

# Generosity

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

## ETERNAL IMPACT

The ability to be generous begins with preparation. Houston's First members learned that near painless preparation brought a great deal of peace and the knowledge that their Kingdom building would continue for generations.

Death and taxes, according to Ben Franklin, are the only two certainties in life, and most people don't like planning for either one.

"We started collecting grandkids," joked Bob Farrell, a member at the Cypress Campus of Houston's First, who with his wife Andi, took advantage of the church's relationship with PhilanthroCorp to test the waters of estate planning. Though they had never thought of it before, a well-timed conversation introduced them to the organization and the idea of protecting their assets, their beneficiaries and the church.

"We wanted to structure our assets in a way that would benefit our children and continue our charitable giving when our will goes into effect," said Bob.

Young couples can also benefit from estate planning so they can rest assured their children are adequately cared for in the event of an untimely death.

In 2012, Houston's First began working with PhilanthroCorp, a leader in estate planning that guides families in managing their estate assets in a way that reflects their desired legacy. Each summer the company leads a seminar at Houston's First, "Biblical Principles of Estate Planning," to discuss the biblical and practical aspects of having a will, life insurance and legal documents related to health and longevity. Formal estate planning is provided year-round to Houston's First members at no cost to them, and neither the church nor PhilanthroCorp ever solicits bequest donations.



"God made it clear to us that he wanted us to be part of Houston's First," said Andi. "The growth Bob and I have experienced and the people we've met here — we want to make sure that others have the opportunities we have had. We want our resources to continue growing the kingdom of God."

Andi and Bob appreciated the knowledge and professionalism of the consultant as he talked through each issue and created a flexible plan that allows them to rearrange or add charities to their portfolio. The advice and step-by-step instructions for their children, who range in age from 28 to 45, give the Farrells comfort that everything is in place. "The information comes to us put together in a nice box," said Bob. "The kids can even call them if they need to have questions answered."

Advancing the cause of Christ is important to Bob and Andi, and they want their legacy to reflect their devotion to God's kingdom, especially to their children. "We want them to know how important God's work is to us," said Andi. "This is our opportunity to show them."

## WHAT IS YOUR GENEROSITY STORY?

Share it at [HoustonFirst.org/MyStory](https://HoustonFirst.org/MyStory).

## MINISTRY IMPACT YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS FROM JAN 1, 2015 TO DEC 31, 2015

### DECISIONS

1,069 New Church Members  
197 Joined By Baptism

18% OF NEW MEMBERS  
WERE BAPTIZED

### ATTENDANCE

233,122 in Life Bible Studies  
(4,662 weekly average)  
280,294 in Worship Services  
(5,385 weekly average)  
32,700 on Webcast  
(647 weekly average)

### MISSIONS

33 Mission Trips with  
2,163 Team Members



### GENEROSITY

7,326 Givers to Great Commission Giving  
2,053 were First-Time Givers

28% OF GIVING WAS A  
FIRST TIME GIFT

## NEWS + UPDATES

Houston's First Baptist Church is a relevant, biblical community where we **gather our hearts**, **grow our souls** and **give our lives** as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

TWEET OF THE WEEK: So blessed to be at @passion268 w/ my church fam this evening! #makeJesusfamous @HoustonFirst — Joshua Green, @greenjoshua13

### ALL CAMPUSES

**HighPoint Bible Study**  
**Wednesdays @ 11:30a — 1010 Lamar (Tunnel Level)**  
This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everybody! This week, Lee Hsia will be teaching. Bring your lunch, or purchase one there for \$8. The lesson begins at 12:10p. Visit [HoustonFirst.org/HighPoint](https://HoustonFirst.org/HighPoint) to learn more.  
**CONTACT Diane.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org**

**Deacons' Meetings & Church Conference**  
**Today — The Loop**  
The Deacon Administrative meeting is at 2:30p in Rm 501/502. All Deacons will meet at 3:30p in Rm 504/505 followed by the monthly Church Conference at 4:30p. Anyone may attend the Church conference, but only church members may vote.

