Westhaven Baptist Church: Thanking Those Who Are Underappreciated

It began as a series of “God moments.”

Bruce and Traci Powers, co-pastors of Westhaven Baptist Church in Portsmouth, found themselves moved to be generous toward people in their community who work in service-oriented positions—at the drive-through windows, at the returns counters, and other places where they are under-appreciated. In fact, these people are likely to be on the receiving end of people’s frustrations and criticisms on a regular basis.

During lunch one day, Bruce and one of his church’s deacons felt motivated to give their cheerful waitress an extra tip, and they learned that she is supporting a young child and a husband who has cancer. Their conversation turned to how they could be generous—sometimes extravagantly—to reach out to people like her in their community with the love of Christ. Their idea, rather than asking others to give money, was to provide gift cards that people could share when they became aware of an opportunity.

At the same time, a new Kroger opened near their church and its manager made a point of introducing himself as a neighbor. Bruce asked if the manager would partner with them, he agreed to do so, and Kroger generously provided gift cards to the church. After printing some envelopes and doing a trial run with the deacons, the church is now working on a church-wide campaign to provide thank-you notes and gift cards to underappreciated public servants in their community.
“This is a form of servant evangelism,” Bruce explains. “We give gifts with no strings attached and are making people curious about why we do it. Best of all, we are helping Christians listen for God’s voice—feeling the nudge—and have their own ‘God moment’ when they know what God wants them to do and they choose to respond in faith. Who knows what God might do when we place small gifts in His hands?”

Ministries like this one are made possible by the generous Cooperative Missions gifts of Virginia Baptist churches affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Read more Kingdom Stories at BGAV.org/blog.

For more information about outreach ideas for your church, contact:
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Kroger store manager Terry Lucas (left) and Dr. Bruce Powers, pastor of Westhaven Baptist Church (right).

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