

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests
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Out of the Office and into the Front Lines

By Mirna Ortiz

It was already past midnight on a Friday when our plane arrived in Houston, Texas. Warm, humid air greeted us as we exited the airport half-asleep. We clumsily jumped inside the van, driven by Reach the World Next Door (RWND) Coordinator Pr. Steve Toscano, that would take us to Cedar Shade Retreat.

My husband, Joseph, and I were excited to arrive, prayerfully awaiting the next few days full of activities. You see, an anonymous donor had given a special gift to all of the ASAP office staff and our families to make this mission trip come true. The intention was for us and ASAP's board members to experience firsthand the work that RWND was doing in multicultural, immigrant-dense Houston and, of course, we immediately jumped on board.

The next day started with an early morning united prayer session at Scott and Julie Griswold's home. Afterward, I curiously looked around, trying to recognize which faces matched the voices of board members I had heard over the phone at my desk back at ASAP's home office in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Soon enough there was an icebreaker activity where all of us were able to share and learn each other's names. It was the first of many bonding experiences. As the weekend progressed, we unitedly interceded in prayer for the needs of the people we had come to serve, got better acquainted with each other, and organized Sabbath services to present at area churches.

On Sabbath morning, all fifty of us were divided into groups. One band headed to Rosharon, where they worshiped in the home of Lynetta, a woman who after losing everything in a hurricane dedicated her new house to a church plant reaching Cambodian, Laotian, and Hispanic brethren. Steve and Gabriel Bonds, ASAP's Associate Prayer Coordinator, headed over to a growing Vietnamese church plant that recently got a worship place of its own.

My group visited the Houston International Seventh-day Adventist Church, where we taught the Chinese children to be thankful to Him that first loved them through scripture songs, storytelling, and crafts. A few other team members went door to door, visiting some of the 3,000 Afghan refugee families who have arrived in the area in the last year. They needed to hear of a Friend who will never leave them nor forsake them. The Conroe Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of RWND's strongest supporters and host church for the Rise High refugee Pathfinders group, planned a special event on Sunday for these refugees and provided food baskets for them. This program makes such an impact on their lives that one of the children ran up to Feno, ASAP's Development Assistant, and randomly said with a smile, "I feel safe here."

That night, as we regrouped and fellowshiped, sharing testimony after testimony of our experiences at each of the sites, my heart was filled with a weighty understanding of the role (no matter how mundane) every single ASAP worker plays in making God's love known to those who have never seen nor heard of His transforming power. This experience made working for ASAP more tangible and real than before. God's voice was so clear in my mind saying that this is not man's work but the work of Him who took us from darkness into His marvelous light.

Mirna Ortiz is assistant to the CEO for ASAP Ministries.

World Church Prayer Requests

February 16 - 22, 2024

- Pray for the *Christian Home and Marriage Week* that is ending this Sabbath, February 17th. Pray that the marriages and homes of families in your local church would continue to grow strong and be witnesses for Jesus. For more information, visit: <https://family.adventist.org/2024chmw-ads/>
- Pray for Global Youth Day coming up March 16th. Pray that young people all around the world will "show up" and get involved being the hands and feet of Jesus. To learn more, visit: <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/events-and-projects/global-youth-day-gyd/>
- Pray for your local pastor and his family and children. Pray that God will protect and strengthen his family.
- Pray for your local church elders, deacons, and deaconesses, who often carry much of the load in the local church. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be upon them and give them unity as they work together for the Kingdom.
- Pray that God would raise up more prayer warriors and intercessors to stand in the gap, praying for those in need.