
MISSION ON OUR DOORSTEP

Baptist Women's Mission Team to Toronto's Dixon Ministry

From July 22-27, a short-term mission team from Baptist Women experienced cross cultural ministry without flying overseas. Led by Diane McBeth and Laura Matthews, the team of seven women gathered in Toronto and drove to the Dixon Road corridor, home to hundreds of immigrant families from Asia and Africa.

They led morning sewing classes for moms and camps for their children. In the afternoons they made home visits with two families (one Algerian and the other Somali), tutoring children, practising English and becoming friends. The team coordinated closely with Dixon Ministry staff and volunteers Jeff McCarrell, Maria Jeung and Jemma Sanderson.

Several team members shared their experiences with live magazine.

What surprised you on this trip? Why?

Sandra Pong: No surprises because God, through Jeff and Diane, prepared us well for both spiritual and logistic parts. I was not sure how much I could help one particular child with English in such a short time but it was really good. I hope down the road, once the family moves to Mississauga, that I will be able to continue tutoring this child.

Doris Mok: Honestly, I went into that trip with no specific expectations, except fear of the unknown and a nervous feeling of inadequacy.

Tammy Tang: The pace of the trip was slower than I expected, more like a spiritual retreat in some ways. I was surprised by the friendliness and openness of the families we met, even though Jeff had told us this many times before.

Jenya Bakai: How wonderfully and thoughtfully God put our team together. We complimented each other with our gifts which made our ministry more effective.

Tell us about one highlight of the trip and why it was a highlight for you.

Sandra: The ESL tutoring. I didn't know how but every day I was so looking forward to it. Perhaps it is because I prefer small groups or one-on-one; I guess it is because I am quite an introvert. The tutoring sessions fit me well and I saw that I could actually help with the families' daily needs.

Doris: The change I saw on our last visit to a Muslim family of five children and mother.

The first visit was a bit uncomfortable but as the week went by, each family member started to open



▲ From L to R: Home made pizza; Fruit tray (Philippine lunch rolls on right are filled with plantain and Jack Fruit); Mahalabia (Algerian rice pudding with orange blossom water); Baghrir (Algerian pancake). Bottom row: Algerian mint tea and Swiss cake;

up a little more each day and by the end of the week they all seemed sad to see us leave; they even asked if we would come back the next week or next year. It was such a sweet and warm feeling that at that moment I was really encouraged to go back as soon as possible to help them. I also learned that the father, whom we had never met because he was working during the day, took the time to call one of our team members after the trip to make sure we knew of his gratitude for the visits to his family.

Jenya: Two things. First, the love and dedication of the mothers to their kids and families. They were there every morning to learn how to sew and they finished some projects. They achieved what they came for. Second: How much the children loved books. In our digital world it pleases me to see how appreciative of the printed papers

and books these kids were; how eager they were to LEARN through playing, reading, writing, talking, etc.

What can we celebrate? Where is God at work?

Doris: God worked in my own heart first, showing me how little I knew. I had the wrong perception that the families like those we met would never allow Christians into their homes, but we were able to visit a Muslim family from Somalia.

Heather Skeates: I can't imagine how hard it must be for families who have to flee their homes and overcome so many obstacles, to start all over in a land with different languages and customs.

Our main focus wasn't to win these families to Christ, but rather to share His love and make them feel welcome in Canada. Seeing Muslims walk into a Christian church to learn sewing was



wonderful to witness.

Tammy: God has been doing deep work through the Dixon Ministry. That is the reason why the women received us with gladness and were open to our message.

How has this trip changed you?

Sandra: To continue to completely trust; to be humble and thankful for what God has in store for me, even though I don't think I am good enough. This trip also made me think about taking early retirement so I could focus on doing something like this.

Tammy: The generosity and hospitality of the women are an example to me. They give out of

their scarcity while we don't always give, even in abundance. Since the trip, I am finding ways to be generous to the people around me.

Heather: The women on the team all felt as if this was a 'retreat' and through learning from each other and simply offering to God the little we had, I was so amazed how He worked everything out. He truly does go ahead of us and walks alongside us if we give Him control.

We all were a little apprehensive about the 'unknown' of our week, but this will definitely be a 'marker' in our faith walk as we continually learn to TRUST Him more and more.

You are a sent woman of God. How has this trip confirmed your thoughts about this aspect of your ministry?

Doris: I feel more confident in helping beginners in a sewing class. As an immigrant myself, I am able to relate to the challenges of new immigrants, sharing my own experience of difficult beginnings while offering some advice and encouragement.

Heather: I dreamed about doing this kind of thing after I retired.

When God aligned everything to happen for me—that my love of sewing and my social personality could be used and that the trip was affordable—I was beyond thrilled. I often don't feel overly qualified for many things, but He confirmed that even I could be used. ■

MISSION IDEAS YOU CAN USE

Perhaps you would like to host a local mission. Here is a bit of our process in case some of these ideas might help you too.

1 We approached an organization that was already working in this area. We visited Dixon Ministry and asked where they could use help; talked about what we could offer; and found the match.

2 With input from Dixon Ministry, we planned activities and estimated expenses. We recruited volunteers for the mission and they raised funds to cover the costs.

3 We paid attention to safety. Each team member read and signed our child protection policy. Dixon Ministry carefully explained their protection practices. Each team member signed a waiver releasing us from liability. We paid attention to allergies.

4 Training. We had four web conferences plus a number of group emails. We had training in working cross culturally and got cultural background on the groups we would be working with. We learned a little about ESL and tutoring.

5 Volunteers used their gifts. We discovered that one team member had excellent sewing skills and that Dixon Ministry had been given a number of sewing machines last year—morning sewing classes were born. Meanwhile, we discovered we had several teachers and child care workers on the team. They led a kids' program during the sewing classes.

Each team member took a turn leading morning devotions. Each member tutored in the afternoons.

If you would like help to organize your own mission, please let us know. We can help with cross cultural training. You'll find links to short-term mission checklists, child protection policy, waiver forms and more on our website at baptistwomen.com/causes.



◀ Team at breakfast in the hotel