



PHOTOS

1. Children on Mission.
2. Chicora Crest baskets.
3. Haiti medical mission.

The vision of two neighbors:

Greenville Tech and FBCG join forces to hold basketball tournament.



(Above) Eric Johnson, a resident at GTFSH (Greenville Tech Foundation Student Housing), volunteered his time to attend every basketball game & keep track of the statistics.



(Right photo) GTFSH director Shannel Smith.

The partnership between Greenville Tech Foundation Student Housing (GTFSH) and First Baptist Church began because two people shared the same vision – and they were able to get connected.

Jarrell Murray, a community assistant with GTFSH, wanted to organize that group's first basketball tournament. "We had been calling around to multiple venues — gyms, YMCA, etc. — to see who could provide us with playing space," said Shannel Smith, resident director at GTFSH. "We had not had any luck, when one day Herlane Edwards walked into my office." (See Herlane's story on the right).

"One thing led to another," Shannel said, "and I shared with her Jarrell's need for a basketball court/gym facility. The next thing I know it was the start of a wonderful relationship."

"My staff and I sat down with some additional church members (Frank, Matt, Mittie) so that Jarrell could personally explain his vision and to see if this initiative would be something that First Baptist would be interested in participating in. Thankfully you were, and we planned the nine-week event of GTFSH First Annual Basketball Tournament."

In March 2008, as our Neighborhood Partnership Committee developed our Long-range Strategic Plan, we decided that one of our three-to-five year planning ministry items would be "to explore potential ministry opportunities with students of Greenville Technical College who now live in a nearby dormitory."

I was headed home from work one Thursday evening in late fall 2008, when I was "prompted" to visit the Greenville Technical College Housing Campus. I met with Greenville Tech's Housing resident director Shannel Smith. Immediately, God began to work through us; and we formed a unique bond. We began to discuss our mutual desire to enhance relations.

In hopes of building meaningful and lasting associations, the FBC Neighborhood Partnership Committee partnered with FBC's Activities Ministry (Matt Rollins) and the Youth/College Ministry (Frank Smith):

1. In extending a standing invitation to worship services and college lunches. Several GTFSH students have accepted our invitation, and one of the student resident advisors, Beth Powers, has joined FBC.

2. In assisting Jarrell Murray (a student RA) to realize his dream of establishing a basketball league. We were able to partner with GTFSH and host its inaugural Greenville Technical College Housing Intramural Basketball Tournament in the FBC Gym (four basketball teams on Mondays and Tuesdays, January 2009 – March 2009). Ron, one of the Greenville Tech security officers has used his days off work to serve as the game official, and Shannel has been available for all games.

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Among the recipients of funds allocated by the Missions Committee in Fall 2008 and funded primarily through the Foundation of First Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina are:

\$2500 to Operation Inasmuch for supplies;

\$1500 to Fraternity of Cuban Baptist Churches for theological training;

\$2250 to GAIHN for children and youth scholarships for FBC retreats;

\$4200 to GAIHN for Carter Street transitional housing partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church;

\$4000 to Gandhi School Choir for summer 2009 tour in Hungary;

\$500 to FBC youth for medical supplies for Bahamas mission trip;

\$2000 to FBC youth for construction supplies for Virginia mission trip;

\$500 to Allison Taylor for January 2009 (college Interim) Hungary mission experience;

\$1000 to Central Community Ministries for ministry expenses;

\$1000 to Diligent Hands, Gracious Hearts for ministry expenses;

\$1000 to United Ministries for ministry expenses;

\$4000 to Church of the Way in Guanajay, Cuba for Patio Project

(Below) Don Shelley is shown with a happy patient following her cataract surgery in Cap Haitien, Haiti, in March. He worked with Haitian ophthalmologists under a program sponsored by Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE), International. He was joined by T. Thomas, founder of HIS NETS, and 1000 mosquito nets were distributed to villagers in this poverty-stricken area.



Elaine Sarratt reflects on Guanajay's Patio Projects.

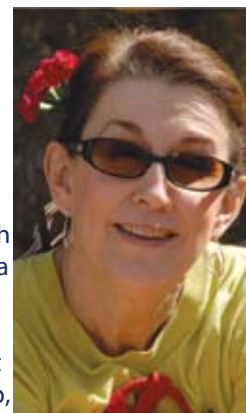
Listening and learning can be as much of an act of worship and doing missions as pouring concrete, teaching an English class, hosting the homeless, or holding a medical clinic. In the case of our partnership with the Church of the Way in Guanajay, Cuba, and its Patio Projects, it is most definitely an act of love, worship, and doing missions.

