

SHARING

newsletter

God opens door for the Gospel through child care program in India

By Elizabeth M. Truong

Children of migrant families in the poverty-stricken neighborhoods of Chennai, India, cannot attend school — even free public schools close to their homes — because they lack basic necessities such as clothing, books and food.

The staff of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School in Chennai noticed that the community's children were suffering from malnutrition, hygiene and health-related maladies. Thanks to gifts from faithful donors these children are now benefiting from an integrated child development program that provides nutritious food and basic health care.

Because of the \$74,000 LCMS mercy grant, a full-time manager and staff can prepare a nutritious breakfast and dinner meal for 85 children each day. Additionally, the staff helps

the children with brushing their teeth, bathing and oiling and combing their hair.

Mr. Eden Prabu, project manager, reports that the parents are very proud of their children's appearance as they head off to school each morning. They are also beginning to realize the importance of a good education and how it opens doors of opportunity for further education and employment for their children.

The majority of children benefiting from this program come from families of tribal, rural and forested regions of India where their livelihood was based on hunting. Hunting bans in place for the last 25 years have forced many families to migrate to Chennai. In this urban center, a city of more than 6 million inhabitants, the migrant families live within an isolated community. The human care and educational ministry — acts of mercy — supported through the integrated child development project have opened hearts and minds to the Gospel.

In addition to food, LCMS grant funds have covered rent at the program centre, cooking supplies, sewing machines used in vocational



More than 85 children are receiving nutritious meals and other health benefits from the integrated child development program in Chennai, India.

training, medical supplies, children's clothing, Christmas gifts, kitchen and office equipment, staff transportation and more.

Children participating in this program have not only had some of their most pressing physical needs met, but for the first time, many of them have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. Through attending a vacation Bible school hosted by Good Shepherd and other congregations of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, they've also been taught Christian hymns and how to pray to the one true God.

We give thanks that God's Word is penetrating the hearts of children and families in Chennai, India, as they experience the love of Christ through these tangible acts of mercy!

To learn more about LCMS work in India, visit www.lcms.org/india.



The LCMS began mission work in India in 1895 with the arrival of missionary Rev. Theodore Naether and his family. It was the Synod's first foreign mission field. Since then, the India Evangelical Lutheran Church has grown into an LCMS partner church body of 50,000 members in nearly 1,000 congregations. The LCMS continues to support mission and mercy efforts in India through theological education, educational consulting and mercy projects.

Give God Glory...

... for LCMS members who give faithfully to LCMS Disaster Response.

Disasters strike swiftly. They can crumble, burn, flood or blow apart buildings and lives in the blink of an eye or over agonizing hours. Total recovery can last years. Long after other relief organizations depart and reporters and cameras disappear, we deliver on the promise of an ongoing presence through both physical and spiritual care.

LCMS Disaster Response is engaged throughout the long journey of recovery, coming alongside the local parish, district or partner church to provide continuing relief months and even years after disaster strikes.

Over the coming months you'll hear more about a creative, efficient approach to the serious business of long-term disaster recovery, the "Ready Reserve Disaster Fund." Today we're challenging you to consider and pray for those who still need ongoing assistance in places like New Orleans, Haiti, Japan, Joplin and Minot.



This Marysville, Ind., family is trying to salvage whatever they can from their tornado-ravaged home.

The mission of the church through LCMS World Relief and Human Care is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

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How Your Gifts Support LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You can help make projects like these possible with your continuing or new gifts to "Where Needed Most." Please use the envelope provided in this issue to send your gift to help LCMS World Relief and Human Care continue to reach out with Christ's mercy around the world. (Note: Thanks to your generous gifts, this publication may occasionally feature projects that have been fully funded.)



Florida church reaches out to Haitian immigrant community

By Elizabeth M. Truong

Salem Haitian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lake Worth, Fla., is well-known for its care of immigrant families in the surrounding areas — especially Haitian immigrants. More than 250,000 Haitian immigrants reside in Florida, and Lake Worth, a city of about 37,000 residents on Florida's Atlantic coast in Palm Beach County, ranks among the top 30 communities with Haitian born residents in the United States.

