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Communications

January 21, 2016

Amber Hinson ('16) is Missionary in S.C. Mobile Home Park

Before she came to the Hunt School of Nursing at Gardner-Webb University, Amber Smith Hinson ('16) and her husband, Grant, began a unique ministry. Stepping out in faith, they left their jobs, packed up their children and moved into a mobile home in Lancaster, S.C.

With input from a pastor in the area, Hinson and her husband started The Connection Ministry at Countryside Mobile Home Park, which has approximately 185 trailers and over 700 residents. The local sheriff's office describes the community as one of the most crime-ridden in the area.

“Our purpose in ministry is to connect our neighbors to Christ and show them that we are all equal and have a purpose in life,” Hinson shared.

She has a bachelor's degree in nursing and had been applying to graduate schools before the couple came to the mobile home park. Because healthcare is one of the needs in the community, she and her husband realized that if she earned a Master of Science in Nursing with a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) certificate, it would be beneficial to their ministry. Friends recommended the program at Gardner-Webb.

“When my husband and I decided it was time for me to go back to school, we began to pray about our options,” Hinson reflected. “Because of our faith background, Gardner-Webb seemed like a great option, where I could learn more about nursing while keeping my focus on Jesus Christ. In obtaining my master's in nursing, I hope to incorporate an aspect of healthcare into our ministry. This is an area of need, as well, that we can use to connect people to Christ and allow them to see His goodness.”

An empty mobile home at the front of the park is where the Hinsons have an office and host Bible studies, tutoring, prayer, Vacation Bible School, youth hang-outs and other activities. The missionary couple raises their own funds to provide the ministry and receive financial support from the Moriah Baptist Association in Lancaster. They also enlist volunteers from local churches to help with the programs they offer.

On a weekly basis, the Hinsons sponsor
Homework Helpers, English as a Second

Language classes and Men's Bible study. A local church hosts a ministry for children each week. Monthly events include a Back-to-School giveaway, Fall Festival, Free Yard Sale, Thanksgiving Dinner, and Gift Distribution at Christmas.

"A lot of our day-to-day work is forming relationships with our neighbors," Hinson described. "We spend a lot of time in neighbors' homes and yards and many have spent time at our house. My husband has meetings with men almost daily where he counsels and prays for them. He also plays basketball with them on Friday nights. I take women to the grocery store and appointments, help the Spanish moms communicate with their kids' schools, and have had a hand at learning to cook Mexican food and cakes."

For Hinson, the nursing profession combines two of her passions. "As a child I enjoyed learning about science and the human body. As a Christian, I have a passion for helping people," she explained. "The nursing profession is a natural blend of those two loves for me. Being a nurse requires critical thinking, time management, and knowledge of how the human body functions. It is a challenging career that encourages me to strive for excellence."

Gardner-Webb's FNP program has prepared her to serve patients, whether it's in a mobile home park or a medical office.

"Gardner-Webb holds nursing students to a high standard and takes education seriously. Each day includes reading, studying and completing assignments. Many days are spent in a healthcare provider's office completing clinical hours," Hinson observed. "No matter what the day holds, a student in the FNP program is always learning and growing in their knowledge of nursing. All of the instructors I've had the privilege of learning from have been very knowledgeable and organized. Dr. Anna Hamrick, Director of FNP Program, has been both an excellent professor and a supportive faculty member. She teaches with enthusiasm while encouraging me to follow what God has planned for my life."