

April 2017

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Beth-El

Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

Mementos of Ministry



It is difficult to calculate her age. Is she elderly, or just worn out by time? Is she the woman at the well, or another soul still in search of the living water from which she will thirst no more? Behind her stands the cross, a remnant lovingly woven together by a former parishioner who recently joined the Church Triumphant.



These are mementos of my travels through ministry. The figurines an inheritance from Dave Moore when I joined Beth-El, the *guaje* a gift from Rosalva, or the German star – a sweet remembrance from my days in Michigan. They are tangible memories--tangible as they remind me of the person who offered these precious gifts.

There is dear Ed who loved to fish, or sweet Helen who even to her final days was never too tired to teach a new student a lesson or two. Of course, I hold many intangible memories, too—the calloused hands of Ignacio who spends his days in the fields, or the bruised spirit of a young man who has endured cruel words by the lips of his friends. At the end of the day, it is those memories, perhaps, that I hold closest in my heart.

Every year dozens of volunteers pass through the doorways of Beth-El. Some come just for the day while others have faithfully volunteered for years. We pray that the memories they leave with from our mission will be a positive one, but we rest in the knowledge that somewhere along the way the traces of someone they met will be etched into their heart, too.

Something very special happens when you volunteer; truth be told sometimes I think it is those that come and serve our community that depart with the greater gift—the trace of a smile from someone who sees that someone really does care, or the comradery of new friends as together we etch small memories to be kinder to one another. Of course, we cannot change the world, but with tender hands and a willing heart, perhaps we can give it a nudge or two in the right direction.



This month's newsletter is filled with stories and opportunities for you to get involved.

Volunteering can be messy, you may not get out of it what you expect, but rest assured you will leave behind a memory, perhaps even an indelible one on your own heart, too.

Dios los bendiga

Rev. Kathleen Dain
Executive Director

My Journey as a Volunteer



I grew up in Guayaquil Ecuador. I have always had a strong desire to help others in need. As a teenager, I wanted to help people in the small towns near where I lived. Many of these people did not have a home. I wanted to do my share by volunteering to help build houses, but my parents said, “no,” because that kind of volunteering would require me to travel away from home with people I did not know.

A few years later my family moved to the United States, and boom! Now, it was my family in need! Here we were in a new country with not much more than the clothes on our back. Those were difficult times. None of us spoke any English! My family first moved to New Jersey then a short time later to Florida. We learned quickly that people in this country needed help just like back home. So, we decided to join the mission and help out.

I enjoyed my experience volunteering, I joined various volunteer groups and worked with people from everywhere around this country. I was amazed, (I still am) about their enthusiasm and passion to help our community. I truly think volunteers are like a big family where you work, laugh, and sometimes cry together to help others in need. It is wonderful to see how your work is making a difference. The greatest example I see of what volunteers do for our community is the Tuesday food pantry at Beth-El. Every time someone walks out with a bag ready to take home without the stress of worrying about how they are going to feed their family it is gratifying. Some people hug you, others wave at you or smile like they are saying, “Hey, I’m happy you can provide these for my family”. Others just show up in my office (I work here now, isn't that amazing?) and ask how is my day going.

Before, I was part of any crew that came to help--now I help Javier to coordinate groups of volunteers, guide them through their visit and sometimes work along them (when my other duties permit). And the goal is always to try to make a family's life better. If before I was happy, happiness stays longer now.

Sheila Villamar Arboleda
Operations Assistant

Scholarship Success Story



Gisela is an intelligent and strong willed young woman. She grew up in a family with four siblings. Her mother and father worked very hard as farmworkers picking tomatoes and strawberries to provide for their family. Gisela graduated high school early and aspired to serve our country by joining the military. She tried to enlist and join our military but was unsuccessful due to unexpected circumstances. A tragic event would occur and create emotional and economic stress. Gisela started working to contribute to her

family's income. She also applied to Hillsborough Community College where she will pursue post-secondary education. She is a brilliant and determined young lady who would like to begin a career in forensic psychology and criminology. Step Up for Success has provided scholarship resources and we are proud to announce Gisela will be a recipient of several scholarships up to \$5,000. These scholarships will help Gisela pay for her educational expenses. Programs like Step Up for Success are important to our community because they provide support and encouragement to help students succeed and turn their dreams into reality. As the resource coordinator for the program it is extremely rewarding to help students in our community and see what the future may hold for bright students like Gisela.

