

Casa El Buen Samaritano Offers Hope & Healing

By Yvonne Estrada

In May of 2008, Casa El Buen Samaritano opened its doors to the Hispanic community of Southwest Houston. Casa El Buen Samaritano is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization – a ministry that is was created through a partnership between West University/Crosspoint Church and Iglesia Bautista Horeb.

This ministry began as a vision back in 2004. Lydia Eckhoff, Executive Director of Casa El Buen Pastor, recalls how Barry Landrum, pastor of West University Baptist, “began praying and strategizing about how to start an outreach to the indigent Hispanic population of Southwest Houston.” Landrum knew that a vital factor in building the foundation for this ministry would be to partner with another church already familiar with the community and its needs. These prayers were answered when Landrum was put in contact with Campo Londoño, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Horeb. “When a group of believers from West University Baptist Church and Crosspoint approached me about the possibility of starting a ministry ...I felt that this was an important opportunity, and that I would like to unite and work together with them in this vision,” states Londoño. Iglesia Horeb is devoted to reaching out to the community. Working together with West University Baptist has enabled Iglesia Horeb to immerse itself, even more, into the community of Southwest Houston and live out the love of Christ.

Stephen J. Spann agreed to serve as the clinic’s Medical Director. His position as Sr. Vice President and Dean of Clinic Affairs at Baylor College of Medicine has opened the doors for every visitor to receive “first class medical care from volunteer doctors and other healthcare professionals from the Medical Center and surrounding areas.” Over one hundred patients are seen each month at Casa El Buen Samaritano. The prayer shared by West University Baptist Church and Iglesia Bautista Horeb is that not only physical needs be met but also spiritual needs. God is answering this prayer as Londoño witnesses how “each week our volunteers demonstrate and express the love of God to those who visit us. And God has blessed their efforts because, each week, we see souls coming to the feet of Christ.”

Volunteers from both churches exercise their gifts and serve in this ministry by providing “medical care, spiritual ministry, child care while patients visit the clinic, translation for medical professionals...and facility cleaning at the end of each clinic day.” One of the greatest needs of the Spanish speaking community of Southwest Houston is affordable health care. Lydia Eckhoff shares how, “according to the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services, over fifty percent of Hispanic residents of Harris County cannot afford health insurance. Casa El Buen Samaritano has, truly, been a blessing to this area of Houston. “God has been using the ministry... to reach the lost and to provide quality, compassionate medical care.”

As the ministry enters into 2009, the plans for growth are to “expand both the medical and non-medical programs offered [as well as to develop] more comprehensive ways to follow up with patients who accept Christ and have spiritual needs.” The prayers for 2009 are that spiritually hungry people be led to the clinic; that financial provision be made to meet the needs of the clinic; and that more people be led to volunteer and join the ministry. Londoño shares his heart and prays that “together, we can continue working to make Casa El Buen Samaritano an even greater ministry.”

Financial contributions can be made to Casa El Buen Samaritano, P.O. Box 20487, Houston, Texas 77225-0487. Volunteers are needed in all areas, both medical and non-medical. Lydia Eckhoff can be contacted at 713-400-7519, or by e-mail at casaelbuen@aol.com