**First Place 4 Health Orientation**  
**Thu, Jan 14 @ 6:30-7p and Sun, Jan 17 @ 4-5p**  
**The Loop (Rm 258)**  
Learn more about this Christ-centered weight-loss program focusing on emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellness. First Place 4 Health classes are Jan 19-Apr 7, 2016. Register at [HoustonFirst.org/Events](https://HoustonFirst.org/Events).  
**CONTACT Debbie.Brown@HoustonFirst.org**

**Stephen Ministry Training Class**  
**Applications due Wed, Jan 20**  
Stephen Ministry training equips members through 50 hours of classes to come alongside individuals who are experiencing loneliness, relationship difficulties, loss, divorce, grief or spiritual crises in their lives. To become a Stephen Minister, apply at [HoustonFirst.org/PastoralCare](https://HoustonFirst.org/PastoralCare). Classes begin Jan 20 on Wednesday evenings during MidLink at The Loop.  
**CONTACT Denise.Munton@HoustonFirst.org**

### WOMEN

**The Table**  
**Tuesdays, Feb 2-Mar 8 @ 6:30-8p — The Loop**  
Come, experience the presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit as women from across Houston join together ready to embrace the hope and provision found through the Word. Teachers Kay Altic, Kelly Matte, and Star Smith will lead us as we 'dine' together and see how Jesus is MORE than enough! Invite others at [HoustonFirst.org/Events](https://HoustonFirst.org/Events).  
**CONTACT Carolyn.ONeal@HoustonFirst.org**

### MEN

**Warrior's Heart**  
**Thursdays @ 6:30-7:30a — The Loop (Garden Rm)**  
This spring we will continue our *Great Men of Faith* series as we look at men who show faith in all types of situations. We will begin with a seven-week session led by Russell Minick. Breakfast is available for \$5. Registration at [HoustonFirst.org/Men](https://HoustonFirst.org/Men) is encouraged, but not required.  
**CONTACT Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org**

**Men: Serve**  
**Sat, Jan 23 @ 8a-1p — The Loop (Oasis Rm)**  
Men will gather at The Loop Campus then go out in teams around the city to serve the widows of our church family. Yard work, home repairs, car maintenance, and other tasks — there is a place for you to serve! Register by Fri, Jan 15, at [HoustonFirst.org/Events](https://HoustonFirst.org/Events). If you are a widow in need of assistance, contact Sherry Oradat at 713.957.6764.  
**CONTACT Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org**

### THE LOOP

**Milestones & MidLink Preview Night**  
**Wed, Jan 20 @ 6:30-8p**  
Come for a soup and chili dinner at MidLink Cafe (4:45-6:15p) followed by worship led by Elevate Student Worship and a presentation by Dwight Edwards, pastor, speaker, and best-selling author. After that, discover opportunities for growth and discipleship through Milestones during an Open House. Preschool, Children, and Student programming starts that night, too! Milestones classes officially begin the following week.  
**CONTACT Courtney.Schisler@HoustonFirst.org**

### YOUNG SINGLES

**Desire: Summit Women's Conference**  
**Fri, Jan 15-Sat, Jan 16 — The Loop (Oasis Rm)**  
How do we navigate our desires for His honor and our best? Keynote speaker Kori DeLeon will focus her remarks on God's passion, plan, and power to transform people into His beautiful likeness. Register for \$30 until Thu, Jan 14, at [HoustonFirst.org/Events](https://HoustonFirst.org/Events).  
**CONTACT Sherrie.Brown@HoustonFirst.org**

### CYPRESS

**MARRIED YOUNG ADULTS**  
**3-Day Marriage Clinic**  
**Jan 11-13 @ 12-6p — Cypress Ministry Center**  
Though couples experience different symptoms such as anger, resentments, and withdrawal, the root problem is usually the same: violating one or more of 25 Essential Marriage Skills Dr. Karl Elkins has identified in the Bible. Elkins, from Christway Counseling Center, will lead a 3-day marriage clinic to explore these essential marriage skills, which provides the equivalent of 18 weeks of counseling in just three days! Register, for just \$75 per couple at [HoustonFirst.org/Cypress](https://HoustonFirst.org/Cypress).  
**CONTACT Greg.Curnutte@HoustonFirst.org or 713.335.6465.**

### DOWNTOWN

**Time Management for Differencemakers**  
**Every Wed, Jan 20-Feb 10 @ 7-8:30p**  
**Vine Street Studios (1113 Vine St., Ste 117)**  
In this day and age, many of us struggle with balancing work and rest, often running out of time to do what is most important as Differencemakers. During this four-session class, we will learn Bible-based principles and practical applications for calendar planning, time budgeting, important versus urgent tasks, and taking of the Sabbath. Register at [HoustonFirst.org/Downtown](https://HoustonFirst.org/Downtown).  
**CONTACT Lee.Hsia@HoustonFirst.org**

