



THE LEAST OF THESE
MINISTRIES
MATTHEW 25:40

Sharing **HOPE**
amidst poverty.

December 2021

Grateful in San Rafael



Wilton Gomez, Director of Evangelism & Social Action,
provides a bible teaching before food distribution in San Rafael

WE WERE INTRODUCED TO BATEY SAN RAFAEL two years ago, through our relationship with Feed my Starving Children (FMSC). San Rafael is about 15 minutes outside of Isabela, the most distant community we serve, and it is one of the most materially poor communities we serve. Our Food Distribution Program began providing fortified rice meals (Manna Packs) from FMSC around mid-2019. Following a positive response from our supporters in late 2019, we were able to add beans to their distribution.

For nearly two years now, the San Rafael community has been fully incorporated into our Food Distribution. God's perfect timing ensured that residents of the community had sufficient food before and during the most difficult months of the Covid-19 pandemic, even as many other organizations paused their services.

As our distribution team established a routine for San Rafael, getting to know leaders and community members, a woman named Gloria stood out to them. Gloria is usually one of the first to greet the team, and insists on helping to set up. She moves chairs and helps to carry things in from the truck, despite a physical condition that limits the use of her right arm.

Gloria explains that she wants to offer her help as a way to express her gratitude for the help that is brought into her community. She has six children and cares for two grandchildren. "Thank you very much!"

The operating costs for our Food Distribution Program have increased in recent months. We are faced with higher prices for rice, beans, and eggs purchased in the Dominican Republic, and shipping costs for the food donated by Feed My Starving Children have increased more than 20%.

Please consider sending a gift today to help offset these increases so we can continue to provide nutritious food to these families in need.



Gloria and one of her grandchildren with Wilton

2021 Banquet

Sharing HOPE

IT HAPPENED LATER THAN EXPECTED, but we were finally able to gather on November 7 with about 100 friends of the ministry to celebrate how God is working in the Dominican Republic. The banquet, which was originally scheduled for March 2020, had been rescheduled three times due to

Covid-19 restrictions and concerns.

Guests enjoyed a delicious meal presented by Martin's Caterers and were treated to encouraging music by The Faith Boyz Band, while having an opportunity to bid on numerous silent auction items. Door prizes of larimar jewelry and coffee from the Dominican Republic were awarded to several lucky guests.

Board member Jacki Stranathan began the main program sharing her passion for serving on mission teams with The Least of These Ministries. She brought wonderful stories and great photos from teams on which she has served. Next, Board member Mel Arbaugh provided an update on the Ministry Hub project. Mel shared progress to date and reviewed current plans for the next phases (stay tuned for more on this!).

Marty Hogan, Executive Director, gave a brief update on recent ministry activities and announced a new initiative to further support local pastors, expected to launch in early 2022 (more to come on this, also!). Mark Wood, our keynote speaker, put the finishing touch on the afternoon with an uplifting presentation. Mark shared the tremendous positive impact serving on a mission team to the Dominican Republic had on his life. He credited ministry founder Steve Hull and his parents for encouraging him to serve on his first team.

Video highlights of the event are available on our website.

We're grateful for all who attended! A huge thank-you to the following businesses and individuals who donated items for the silent auction or provided other in-kind support: Jack & Jane Anderson; Baugher's; Bill's Brush & Hammer; The Cutting Garden; Mike Henning; Ann Hull; Lind Family Farm; Minuteman Press (*Hanover, PA*); Ole Mink Farm; Sight & Sound Theatres; and Wait, What? Sauce Co.

A NEW MEMBER OF THE FAMILY



**Join us in
congratulating
Ricardo and Anny on
the birth of their son,
Daniel, on Friday,
October 22, 2021!**

Sharing Hope through Tributes

Gifts given in Memory of:

Margaret Gladhill *by* Paul & Kathy Jenkins

Dale L. Grote *by* Dianne Grote

Jeanne B. Herr *by* Sarah Marks and Bob & Charlene Jones

Steve Hull *by* JoAnne & David Kreider, Lynda Lockard, and Bradford & Jean Yates

Jean Myers *by* Robert Brenneman

Steve Welty *by* Mark & Roxanne Wood

Gifts given in Honor of:

Ann Hull *by* Lynda Lockard, Katuria Springer, and John Taylor

Linda Wood *by* Rev. Dr. Sue Shorb-Sterling

If you would like to honor or remember a friend or loved one through a donation to The Least of These Ministries, simply provide the information on the enclosed form, or send a note with your gift!

Profile: Pastor Alexandra, Batey 9

This is the third in a series of profiles on Pastors and church leaders in the bateys served by The Least of These Ministries.

BATEY 9 IS ONE OF SEVERAL communities served by The Least of These Ministries that is only accessible by dirt roads between fields of sugar cane. When the cane has grown tall, it can seem like riding through a maze. The third largest community in our Food Distribution program, around 80 families in Batey 9 are served, representing some 500 people.

When our DR Ministry staff began distributing the food through local churches several years ago, we did not have a connection to a church in Batey 9. A Pastor at one of the community's churches learned of our need and approached our Manager, Ricardo, to make her church available to us.



Pastor Alexandra

"The doors of our church are open to you because this feeding program is a blessing from God in this community," Pastor Alexandra told Ricardo at the time. "I see it in this way and I know many people see it in this way too, since there are many people in need who are part of this program. And I can see that they are grateful."

Pastor Alexandra is 47 years old, and is married to William, who is also a Pastor at the church. Alexandra and William have two children—Natanael, age 25, and Lisandra, age 16. Alexandra was born in Barahona and moved to Batey 9 in response to God's call to serve. She holds a degree in Nursing from the Catholic Technical University in Barahona (UCATEBA). She chose that profession as a way to further help her community, as she has a passion for serving others.

"...this feeding program is a blessing from God in this community."

Alexandra says she is grateful for the Food Distribution program as it helps her to reach more people with the gospel message and identify needs in the community of which she otherwise may not be aware. The distributions are also an ideal time for her to announce church and community activities.

She says that, to her, it feels like we are "a family with the same objectives: sowing the seeds of Jesus in the hearts of the people and helping the needy."

Please pray for Alexandra's and William's ministry to the Batey 9 community, that God will continue to give them wisdom, strength, and peace as they serve others. Alexandra also asks that we pray for her mother, who has Alzheimer's disease, her sister, who has cancer, and her cousin, who is addicted to drugs.

Alexandra shared that one of her favorite bible verses is Philippians 4:13 — "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (NKJV). May God bless her abundantly as she seeks her strength from Him!



Pastor Ramón serving at a food distribution in Batey 9 as Alexandra (far right) looks on.

Golf Tournament

We are thankful for all of the golfers & sponsors who helped to make this year's tournament a huge success. Thanks to each of you, we raised \$20,000 for our Food Distribution program, which pays for about 160,000 meals for the families we serve!

Please be sure to show appreciation to our sponsors by purchasing their products and services when you need them. Many of our sponsors have supported the tournament for several years; some have been with us since our first event!

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