

December 19, 2007

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## Bout with polio not about to stop her



Photo 1 of 1



Carla Monroe (right) helps a fellow volunteer assemble bags filled with candy and small toys to share with children during a MissionsFEST block party in Philadelphia. [Photo Terms of Use](#)

Posted on Dec 18, 2007 | by Ann Maniscalco

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--When Carla Monroe shows up for a missions trip, some may be surprised.


"I had polio as a child," Monroe said, seated at a table while separating small foam letters for a children's craft during the Woman's Missionary Union-sponsored MissionsFEST in Philadelphia/South Jersey.

However, "By the end of the week, they realize I can make a contribution."

Monroe normally can get around for short distances with a cane, but a recent tumble had left her with an injured kneecap and more dependent on her motorized scooter.

"I've been to Romania twice, Honduras twice, Puerto Rico twice and Mexico three times," she recounted.

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But there was something special about this week: "It was a blessing to go on MissionsFEST with my 84-year-old mother, Ruth Johnson, who has been an active WMU member most of her adult life," Monroe said.

Monroe and Johnson were assigned to Ezekiel Baptist Church, a predominantly African American congregation in Philadelphia. The mother-daughter duo and several other MissionsFEST volunteers did some cleaning and organizing in the church and prayerwalking in the neighborhood to invite people to a block party of family activities, food and a health care screening.

Much of the block party preparation involved organizing supplies for crafts and other activities and bagging candy and small toys for young attendees, with Monroe noting that she enjoyed getting to know volunteers from different areas of the country. On Saturday, she manned the registration table, welcoming area residents to the event.

On Sunday morning, the MissionsFEST volunteers had the joy of worshipping with their sister church. The passionate, caring spirit of Ezekiel's members touched Monroe deeply. "You can hear their heart for the Lord in their prayers," she observed.

Apart from her missions service, Monroe is a counselor. She's seen fear of the unknown hold people back. However, by living life to the fullest instead of letting her limitations dictate her activities, she offers hope to others for overcoming their own challenges in life.

"I do my best to not let fear of any kind control my life," she said, voicing the axiom: "Never let what you cannot do keep you from doing what you can do."

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Ann Maniscalco is a freelance writer and a participant in the Oct. 10-14 MissionsFEST in Philadelphia/South Jersey.



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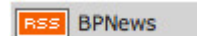


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