

REACHING THE *Lost in Appalachia*

Fulfilling your calling to reach the lost can sometimes lead to unusual, uncomfortable, and unpredictable places. Sometimes, that's just across town. That's what Mary Beth Adams of **Harmon Memorial Baptist Church** in Grundy, Virginia, discovered in the spring of 2024.

Mary Beth, a member of the SBCV Women's Ministry Leadership Team, is no stranger to serving in difficult situations. Her job as a court advocate for abused women and children in Buchanan County—one of the hardest hit areas in Appalachia for drug abuse and related crimes—has led her to experience people in the very worst seasons of their lives. In those hard seasons, she uses the opportunity to show the love and compassion of Christ.

In fact, Mary Beth was in a season of prayer about using some of her vacation time to join fellow team member Casey Weymouth and her husband Fred with the Fix Ministry to travel to the Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington—known as “the worst of the

worst” for drug addiction on an epidemic level.

The Women's Ministry Leadership Team is comprised of women who lead in their churches, workplaces, schools, and communities. Using their God-given gifts, team members are encouraged to step out in faith, as the Holy Spirit leads, and to follow Him in humble obedience.

When she was stopped in traffic because of road construction, Mary Beth looked out of the car window at a run-down roadside motel known for drug use and other crimes. It was there that Mary Beth felt the Holy Spirit leading her to serve, impressing on her that this is “your Kensington,” and to help the people there.

Immediately, she presented the idea to her pastor, Dr. Shea Shrader, who agreed. After praying and working through logistics, they decided that this would become the summer mission project for Harmon Memorial. Door-to-door flyers were distributed, and personal invitations were given, often


while dodging liquor bottles and syringes.

From June to August, Wednesdays at 6:30 PM were spent feeding the residents dinner, worshipping together, offering the Gospel message, and prayer. Lots of prayer. So far, one woman has accepted Christ as her Savior and is preparing to follow Him in baptism. Attendance has been consistent with around 25-30 residents, and some have shown interest in attending church. About 15-20 church members have joined the effort each week; some seeing this harsh reality of life for the first time.

Many of these residents have “worn out their welcome” with their families, Mary Beth noted. “We have the opportunity to love on them, and to present the Gospel. That's what Jesus calls us to do.” ■

RESOURCE:

If you would like to know more about the SBCV Women's Ministry Leadership Team, contact Dolly Mink at:

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