

Small Church--Big Impact

"We count the things that don't count and fail to count the things that do." Albert Einstein

If the number of people serving was counted rather than the number of people seated then Rich and Rose Swetman's church in Seattle would be in the top 1% of effective churches in the U.S and getting lots of press.

When it comes to finding creative ways to serve those around them this church is definitely off the charts

Rose recently sent in this report:

We decided to track the people responding to the idea of mission projects that are doable and that don't necessarily involve the church--people are really grabbing hold--they are looking for doable ways to give a 'cup of cold water' and asking for their co-workers, family, employers, etc to join them. The response has been awesome

This is the response we received from a group of about 12 people in our leadership training class.

1. Josh with his co-workers: Organize food drive for Seattle Food Bank
2. Emily with her husband's co-workers: Organize drive for Women's Shelter
3. Gary with friends: Organize blood drive
4. Ron with friend's, co-workers and church members: Organize clothing drive and bicycle drive for overseas
5. George with friends, co-workers and members of another church: Organize shelter and meals for victims of domestic violence
6. Diane with co-workers: Organize clothing drive
7. Tuesday Group from our church: Christmas Caroling at Elderly Housing Complex; Provide Thanksgiving Dinner for family with need
8. Our Church: Members serving at Thanksgiving Dinner for residents at low income apartments
9. Our Church with local Housing Authority: Christmas Party with gifts and Santa and crafts and caroling for 100 kids, infants to 17 year olds
10. Lisa with co-workers at Police Dept: Donating \$\$ towards Whispering Pines Apartments Christmas Party
11. Tonya with family and co-workers: Went door to door in neighborhood and left grocery bags with a list to fill and put back out--then went and picked up grocery bags (she filled her Ford Explorer) and donated to local Food Bank.

This church is on the smallish size but has discovered that size doesn't matter when it comes to serving. They also discovered that before you tell people what to do it is more effective to ask them what they would like to do.

Rolf Smith, a corporate consultant once had the daunting task of trying to help the Air Force make some significant changes. His tactic? He went right to the troops and asked them what they had in the way of ideas. The response was overwhelming. He had over 13,000 ideas sent in over a

five-year period. Rolf thinks that the job of a leader isn't so much to come up with good ideas, as it is to create an environment where people aren't afraid to tell you what they're already thinking. That's what happened to the Swetman's when they went to a few ordinary Christians in their Leadership Class. By the way when it says, "friends and co-workers" it's referring most often to their non-Christian friends at work. Even lost people know how to hand out food, give blood and collect clothes, and they are even willing to do it with Christians if we will simply invite them to join us.

Rich and Rose's community was recently featured in the local newspaper. [Check it out.](#) [Email Rich and Rose.](#)

http://off-the-map.org/idealab/02-12/Issue15_Dec_02.html#travel