



THE LEAST OF THESE  
**MINISTRIES**  
MATTHEW 25:40

Sharing **HOPE**  
amidst poverty.

August 2025



Karelyn with her  
youngest daughter.

## A Ray of Hope in Villa Central

**KARELYN\***, A 29-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MOTHER, carries the weight of the world on her shoulders in the humble community of Villa Central. Her days are a constant struggle to feed her four children: Three daughters, ages 12, 8, and 1, and one 4-year-old son. Worry and sadness have become permanent shadows on her face, especially when her youngest daughter cries from hunger.

During our January mission trip, team members visited Jaime Mota Hospital in Barahona, where they prayed and shared the word of God with patients and their families. The Holy Spirit guided the team toward Karelyn on their visitation rounds. Ricardo saw her sitting on

the side of a bed, her face filled with anguish, while her 1-year-old daughter slept, frail and delicate. "What's wrong with the child?" Ricardo asked. Karelyn replied, "She has too much sugar in her body." Ricardo, confused, asked, "Does she have diabetes?" Karelyn answered, "No," and with a voice barely audible and full of shame, she confessed the painful truth: "She has too much sugar in her body... it's because I give her sugar water in the morning, for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner, because it's all I have to give her." Tears welled up in her eyes, displaying her grief and despair.

They prayed together at that moment, offering Karelyn's soul the hope that God was in control of her baby. Afterward, Ricardo asked for her phone number. However, Karelyn didn't have a cell phone, and the description of her home in Villa Central was so vague it would be almost impossible to locate. They parted with faith that their paths would cross again.

More than a month passed with no success in finding her. Ricardo didn't give up, but the community of Villa Central was large, and finding Karelyn was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Until one day, while Ricardo was assisting with a medical mission team in the same community, a young woman approached him and tapped him on the shoulder. "Hello, do you remember me?" she said. Ricardo's eyes widened with surprise and joy. It was Karelyn! "Of course, I do! I've been looking for you for over a month!" he exclaimed.

*Continued on last page...*



Members of the January team talk with Karelyn  
after praying for her and her daughter.

\*We're using a pseudonym to protect the family's privacy.

## Young Adult Serves, Raises Support

**CORINNE O'CONNOR HAD WANTED TO SERVE** on an international mission team since reading “Kisses from Katie” in sixth grade. The book tells the story of Katie Davis Majors, who moved to Uganda after graduating high school. Katie had visited Uganda on a mission trip in her senior year. Today, Katie lives in Uganda and leads the ministry she founded that supports vulnerable families and children in that country.

Now in her senior year at West Virginia University (WVU), Corinne quickly signed up for a team serving with The Least of These Ministries when she learned of the opportunity at Suncrest United Methodist Church in Morgantown. She was part of the team from Suncrest that served during Thanksgiving week last November. The team poured several concrete floors in residents' homes and was able to support some roof repairs. Team members also participated in Bible School activities in a couple of communities and served with the Food Distribution.

Corinne had done volunteer work and completed service projects since middle school, but November's trip was her first international service experience. She was surprised at the living conditions of many in the communities where the team worked. Yet she witnessed that the families still were happy, many showing appreciation and giving glory to God for what they have.

“It's made me happier, more grateful, for what I have,” Corinne said of her experience serving in the bateys. She said it also has helped her to appreciate more the importance of community—friends & family—over material things. And she sensed God's presence, even amidst the difficult conditions.

Recognizing that much of the work being done in these communities comes with a financial cost, Corinne wanted to raise funds to help the ministry in this work. As a member of the **National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS)**—she was recently elected to serve as President of the WVU Chapter—she embarked on a fundraising journey in conjunction with her Chapter of NSCS.

Through several fundraising activities, the organization raised almost \$400 for The Least of These Ministries! The funds were used to help cover expenses toward connecting electricity to the home built by the April Mission Team. This work will also help with the connection of future homes nearby, increasing the impact of the gift.



*Corinne, pictured with a new friend she made at the worksite during the November 2024 Mission Team.*



According to their website, “NSCS is an honors organization that recognizes and elevates high-achieving students. NSCS provides career and graduate school connections, leadership and service opportunities.” The WVU Chapter is one of over 300 nationwide.

Ms. O'Connor, who is pursuing a degree in Finance, said she hopes to return to serve in the Dominican Republic one day. She also would love to serve somewhere in Africa in the future. We're confident that Corinne will share hope wherever God leads her!



