

# Unexpected Journey



## Successful Outreach Through Children's Ministry Partnerships

Strengthening Church Growth Through SBCV Kids and Upward Sports

Children's ministry is an avenue for church outreach and growth through the many programs available to churches, some of which are fully managed in partnership with other organizations. The SBC of Virginia Children's Ministry works with Upward Sports to bring a full-package to our partnering churches. **Gospel Way Baptist Church** in Williamsburg has found this partnership successful.

Beth Orne never liked change. But, after 13 years of teaching first grade, she realized God was leading her in a different direction, and became the Director of Children's Ministries at Gospel Way Baptist Church.

Orne also never really liked sports. But when she started at Gospel Way, the church had just launched an Upward basketball league, and would experience firsthand how God can work through this program in unexpected ways.

Orne has since celebrated 20 years in ministry.

She is an all-star Upward league director and was selected as an Upward ambassador—an example for others to follow. She says, "Even though I played no sports and had no background in sports at all, that just shows what God can do. God can use you in a big way, even in an area where you feel inadequate ... I've learned a lot about basketball over the past 20 years."

While her interest in sports grew over time, she already had another helpful skill for a league director: she is organized! She explains, "It's like a huge puzzle just managing and making it all work. And so, I'm good at that. God used my skill set."

Orne knows parents value organization and communication. She appreciates how Upward's software makes league management easier. "Upward Sports can be such a light in the community ... the whole family will come to





cheer on these athletes—and what an opportunity it is to reach them with Christ’s love through our actions.”

Gospel Way averages about 320 attendees on Sunday mornings. With Upward, Orne says, “We get a whole season to reach more than 1,000 people every single week with the love of Christ.”

The league added a more competitive high school division a few years ago, but they still want everyone to have a great experience. She says, “I think on all of our teams we have some children with special needs and special abilities who still want to play and be a part. They’re very successful, and they get the same equal playing time as some of our advanced players. It’s about encouraging and developing these

young athletes at whatever level they’re at and showing Christ through all of what we do.” ●

You can find more information on the SBCV Kids partnership with Upward at [upward.org/sbcv](https://upward.org/sbcv).

