

Sharing the Gospel in Trail Town USA

"Living in Damascus, Virginia, is an incredible thing! God literally brings the world to us! We can do local, state, and foreign missions right here in our hometown!" exclaimed Linda Austin, the founder and director of Trail Days Ministries. Trail Days began at First Baptist Church in Damascus in 2001 and now includes churches from Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Damascus is known as Trail Town USA because of the seven nationally known trails that come through this little town of less than 900 people. It is a place of natural beauty, outdoor adventures, and a laid-back vibe that affords all who visit the opportunity to be still and allow God to speak.

Each year, the hikers usher in spring by making their annual appearance in Damascus, hiking in on the Appalachian Trail, the 2,190-mile footpath that enables them to walk from Georgia to Maine. Damascus is one of the few places where the trail weaves its way through a town, giving the folks in Damascus the opportunity to have conversations, bless the hikers with acts of kindness, and share the Gospel when the Holy Spirit opens the door.

Each May, the town hosts a festival called Appalachian Trail Days, and with it come thousands


of hikers from the past, the present, and those who hope to hike in the future. The hikers are from every state in the union and often more than 20 foreign countries.

As with most other ministries, changes had to be made this past year due to COVID-19. The events were all held outside under big tents, and the food was boxed inside and served in closed containers for safety's sake. But what didn't change was God working in the hearts of hikers and volunteers alike. The Holy Spirit stirred and brought five souls to salvation. Even after 10 active years of this ministry, this never gets old!

Would you consider bringing a mission team to share the Gospel in Trail Town USA this May? Whether it's helping with shower and laundry units; assisting with food and coffee stations; serving on the medical team; providing haircuts; operating charging stations; or running games, there is an opportunity for your church to come and share the love of Jesus at Appalachian Trail Days. ■

RESOURCE:

To help this ministry continue to touch lives in Southwest Virginia, visit:

 damascusfbc.com

