

## Opportunities for Service

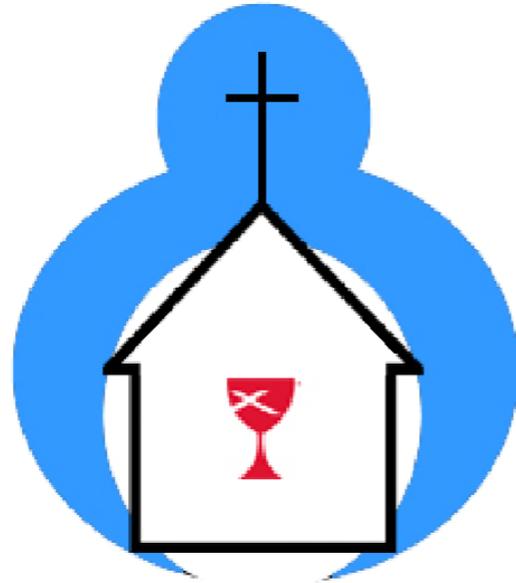
For decades, mission work groups have built the ministries of SWGSM—literally, they've built our buildings! Each group adds immeasurable value to our organization, but they also leave having learned lessons of humility, compassion, and cultural understanding.

Groups can visit SWGSM year round, and opportunities for projects range from construction and repair needs to interaction with refugees and those served by our programs. Call today to start planning a life-changing experience for your group or visit [www.swgsm.org](http://www.swgsm.org) to get started!

### **Retreats:**

Churches from across the Rio Grande area enjoy weekend and week-long retreats for youth, adults, and families, using the excellent facilities at Bayview (9 miles north of Los Fresnos), which include an indoor chapel (seats approx. 150), dorms accommodating 100 guests, a modern kitchen/dining area, 13 showers, meeting space and an outdoor chapel.

SWGSM is a member institution of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest Region. Its Board of Directors is formed by representatives from across the Region, the Southwest Hispanic Convention, the Global Ministries/Division of Overseas Ministries and the Refugee and Immigration Ministries of Week of Compassion.



## **Southwest GOOD Samaritan Ministries**

*"Whatever you have done for the least of these, you have done for me."*

*(Matthew 25:40)*

Serving  
**Los Fresnos Texas**

And the Rio Grande Valley since 1983

## **Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries**

It is often difficult for the average American to imagine the cross a refugee must bear. As a former refugee from Cuba, I can personally relate to the perils of my brothers and sisters in Christ seeking freedom from terrorism, violence and political persecution.

You might ask, "What can I do for these refugees and the 'poorest of the poor' in this part of the country?" Well, we cannot look at these less fortunate with the eyes of the world.

We must see Christ in their faces and lift our voices to eliminate the many obstacles that prevent these, God's people, from achieving freedom and liberty.

My hope is that you will pray for them and hear again Jesus' own call to faith, the verse that has become the inspiration for this ministry:

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."*  
(Matthew 25)

F. Feliberto Pereira,  
Founder and Executive Director, SWGSM



**Feliberto Pereira**

**The Mission of Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries** is to teach the love of Jesus Christ by building a renewed sense of wholeness and dignity and by standing with those who are broken, especially among refugees and those who are disenfranchised and displaced. The Good News of salvation is lived out by addressing spiritual and material needs, including emergency shelter and food, clothing, transportation, legal aid, advocacy and job referral through a cooperative effort with other agencies and religious organization.

# Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries: Responding to Christ's Call for Compassion

*I was a stranger...*

## Refugee Programs

Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries was established in 1985 with the specific purpose of providing assistance to refugees coming primarily from Central America seeking political asylum in the United States. A refugee is "a person who fears persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

Working closely with the US Department of Homeland Security and Church World Service, SWGSM has helped more than 20,000 refugees begin life anew by sharing the love of Jesus Christ through gifts given "to the least of these" whatever their need may be.



*I was an orphan...*

## Casa Bethel

Responding to special needs of the youngest of the poor in Matamoros, Mexico, SWGSM distributes monetary gifts that help to provide school scholarships, uniforms, school supplies, food, clothing and toys.

*I was hungry...*

## Rice and beans Program

The Disciples' Rice and Beans program, sponsored primarily through two Areas of the Christian Church in the Southwest Region, provides thousands of meals every year through these basic staples to needy families, isolated villages and children's homes in both the U.S. and Mexico.



*I was homeless...*

## Jericho Road Program

Who is my neighbor? The parable of the Good Samaritan tells us that it is the person in need. This ministry helps families on the U.S. side of the border with needed home repair, such as leaky roofs, poor construction, plumbing problems, painting projects, broken appliances, and fallen fencing. With poverty rates exceeding 25% in Brownsville-Harlingen area (compared to 15% on average in the U.S.), there are many poor families needing shelter repair. The Jericho Road program is operated entirely on the U.S. side of the border and overseen by professional carpenters who assist mission work groups.

*I needed care...*

## Lilies of the Valley

This ministry mentors young mothers in the Rio Grande Valley who would otherwise have little or no emotional support, parenting and life-skills training opportunities. The mothers meet weekly for training and education while volunteers attend to their children. A new educational facility was added to what was formerly the caretaker's cottage at Bayview. "The Lily House" is equipping the mothers with life skills such as sewing, healthier cooking and English.

*I was naked...*

## Mike's Kids

Mike's Kids, begun in 1987 by Mike Slaight, has become an annual Christmas project supported by the North Texas Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An 18-wheeler filled with more than 1500 banana boxes delivers new and gently used clothes and toys to be distributed to the poor and abandoned children across the Lower Rio Grande Valley.



## Coming Soon: Dental Clinic

SWGSM hopes to open a dental clinic at the Bayview campus to serve the neediest with basic dental services, such as fillings and extractions. A local dentist has graciously agreed to serve as the volunteer director of the clinic, which will work with local church pastors to identify low-income families in the Harlingen-Brownsville area who need dental care and are unable to afford it.



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