

DBU Missions Team Spends Fall Break Serving in Guatemala



Fall Break at DBU can be a time for relaxation, a time to catch up with school work or with friends, and for some students, a time to put into practice the servant leadership they have been learning all semester long. This past Fall Break, twenty-five students and staff from Dallas Baptist University traveled to Guatemala to serve with Buckner Orphan Care International. DBU's partnership with Buckner has included several mission trips, with the longest being a month-long trip to Russia last summer.

"We love working with college students because they have the time and energy to travel, and also because of the special love they have for children," explained Eraina Larson, mission coordinator for Buckner Orphan Care International. "Specifically, we partnered with DBU because of the quality of the students and their passion to help in countries like Guatemala where the situations are so desperate."

The team, led by DBU executive vice president Dr. J. Blair Blackburn and Dr. Ozzie Ingram, assistant vice president for administrative affairs, ministered to over 100 children and teenagers at an orphanage in Xela, Guatemala.

"It was amazing to be able to go into the orphanage and minister to all of the children," shared DBU senior Jason Hatch. "Two young Guatemalan teenage boys approached me one night and told me that they were Christians, but they had no idea what they needed to do now. God has placed a sincere love in my heart for Spanish-speaking people, and after seeing what I saw on this trip, I am praying about going back to Guatemala on a long-term basis to help disciple the orphans. They desire to live godly lives and are hungry for someone to teach them."

The team provided daily Bible school activities for the children as well as fellowship and evangelistic exercises for teenagers. These activities included Bible stories, Scripture memorization, crafts and recreational sports. The impact of the trip in the lives of the students was astounding as many of them witnessed the Holy Spirit at work in conditions that many would deem "unbearable." They observed miracles in the lives of the orphans over the course of the week, as twenty children and teens professed faith in Jesus Christ.

Working with the staff that managed the orphanage in this third-world country helped Katy Matthews, a senior English major, redefine the meaning of commitment and hard work. "What impacted me the most during the trip was the encouragement we received from the staff that worked at the orphanage in Xela," said Matthews. "They are understaffed and often struggle to take care of more than a hundred children, several with special needs. They ministered to me because of their dedication and genuine love for the children."

Candice Wright, a master's student at DBU, expressed gratitude for the chance to be a part of the Guatemala trip. "It was such a blessing to go and work with the children in Xela," she said. "You can tell they long for love, and we had the opportunity not only to love on all of them, but to share with them how much their Heavenly Father loves them. The faces of each of these orphan children will forever be engraved on my heart. It's something you just can't forget."

