 450 students came to the outreach event, many leaving their contact information so the BSM can follow-up with each one and attempt to reach out to them in additional ways.



Volunteer Marla Herrera helps clean the grounds at Buckner Family Place in Amarillo. (PHOTO/Eric Guel)

Other volunteers dug in and got dirty at the Bruce Ford Community Center, an after-school program of Buckner International that serves vulnerable children at the Whittier and Robert E. Lee elementary schools.

Terry Thomas, program director for the center, put the volunteers to work outside on the playground, loosening compacted mulch with shovels and pitchforks to make it into a softer cushion for the children when they fall.

"Really, it's hard to describe what it means to have them out here working today," Thomas said.

"They're making this a safer environment for our kids. It's very meaningful to us that they took time out of their day—they didn't have to come out here. I think it really puts in action the word 'servant ministry.'"

It was dirty, sweaty work, but the group was up to the challenge and excited about serving.



David Dinkins (cowboy hat and plaid shirt) and Mike Bearden spent a morning during the BGCT annual meeting serving at the Bruce Ford Community Center in Amarillo. (PHOTO/Lauren Sturdy)

"I've been coming to the convention a long time, and so I was real excited not only to see that we were convening in the building, but also taking what the Lord's put in us and being able to impact Amarillo," said Jeff Humphrey, minister of education at [First Baptist Church in Allen](#). "And it's just fun to be with Texas Baptists doing stuff like this."

A few Texas Baptists also spent their morning at the [Buckner Family Place](#) apartments helping with the upkeep of the property.

Dianne Samaniego, program supervisor for Family Place, said she is thankful to have volunteers' help, since she doesn't have a full-time maintenance crew.

After a quick introduction to Family Place and what the ministry does, Samaniego sent the Texas Baptist volunteers to the front yard and playground area to gather leaves.

They also cleared out vines that had been growing over many of the windows and gave the windows a good washing.

"They have been a huge help cleaning up our front common area where the kids play," she said.

"It's just those time-consuming things that we haven't had a chance to get to that just make the property look a lot better."

"Volunteers are increasingly becoming such good partners to us, and we're so thankful for their help," Samaniego said.

Other projects included a children's field day complete with games and clowns at the preschool at City Church.

Another group went to the school to read books to the kids and pass out books donated by Texas Baptists and bookcases provided through [Literacy Connexus](#).

Texas Baptists and Buckner International donated more than 600 shoes to "A Step Up" shoe ministry at [Mission Amarillo](#), and 10 volunteers went to the center to sort the shoes, which will be given to Amarillo-area school children in need.

Not only was the gospel proclaimed at each of the mission projects, but a helping hand and the care of Christ also were extended by about 200 Texas Baptists.

"Through this, I hope that Amarillo sees what we do as Baptists and that we care about this community," Smith said.