

# Compassion Ministries

*"And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." ~ Matthew 9:35-36 (ESV)*

Christians are a Good News people and a Kingdom people, called to proclaim the Gospel. We also help provide for the needs of those around us. Churches around Virginia are stepping outside the walls of their buildings and onto the front lines to meet needs with compassion. The SBC of Virginia Mobilization Team stands ready to serve, train, and connect churches to bring many to faith in Christ through acts of compassion.

## SOME THINGS REMAIN THE SAME

Two of the primary ways that SBC of Virginia churches have been sharing the Gospel through compassion ministries have been at the center of our mobilization strategy for years: English as a Second Language (ESL) and hunger ministries.

In 2017, 112 people were trained for ESL ministry, adding to the hundreds already involved in ministries across the Commonwealth. Over 50 churches were involved in this training, and the number of trained people continues to climb.

In 2017, 48,807 people were fed through the hunger ministries of 10 SBCV churches, leading to innumerable Gospel conversations and the salvations of 117 people. Praise the Lord!

These ministries, along with mission projects that served thousands this past year (ex., Christmas backpacks for children in Appalachia), will continue to be the backbone of the SBCV compassion ministries strategy. But the needs are great, and the opportunities are endless.

Welcome SARAH DEJARNETTE to the role of mobilization associate for compassion ministries. Sarah joins the SBC of Virginia with years of experience working with the International Mission Board and the local church and is excited to work with and expand the compassion ministries footprint in Virginia.



## SOME THINGS CHANGE

Sue Sawyer, a fixture around the SBCV, retired at the end of 2017. Her dedication to serving our churches and the Gospel built a legacy and a network of compassion ministries and projects that is a testimony to her hard work and to the grace of God.

With the advent of Send Relief of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), new initiatives and opportunities are becoming available for SBC churches every day. Send Relief exists to tackle big issues and to see lives changed—and the crises are everywhere. Human trafficking is soaring; childhood and adult illiteracy is rising; 480,000 children are in the US foster care system—and the church needs to be equipped to make a healthy, lasting, and eternal difference. That's why the SBC of Virginia Mobilization Team is reorganizing compassion ministries to better partner with Send Relief and to connect churches to each other and to healthy partners for more effective ministry. Whether your church is led to stand for life with your local pregnancy resource center; provide medical and dental care in your community; serve refugees



and internationals through ESL and job training; feed the hungry; tutor school children; or install smoke detectors, the opportunities are endless, and the SBCV is ready to help.

Here are just a few of the opportunities that you and your church can explore with the help of the SBCV Mobilization Team:

1

**SEND RELIEF**

**Quick-Start Guides and Training –**

Working in concert with Send Relief, our Mobilization Team is making available resources and training to help churches start compassion ministries to fight poverty, reach internationals and refugees, and serve their communities. Contact Brad Russell for your quick-start guide or find more information at [sbcv.org](http://sbcv.org).

2

**ARISE 2 READ**

The national literacy program, Arise 2 Read, is geared toward helping churches adopt local schools and work with elementary-age children. This is an opportunity for SBCV churches. Petersburg City Public Schools have already adopted the program and will be working with SBCV churches for training and implementation. A statewide webinar and training is scheduled for July 31. Contact Brad Russell for more information on how your church can fight childhood illiteracy and break poverty cycles in Virginia.

3

**BLESS PARTNERSHIPS**

Our SBCV Mobilization Team has worked in Petersburg to help connect churches to each other and to the community to serve. Bless Petersburg was a one-day event that involved two dozen churches and over 400 volunteers. Bless Portsmouth will be held on the Saturday before Annual Homecoming (November 10) and will seek to build pathways to serve the city of Portsmouth. Training is available for churches who want to

partner to reach their community through compassion ministries.

**WE ARE ALL ABOUT THE GOSPEL**

Compassion ministries are another tool to be used to lead to Gospel conversations. Our desire is not just to end physical suffering but to end eternal suffering.

**WE ARE ALL ABOUT PARTNERSHIP**

If you are not sure how to get started, the SBCV Mobilization Team wants to equip you and partner you with other local churches to help you learn, plan, and implement compassion ministries in your community. The vision is to see partnerships of SBCV churches all around Virginia and DC ministering together and setting up ministry connection centers through local churches to meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors. Be on the lookout for more exciting announcements and training opportunities in compassion ministries and watch for connection centers for compassion ministries coming soon!

*Bless the City*

Over 400 volunteers hit the streets of Petersburg in November to serve the people of the city and share the Good News of Jesus. Volunteers worked with local schools, the fire department, pregnancy resource centers, and other ministries around

the city. But the blessing didn't stop there—it's catching on all over the Commonwealth.

**Kingsland Baptist Church** (North Chesterfield) was involved with Bless Petersburg at Robert E. Lee Elementary School, partnering with other churches to beautify the school and run a soccer camp.

Justin Beville, pastor of youth and local outreach, says,

*Being a part of Bless Petersburg began to stir our leadership team toward blessing our own community in additional ways to what we are already do throughout the year (ex., community meals, VBS, etc.). Out of Bless Petersburg, we launched an initiative called Bless Bellwood, a three-week outreach emphasis to bless Bellwood, our local community. We sent out four teams each week, directly after church on Sunday, to spend their afternoon blessing Bellwood. We had prayer teams, lawn care teams, and canvassing teams, and we hosted a basketball camp for children in the community. Throughout this outreach emphasis, we spent time sharing the 3 Circles Gospel presentation (with children through adults), and we advertised our upcoming Easter services and our upcoming revival.*

Other churches are also getting in on the blessing. **Wayne Hills Baptist Church** (Waynesboro) has adopted the local middle school, Kate Collins. Their Bless Kate Collins initiative saw volunteers from the church working to beautify and bless the school through landscaping, cleanup, and serving the needs of the school administration. This spring, **Old Powhatan Baptist Church** (Powhatan) launched its Bless 23139 initiative, seeking to serve the community by meeting practical, everyday needs and tackling the big issues of Powhatan with Gospel compassion.

So how can your church jump in on the blessing? Bless Portsmouth is coming up on November 10 and will see churches from around the Commonwealth joining together to meet needs and share the Gospel in Portsmouth before SBCV's Annual Homecoming. Bring out your church members and learn how to take those same initiatives back to your community to bless your city with compassion and Good News.