### SIENNA

**We Must Protect Our House**  
**Sundays, Jan 17-Mar 13 @ 9:30a — NextGen Suite 220B**  
As parents/protectors we have to be aware of the dangers that lurk around every corner and we must be prepared to "protect our house." Life Bible Study teacher and former law enforcement official Mike Pankurst will lead this special eight-week study designed to equip and prepare parents to observe, identify and react to adversaries' attacks.  
**CONTACT Jordan.Floro@HoustonFirst.org**

### SPANISH

**Worship & Life Bible Studies**  
**Sundays @ 5p & 6:30p - Oasis Room**  
We invite you to come worship with us in Spanish and hear Pastor Gregg's message in Spanish or English! After the service, join our Life Bible Studies where you will fellowship with others and learn more about living a Christ-centered life.  
**CONTACT Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonFirst.org**



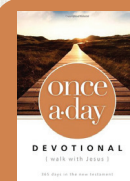
### SPRING MISSION TRIPS

Interested in a 2016 mission trip? For trip details and to complete an interest form, visit online at [HoustonFirst.org/Missions](https://HoustonFirst.org/Missions).  
Spring trips include:  
• California (Bay Area): Feb 24-28  
• Costa Rica (Family Trip): Mar 12-19  
• NYC (Easter): Mar 23-27  
• NYC (IT Trip): April 8-13  
• Brazil: May 11-16  
• Cambodia: May 12-22  
**CONTACT Ameer.Omar@HoustonFirst.org**

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

**Every Wed, beginning Jan 13 @ 6:30-9:30p**  
**The Loop (Reception Rm)**  
Perspectives helps believers from all walks of life see how they can be weaved into God's story of redeeming people to Himself. In this 15-week course your eyes will be opened to the heart and purpose of God, and how you can take part in His work.  
**CONTACT Peggy.Meeks50@gmail.com**

For more information on Giving Life Away, contact [Charlotte.Nease@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Charlotte.Nease@HoustonFirst.org)



### 2016 DEVOTIONAL

Pastor Gregg recommends the *Once-A-Day Walk with Jesus Devotional* for our church family to use in 2016. The 365 daily entries allow you to read through the New Testament in one year. Each day includes a Scripture portion, insight from a Christian writer of the past, and a personal application and worship portion. The devotional is available from CornerBooks for \$15.



# FROM FITNESS TO FAITH



### MORE STORIES:

TREASURE IN  
JARS OF CLAY

WE SAID YES  
ETERNAL IMPACT

JAN 10, 2016

### SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

**The Loop Campus**  
7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024  
Worship 9:15a-11a-5p  
Life Bible Studies 8a-9:15a-10:45a-6:30p

**Cypress Campus**  
10300 Warner Smith Blvd • Cypress, TX 77433  
Worship 9:30a-11a  
Life Bible Studies 9:30a-11a

**Downtown Campus**  
1010 Lamar • Houston, TX 77002  
Worship 11a  
Life Bible Studies 9:30a

**Sienna Campus**  
4309 Sienna Pkwy • Missouri City, TX 77459  
Worship 9:30a-11a  
Life Bible Studies 9:30a-11a

**Spanish Campus**  
7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024  
Worship 5p  
Life Bible Studies 6:30p



# FROM FITNESS TO FAITH

God is amazingly creative — and often unconventional — when drawing hearts to His Son.  
Who would consider a fitness facility the ideal place to meet Christ, or to discover one’s purpose for life or ministry?

“Growing up, no one ever told me I was created for a purpose,” said Debbie Brown, Fitness Ministry Associate at Houston’s First Fitness and Recreation Center (FRC) at The Loop Campus. Debbie’s journey to establish a relationship with Christ, find her life purpose and discover a God-appointed ministry would cover uncertain and painful paths.

A child of the ‘60s, Debbie recalls her paternal grandmother being the only churchgoer in the family. But the small town, one-room church held little allure for young Debbie. “My family got off track,” said Debbie. Family vacations included time spent with members of a rock band, which contributed to her alcohol and drug use as a teen. Having little godly guidance, graduation day came and Debbie had absolutely no idea what to do with her life.

“My dad said I needed to do something and suggested community college,” said Debbie. “Learning didn’t come easy, so I didn’t want to go to college. My heart’s desire was to be married, but I had no dates in high school; I never even went to the prom. Those scars ran deep.”

