



## Missions Road Trip Leads Back Home

by Jack Noble, Church Health Strategist, Central-West Region

Sometimes church life is just plain confusing. In late 2008, Pastor Michael Harrison of The Community Fellowship in Collinsville announced to his congregation that they would take a monthly trip 50 miles north to Roanoke to feed the hungry and worship with an SBCV church plant, All-Nations Metro. The town of Collinsville, however, had its own problems—20% unemployment and another industry planning to close permanently. Some members were confused, wondering why the church needed to travel 50 miles to meet needs when its own community was hurting. Nevertheless, The Community Fellowship began a year-long commitment to help All Nations Metro and Pastor Matthew Murphy reach downtown Roanoke. On the appointed monthly Sunday, the congregation would depart minutes after the morning service, drive to Roanoke, serve a late lunch to the needy, and join in a time of worship with All-Nations Metro.

With each passing month, church members

learned how to effectively minister to those in need. Not only did they discover the necessary tools for a strong and healthy hunger ministry, their hearts and compassion swelled. Over 130 church

members joined in the “Serve-olution,” growing in faith and developing a passion for helping people in need. They began to realize how they could provide a similar ministry to hurting people in their own community.

As Pastor Michael had expected all along, the natural next step was clear. In January 2010, The Community Fellowship started its own hunger ministry, physically feeding 150 the first month and spiritually feeding them with the hope of Jesus Christ. Although going to Roanoke had been confusing to some at first, it was actually a clearly thought-out and prayed-over plan to help the congregation learn, serve, grow in compassion, develop excitement, and start their own hunger ministry in Collinsville. Sometimes the most perplexing scenarios yield the most amazing results.

The Community Fellowship now serves meals from its building twice a month. Pastor Michael shares, “For me, as pastor, the greatest blessing has been watching our people volunteer their time and do hands-on ministry. For all of us, the biggest blessing is building relationships with people and watching their lives change.”



### RESOURCE

#### ■ Websites:

[www.thecommunityfellowship.org](http://www.thecommunityfellowship.org)  
[www.sbcv.org](http://www.sbcv.org)

#### ■ SBCV Contact:

Call 888-234-7716 for details from your region's missionary.

#### ■ Consider:

What are ways your church can build relationships with the people in your community?