The Cuban people we met in Guanajay, San Antonio de los Baños, Pinar del Rio, and Havana were so happy that we had "come from far away" to learn about them, their way of life, their success in their struggles for survival, their devotion to the God, and perhaps, incidentally, their patio projects. One of the main tenets of these projects is that people use what resources and spaces they have, to raise fruit, vegetables, animals, and flowers, to share with each other and increasingly, with their communities at large.

We visited many of these gardens and saw how they are using the support that we send them to do more than fill stomachs. We were able to see both the resilience of the people and their land following the devastation of the recent hurricanes. We were all impressed with the seed garden that Candida had already developed where the hurricanes had blown away so many of her banana trees, which grow very slowly and had formerly been her main backyard crop.

We visited tiny patio gardens and large yard gardens and even saw a rooftop barn with pigs and chickens. We saw evidence of the sense of self-worth and inter-dependency that have developed as the people have worked together to provide for each other. The presence of God in each person we met would have been hard to miss. It has not been quenched in this land where plenty is scarce. The Cuban people know a wealth in their poverty that most of us will never realize. At the home of Julyan and Luisa in Havana, he left us with these words, which he spoke to us in his broken English, "without God, nothing; with God, everything."

Elaine was a member of this team that went to Cuba from Dec. 28, 2008, to Jan. 6, 2009. They are joined here by members of the Guanajay church. She originally offered her reflections during the mission trip report on Sunday, February 1. A longer version of her comments can be found on the Missions Partners page of the church Web site.



Missions Support from Adult Sunday School Classes and Women on Mission

(August 2008–April 2009)

Volunteer Contributions

GAIHN hosts
Project Host soup kitchen

First Friday hosts
Second Tuesday hosts

Operation Inasmuch

Walk for the Homeless

Cuba partnership

Hungary partnership

Monday Morning Prayer Guild

Christmas caroling at Rolling Green Village

In-Kind Contributions

GAIHN—meals; cleaning and paper products; Internet connection

Operation Christmas Child—shoebboxes

Triune Mercy Center—socks, jeans, underwear; toiletries

Lapsits for Early Literacy—children's books

Marie Younts Home for Girls—birthday cards, graduation gifts, pizza party

United Ministries—food and towels

Loaves and Fishes—food

Coordination of Operation Christmas Child

Coordination of Salvation Army Angel Tree

Miracle Hill Ministries—towels

Gandhi School—socks; winter scarves

Groceries for family in need

Helping Hands of Clemson—Christmas gifts for children's home

Mentoring of local young woman

Financial Contributions

Kendrick Hunger Fund/United Ministries
 Triune Mercy Center
 College scholarship for student from Zimbabwe
 Carson Mission Fund for youth missions
 Divinity school scholarship for FBC member
 Missionary Support Fund
 Volunteers of America
 Project Host Soup Kitchen
 Salvation Army Greenville Rescue Mission
 Multiple Sclerosis Association
 Diligent Hands/Gracious Hearts
 Local Relief Fund
 GAIHN
 Hungary mission partnership/Gandhi School
 Greenville Free Medical Clinic
 Rev. Yaw Ofori (Ghana)
 Miracle Hill Ministries
 Young Artists Program (Romania)
 Boys Home of the South
 Fellowship of Christian Athletes
 FBC Sanctuary flowers
 Winyah Hospice
 Meals on Wheels
 Harvest Hope Food Bank
 CBF of SC Allendale, SC
 Partners in Caring-HIV/AIDS ministry via Duke Hospital
 Ruth School student sponsorships (Romania)
 College scholarship for Greenville Tech student



Children on Mission enjoy learning about medical missions in Southeast Asia. Other recent children's mission units include learning about FBC's partnership in Cuba and rural poverty in Kentucky.

Basket cases.

As residents move into the new Homes of Hope "Chicora Crest" houses in the Haynie-Sirrine Neighborhood, the Neighborhood Partnership Committee of First Baptist Church wants to welcome them.



Ruth Reid and Dottie Bryan are co-chairs of a sub-committee that is preparing welcome baskets for each new resident. Their goal is to extend Christ's love through the gifts to form new connections between H-S residents and FBC members.

The "baskets" are oval plastic laundry baskets decorated with an attractive ribbon and bow on each. Included in the baskets are a Swiffer® starter set, household cleaning items, gift cards from



Zaxby's and Schlotzsky's, pens, pencils, work gloves, safety masks, American Red Cross home disaster backpacks with some first aid items, YWCA plastic shopping bags and water bottles. Also included is a ZipLoc® bag of information from churches, service

organizations, and the YWCA; and another ZipLoc® bag of "budget stretchers" such as coupons for food and baby supplies. (Members of FBCG clipped the coupons to include in the package.) Other contributors to the baskets included Duke Energy, Home Depot, Homes of Hope, New Horizons, and Grand South Bank.

