



Mission Alabama

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By Andrea Knight, Freelance Writer, Nashville, TN.

Shannon Hughes: Minister to College Students

Shannon Hughes serves as State Missionary at the University of South Alabama and at Spring Hill College for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Throughout the last three years, Shannon has seen many college students accept Christ's salvation and grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

"I am a missionary to the campuses of the University of South Alabama and Spring Hill College. Much like a missionary to Brazil or Japan, I see my mission field in terms of people groups," Shannon says. Shannon and others at the BCMs think of creative ways to minister to students. And because students like to hang out with others who are similar to them, they have met the needs of a variety of groups on campus.

"We have ministered to the softball team, Greeks, internationals, the African American student association, freshman athletes and faculty, just to name a few," Shannon says. This year, the BCM even delivered popsicles to the newly-formed marching band on campus!

"As a campus minister, I also have the privilege of ministering to the Christian students who come to South and get involved in our ministry at the BCM," Shannon says. One of those students was Felicia.

Felicia was a student at the University of South Alabama. As soon as she arrived on campus, Felicia got involved in activities and Bible studies through Baptist Campus Ministries. Growing up in a Southern Baptist church in southern Mississippi, Felicia accepted Christ before she came to college and was ready to grow in her faith; however, Felicia was also very concerned about money. For two years, Shannon and other BCM leaders encouraged Felicia to serve as a summer missionary but the young woman was unwilling to take that step of faith. As a junior in college, Felicia worked a 20-to 30-hour work week plus maintained a full-load of classes. But God was about to do something amazing in Felicia's life.

In the midst of her busy schedule, Felicia decided to complete an application for summer missions. For the next two years, Shannon had the opportunity to watch Felicia mature as a Christian and serve as a summer missionary in Wales and then the following summer in the Philippines. After graduation, Felicia went on to study at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where she is preparing to serve as a full-time career missionary.

However, Shannon is not just concerned with students who automatically get involved with BCM. More than 1,000 students at South Alabama are international students. The students often arrive at school with simply a suitcase full of clothes and nothing else. The BCM sees this as a unique opportunity to reach internationals with the love of Christ.

"We locate twin size mattresses and deliver them to these students in their apartments," Shannon says. "By meeting a physical need, we have an opportunity to share the love of Christ. God has opened many doors through this ministry even allowing our Christian students to be invited by international students to fellowship in their apartments where they were able to talk about Christ."

James 2:15-17 says, "If a brother or a sister is without clothes and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm and eat well,' but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself." (HCSB) Through the ministries of BCM, Alabama Baptists are meeting the needs of college students.

“When I walk on each of the campuses where I serve, I do so with Alabama Baptists from Huntsville, Dothan, Grove Hill and Alabaster. Even though they may not physically be with me on campus, Alabama Baptists allow me to carry our common belief in the Great Commission and Great Commission Ministries to students,” Shannon says. Statistics show that 70 percent of students leave the church during the years immediately following high school. As a result, Shannon takes very seriously the responsibility of reaching out to students and then connecting them to a local church.

So how can you get involved? Shannon says Alabama Baptists can impact students by teaching a college Sunday School class, cooking a lunch for the BCM, prayerwalking a local campus, adopting an out of town student and by contacting a local BCM to partner with them in evangelistic events.

To impact the lives of students, Shannon says, “all it takes is a willingness to go and build a relationship with students. There is no greater joy than to see a student transformed through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Prayer Requests

- Pray for more than 14,000 students at the University of South Alabama and 1,200 students at Spring Hill College as the BCM seeks to reach the students with the unchanging Gospel message in a changing culture.
- Pray for the “people groups” on campus. As the BCM serves them, pray that the Lord would give the BCM opportunities to share the Gospel and that BCM leaders would see many of the students come to know Him personally.
- Pray for favor with the administration and faculty on the campuses where the BCM serve. Pray that the BCM would continue to have positive relationships and that the administration would continue to allow the BCM to have access to the campuses.
- Pray that Baptist students would take seriously the calling to make disciples. Pray that they will see their campus as a mission field that God has specifically called them to reach.
- Pray for the 70 percent of college students who will leave the church this year and as they make crucial decisions about their future and faith, pray that they would realize that it is in the Body of Christ that God designed them to find the answers for which they are searching.

Ways to Get Involved

- Be sure to give gifts through the Cooperative Program.
- Teach a college Sunday School class.
- Cook lunch for the BCM.
- Prayerwalk a local college campus.
- Adopt an out-of-town student and make them a part of your family while they are at college.
- Seek opportunities to partner with a local BCM.