

People

Rachel Grove returns from Brazil

For Stouffville resident Rachel Grove, a recent trip to Brazil as a member of Campus Crusade for Christ was very much a learning, as well as a teaching, experience.

Grove, who has a summer job with Emmanuel International for the second consecutive year, is studying environmental engineering at Guelph University. Campus Crusade for Christ is a Christian organization with clubs across Canada at different universities, including Guelph, she explained.

"I have been involved since my first year and I'm now going into my fifth year. They teach students about Christianity and how to share their faith with others. They work in Canada, the States and around the world."

Her mission took her to São Luis, an island off the north east coast of Brazil. There were about 35 staff and students in three different cities and we lived with Brazilian families in the city. Campus Crusade has a film called The Jesus Film about the life of Christ, and we used that a lot. The film helped to ease the problem of communication with the Portuguese-speaking population, she explained.

"In the evenings we were working with a church there, trying to start another branch of the organization in another part of the city. We were also working with the state university, to help them start a similar group to the ones we have in the Canadian universities."

Response to their message was extremely positive and the Brazilians were very enthusiastic about meeting their Canadian visitors, observed Grove. "We stayed with richer families so we didn't really see the poorest conditions, but there is a big contrast between rich and poor."

While the family she stayed with was reasonably well off, "they didn't have as much stuff as Canadians and lived more simply." Sadly, she said, television has a major influence on even the poorest Brazilians, who aspire to the North American dream they see por-

trayed in the programs they watch.

"Everybody wants to come to Canada, they think it's so great, but they're so much more relationship oriented."

The team's days were busy, she recalled. "We would leave early in the morning and go to the university, then come home most afternoons for lunch and maybe a nap."

"At about 5 o'clock, they would go door to door distributing flyers, inviting residents to the next showing of the film. After the film we stayed and talked to people, so it was always late when we got home."

With audiences of between 200 and 500, it was an exhilarating, if hectic, experience. "I learned a lot more from the people there almost than I taught them," she said.

"On one of the last days we had a meeting with everybody who was part of the group at the university. They all seemed to have their own vision, it was exciting to see that come about throughout the project and to see their confidence levels raised."

In order to be accepted for the mission, Grove had to fill out a detailed application form and supply references from her pastor and others who know her well. "We had to raise our own money and that was a big part of going," she explained.

"I sent out letters to people I knew and talked to my church (Wideman Mennonite) who were very supportive and encouraging." On arrival at their destination, the young people underwent four days of intensive orientation before they began their mission.

Since her return June 29, Grove has given a slide presentation to her congregation, detailing her experiences in Brazil. And although it was the first time she has done anything like this, she is determined that it won't be the last.

"I'd love to go again," she said. "In the long term, I'm interested in missions which have more to do with engineering."

Kate Gilderdale



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