

=====
Mission for students: Persevere while learning to spread the word

Fort Worth Star-Telegram (TX)-January 4, 2009

Readability: 10-12 grade level (Lexile: 1160L)

Author: TERRY LEE GOODRICH, Star-Telegram Staff Writer

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

*Fort Worth conference draws nearly 1,000 college students for training, ministry

ARLINGTON -- The little girl opened the door a crack and peeked out to see five college students outside her apartment.

They chorused greetings, but the little girl stayed quiet. Then Carla Stich, 22, a graduate student at Louisiana State University, had an idea. She spoke in Spanish, offering the girl free school supplies and issuing an invitation to come to the apartment playground for games and crafts.

It did the trick. The child smiled and began talking to Stich in Spanish.

Stich and her group were among dozens of Campus Crusade for Christ teams visiting communities in the Fort Worth area on Saturday. Their efforts were part of the Christian student organization's outreach during 10 regional winter conferences. This is the first time a regional conference has met in Fort Worth, with nearly 1,000 college students from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Louisiana traveling to the Renaissance Worthington Hotel for training and ministry.

At the Cooper Park apartments in Arlington, it was slow going for Stich and her team as they knocked on dozens of doors.

At many homes, no one answered; at a few, residents opened doors and promptly closed them. But the students kept on, doling out bags laden with pencils, crayons, rulers, stickers -- even toothbrushes.

For the youngsters who accepted the invitations to play games and hear Bible stories at their apartment playground and courtyards, college students told the story of Jesus in simple terms. They helped little ones string together beaded necklaces and bracelets with colors symbolic of the events in Jesus' life: red for his death, yellow for heaven, green for growing in the resurrected Jesus.

Campus Crusade representatives also invited residents of apartments and mobile home parks to attend regular worship services held in their complexes by Christian mission groups.

Early in the day, Mission Arlington staffer Matt Hart urged students to persevere no matter what kind of reception -- or results -- they got.

"Ministry is not a one-afternoon gig," he said. "Some of you have never done this before; some of you are well-oiled, well-trained evangelizing machines."

Even a small kindness like giving someone a packet of school supplies may make a memory that can open a spiritual door later, leaders told students.

"I don't know how good my Spanish grammar is, and I don't know a lot of the language," said Stich, who listens to Spanish lessons while driving. "I'm just trying to make memories."

Ministry is not a one-afternoon gig."

Matt Hart, Mission Arlington staffer, advising Campus Crusade for Christ students

TERRY LEE GOODRICH, 817-685-3812

(C) The Star-Telegram 2009

Edition: MainSection: MetroPage: B01

Record Number: MERLIN_16168847Copyright (c) 2009 Fort Worth Star-Telegram

http://docs.newsbank.com/s/InfoWeb/aggdocs/NewsBank/12589F8F95E76C00/0DCE74CA83DC3680?p_multi=FWTB&s_lang=en-US