

Bettering the Region

Serve Roanoke Teams

by Dan Nicholas



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“Barbecue is doing the Lord’s work!” That was the appreciative comment of a Roanoke sanitation worker before he and three dozen of his coworkers sat down for a delicious lunch of pulled pork, baked beans, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, cookies, and brownies.

Preparing the home-cooked meal was a generous act of kindness—just one of the 17 community projects that were part of **Cave Spring Baptist Church’s** July 17-20 Serve Roanoke outreach. Candace Deweber, who has been attending the church since 2009, coordinated the lunch. She and other volunteers also delivered large baskets

of cookies and brownies to fire and rescue workers.

Joyce Tennant led a group of 20 students and others to area nursing homes and retirement communities each morning. At Woodland Hills, Pheasant Ridge, Our Lady of the Valley, and the Park Oak Grove, they sang favorite hymns



like “Amazing Grace”—classics that were unfamiliar to some of the young church members.

Timothy Nuthulapati, a 10-year-old who attends the church with his parents and brother, has been playing soccer for half of his life. He especially enjoyed Soccer Nights, which was a part of Serve Roanoke. Wednesday’s soccer camp was, in his words, “a good way to meet new people and have fun. It just made me happy.” Timothy made five new friends that night. More than 125 children and church members participated.

Mia Rivera, a 15-year-old from Iglesia Gracia Redentora (Redeeming Grace Church) in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, returned for a second year as a Serve Roanoke servant. She reinflated bicycle

tires and basketballs for area children and learned that one of the bikes belonged to a young girl just learning to ride, which made Mia so happy. The churches in Vega Baja and Roanoke share a missions partnership.

The Apostle Paul urged Christians to “serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not people” (Ephesians 6:7, NIV). In response, church members and friends (including a team from **North Roanoke Baptist Church**) gave countless hours to Serve Roanoke.

The outreach projects “made a genuine contribution to the betterment of Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, and its surrounding communities” said Allen James, Cave Spring’s pastor of community and missions.



“With over 65 middle and high school students (plus college interns and adult leaders) serving each day and staying overnight, we were able to serve in a variety of contexts,” explained Chip Baggett, pastor of children, students, and families.

“Serve Roanoke is an amazing churchwide effort. Church members from every generation gathered to serve together. It’s a beautiful expression of the body of Christ!” ■

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