

September 2015

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# Beth-El

## *Farmworker Ministry, Inc.*



## Skipping Stones

As someone who spent her summers beside the fresh waters of an inland lake, learning to skip stones was a right of passage. But for every stone I attempted to dance across the waters there were an equal number that fell silently to the bottom – leaving only concentric circles moving away from its source.

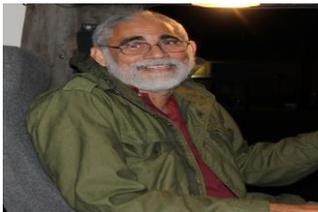


I am reminded of that image when I think of God and the wondrous ways God's hand breaks into the still waters of our lives--carrying us down uncharted seas, calling us into a time of renewal. With each gentle wave moving farther from its source we are called in faith to move above our own limitations and to trust beyond our own expectations that we may find communion with one another through our living God.

There has been a lot of talk in the news recently about building walls and finding new ways to divide us one from another, but it is the remembrance that nature itself is fluid – like the gentle ripples breaking the stillness of an inland lake.

There is nothing concrete about mission. Certainly, we have bricks and mortar in which to house our services, but the soul of our operation comes through the lives of those who serve, and our attentiveness to the needs of the community to which we have been called. Like a stone falling silently to water's bottom, we may never know the impact our service may have – only that it is what we have been called to do.

Beth-El is blessed with a number of dedicated volunteers who come each week to serve our community. They come to pack and distribute grocery bags for our food pantry, fix a meal for our community dinner, or deliver clothing and school supplies for the farm workers and their families. None of us will every fully know the impact of a small smile, or the extra time spent with a new family. None of us really ever know the impact these small acts of service offer—like stones skipping across the water, breaking beneath the surface--our actions carry far beyond its epicenter, prayerfully leaving hope where once silently stood despair.



One of our volunteers, Jariff, oversees the youth program. He is a tall man, with an engaging smile and numerous nicknames given to him by the youth. On first glance you might not think the work he does is different from any other, but then you begin to hear

the stories of young teens who face bullying or difficult times at home and how *'grandpa'* got them involved in the youth group. He will go to the teen's home to make sure they have transportation to worship, and with a genuine sense of care gives every child, young and old, the knowledge that they are welcome in God's house.

Each of us is called into communion through the living waters of our God. Like the gentle ripples left behind from a skipping stone, what kind of legacy shall we leave behind?

Dios le bendiga,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director

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This summer I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Cedarkirk for pool day with the children attending Vacation Bible School at Beth-El.

Currently Beth-El owns one 15 passenger bus, so it was a challenge to get fifty children, ten youth leaders, and ten accompanying adults to Cedarkirk. At one point pool day was going to be cancelled because there was not enough transportation available. So, Kathy, the executive director, started calling all the churches she could think of to see if there was a bus available. There was none. After much persistence Kathy was able to get Cedarkirk to provide a van and a driver, but we still did not have enough room to transport everyone. So it was decided that we would rent an additional mini bus for the

day. That day I stayed longer than usual at work to get everything situated along with Kathy and Javier.



Pool day arrived and the children were delighted, but when we got to Cedarkirk we were told that the children had to wait a few minutes more because there were storms nearby. Needless to say the children were anxious. When we got the okay to go into the pool the children started cheering. They were all so happy to be in the pool. The youth leaders contributed to that joy by doing a tremendous job in helping them down the slide while others were ready to catch them at the other end. Most of those children only get to go to a pool while attending VBS at Beth-El. So seeing their smiles was very gratifying for me and I am glad God gave us the knowledge to make it happen.

