

The Mission Field Next Door

Did you know you don't have to fly to the other side of the  world to go on a missions trip? Try traveling across the street next time—it's cheaper *and* you might affect just as much change. So says Nashville, My Own Backyard ministry, which is redefining the concept of missions work.

The group equips volunteers to make a difference in their own cities through everything from monthly block parties to mentoring young people to creating “action days” for churches and groups to go out and serve their communities.

While in South Africa in 2009, founder Kathleen Murphy was inspired to start this ministry after a life-altering vision: “What struck me was the contrast between the rich and the poor. I thought, *How is it that you could live five miles down the road from complete despair and ignore the problem?* Then it hit me: This was just like my hometown. This is the picture of America. People with and people without, living as next-door neighbors.

“God was calling me to wake up to the issues in my own backyard,” she says. “How could I take a trip once a year and compartmentalize my life to the extent that ‘missions’ was only a part of who I was? He was calling me to *live missionally.*”