



30 Years of REACH

By Madalyn, Media Coordinator

In 1992, the Annual Report for Rosedale International (then Rosedale Mennonite Missions) stated, “This year marked the beginning of the pilot REACH program, based in Rosedale and Cincinnati. Twelve young people completed three months of intensive discipleship training and then formed ministry teams for three months of outreach in Israel and Kenya. Possible teams for 1993 include Taiwan, Russia, Israel, Kenya, and a circuit-riding Hispanic ministries team.”

Since these fledgling beginnings in '92, over seven hundred REACH students—a total of 155 teams—have collectively served as Kingdom workers in 34 countries around the world. Some aspects of the program have changed—REACH is now based in Columbus, includes six months of outreach, and sends 26 students and five teams per year on average. But the heart and goal of REACH, to mentor, disciple, and equip young adults to pursue a life of devotion to God, no matter where they find themselves, has remained.

In the fall of 2022, Rosedale International (RI) will send teams on outreach for the thirtieth year in a row. In anticipation of this anniversary, we asked both current and former REACHers to reflect on their time in the program. Their responses revealed themes of joy, worldview expansion, and deep spiritual growth which run through an experience in REACH.

Candice, RI worker in Thailand, served in Ecuador with REACH in 1996. She was excited to worship in a new language, observe leaders sacrificially serving their congregations, and meet young believers who embraced her team. “God was working in Ecuador just like he was back home.

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It felt so free and so fun to be a part of something bigger than myself and my small world,” she remembered. “Their faith encouraged my faith. I feel incredibly fortunate that I got a chance to learn from Ecuadorian Christians and to enjoy and learn about their culture.”

Looking back, Candice credits her time in REACH with planting the seed for her life in missions: “God began preparing my heart way back then for a life in his upside-down kingdom.”

David, three-time REACH alum and current RI worker in the Mediterranean, shared the aspects of REACH that compelled him to return. “Discipleship training school (DTS) was such a rich time of learning and growth; I wanted to go through it again to absorb more of the knowledge and wisdom offered to us. I learned that the world is a big place, full of lots of different people and incredible diversity—yet despite these vast differences, we were all created for relationship with our Father.”

“For me, REACH was the beginning of a new direction in life,” reflected Kurt, part of 2016’s Team Eurasia and currently leader of Team Albania. “I learned that I was not made to be a solo Christian. God taught me that I was designed for and needed a supportive community—and gave me a love for the church and for people that I did not possess on my own.” >>>>

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>>>> When RI staff sent out the first REACH teams in 1992, they could not have known the scope and influence that the program would have both locally and globally. Out of CMC, REACH has borne mission workers, church planters, youth pastors, and believers passionate about living out the gospel. Overseas, a harvest is growing and spreading through the impact of the program. As David aptly summarized, “REACH created a platform for me to step out of my little world and accept his invitation to be his hands and feet. It helped me connect the things that I had always known as truth to this big world and my role in it. If one is willing to commit and apply themselves to REACH and to God, it can be a life changing experience. It certainly was for me.”

In mid-May, RI will welcome home our three REACH 2021-22 teams—fourteen young men and women transformed by nine months of discipleship training and outreach. They join REACH’s long legacy of Kingdom workers, equipped to follow Jesus and share his love wherever they go.

If you are interested in exploring what it means to actively step out in your faith and learn tools for leadership and disciple-making, we invite you to join REACH '22-23. rosedaleinternational.org/reach

Some names and locations have been changed for security.



Job Opening: Rosedale International Center

Rosedale International seeks a ministry-minded couple or individual(s) to facilitate the operation and use of the Rosedale International Center in Columbus, OH. We are looking for anyone interested in maintenance, hospitality, or property management. The role does not necessarily need to include all three interests, as we are willing to build a team if necessary. The opportunity can be customized as part-time or full-time.

If you have any questions or potential interest, please contact Myron Sommers at myrons@rosedaleinternational.org or phone at 614.258.4780 ext. 238.

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