

Love the PEOPLE!

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Love the people — that’s what has been happening at **Franklin Heights Baptist Church** through a newly launched ministry to local internationals. The ministry began just under one year ago as Program Director Carolyn Barr mobilized the congregation to serve the community through offering English as a Second Language (ESL). SBCV trainers, Jim and Susan Austin, responded to the church’s invitation to train the interested volunteers in ESL. With training completed and volunteers equipped to lead, a new ministry was born that would soon birth new life.

Just seven people came to the first ESL session offered by Franklin Heights. A year later, more than four times that amount come on a regular basis. Some members joined after seeing fliers or from contact-

ing local shops, but most came through word of mouth. The word about Franklin Heights quickly spread as the church became known as a group of people who truly cared about others. Through conversational English lessons, students naturally shared about life and needs. Understanding and knowing the students’ needs turned into a ministry opportunity. For example, the church began providing dinner during the ESL sessions to help students not go hungry. Teachers helped families run errands and special sessions were held to help navigate community resources such as hospitals and schools. In all of these things, the hands and feet of Christ were at work in families from around the world, who now live in Rocky Mount, Virginia.

Tilling hands and planted feet softened the soil for the Word of God to take root. With each English lesson, students also heard a Bible lesson and were challenged to memorize Scripture. Through learning to trust their teachers and the message they taught, five students have trusted in Christ and received baptism. Two new international families are now a regular part of the Franklin Heights fellowship. One year, two families and five baptisms — with an endless supply of opportunity as the nations continue to be found next door.

“Bury yourself in Christ and just love,” says Barr. “It’s all about Jesus.” And as He made plain — they will know we are His by our love. ■

RESOURCE:

Interested in hosting your own ESL training, or want to attend one? To learn more, visit:

sbcv.org/esl



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