Veronica Barrios - Monroy
Outreach Resource Coordinator

We love our Volunteers

Volunteers! They come in all shapes and sizes. They come in groups or they come on their own. They come near and from far. There are some who come and go and there are others that stay for the long run. Some of them do it because they have to, but many of them do it because they want to. We get a lot of work done through their efforts. Beth-El would not be able to properly function without their help. No matter what category you may fall into, let it be known that:



"WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS".

Javier

Javier Izaguirre,
Operations Manager

VBS



Summer is almost here! Every year as many as 80 children participate in our July Vacation Bible School programs. The mission is looking for leaders to help lead some of the summer activities. If you or your church would like to help out, **please call Walter or**

Kathy at 813-633-1548.

Gracias!



STEP UP
for
SUCCESS



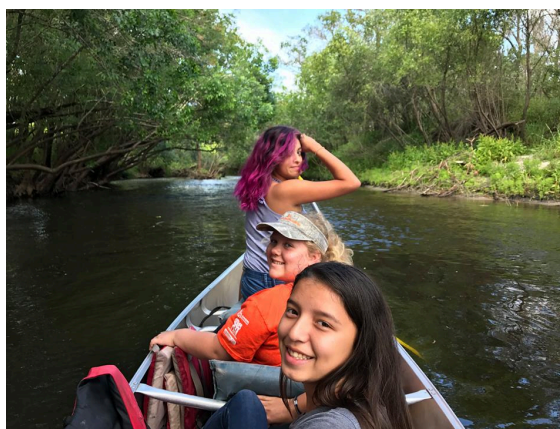
Mentorship Opportunity

Do you have experience in Education or Human Resources? Our Step Up for Success program is seeking volunteers in our community who would be interested in becoming mentors. We have individuals in our program with different needs which include preparing for job interviews, discussing the Do's and Don'ts of job interviewing and completing online applications. It is important to provide support to promote personal and professional growth. **For additional information contact Veronica Barrios-Monroy, Outreach Resource Coordinator, by phone at (813) 634-1548 ext.224 or by email at veronica@beth-el.com**

Beth-El Moments



This spring we were fortunate to have a group from Grand Valley State University. Everyone had a blast! They were able to work directly with the community through our food distribution program and learn about the community while getting a glimpse of " what a day in the life of a farmworker" looks like. If you would like to learn more about doing a mission trip to Beth-El, please contact Javier at Javier@beth-el.org.



Beth-El Youth partnered with Pine Shores Youth for a fun time along the Little Manatee River followed by serving hotdogs and hamburgers for the monthly community dinner.



On the left: Some of our volunteers taking care of the registration table.
On the right: A grandmother came to pick up her bag during our food pantry.

Immediate Needs

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry has an immediate need for the following items:

- **Deodorant: men/women**
- **Baby formula**
- **Toothpaste & Toothbrushes**
- **\$25 Wal-Mart Gift cards**
- **Sunscreen**
- **New/Used baseball style cap**
- **Diapers sizes 4,5,6**
- **Wipes**
- **Shampoo**
- **Combs & hair brushes**
- **Bath towels**
- **Washcloths**



Hello Friends, as you may know we have been serving approximately 60-80 men, women and children through our Community Dinner on the second Tuesday of every month. If you are interested in sponsoring the Community Dinner for June-July and going forward through your church group or organization, please contact Javier or Sheila at (813) 633-1548 for more details.

• **Bug repellent**

I would like to become more involved at Beth-El Mission as a Volunteer:

- Community Dinner
- Food Pantry
- Lead VBS
- Organize a Workgroup
- Organize a Food Drive
- Organize a Clothing Drive

I would like to donate \$_____

- Summer Camp Scholarships
- Back to School Program
- VBS Supplies
- College Scholarships
- Music Lessons for Youth
- Food Pantry
- Mission's Greatest Need

Leave a Lasting Legacy



Consider making Beth-El Farmworker Ministry part of your will or living trust. Your gift will help the farm working community for generations to come.

Support Beth-El Mission with your online contribution today.



**A Printable Copy of this Newsletter is Available on our
 Website at: www.beth-el.org or by emailing us at:
info@beth-el.org**

Beth-El

Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

Fueled by Volunteers and Your Faithful Prayers and Support

Our mailing address is:

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Email: info@beth-el.org

Web: www.beth-el.org



Beth-El Farmworker Ministry is open Monday through Thursday from
8a.m. to 5p.m., or by special appointment.
We are closed from noon until 1p.m. for lunch.



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