

The Gaffney Ledger

Crusade kickoff draws 1,000

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Youngsters from Kirby Memorial Baptist Church enjoy a meal before joining 80 church youths as servers at Thursday's kickoff event for a May 21-24 crusade led by evangelist Rick Gage. Nearly 1,000 people attended the kickoff event at Broad River Electric Convention Center.

Nearly 1,000 local residents attended a kickoff event Thursday evening at the Broad River Electric Convention Center to begin preparations for a crusade that evangelist Rick Gage will lead in May in Gaffney.

Gage hopes the W.K. Brumbach Stadium at Gaffney Middle School will be filled to capacity May 21-24 at 7 p.m. nightly for his Upstate Carolina Go Tell Crusade. Rick Stanley, a half brother of Elvis Presley, is among the guest speakers who will join Gage in sharing the Gospel.

“About 60 percent of Cherokee County residents are unchurched. We want to cast out a vision and burden for leading lost people to

Christ by sharing the Gospel,” Gage said. “There is nothing more dearer to the heart of God than leading sinners to salvation.”

It's a burden Gage has felt since 1986 when he quit his assistant coaching position at Liberty University to follow in his father's footsteps into full-time evangelism. He had rebelled earlier in his life by becoming involved in alcohol and drugs while pursuing his dream of becoming a college football coach.

“I thought football would fill the hole in my heart. I was wrong,” said Gage in his book “More than a Game.” “The greatest thing a person can do is to bring another person to Christ.”

More than 60 churches have joined Broad River Baptist Association in working with Rick Gage Ministries to plan the crusade. Churches will provide personnel to help with the months of preparation, the actual crusade days and the extensive follow-ups with people who make decisions to follow Jesus Christ.

Local residents are being sought to serve on committees dealing with tasks such as attendance, program arrangements, counseling and follow-ups, fundraising, outreach, music, publicity and ushering. A proposed budget puts the total cost of staging the crusade at \$72,000.

It's an effort which will extend well beyond the 300member community chorus that crusade organizers hope will perform at W.K. Brumbach Stadium.

Ministers will play a key role in the success of the crusade in May.

"The most influential voice in the church comes from the pulpit. We need pastors to give this crusade priority," Gage said. "Our vision is an army of God working to help share the Gospel."

Gage is the founder of Go Tell Ministries and holds annual Go Tell summer camps to reach teenagers. He has spoken in many schools about young people's abuse of alcohol, drugs and other moral issues such as premarital sex.

"We need for teenagers to stand guard against anything that can ruin and destroy their lives," Gage said. "One of our goals in this crusade is to reach out to teenagers and help them become winners in life."

More information about the Upstate Carolina Go Tell Crusade can be found on the Internet at:

www.gotellcrusades.com