

# Jennifer in North Macedonia

September 3, 2024



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VIM team members converting bicycle boxes into boats for the children's summer camp

***"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."***

***~ Proverbs 19:21***

***I like plans. And I REALLY like it when things go according to plan. By "plan" I mean "my plan" of course.*** Audrey Sistler first reached out to me on behalf of the Raleigh Court UMC in May of 2023. After a few online meetings, the church decided they wanted to partner with the Macedonian district and even send an UMVIM team (a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission team) to help us with our children's camp. For ten months we made plans for a team of six to come. I visited the Raleigh Court church in March, created a detailed itinerary for the trip and even gave a few language lessons!

*Touring downtown Skopje*



The team arrived on Saturday, June 15 and hit the ground running. On Sunday, they introduced themselves in Macedonian to the Skopje Methodist church and had lunch with several members. On Monday, they got to visit residents of a local assisted living facility with Pastor Laze as well as tour the city. On Tuesday, they visited the Holocaust Memorial Center and learned a bit about Macedonia's difficult history before I put them to work helping me prepare for the camp (see photo above).

The team was a HUGE help at the camp. Rich and Mary provided exquisite homecooked meals for the three days of the camp and the others helped decorate, helped with the small group activities, assisted with games and crafts, and provided much needed supervision for the pool and river. Through smiles, hair braiding sessions, Hot Tamales, acts of service and inside jokes, they each made special connections with the children and let the children know they are valuable and loved. To watch the children's camp video, click [here](#).



After the camp, the team and I travelled to the eastern part of North Macedonia to experience a bit of village life. We divided up into three groups so we could visit three different village churches. After the service, each group was treated to a homecooked meal in the home of a local family. It was a beautiful day of forming relationships and experiencing the amazing Macedonian hospitality.



Above: Enjoying fried chicken and stuffed peppers at Jasmina's house. Click on the photo to watch the team engaging with other Macedonian foods.

During their eleven-day visit, there were so many things that did not go according to (my) plan. Transportation confusion led to an impromptu hike for half our group, a restaurant I had picked was closed due to a Muslim holiday, one member came down with an illness and had to stay behind in Skopje two extra days, a miscalculation resulted in a shortage of craft supplies, and confusion about lodging led us to return to Skopje a day early. Ellen kept encouraging me to “pivot” and this wonderful team helped me do just that. They were so flexible

and accepting. As I learned to view the mishaps as God's plan, I got to see how God brought a delightful encounter at another restaurant, demonstrated His love and care through the community who cared for the teammate who had to stay behind, gave us inspiration to solve the craft shortage problem, and blessed us with time to relax and enjoy His creation at the end of the trip. I am so thankful for this team from Raleigh Court, their tremendous contribution to the camp, and the lessons their visit has taught me about trusting God's plans over my own.

In Him,  
*Jennifer Moore*

### ***Blessings from across the ocean***

It is easy to focus on the individuals who make the trek overseas in order to be God's hands and feet to another country; however, a VIM team is really made up of numerous people who pray, make connections, coordinate logistics, give financial support, and/or give of their personal talents whether they leave home or not.

One member of the Raleigh Court UMC, Mary's husband, Frank, couldn't come on the trip, but he felt compelled to use his woodworking skills to bless members of the Macedonia district. Click below to watch Pastor Dejan Vasilev's response when Mary presented the portable communion box Frank had made especially for him.