The first residents started moving into the new homes March 23-30. Church members will deliver the baskets about two weeks after the residents move in. Currently 11 families are moving into the homes, and all except three are new to Haynie-Sirrine. Eventually there will be a total of 29 new homes built through Homes of Hope. There are 15 children and youth under the age of 20 in the first group of families. Special gifts are included in the welcome baskets for each young person.

"We have tentative plans to have a partner from FBC for each new family," Ruth said. "Our hope is that giving the baskets is not an end but a beginning of a more meaningful partnership."

- April 24-25 CBF of SC General Assembly in Greenwood: Missional 101
- April 25 Operation Inasmuch
- May 2 Youth Yard Sale to support summer missions
- May 6 Mission Friends and Children on Mission Open House
- May 10-17 GAIHN Host Week
- June 5-12 High School Seniors Mission Trip
- June 8-11 Children's Missions Week for 1st-2nd graders
- June, July, August (Tuesday Mornings) Youth Mission Possible
- June 22-25 Children's Missions Week for 3rd-5th graders
- July 11-15 High School Mission Trip in Farmville, VA
- September 6-13 GAIHN Host Week
- September 12 CBF of SC Fall Workday
- October 18 Walk for the Homeless
- November 16-23 Operation Christmas Child
- November 25-26 Loaves and Fishes Feed The Thousands (tentative)

Look who's in the building.

FBCG is host to numerous groups that use our facilities for housing while they're in town on various mission projects.

Two groups from Michigan universities stayed with us as part of an alternative spring break sponsored by their respective schools. The University of Michigan was with us Feb. 21-28 and Saginaw Valley State University Mar 7-14. Both groups worked at Crossroads Group Home (www.crossroadsgrouphome.com.) There were 12-15 in each group, and they piled into the Youth Lounge to live for the week. They worked each day at Crossroads and then had fun around Greenville at night.

A youth group from Grace Church in Greenville (www.gracechurchsc.org) will be with us April 5-9 as part of an in-town spring break mission trip. They will sleep and have a base of operations at FBCG, and during the day they will tackle projects such as clean-up, construction, food distribution and outreach in conjunction with local organizations such as The Frazee Center, Monaview Elementary School and Triune Mercy Center. This is the second year they've stayed with us.

We also have churches using our facilities June 15-20, July 12-18 and July 19-25 as they work through Central Community Ministries. We are one of the churches that director Ellis Beddingfield calls on routinely to house out-of-town church mission groups. Fellowship of Praise in Santee came Jan. 15-19 as part of that program. That was a weekend that we had freezing temperatures, but that didn't stop them from doing the work they came to do.

"I cannot express the blessing First Baptist Greenville has been to our ministry. We have been partners together ever since we started this ministry in 2001, and your folks have always supported us in prayer, in volunteering, and financially. Without these elements we would not be where we are today. We also feel your very generous willingness to allow our groups to come into your facility and spend a week with you, and the love you show to them has been an underlying advantage that takes our partnership to another level. God bless you and your congregation for the incredible support you show CCM each and every year. We pray that our association will last forever."

• Ellis Beddingfield

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Several FBC members have joined us in this effort: FBC youth Jordan Coates has diligently assisted the team with every game. Jim Cauble, Billy Carpenter and Hugh Hughes have also served as volunteers; and Mittie Taylor and I have been supportive as committee member staff liaisons. On average, per game we have housed approximately 75 student spectators. This has been a gratifying experience for everyone involved in the tournament. In commemoration, a basketball banquet, sponsored by GTFSSH, was held in the FBC Fellowship Hall on Thursday, March 26.

We are definitely appreciative for being able to share the love of Jesus and see his marvelous works performed in and through individuals and opportunities. And just think, by being obedient to the "prompting of God," lines of communication have been opened toward developing lasting and rewarding relationships with staff and students of Greenville Technical College.

• Herlane Edwards

If you are interested in helping, please contact Herlane Edwards at 233-2527 ext. 109 or e-mail herlane.edwards@firstbaptistgreenville.com

Join us April 25



CBF of SC Work Day on Sept. 12

When you make a difference in the life of another person, it will change you for the better. When what you do makes an impact on a community, the blessings are multiplied. You probably won't remember what you do on many Saturdays this year; but when you spend your day off working together and caring together with Cooperative Baptist folks to serve people in South Carolina who live on the margins, you will remember that day, how it blessed those you served and how it blessed you. Being the presence of Christ and doing the ministry of Christ is like that.

• Beverly Greer

• CBF of SC missions coordinator

