

'Happy Faces' Gives Children Reason to Smile

Ministry to Children in Poverty

Children from all different backgrounds confront various challenges because of their environment. Happy Faces Youth Ministry at the First Spanish Baptist Church, located near Camden, N.J., works to aid Hispanic children in any way possible. Originally a dream for church members, this unique ministry became a reality in October 2000 and is still thriving today. As Pastor José Vélez explains, the success of Happy Faces comes from the involvement of volunteers and caring adults.



The goal is to serve children, youth and families, and to preach the gospel in a dynamic and exciting way. Thanks to the growth of Happy Faces, the church now has a van available to transport children to worship services and other activities. Many fun programs and events for the kids are held weekly, monthly and annually. "We offer activities that help our kids relate to God and the church," Pastor Vélez says.

The following is from a letter written by volunteers John and Jodi Eaglesham: "We had a brief tour with the group to get a firsthand look at some of the kids' homes. Examples of living conditions for the children, both physically

and mentally, were more heart wrenching when we saw them in person...They really look forward to going to the church, and for some it is the only love, not to mention food, that they get that day."

Their faces lit up as the children posed for a picture holding up signs: "Jesus Loves Us." Their smiles give away this ministry's name!

Visit www.nationalministries.org/children for information about opportunities to address the issue of Children in Poverty.



"I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, 'Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand.'" - Romans 15:20-22 (NRSV)

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Visit www.nationalministries.org/CIP for information about opportunities to address the issue of Children in Poverty.



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