

HPU students assist Zambian orphanage

May 14, 2019

BROWNWOOD—A group of chemistry, biology and biomedical science students at Howard Payne helped an orphanage in Zambia improve its science curriculum.

Craig Younce, assistant professor of biology at Howard Payne, had traveled to Zambia on a mission trip with Coggin Avenue Baptist Church in Brownwood last fall. On that trip, the team spent one night at New Day Orphanage.

Responding to God's call

Younce felt God's call to return to assist the orphanage.

"I could hear God telling me that we needed to do something with them," he said.

Younce and Pam Bryant, dean of HPU's School of Science and Mathematics, coordinated with New Day Orphanage to bring students from HPU to Zambia.

"My expectation for the students was that they would see that the ways they are talented and the abilities God has given them can be used to bring glory and honor to Him," Younce said. "In our culture, talent is often used for personal gain, but this opportunity showed them that you can use your talents to help others."

Younce and Sydney Spencer, administrative assistant in the School of Science and Mathematics, led the team on the recent trip. Student

participants were Paulo Flores, junior chemistry major from Chandler; Hannah Justice, senior biomedical sciences major from Brownwood; Angelica Ramirez, senior biology major from Austin; and Brittany Rideau, junior biology major from Beaumont.

“This isn’t just a trip for one type of student. It is a trip for students of nearly every discipline,” said Spencer, a 2017 graduate of the HPU Guy D. Newman Honors Academy program. “God is so clearly at work in the lives of the children and workers at the orphanage, and it is wonderful to see a population with so little rely on their faith to carry them through. I think we can all take something away from their reverence and trust for our Creator.”

Students served the orphanage



Craig Younce, assistant professor of biology at Howard Payne University, and senior Angelica Ramirez speak to students at New Day Orphanage in Zambia. (HPU Photo)

New Day Orphanage accepts children of all ages, provides them with an education and raises them to adulthood. The HPU group served the orphanage by assisting in the refinement of its science curriculum and

helping with science demonstrations.

“We worked with the classes almost every morning and performed science, technology, engineering and math demonstrations,” Younce said. “In the afternoons, we sat with the teachers and explained to them what we did and answered any questions they had.”

Students from HPU also took part in National Youth Day, a Zambian holiday recognizing the significance of young people. The students from the orphanage had a day off from classroom instruction, which enabled the HPU group to interact with them through games and activities.

“I had the opportunity to be partners with David, a young boy who lives at New Day with his parents,” Flores said. “We bonded very well and became good friends.”

God’s timing

Younce was impressed by God’s timing.

“This year, the university is really emphasizing the life of the mind and the life of the Spirit,” he said. “It’s fascinating that, when all of this was coming to fruition, I wasn’t even aware that was going to be a focus.”

Younce hopes the trip helped show students how to bridge the gap between the life of the mind and the life of the Spirit by allowing them to incorporate both their education and God’s vision while serving. He plans to continue making the trip with students in years to come.

“We are currently working on plans to return to Zambia,” he said. “We’ve talked with the orphanage and they said, ‘Yes, come back.’”

Younce noted he was impressed with his students, who not only demonstrated that they were grasping lessons at HPU but showed

tremendous spiritual maturity.

“We are all created for a purpose and that is to carry out God’s mission,” Younce said. “If nothing else, one of the biggest things that Christ calls us to do is to serve. We all have different skills with which to do that. These students are getting an education, and now they can apply it in a way of service.”