Located in the midst of a low-income section of Lake Worth, Salem's mercy ministries make the love of Christ known among its neighbors with the goal to "reduce suffering and hopelessness among Haitian immigrants living in Lake Worth and the surrounding areas of South Florida by empowering Haitian residents with the capacity to improve their lives."

Through the generous gifts of LCMS donors, a \$6,000 mercy grant supplemented funding the church received from other sources. The mercy monies support Salem's "Resource Center" which serves the Haitian immigrant community. "We have labored to provide spiritual sustenance and a venue for social and cultural support for Haitian immigrants and their families," wrote the Rev. Elie Louissaint, Salem's pastor. "There is a real need in our community for these services, especially after the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Many of our residents struggle to support themselves and loved ones still in Haiti. Many earthquake victims have arrived in our community and need support in the transition."

Salem has established an emergency food and clothing pantry and conducts food drives during holiday seasons to gather supplies for the pantry. Maxine Duverpile, a 16-year-old, is just one who has benefited from the emergency

food and clothing pantry. Having received food from the pantry for weeks, Duverpile realized that the ministry was in need of additional volunteer help. In grateful response, he now assists the pantry in its food collection and distribution.

Additionally, Salem counts its document and translation services as successful efforts in serving the Haitian community. The staff and volunteers also link many in their care with much needed health care professionals and services.

Through the Resource Center, nearly 20 people have learned to use computers, 10 people are taking piano lessons, 25 have received assistance in applying for food stamps and 100 families are currently receiving food three times per week. Additionally, the congregation has held two health fairs, serving a total 540 people.

Through all the Resource Center does, its staff and volunteers strive to make the love of Christ known in word and deed, connecting those they serve with God's eternal gifts in Word and Sacrament which flow from Salem's altar, font and pulpit.

Learn more about LCMS domestic mercy grants at www.lcms.org/domesticgrants.



Lake Worth, Fla., located to the north of Miami, on Florida's Atlantic coast is a diverse community with a growing Haitian immigrant population.



Haitian children walk down the street together in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in the days following the January 2010 earthquake. Haitian immigration to communities like Lake Worth, Fla., has increased in past two years because of this catastrophic event. Many immigrants arrive with few resources and in need of the assistance provided through ministries like the Salem Lutheran Resource Center.

From the Executive Director

Dear Christian Friends:

"Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!"

In a Lenten sermon based on Matthew 15:21-28 — the account of the Canaanite woman who pleaded with Jesus to heal her daughter — Martin Luther observes, "Christ and His disciples along with the woman in this Gospel exhibit to us an example of love, in that no one acts, prays, and cares for himself but each for others, is also clear enough and worthy of consideration." (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 2, p. 154).

During the season of Lent, the Gospel readings remind us that in the life and passion of Jesus, God withheld nothing in providing for our salvation through the forgiveness of sin and removing the sting of death. Jesus did not live for Himself; rather, He "completely poured forth Himself and withheld nothing from us" (LC, Creed, 26). Every act of mercy, every prayer from His lips, every thought in His heart was for you.

Easter gives us good reason to rejoice and live life abundantly each day! Suffering and death do not and will not get the last word. The Gospel, which gives forgiveness and life in Jesus, is the final word. Alleluia!

As the body of Christ, we act, pray and care for the benefit of others, bringing compassion, relief, prayer and life through God's Word and Sacrament and through tangible acts of mercy. Recognizing that we are all beggars, no different from the Canaanite woman of Matthew's Gospel, we approach Jesus in bold confidence on behalf of others because He has promised to be merciful.

Thank you for your prayers, faithful gifts and kind acts on behalf of others. Our careful planning and work is blessed through you. Together, as the living Savior leads and guides His church where and when He will, we bring His mercy to others.

Peace be with you this Easter season.

Rev. John A. Fale

Interim Co-Executive Director, Office of International Mission
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Mercy forever.