



Go to the Beach ... in Public Schools

BY DAVID BIVINS

“Her dad is in ICU and is not expected to make it.” These are words you never want to hear. But when it’s a child you’ve grown to know, you’d do anything to help bring comfort to her family. This opportunity to minister to the family didn’t directly happen through our church, but through our relationship with a local public school.

Within a few miles of where I live, there are over 30 public elementary schools. Each school has hundreds of children who need to hear the Gospel and who long for a positive adult influence in their lives. The need is great, but how can we reach them when you can’t mention God at school? Or can you?

The truth is, my church is allowed to teach about God and salvation in a public elementary school near us. In fact, God is welcomed! Our church partners with KiDs Beach Club, an organization that equips local churches to impact communities by sponsoring weekly after-school programs on school campuses across the country. For one hour a week for 24 weeks each school year, volunteers from our church and community lead high energy games, provide snacks, give prizes, help kids memorize scripture, pray, and encounter Jesus on their school campus. A recent initiative through KiDs Beach Club puts a Bible in every child’s hand AND teaches them how to use it.

How is this possible? In 2001, the Supreme Court upheld the Equal Access Act which states that if any group met on a public school campus, outside normal class hours, then no group could be discriminated against. It’s time for our churches to reach out into our communities—right into our public schools—to minister to children, their families, and administrative staff. When the mission of the Church is to tell others about Jesus, an effective strategy is to go to where they are. KiDs Beach Club empowers churches to do that.

KiDs Beach Club connects our church with a local school and supplies the curriculum, training, and Bibles. We even have an area director who provides guidance and walks us through the process. Our church supplies the volunteers, snacks, and prizes. Volunteers from our church build relationships with the kids and their families while leading activities each week. Sponsoring a club has been a great outreach opportunity since we often see kids at our church who attend KiDs Beach Club.

Our club leaders were invited to visit the hospital in a time of need and sadly went to the memorial service of one of our clubbers’ parents when he passed. We were able to be the Church for that family who didn’t have a church home. By venturing outside the walls of our building, we’re seeing God change the lives of kids in our community. **K**

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