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Volunteer Appreciation Month Starts Two Days Early for the Panama City Rescue Mission's Volunteer Coordinator

Shawn Doss, founder of Hope Mission Trips in Jasper, AL, arrived in Panama City yesterday with a group of teens and young adults to serve as volunteers for three days at the Panama City Rescue Mission.

When they arrived this morning for work at 10 am, Doss stepped out of the van and looked over at a gentleman working in front of the Mission. They each had double takes before Doss realized the gentleman was Tommy, someone he knew growing up in Alabama.

Tommy is a student in the Mission's long-term recovery program, and Doss hadn't seen him in years.

"It was an amazing and unexpected reunion!" Chelsi Douglass, the Mission's Volunteer Coordinator said. "As I began to talk with the individuals in this group, I admired other hearts in the group, and I was filled with hope and appreciation, too."

For example, Douglass heard another volunteer say that his birthday was last week, and this mission trip is the best birthday present he could ever receive.

When the group was sent to the Mission's donation production center to get started on a project, Douglass had an opportunity to talk with one of the other leaders, Frankie.

Though Frankie is battling Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's Disease, he doesn't let that stop him. He looks at the kids as the future of our country, and is dedicated to serving God by being an example and sharing his miraculous testimony.

Douglass added, "I walked away from our conversation with tears in my eyes, knowing that there are so many people out there who are just like me. They have been broken in the past; but just want to reach out to the broken people in the present. I am so thankful for these servants' hearts!"

Volunteers are the backbone of the Mission of the Panama City Rescue Mission, which is just now firming up plans for a busy Spring and Summer, of not only providing its basic emergency service and long term recovery programs, but also plans for its Children's Ministries.

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Each year hundreds of volunteers give thousands of hours helping plan and execute The Easter Egg Hunt, Family Food Festival, and Klothes for Kids. These ministries would not be possible without the help of dedicated volunteers.

Volunteers are important in the basic operations of the Mission, from answering phones, to filing papers, to serving meals. Teachers, mentors and chapel speakers are also needed, and can serve any time from early morning to early evening. Last month volunteers gave 1,265 hours!

At an upcoming banquet on April 14 at the Bay Point Marriott, the Kid's Ministries Volunteer of the year will be recognized for her service to the more than 850 local homeless children.

To learn more, go to www.pcrmission.org/volunteer.html or call Chelsi Douglass at 769-0783, and sign up for an upcoming special event, or other need.

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