BCMs Connect in Ministry to Students of Valley-area Schools

The Augusta Baptist Association has five colleges and universities within a 45-minute drive of each other. Of those five, two have active Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) on their campuses. Over the years, the BCMs have looked for ways that they could expand to include more college students as well as work with the churches in the association to minister to young adults in the area.

The BGAV Collegiate Ministry began doing this years ago by expanding connections and staff to minister to these different campuses. Daphne Almarode, full-time campus minister at James Madison University (JMU), has partnered with volunteers and self-funded ministers at some of the other schools. Pam Traylor (volunteer campus minister at Mary Baldwin College), Brian Clabough (who raises his own support to serve at JMU), are two of those partners. Recently, Kim Davis came on board as a part-time staff member to work on rebuilding the BGAV ministry at Bridgewater College but also to connect with the young adults at Laurel Hill Baptist Church, where many students from Blue Ridge Community College attend. That is how Kim met Ashley.

Ashley, who has been at Laurel Hill her entire life, responded to Kim’s invitation and began attending Thursday young adult worship at the BCM center in Harrisonburg. She became active in that young adult ministry and attended the Collegiate/Young Adult Fall Gathering at Eagle Eyrie, meeting and connecting with JMU and Mary Baldwin students. Ashley has built
new relationships with these young adults, attended a regional spring retreat, and participated in a spring break mission trip to Bear Branch, Kentucky. These connections have provided opportunities for her that she may not have had as a member of a small church in a small town who chose to stay in the area to study and work.

Ashley says it’s because of the people she has met that she continues to participate in BCM events, which allow her to grow in her faith and learn more about God’s plan for her life.

Zechariah 4:10 says, “The Lord rejoices to see the work begin,” and this year, Kim and Daphne have witnessed the ministry at Blue Ridge Community College begin with Ashley, a special young woman seeking to find community with the young adults in the Shenandoah Valley.

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Ashley on a JMU BCM mission trip.