

God Finishes 2020 Expo Tour with Grand Slam!

Well, God did it. That's right, He made a way for us to hold all three of our domestic Expos as well as our international Expo in the crazy year of 2020! In fact, the FINAL TWO outreaches of this year's Access-Life GRAND SLAM were the East Tennessee and North Texas Expos.



The East Tennessee event was first on August 15th and from the new medical protocols and limited capacity time slot guidelines to the loads of liquid sunshine we received, it was anything but typical. However, it was so encouraging and even inspiring to see all of our Access-Life volunteers from area churches and community organizations COME TOGETHER and PERSEVERE during such a rough time to BLESS individuals and families living with disabilities locally in the name of Jesus and in turn be BLESSED in ways none of us could imagine.

What was more IMPACTING and even HUMBLING was seeing the participants who came out in ponchos, rain jackets and umbrellas to be a part of this 11th annual outreach! The activities were limited and the weather was better for ducks than people but the THANK YOUS and spirit of GRATITUDE abounded throughout the park and day. So many participants expressed how GLAD they were that we were able to have the Expo in East Tennessee in 2020 as they look forward to attending every year and felt it was especially IMPORTANT to hold it this year as the NEED for CONNECTION was so great during these uncertain times.

There were the usual blessings to be found at the EPIC 2020 outreach in East Tennessee this year like seeing smiles of joy, the fellowship of friendship and God's beautiful outdoors. However, this year's outreach was also SYMBOLIC in many deeper ways as God made a way where there was no way. Hopefully, the miracles He performed and the work He did in the hearts of our Access-Life team members to make things happen spoke volumes to those living with disabilities in the area. We pray that the truth of God's LOVE and GOSPEL were seen in action and that those impacted by disabilities locally know that by God's grace not only are we here for them RAIN OR SHINE but God will always be there for them no matter the circumstance.

Here is part of an email we received from the mom of a participating family that we believe sums it up pretty well:

I just want to thank you and all of the volunteers for your hard work on this event. In spite of the pandemic and some pretty dismal weather today, it was a tremendous event.

My 21 year old son with Down Syndrome has seen every single activity he normally participates in cancelled since March, including the last several weeks of his final year in public school. He was beyond happy today. Every volunteer went above and beyond (as they always do at this event) to make sure he was safe and happy.



The gentleman who took us out on the boat gave us an extra-long ride since it was raining hard and not many people were waiting. He gave us a lot of the local history, pointing out interesting things and telling us who lived or had lived in some of the houses. It was all very interesting, and a nice break for my husband and me too, since we have left the house infrequently since COVID starting shutting things down. It was a very enjoyable ride.

The people who give so generously of their time and love are blessings beyond measure, especially for the fragile members of our society. I can't thank you and them enough for today and all of the other days we have enjoyed with your group through the years. See you next year, rain or shine!



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