

DBU PATRIOT Cross Country/ Track Team Serve in Brazil

Fourteen individuals, including 12 members of the Dallas Baptist University Patriot Cross Country/Track Team and two university staff members, traveled to Brazil on May 30, 2011, for an eight-day mission trip—the seventh trip of DBU’s Global Sports Mission Initiative.

“We have a really special group of student-athletes at DBU, who gave up a portion of their summer break traveling to Brazil where they shared their faith in Christ,” stated Ryan Erwin, DBU Director of Athletics, who helped organize the trip.

Most of the groups’ time was spent in the heart of downtown Sao Paulo, serving at a local ministry called Mission Cena. This faith-based ministry focuses on restoring the local population, sharing the Word of God, and helping those caught up in drug use and prostitution.

DBU Cross Country/Track student-athletes
Tabbitha Ashford, Jordan Gatts, and Julie Durrwachter



“Brazil really opened my eyes to the true hurt and sin of the world. Mission Cena is working to do something about the situation. They truly love the people,” DBU Cross Country/Track student-athlete Laura Schaffner said.

The group was able to assist Mission Cena by engaging in conversations with many poverty-stricken individuals, assisted by Portuguese translators. The student-athletes used their personal relationships with Christ to plant seeds in these individuals’ lives in order to further God’s Kingdom. They also helped Mission Cena by regularly cleaning

the building, serving food, and providing warm clothes to people prior to the upcoming Brazilian winter.



The team of student-athletes also helped at the Mission Cena Farm, where Mission Cena provides housing for those who are trying to get their lives back on track. Most of the participants at the Farm come from broken homes and suffer from struggles such as drug abuse and immoral lifestyles.



Former DBU Head Cross Country/Track and Field Coach Jacob Phillips and his wife, Rachel
Cross Country student-athlete Kurt Lindsey
in the background

On Sunday evening, the group attended Good News Baptist Church in downtown Sao Paulo, which is pastored by Vagner Vaelatti, whose daughter attends DBU. The student-athletes met with Pastor Vagner and other church members, where Christy Gandy, trip-leader and DBU Director of Global Missions, shared the mission of DBU in Sao Paulo—providing the church with encouragement and support.

“The trip to Brazil was an eye-opening experience for our group. We were not sure of what to expect, other than we were going to do the Lord’s work. It is such a blessing and awesome opportunity to be a part of a University that is mission- and service-oriented.” said former DBU Head Cross Country/Track Coach Jacob Phillips.



DBU Director of Global Missions Christy Gandy

Written by Tyler Knox