

Reaping Where He's Plowed:

Barnabas Project in action

By David Patten

The most awesome aspect of the second Mary Craig Ministries' sojourn to the Homestead area for the Barnabas Project, held on Sunday, November 23, was the spirit of the place. It was so evident that things had changed since our first visit. Then, Jim and I had nervously requested the permission of Enrique, the chief of the soccer



■ David Patten extends the love of Christ.

league, to distribute items to the farm workers. Now we strolled over to him like old Homestead friends, reminded him of our ministry, and were rewarded by, "Oh, sure, sure." Enrique recalled our earlier visit with a smile and nodded that yes, we could certainly



■ Carlos, David, Joanna, Mary, Gustavo, Marcia, Steve, and Jim (photographer) prepare to head south to Homestead.

occupy the central gazebo area in order to distribute Barnabas items.

It was a beautiful, sunny day to be in the Everglades area, and quite beyond the weather it felt like many strongholds had been broken. Even the carpet of broken



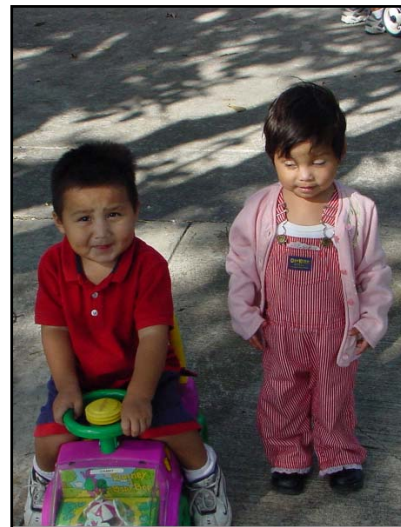
■ Babies find delightful toys.

beer bottles seemed to be diminished, and this time no one was skulking about distributing cult literature. It was clear that our prayers had cleared the way for our Lord to begin His merciful healing work on behalf of the farm workers.

We knew going in that this trip would be different from the first. After all, this time we would distribute the Barnabas Box. It was an important assemblage of largely symbolic, spiritual items.

One of the great blessings of the day was watching the children's eyes light up when they saw the toys,

clothes, and school supplies. The notebooks and pencils and markers seemed to disappear like a few drops of water in the Sahara, so quickly did they disappear. Many of the families had three or more children and it was interesting to see how they sifted together through the items, helping each other. Even



■ Little ones enjoy the day.

with a wealth of material goods that they might have



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squabbled over, the children and adults were polite and orderly in a way that suggested the Lord had extended His hand to encourage peace and prevent chaos.

We met one young boy named Esias. He stood with a key about his neck, and explained that he carried the key with him everywhere. His mother had given it to him, he said, for those occasions when he would come home



■ Our new friends want to say "Hello!"

from school and would be on his own at home. Esias held himself with a maturity and bearing that suggested he had been forced to grow up early. He explained that because



■ Marcia makes sure even the smallest are not ignored.

he was small, other boys would sometimes try to pick on him. He could only let their remarks go on so long, he said, before he lost his temper. Esias said he had trouble with anger, that sometimes it just swept him away. We encouraged him to pray to the Lord to take his wrath away.

And then there was Edeny. Surely no one there that day will ever forget her. Medium height, dark hair, large eyes, and a meekness about her that was becoming.

She had been there at our first Barnabas visit. Too shy to speak to us, she had simply picked up a bag and had

walked off. Unfortunately, she had picked up a bag that was stuffed with coat hangers. Realizing her mistake



■ Joanna explains the purposes of the ministry.

later, she missed her chance to obtain the things that would make her life a little easier. So when she saw that Mary Craig had returned, she came back to explain what had happened to the bag of coat hangers. Mary Craig chose to present the Barnabas Box to Edeny, whose name, she said, came from Eden.



■ There was no lack of excitement, thanks to our generous contributors.

That day, as we were cleaning up and getting ready to leave, with another successful Barnabas visit behind us, Edeny lingered. Where could she find a church? She asked. Did we know of a church where



■ Mary encouraged many with friendship.

she could get to know this Jesus?



Several of us began to discuss how we might help Edeny find a good church. But Mary stepped for-



■ Betty Patten provided Bibles in Spanish.

ward. "Do you want to get to know Jesus? You can get to know Jesus right now." "Yes," Edeny said. "Please."

As the sun of the Everglades warmly smiled upon us, and as the distant thuds of kicked soccer balls echoed, you could almost hear the angels singing in the heavenly realms, as Mary led Edeny in a prayer and she gave her heart to the Lord.

Afterward, we talked with Edeny for a while until it was time to go. Then we piled into our vehicles to head east, to see first-hand if Robert's



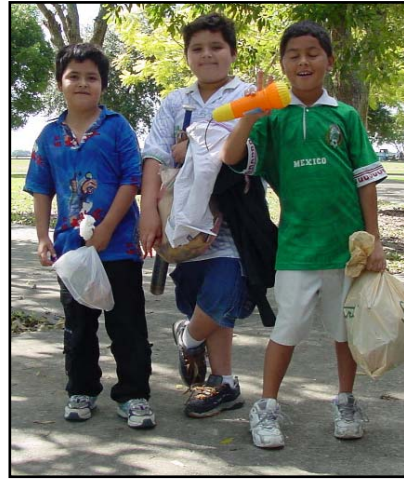
■ Edeny has a new personal relationship, with Jesus Christ.



■ Pastor Jim and Mary are thankful for the Lord's grace.



key lime milkshakes were all that the roadside signs had claimed them to be. The fertile rows of crops saluted as we drove past.



■ The boys were blessed too.

In a land of soybeans and corn and strawberries and alfalfa, lives had been touched by God. Souls had been saved. And a new



■ Families were delighted to receive much needed clothes, shoes, toys and supplies.

harvest had begun. ■

www.marycraig.org

Please, will you check it out too?

