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SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TRIP

BY JEFF '86 AND SHELLEY (FOX) BESTE '95

We had always dreamed of our family going on a missions trip together, so a few summers ago, when friends Steve '89 and Becky (Davis) Dye '89 asked us to consider leading a team of Cedarville students to Berlin, Germany, to help them with two weeks of vacation Bible school and camp, we began praying. We didn't want to do it unless the whole family felt like this was the right thing.

None of us spoke German, and we knew this could be a challenge, even though the camps were going to be in English. It was also a lot of support for our family to raise! But we wanted our girls to experience another culture together — and see that the Church is not just “American.” As parents, we hoped this would be an incredible opportunity for our family to serve together.

If you have been on a short-term missions trip before, you know what happens. You go with the intent of being a blessing to others and allowing God to work through you, sharing the Gospel with people who need Jesus. But He always ends up blessing us even more than we can imagine, and He works in us as much as through us. Our trip to Germany was no different.

We did not go on this trip for our family to benefit; we tried to always put our focus on the ministry in Berlin. But we did benefit. We were able to see God provide financially for our family's support in incredible ways. Our girls made new friends, both Cedarville students and people in Germany. We were able to learn world history and church history. From Luther and the Reformation to World War II and the Holocaust, we experienced lessons in the villages and cities where history took place. We were able to share the love of Jesus with believers in Germany, and with refugees who had not heard of Jesus and did not speak our language.

We were able to see God at work in our travel to Germany through canceled flights, missing luggage, and train connections. We saw Him at work in the hearts of kids and teens who showed up for the camps. And we were able to see the Lord at work in the lives of the missionaries as we observed their ministry up close and experienced as a family their day-to-day life.

As a mom, to serve alongside my family and engage the culture with them was an incredible blessing. I will always remember the two days our team visited a refugee camp in Berlin. Language was a definite barrier, but the sport of volleyball opened up a common connection between my daughters and a young teenage mother. I also found that the



other moms were interested to see my girls and then to share their children with me. The Dyes continue to nurture their friendship with a family that began because of that outreach. Ministry as a family is being intentional about what you are pursuing together and then trusting your children, knowing that they have amazing gifts God will also use to strategically reach others.

The trip wasn't perfect, and neither was our family. There were challenges, and we didn't always respond correctly. But one of our daughters said this: “I learned that there are so many people who don't know much about Jesus, and those people are the ones who are most excited to learn. I want to be like them! I want to be excited to learn every day, even though I know about Jesus. It should give me a better and greater reason to learn and serve Him!” As parents, we couldn't be happier.

Jeff Beste '86 is Director of Strategic Relations in Cedarville University Advancement. He and **Shelley (Fox) '95** are the parents of Kylie '20, Sara '22, and Rachel.