**Rosalva Serrano**

**Executive Assistant**



**Volunteer Today for  
*Cena Comunitaria.*  
A weekly community dinner.**

**Every Thursday from  
5pm to 7pm**

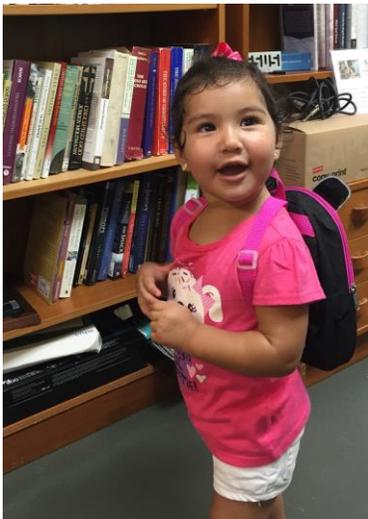
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### ***Leave a Lasting Legacy***



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.

***¡Muchas Gracias!***



Thanks to your generous donations,  
Beth-El has given away 300  
backpacks filled with school supplies  
to the children of our community, and

to the adults going back to school to earn their GED or ESOL certificate.

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Last week many of our farm workers returned from working the crops in the northern states. The growing season was difficult and a number of our workers returned with nothing to show for their efforts. We would greatly appreciate your donations of blankets, pillow cases, towels, long sleeved shirts and hats. Rice and Pinto beans are always welcome. Thank you for your continued support of our farmworking community.

## **DAIRY QUEEN; A GOOD PLACE TO CHILL OUT**

By The Rev. Walter F. Chuquimia

Before I moved to Florida, I lived in the Northeast, where summer is a prime time to spend with family and friends in the great outdoors. Churches like to have picnics around one of the ten-thousand lakes of Minnesota, while adults are preparing a barbecue the young members would be playing volleyball, soccer or hiking; and children having fun in the water pretending to catch fishes or playing Marco Polo. As you might imagine, at the end of such a fulfilling day, Pastors are completely worn out. On my way home, I loved to stop at the Dairy Queen on Old Highway 8 NW in New Brighton to get a strawberry sundae. It was like heaven on earth for me. As soon as I became a Pastor of the Mission, I looked for such a place in Wimauma, Sun City Center and nearby areas.

Summertime here in Beth-El is also a prime time. The preparations to respond to the summer needs of the young people and children living in the nearby community, starts with a meeting with Javier Izaguirre (Operation Manager) and Jariff Irrizary (Volunteer Summer Coordinator) in the Pastors study. Then the overall plan would be submitted to the Executive Directors

office. This year, the first week of VBS was hosted by Trinity Presbyterian Church, New Port Richie; the overall theme was that "God has the power to provide." They brought a huge Everest Mountain displayed around the whole sanctuary with different stations showing equipment to survive in such cold conditions. Children learned that God is in control of our lives even in extreme situations. The second week was hosted by the Youth of Beth-El under the theme of "Noah's Ark." The third week was a time for the Youth of Beth-El to gather for a time of reflection guided by Teen Impact, Tampa. The responsibility of overseeing about seventy kids is tiring. Wouldn't it be a good idea to visit Dairy Queen at the end of a full hot summer day? Another highlight of the summer was the joy of participating in a fun and educating activities of the Cedarkirk Presbyterian Camp. In words of someone who participated: "It was a way to get away from the world and realize that there are many people who believe in God out there. It was fun learning how every activity we did had something to do with how we are clipped in to the Lord."

The 2015 summer activities ended with a solemn worship service followed by a graduation ceremony. Every participant child received a certificate of attendance and a backpack full of school supplies

according to the grade they were going into. As a Pastor of the Beth-El Farmworkers Ministry, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals and churches for making all of this possible. There is nothing more beautiful than to see a smile on the face of a child of God. I must tell you that I also smiled when Dairy Queen on early July opened on the intersection of U.S. Highway 301 and Big Bend Road.

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**Be Sure to Visit Our New Website**  
at [www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)

**Beth-El**  
*Farmworker Ministry, Inc.*

Fueled by Volunteers and Your Faithful Prayers and Support

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Web: [www.beth-el.org](http://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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