

Los Arcos Outreach 2010

Back to School Uniforms and Supplies for Refugee Children in Downtown Houston

They lined up by the hundreds and stood in line for several hours, as a whole host of volunteers from six different churches handed out uniforms and school supplies for around 300 students in the Los Arcos apartments in downtown Houston. The children were all refugees/immigrants from every nation under heaven: Nepal, Eritrea, Bhutan, Belize, Mexico, Ethiopia, Burma, Taiwan...the list goes on and on. Many of them had just recently arrived in America, and would be going to a U.S. school for the very first time in just a few days.

Throughout the Bible, we hear of God's concern for those who are hurting or struggling. In Jeremiah, we're told to *"defend the cause of the poor and needy,"* which is immediately followed by the statement: *"Is that not what it means to know me" declares the Lord. (Jer. 22:16)* The book of James tells us that *"religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..." (James 1:27)* Over and over again, the Bible talks about God's heart for those who are in need. What a humble joy and privilege it was to be the hands and feet and heart of God as we cared for the people in Los Arcos.



Each child was given basic school supplies, a pair of pants, two shirts, a package of socks and a package of underwear. What a joy it was to see the look on their faces as they realized they would be going to school dressed and prepared for their first day of classes. Their excitement practically oozed out of them. As usual, they ended up giving us so much more than we ever gave them.



Best of all was what happened at the end. After all the items had been given to them, we pulled them aside one by one and asked if we could pray for the children as they went back to school. Some had different or no beliefs and they politely refused. Most, though, were very thankful and wanted us to pray. So we did. We prayed for a wonderful school year, good friendships, lots of learning, and most of all for the love of Jesus Christ to grow strong in their hearts.



We are so thankful for all those who sponsored children and for the countless volunteers who rolled up their sleeves and worked in some pretty tough conditions to "be Jesus" to these children. And, we are extremely excited with the growing partnership that is developing with Pastor Kbrab and the Eritrean Church, and Pastor Abraham and Om Maya who are ministering among the Nepali. Their partnership ensures that this will be more than just a one-time event...but rather an ongoing relationship with these precious people who are loved so dearly by God.

-- Pastor Michael Meissner - LifeBridge Church, Cypress TX

