

bless support encourage

by Wanda Kidd, CBFNC Collegiate Engagement Coordinator

CBF young adults across our state are using their gifts, education, and calling for non-traditional ministry. They understand what it means to be missional even if they do not know the word, and they have an innate understanding of asset mapping. They missionally want to reach out beyond the walls of the church but still stay tethered to the local church. They also embrace their assets and share them with their peers and community, rather than looking at a list of overwhelming problems. They are going to use those gifts somewhere. Fortunately, there are CBF congregations who see their calling and bless their efforts.

One of these stories is unfolding at First, Spring Hope. Their pastor, Kevin Moore, told me about an NC State University student who is making an impact on their church and the community. He has been struck by her desire to be involved both in her home church and her community while she attended college. He suggested that I talk to her about her calling and what motivates her to invest in the church and her small town.

This is what Tori Parker, a recent Agriculture Education graduate, shared with me.

Tell me about your idea to reach out to the community.

The church project I initiated is sort of a workshop series. Although we have had only one workshop so far, we plan to have them quarterly throughout the year. These workshops are nonreligious and are on topics of interest to the general public. The goal was to simply bring people into our building without mentioning God, without praying, or without pushing the Christian faith on them. I thought if people could just get into our building and mingle with our people, they would eventually be curious about our worship and ministry. I call it a “silent ministry.”

In light of her goal for the project, I asked her about the value of church. *It is very important to me to be a part of a church family, if for no other reason than to have a stable environment where I know people support me and my religious and nonreligious endeavors. Although my church family has always been small and for the most part elderly, I have always*

felt as though I had a family in Christ that others in other “mega” churches did not always experience.

How did you help the church share your vision of reaching out to the community in this way? *When I presented the idea to the church members, I stressed to them the importance of attending the workshops whether they were interested in the topic or not, and, while they were there, being the most friendly and hospitable people anyone had ever met, without talking about church stuff unless asked!*

How did the plan work? *The first workshop was about container gardening. I had a local master gardener come and present on how to create beautiful containers that are easy and fun for the*

spring. We had door prizes and refreshments. Although many in attendance were members, we had a few people from neighboring churches and from the community. One guest has even recently attended our morning worship service (several times!).

I like to think this project is a good reflection of my faith and the faith of our church as a whole. Although we aren't out shouting our faith and being bold about inviting people into our church, I feel as though this is the right move for us. We have tried so many different things in the past and still have a dwindling congregation. They say, “if you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you've always gotten.” So, we are doing something different!

The young adults you taught about Jesus, and nurtured to respond to His call, are waiting to be invited to the ministry table. They want to do more than sit in a pew. They want to be the hands and feet of Christ. Bless them, support them and engage their gifts and enthusiasm.

