

## ***9th Expo in East Tennessee is Small Slice of Heaven on Earth!***

You know bringing heaven to earth is no small feat and in fact it is something only God can do. Fortunately, it is also something He does on a daily basis. Our goal for each Expo is to pray, plan, prepare and execute things so that this miracle will occur each time we hold an outreach. We want people who come to know they are safe, blessed and can be touched by God in a special way that day as His presence covers and fills the atmosphere of each venue. In fact, we sometimes hear from participants, volunteers and exhibitors that the Expos are so peaceful, like God was covering it with His hand pulling people from the hustle and bustle of their daily lives to a place where He mercifully and graciously brings a small piece of heaven to earth that day.

This year's East Tennessee Expo like so many other outreaches was such a day. The early morning showers brought a bit of coolness to the August heat while we finalized set-up but then it stopped before a single participant arrived. While the weather forecast that called for heavy rain all day kept a few folks at home, the 659 that decided to come were not disappointed as God blessed us all with His joy, wholesome fun and peace through the many people and activities there that day. Participants rekindled or made new friends with their Expo buddy, enjoyed a boat ride, took a kayaking trip or even climbed a rock wall for the first time! For others it was a time of respite, the opportunity to paint a picture, make a picture frame or have their picture made with family and friends. The miracles that took place that day may not be the ones you think of normally. They were often small, personal and unnoticed by others but all a part of God bringing heaven to earth at the East Tennessee Expo.

One of my favorite sights that day was seeing a young buddy named Elizabeth interact with her middle-aged participant, Don. You would have thought they had known each other for years and were even lifelong friends. They went from activity to activity with such an easy natural flow asking each other what they wanted to do next. They were just two people walking in the light of God's love and enjoying the blessings He brought them that day. Now some people call this disability ministry or maybe intergenerational ministry but I call it just one aspect of having heaven on earth.

I often pray that God would bring more of heaven to earth each day through Jesus and I am so glad we get to see a glimpse of this each time we hold an Expo - lives touched and changed resulting in fellowship with God and friends made for eternity.

