



## Following the God Vision: The Refuge House in Armona

Aaron and Alyssa Haley

5 years ago, my husband I were both teaching in Armona and noticed everyday after school, kids were walking the streets, sometimes even late at night. After much prayer, God laid it on our hearts to begin "Open Gym". We opened the community center a few days per week during the summer so kids could spend time off the streets. Our main goal was to build positive relationships with the students. That first summer we had about 30 kids a day. When school started back, we opened the gym twice a month to give the kids a meal and let them hang out with their friends in a safe place. At this time we averaged 70 students.

Year 3, after praying for God's plan we shifted our Open Gym night to a youth ministry called **Refuge**. The definition of Refuge is a safe place, our goal this whole time. We spend the first 45 minutes serving kids through sports, crafts and board games. Followed by a 15-minute Bible-based message ending with a time of prayer for those students who want it—an average of 25 kids ask for prayer each week. We

feed the kids pizza and ice cream and have raffles for cool prizes like sports or snacks they love. We have Bibles available for students to keep and provide Refuge shirts for each student. We stress to them, no matter what they go home to, we are a Refuge family, God's family, and He has a big plan for each one of our lives. We currently average 170 kids each night!

Over the year we noticed a need for more than a twice a month ministry. There are kids who come to school hungry, dirty and in need of help with school as no one is home to help. Recognizing this need has birthed our dream for **Refuge House**, a dedicated safe place for students to come between the hours of 3-8pm. We provide homework help and a simple

meal. We have a non-perishable food room where students can take home food they may need. A clothing closet with shoes, jackets, socks and other essential clothing items they may not have.



We plan to open our doors this September! There are

still many preparations that need to happen for us to open on time. We are trusting God will continue to pave the way.

We will have a work day July 20, 8am-12pm at the Refuge House. Email [chad@kchanford.com](mailto:chad@kchanford.com) to get more information.

Follow our story at [facebook.com/refugeyoutharmona](https://facebook.com/refugeyoutharmona) or email [chad@kchanford.com](mailto:chad@kchanford.com) for more information on how to get involved.

## Monthly Missions Support

**Local Partners** The King's Pantry | Hanford Jail Ministry | Crossroads Pregnancy Center | Episcopal Soup Kitchen | Youth For Christ | King's Gospel Mission | Samuel's House

**Global Partners** Helping Hands, Mexico | Victory Bible College, Ethiopia | Acton Family, Mozambique | Refugee Crisis, e3 & YWAM | Tamayo Family, Taiwan | School of Transformation | NETCA, Taiwan | Care India, Southern India

## Pray for our Baja Team

¡Viva La Mexico! We have a team leaving for Baja, July 27-August 2, to participate in the yearly trip to La Roca (The Rock) Church. A small church supported by Helping Hands Ministry. Helping Hands is overseen by Blake and Rena Cromwell (former lead Pastors of Koinonia). The heart of this ministry is to spread the Gospel and educate children about Jesus Christ by providing meals and a safe place for children to play. We have partnered with Helping Hands for over 10 years and have grown close to this ministry.



### Join us in praying for this team:

- Gospel to take root in the hearts of the people
- The VBS they will lead
- Work projects
- Women's Conference
- Team safety and health

## Making a Difference in the Local Homeless Community

I heard a saying a few weeks ago that keeps playing in my head and seems to be true: Proximity creates compassion and distance creates distortion. The story changes the

closer you get to a situation and you start to humanize and look at the situation with compassion, rather than look at it from a disconnected distance.

Dave Clevenger and the team at Kings Gospel Mission are one way we can bring homelessness in our community closer in proximity to us.

They are familiar with the men and women on the streets and know the answer is going to take time, love and creativity. So far Dave and his team have been able to create not only safe environments but also create a sense of purpose.

The Kings Gospel Mission have a recycling Center in Armona, a Thrift Store in Hanford, and a new project, Rescue Ragz. These avenues of revenue give men at the mission an opportunity to work, giving them a sense of confidence and helps pay for the men's living costs. It's a very practical way of approaching the issue of homelessness. Rescue Ragz is genius! Men in the home take all the clothes they can't sell at the Thrift Store, wash them and cut them into rag-sized pieces and repackage them to sell. I've tested the product out for myself and they are great lint free rags to use. If KGM is able to sell 200 rolls a week they can support 4 jobs. Just imagine if our whole community got into the idea of buying rags to not only employ homeless men, but to fund an organization that is putting hard work into getting these men back functioning in society.

Let's get a little closer with Dave and his team. Maybe closer for you is buying rags on a regular basis. Maybe it is recycling cans at their recycling facility. Maybe it has nothing to do with



your resources and instead involves your time volunteering. Whatever your "closer" looks like—go for it!

Visit [kingsgospelmission.org](http://kingsgospelmission.org) to get details about what an impact they are having on our community. You can also email [chad@kchanford.com](mailto:chad@kchanford.com) to get involved.

You can purchase Rescue Ragz at their thrift store downtown; 126 W 7th St. Hanford.

## GO

Join a Koinonia Missions Team and serve. Mission team applications and brochures are available at Guest Services.

## PRAY

Pray for the missionaries and ministries we support. Those working in ministries both local and global, face unique challenges and need our prayer support.

## GIVE

Give to the ministries and missionaries we support. To give to missions, write "Missions" on your check or tithe envelope.