

Hands and Feet Medical Missions



HANDS AND FEET MEDICAL MISSIONS BEGAN AS AN INITIATIVE OF THE BAPTIST STUDENT MINISTRY AT UTMB SHORTLY AFTER HURRICANE IKE RAVAGED GALVESTON ISLAND. Remembering that God calls us to look beyond ourselves, even in times of need, we took our first trip in March 2009 to the US-Mexico border to offer free medical care, prayer and a word of hope for all we met. Since our beginnings, our work has been led by students. Starting with students at the University of Texas Medical Branch, and expanding to other medical and health professional schools around Texas, we have taken more than 5 trips, seen over 500 patients, involved over 150 students from a variety of schools, helped bring 6 new families to church for the first time.

At present students comprise separate leadership structures at UTMB and Texas A&M. These leaders plan and lead mission trips every other month, alongside the regular duties of diligently preparing to lead in the medical and health fields in the coming years and decades. We expect to help students at the Texas Medical Center in Houston and at Texas Tech develop similar leadership structures to implement their own chapters of Hands and Feet Medical Missions. In all of our campuses, we seek to involve as many different programs as is possible. At UTMB, for example, the Clinical Lab Science and Physical Therapy departments support the work of Hands and Feet in conjunction with the Global Health Program through providing faculty, students and clinical hardware.

Hands and Feet Medical Missions seeks to partner with anyone and everyone who would be willing to help us accomplish the work we feel called to do. We set up clinics in churches in Laredo, staying in the homes of church members. Faculty and community physicians from Dallas, Houston and Galveston, along with nurses, physical therapists and pharmacists have supported and made our work possible.

Also, we would be remiss if we did not express extreme appreciation to the Moody Methodist Permanent Endowment Fund for a very generous grant to alleviate the cost of trips to our students. In addition to this generous grant, we have received wonderful financial support from FBC Galveston, and generous private donors.

What we do in Laredo:

The typical weekend proceeds as follows:

Friday afternoon we spend driving down to Laredo. Frequently students will study together during this time, as they all have busy schedules and make academic sacrifices in order to serve God and the patients we see.



Saturday morning we share in a little devotional time and prayer before opening clinic and seeing patients during the day. We pray and plan for our clinics to support the outreach and evangelism efforts of local churches. Saturday evening we worship together, share in a devotional and reflect on where we saw God moving during the day, and how we were affected.

Sunday we join our partnering congregation for Sunday morning worship service, and begin the seven hour trek back home. We always stop at Buc-ees before arriving back around 9pm that evening.

We see our work as an effort to partner with local congregations, and share in fellowship with them. We stay with families of the church we partner with and enjoy

their hospitality the whole weekend. This is regularly a student-favorite aspect of the trips.

Currently we take these trips every other month. Each trip there has been an increase in the numbers of students interested in coming along.

What it has meant for our school:

Hands and Feet began in the beginning of 2009 with just a few students interested and committed to developing an organization to promote missions and outreach among UTMB, and helping support the work of local churches in outreach and evangelism in their local communities along the border.

While we began with a few committed students, and our first trip brought around 18 students, we have since grown to over 50 students per trip. There are students who are interested in coming on our trips, and who have come on our trips, who do not identify themselves as religious or even necessarily spiritual. The fellowship of believers and the demonstration of our core conviction that God gifts us in order to bless other people provide a contagious environment for these students to learn about the gospel.

We have gatherings to promote the sense of unity and fellowship among students when they are not "doing" missions. Our goal is to help grow a community and a culture in which missions just make sense, and students are exposed to opportunities to experience a calling in medical missions.

These trips and the fellowship they help foster also provides interdisciplinary education for students across the different health and medical fields taught and represented at UTMB. Students experience the joy of using their education, and learning why their education is important to the work of God in the world.

Future Expansion



College of Medicine and Texas Tech. We have since begun partnering with these schools to help them begin Hands and Feet chapters at their own campuses.

Interest in expanding to other schools has come from students at other schools who have requested to come on our trips, and the awareness that it could benefit those communities also. At present, we have received requests from students at Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Texas Health Science Center, Texas A&M Galveston, Texas A&M