**“TWO PATHS DIVERGED** in a yellow wood and sorry I could not travel both...”; so begins Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken.” Seven years ago I took a path to come on a mission trip to Barahona, Dominican Republic. So many things happened on that trip. I fell in love with a country. I learned so much about The Least of These Ministries. I fell in love with the people here. And with the youth I worked alongside on that trip and their leaders. I also fell in love with the founder of this ministry, Steve Hull. I’m so happy that I had the opportunity to do a mission trip with him.

After participating on several Mission Teams, I felt a strong call from God to stay a year in the country I fell in love with. I’ve now been here six months and God has proven over and over again that this is where I needed to be.

To see the full working of Ministerio Cristiano Amor y Esperanza (how the ministry is known locally) has been an enormous blessing. I love that every week in every weather 14 bateys—plus other places—receive food. Many activities to build up the communities and their churches are also held in these bateys.

We have had mission teams come and again many lives were improved by their hard work and dedication. The next two Mission Team opportunities are scheduled in October and January. Information is below and on our website.

Throughout my ministry I have worked with different ages. What’s wonderful about my time here is that I have the opportunity to work with all ages. I love babies, children, adults, and the ‘wise adults.’

When I began my time here in January, I thought language was going to be a big barrier. At times it has been, but for the most part, no problema!

Facebook is an important tool for me. It keeps me in touch with my family and friends. I recently updated ‘work experience’ on my Facebook profile with ‘Missionary.’ Although I don’t really consider this a job; it’s a calling from God. Every morning and every night I thank God for the opportunity to be here and I ask God to watch over my family.

I also thank God for those who have sponsored me in this journey. If you would like to provide financial support for my last six months here, you may do so through The Least of These Ministries.

With love and thanksgiving, Jacki



*Jacki with friends she met during her first Mission Team with TLOTM in 2018.*

*Jacki Stranathan is a member of the Board of Directors of The Least of These Ministries. She is serving as a Missionary with the organization throughout 2025. Watch our newsletters and Facebook page for updates from Jacki on her ministry in the Dominican Republic.*

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

# MISSION TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

**REGISTER NOW!**

Scan this code with your phone's camera to access information & registration on our website!



*We have two trips planned in the coming months, with much work to be done!*

No experience is needed—only a desire to serve others. Team members are needed to work on the service project, assist kitchen staff at the mission house with meal prep and clean-up, and plan & coordinate kids’ activities.

***How is God calling you to serve?***

Fall Mission Team  
**October 18–25, 2025**

Service project: Framing & drywall construction on the ground floor of the Ministry Hub.  
*May include electrical/network wiring & plumbing.*

Winter Mission Team  
**January 10–17, 2026**

Service project: Depending on team size, we may work on 2nd floor of Ministry Hub and a service project in a batey simultaneously.

Mission Teams will also include opportunities to serve with the daily food distribution ministry, children’s activities, and evangelistic outreach!  
Mission Team participation is \$725 *plus* airfare.

**Register online at [leastofthesemin.org](http://leastofthesemin.org) or call 443-918-7105!**

Karelyn led him to her humble home. Ricardo, with the invaluable help of his friend Chis, who seems to know every corner of Villa Central, arrived directly at the house. The small, bare kitchen with an empty refrigerator confirmed the painful reality Karelyn had shared. Ricardo didn't hesitate: he brought them food and clothes for her children, a small relief for the great burden they carried.

Today, Karelyn's story is a beacon of hope. Ricardo is coordinating with a community pastor to ensure that Karelyn and her family, and perhaps other families in the same situation, receive food regularly.



You can help Karelyn and many other families facing the same need, through your gifts to our Rice & Beans Fund. Every bit of help can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it most!



**"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ...And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"**

—Matthew 25:37, 40 (CSB)

## Sharing Hope through Tributes

### Gifts given in Memory of:

**Barry W. Dahl** *by* Michelle Dahl & William Dahl

**Jorge DuBreuil** *by* Antonio Delgado

**Bob Jones** *by* Charlene Jones

**Peck Kehler** *by* Meg Kehler

### Gifts given in Honor of:

**Debbie & Bob Stewart** *by* Joann Bond

**Jacki Stranathan** *by* Lynda Lockard

**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!**

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