

## TEXAS WOMEN PROVIDE 'SPARK' TO MISSION

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What do you get when you mix a group of Southern-drawl "church ladies" from Texas with a bunch of street-hardened recovering female addicts from Reno? Changed lives. That's exactly what happened over five days recently when 19 women from Spark Ministry in Dallas traveled to Northern Nevada to love and serve recovering addicts and staff at the Reno/Sparks Gospel Mission. "We wanted to show these ladies God's love," said Molly Breitenfeld, founder and director of Spark Ministry. They did.

There were the wild and crazy moments. Imagine street-tough women – some of them former prostitutes and meth addicts – laughing and giggling like school girls as they dipped their feet in the icy waters of Lake Tahoe.



Or sporting hula skirts and horsing around with pink flamingos in a public park. Or hollering and cheering as they watched each other strut their stuff in a talent contest.

Then there were the spiritual – almost surreal – images of women praying over other women. Of women crying as the Spark group washed their feet in love. Of the woman fresh out of jail shaking as she shed her guilt and shame. "It was the most inspiring, uplifting and Spirit-filled time of my life," said Tammy Treadwell, the Mission's women's service coordinator. "It was a renewal of faith for me to have so many women praising the Lord. I mean really praising God. "We weren't in a church but in a house together. And we were rocking it down!"





Molly said the idea of Spark Ministry is to reach out to hurting women – and those who serve them – to provide a weekend of relaxation and refreshment outside of often confining church and mission walls. Each of the Spark women raised enough money to travel to Reno to fully fund

the weekend for 20 Mission clients and 10 staff members. “They do it out of love,” Molly said. “They ask for nothing in return except for the chance to bless others. And we end up getting blessed ourselves.”

Rebeckah Wallace, Mission dispatcher, said words can’t describe her experience. “It was the most incredible time of my life,” she said. “These ladies loved us through Christ. To feel that love – a true Christian love – will be with me the rest of my life.”



Tammy said the Mission women were abuzz for weeks. Better yet, she says she sees profound change in many of them. The weekend, she says, seems to have restored an innocence stolen long ago by alcohol and drugs. “They might be street tough, but they were like sweet, innocent girls that weekend,” Tammy said. “If you didn’t know their past, you couldn’t tell them

apart from the other women. “They’re still talking about the weekend they were loved by a bunch of women from Texas. They truly felt the love of Christ and understood the beauty and depth of God’s grace. They know without a doubt that whatever they go through in life, God loves them.”