



spring observer - news

Local ministry reaches out to hundreds of neglected teens

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By providing healthy, loving relationships, and addressing spiritual, emotional and material needs, Back 2 Basics Ministry strives to bring the love of God to hundreds of abused, neglected and forgotten local teenagers.

Back 2 Basics gained nonprofit status nearly four years ago when former insurance agent Barbara Humiston reached out to about 15 teens at a local church. The ministry now serves more than 500 kids who receive assistance that live on the streets, shelters, foster homes and other facilities.

"Once these kids get into the system, they get moved around a lot, probably five or six different places a year," Humiston said. "So they kept calling me, telling me where they were and when I visited them, I met other kids and before I knew it, the family was growing. Our activities included Bible studies, birthday celebrations, all holiday celebrations, cooking classes, arts, carnival and just things normal families do."



Through Back 2 Basics Ministry, abused and neglected kids take part in Bible studies, church services, Christian concerts and other life enriching events.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Most of the kids that lived a life of abuse naturally have their guard up, Humiston explained.

"They are not warm and fuzzy due to the lives they have lived," she said. "I just wish that people could remember that once upon a time these kids were warm and fuzzy and cute little babies, that were abused neglected and ultimately rejected, over and over again."

Humiston said one of the kids she has known for about six years hated her guts at first.

"He would cuss me out and just be plumb rude for about the first year," she said. "Today, he is like family and even random people at Kohl's have noticed how he and Lance, another volunteer and board member, and myself all interact. We have been told it is refreshing."

Some of the methods and activities to accomplish the group's mission include opportunities to take part in Bible studies, church services, Christian concerts and events.

Between the Christian-related outings and participating in activities like roller skating, bowling, dining out and going to the beauty salon, Humiston said she is with the kids just about every day.

Back 2 Basics also takes six different shelters to the Panther Creek Inspiration Horse Ranch once a week. "It is amazing how calming horses can be for teens with understandable anger," Humiston said. "It is amazing to watch the teens interact with the horses and see which horse each one bonds with."

Christmas time is very busy, Humiston said.

"We do family style Christmas with over 500 teens," she explained. "This includes home cooked meals by Lisa Anne, an amazing volunteer, and muffins and desserts from Debbie. Each teen receives a Christmas present

on or just prior to Christmas day. We also do our best to welcome new teens to a shelter with a teddy bear, special pillowcase or other item to help give comfort in their new home/temporary shelter.”

The ministry also collects duffel bags and suit cases for the teens, so they don't have to go from place to place with everything they own in a trash bag.

Throughout the year, donations are collected for new and nearly new clothes to provide the teens with contemporary, stylish and quality clothes to help boost their self-image, primarily during the school year, Humiston said. And they receive a monthly shopping experience, compliments of Milagro Resale Shop.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

All of the teens receive a birthday present on or near his or her birthday. The group also organizes and hosts birthday parties at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Spring with about 200 kids in attendance every six to eight weeks. The ministry has about 40 volunteers that help make each one a huge success, Humiston said.

Nick Vujicic, a preacher who was born without limbs and who is the director of Life Without Limbs, a world wide ministry, spoke at the most recent Back 2 Basics birthday party.

“Some of these kids never had birthday parties,” Humiston said. “Things many take for granted are huge to these kids like homemade cupcakes, snow cones, piñatas, basketball tournaments makeover tables. Stability and consistency are hard for them to comprehend, but they know every time there is a Back 2 Basics Birthday party at the Vineyard they are going to see us there. And that gives them some kind of stability and hope.”

Camara, 18, met Humiston at a birthday party almost two years ago. Since she was 2 years old, she has lived in 35 foster homes, four shelters and group homes.

“Barbara knows a lot of kids but she takes the time to get to know you individually,” Camara said. “When I first met her, I would call her whenever I needed to talk or pray. She was like the closest thing to family that I had.”

Camara recently graduated from high school and is looking for a job.

“Barbara stressed the importance of graduation. I didn't think I would be able to,” Camara said. “Most kids like me don't graduate. But I'm glad I did because I know that I can get a better job by having an education.”

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Most of these young teens have lived a life of physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse, Humiston said. Oftentimes, they have been abandoned and neglected for as long as they can remember, and now through no fault of their own, are sent to live in a group home with a group of other teens who have experienced similar cruelty.

Although their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter are provided through the system, any semblance of a family is completely gone, Humiston said.

Humiston told the story of a boy she met years ago, who is now in jail, but she still visits him for prayer and Bible study.

“I tell him, ‘I see you as that 14-year-old kid that I know and love, but those people see you as a man and a criminal. You're an 18-year-old man and grown’” she said. “Last week he told me that I was the only person that has stuck with him through the years and that since he has been in jail (seven months) only his girlfriend and myself have visited.”

With Back 2 Basics kids receive the unconditional love that their families either neglected to provide or simply couldn't, Humiston said.

“They know that there is somebody there who does care,” she added. “We are there for the kids no matter what they are going through. We have one kid who has been going to court for the last six months and we have been going to all the court dates with him. When they are in the hospital, we visit them there. We are there for them even after they are grown up and off of the streets, shelters, and other systems.”

For more information on Back 2 Basics Ministry or to learn how to donate to the group, visit www.b2bministry.com.

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