



IDW Mission Grant Evaluation Report Form

Grant recipients are to complete and submit the report form within one month of the completion of the effort. If this is a continuing ministry, please submit a report by January 31st of the following year, in which the grant is received. Include pictures/videos that help share the story with other congregations to encourage them in their own ministry. Final grant funds will be sent upon receipt of this evaluation.

Contact Person, Congregation, and email address:

Marilyn Shults, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, West Des Moines

Marilyn@sotv-wdm.org

1. Please provide a brief overview of the effort:

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church held its second Backpack Blessing for the community. Also, SOTV was asked to host a Backpack Blessing at Monroe Elementary School's Open House. This second backpack blessing was accomplished through the support of mission grant money and donations from all over western Iowa.

The preparation for these two blessings took place over the last year....but the majority of the effort was during the summer plus three key dates. The dates were: Thursday, August 11 to organize and count supplies and backpacks; Saturday, August 13 was SOTV's backpack blessing; and Monday, August 22 was Monroe Elementary Schools Backpack Blessing.

2. What goals were established for this effort and what did you hope to accomplish?

- Connect with 100-125 families during registration to assist them in getting backpacks and school supplies for the 2016-2017 school year.
 - A total of 380 backpacks were filled with school supplies. The backpacks and school supplies were donated from congregations and organizations around the state or purchased from mission grant and donation money.
 - 227 backpacks with supplies were given to children and parents at Open House – August 22 at Monroe.
 - 153 backpacks with supplies were given to Monroe to give to children who arrive at school without the needed supplies. To date (9/13/16) only a couple backpacks are still on hand to be given out.
 - Because the school decided to change what they requested from families for each backpack. But all classrooms at Monroe still needed basic supplies. The six items on the student supply list were a backpack with glue sticks, tissue box, pencils, pocket folders, scissors, and 4 spiral notebooks. Because other basic school supplies were

needed we filled a van with crayons, dry erase pens, pens, binders, colored pencils, composition books, hand held sharpeners, highlighters, Classic markers, notebook paper, post it notes, ruler, school supply box and zipper supply pouches. With 24 classrooms and 550 students these items will become shared classroom items to be used up during the year.

- Each backpack will be personally blessed by a pastor or SOTV staff.
 - Every child who went through the backpack line was asked if they'd like a blessing. The family could decline and we said, "Have a good school year." Or if the family accepted, a prayer and blessing was spoken for them.
 - One woman thanked Pastor Mark Gerken for the blessing saying she has had a very rough year and really needed that blessing.
 - Some families clearly did not speak English (our language) but accepted the blessing. We trust the Holy Spirit to do His work with every blessing.
- All volunteers will be encouraged to sign up for the "Everyone Wins" volunteer opportunity at Monroe. "Everyone wins" volunteers read one to one with their assigned child and mentor them.
 - Volunteers were encouraged to sign up for "Everyone Wins!" At present we have two volunteers getting approved for one to one lunch times to eat and read with an assigned child. Prayerfully we hope that number will grow.
 - Our Sunday school children have been asked to help support the food pantry and clothing closet at Monroe. The goal continues to build a lasting relationship with people going to Monroe and the staff at Monroe.

3. Did you achieve your goals? If not, what do you think were some of the contributing factors?

Did we achieve our goal? "yes" and "no" The above goals were achieved but building a relationship with this school is just beginning. Now the creative process of how to connect and have an ongoing relationship begins. A team of 4-6 people are being pulled together to start conversations about this ongoing process.

4. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to undertake this effort again?

- Since we have Hispanic Ministry in our building...we may not be able to speak all the languages at Monroe but we need a couple people who can speak Spanish in our volunteer pool.

- In future years we need to find a funding source for items not donated. Or, a couple people who are able to contact the community and congregations for support of donated items or financial support.
- Having a solid team of 4-6 people with diverse roles: communication, publicity, financial accountability, organization of backpacks and supplies, etc. This year's team of 3 was not sufficient.

5. What lessons were learned through this effort?

I don't think of myself as a doubting Thomas....but I can now admit I am. I doubted the bigness of God to provide all that was needed at Monroe. God clearly provided the extreme amount of school needs for children and families plus the teachers. The lesson was if it is God's mission and He will provide. Watching school supplies and backpacks arrive is humbling to this doubting Thomas!

Many little things were learned too such as:

- Economically challenged people who very nice people – gracious and thankful.
- Being economically challenged limits mobility. Families don't have the transportation to get to West Des Moines. Often there is no vehicle or if there is a vehicle the gas is needed to get to work.
- There is much cultural, ethnic diversity in our city. With several families we did not know what language they were speaking. Body language and kind acts had to relay our message.
- Teachers and staff appreciate being supported as they often don't receive thanks for all they do. They are expected to education when the basics of home life are not stable.

6. Will this outreach effort continue and be sustaining? Did a new outreach opportunity present itself?

Yes, I believe this outreach will continue. That will be a team decision how and in what format. The seeds were just planted – I believe we will stay to nurture grow.

7. What suggestions would you give to a congregation considering a similar effort?

If God calls you to a new ministry area, He will supply what is needed to complete the task. Be prayerful follow His lead. Bring a solid team together to set goals and plans for this ministry.



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Contact Person, Congregation, and email address:

Marilyn Shults, Shepherd of the Valley, Marilyn@sotv-wdm.org

1. Please provide a brief overview of the effort:

SOTV is intentionally connecting a pool of members with the 140 adults living at the YMCA – Supportive Housing Campus. At least monthly an evening was planned for activities, fellowship and faith testimonies. A number of different activities have taken place at the Y including: cookout, Bible studies, card making, hand bell concert, choir concert. Numerous times people living at the Y have come to SOTV to help with service opportunities and worship.

2. What goals were established for this effort and what did you hope to accomplish?

Intentionally build relationships between the tenants of the YMCA and members of SOTV, by helping meet each other's physical, mental and spiritual needs. Through this process, grow Disciples both among YMCA residents and members of SOTV, to become future Disciple Makers to any unchurched.

3. Did you achieve your goals? If not, what do you think were some of the contributing factors?

- *Yes. SOTV has a core group of 12 – 18 adults who regularly go to the YMCA or support Y people who come to SOTV. These people are very relational!*
- *NO. The process doesn't end. There is always more to be done and more people to connect with.*
 - *There is a gradual turnover at the Y. We have gotten to celebrate one man moving to Arizona to work and be with his nephew. One man who attended worship with us regularly is moving to a town east of Des Moines to live with a friend and work there.*

4. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to undertake this effort again?

SOTV has a commitment to continue serving the people at the Y.

5. What lessons were learned through this effort?

Nothing new....

- People love food and fellowship
- People love to be entertained
- Coming to a Bible study is threatening....and hard to start up
- People at the Y love to hear our faith stories and are particularly interested in people who have served in the service (several are Veterans)

6. Will this outreach effort continue and be sustaining? Did a new outreach opportunity present itself?

Yes. This will continue with a team of people scheduling and leading our congregation to an ongoing relation with Y people.

7. What suggestions would you give to a congregation considering a similar effort?

Go for it! If there is a location welcoming you in and asking for your presence, be there. Go with the intention of building relationships and being a light for Jesus.