Not yet 20 years old, Debbie met a young man where she worked as a waitress at a Holiday Inn nightclub. He was bound for the Texas oilfields and encouraged her to pack her bags and follow him to Palestine, Texas. “It was worse than the small town I came from,” she said. The relationship didn’t pan out and Debbie moved to Houston, which she immediately loved.

Life began to stabilize after meeting Denny, 20 years her senior and the man she would eventually marry. “Denny thought his life was over after his second wife left him,” Debbie recalls. “He told me he believes God dropped me on his doorstep.”

Debbie began longing for home about the time she turned 25. “I began realizing how important my parents were,” she said. In the meantime, a neighbor invited Debbie to teacher Beth Moore’s Life Bible Study. Debbie never set foot in a worship service until five years later, but began attending Beth’s aerobics class at Houston’s First. “God meets us where we are,” she said. “The Holy Spirit started drawing me to God.”

Her mother was not well, and Debbie and Denny discussed moving to West Virginia so they could reconnect with her family. But before they could move, Debbie’s mother took her own life on the day after her forty-fourth birthday. Debbie and Denny moved anyway. Six months after her mother’s death Debbie’s churchgoing grandmother passed away. Within a couple of years of her mother’s death, Debbie learned she was pregnant with Jessica, Debbie and Denny’s only child. “I recalled thinking I finally had a purpose in life,” said Debbie.

After moving back to Houston, Debbie attended worship at Houston’s First for the very first time. She heard hymns that took her back to the little church where her grandmother had dragged her as a child. The message of the cross of Christ changed her life.

Beth Moore inspired and counseled Debbie in Beth’s aerobics class and Life Bible Study, where Debbie’s faith walk began taking top priority. God was at work putting all the pieces together on behalf of the FRC and for Beth’s fledgling writing and speaking

ministry. Debbie was in the class the day Beth announced that God was leading her home to begin writing Bible studies.

Beth’s departure created a hole in the instructor schedule and Houston’s First staff member Diane Bagby took charge of the program. For three months she prayed for a fitness instructor and Debbie fit the bill. She taught classes until her family moved back to West Virginia the following year. Teaching aerobics was becoming Debbie’s ministry.

Debbie began directing the Fitness Ministry at Houston’s First after returning to Houston in 1996, and she began teaching a variety of classes which now include Bible study for members and non-members alike.

Amie Koroncok moved to Houston four years ago and began teaching yoga and relaxation classes for cancer patients in the Medical Center. While living in Dallas, Amie had had a “falling out” with God after a few major disappointments. “I got mad at God and depressed,” said Amie. “I felt stagnant and lost contact with Him.”

A Christian man she began dating while living in Dallas proved to be a turning point in her spiritual life when he told her he could no longer date her because they were “unequally yoked.” Amie’s relationship with God in some ways mirrored the

relationship with her dad. Looking for affirmation from him since her parents’ divorce at age 12 fostered in her low self-worth.

A weekend Christian retreat with her stepmother began soul mending toward her father as the speaker’s message focused on forgiveness. Amie decided to act on the many invitations from a neighbor to attend Houston’s First and immediately found the FRC. She contacted Debbie about teaching, and their first meeting was an emotional one. Amie noticed a book on Debbie’s floor — the very one she had just ordered, but hadn’t received. Debbie explained it was the new Bible study she would be leading in conjunction with an upcoming fitness class. Amie took it as a sign.

Amie learned more about what it meant to be a Christian, but felt some confusion about what it truly meant. “Am I missing something?” she asked Debbie and another fitness instructor at a second meeting. Amie received the answers she needed and prayed to receive Christ. “I got the peace that I needed that day,” she said.

As her faith in Christ grew, Amie reevaluated her methods of teaching yoga. Growing increasingly uncomfortable with the spiritual nature and self-focus of the practice, she has refocused her teaching on its physical benefits. “I teach yoga because it feels good — it’s calming,” she said. “The relaxation part of yoga is a good time to pray, after you expend your body.”

Amie substitutes now as an FRC fitness instructor and has also found a way to practice faith in her workplace. She plays Christian music during her classes, something she would never have done months ago. While counseling patients taking chemotherapy, instead of hypnosis she offers to read to them from the Scriptures. “My whole focus has changed,” said Amie. “I realized I had not trusted God. I’ve changed a lot of things about the way I teach.”

# TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY

God calls ordinary people to the front lines each week to deliver God’s extraordinary message of life and hope.  
Is 2016 the year you can make a difference in Life Bible Study leadership? Here are some who are...



**Joe and Nancy DeLorenzo** began “teaching” by ministering to their two oldest grandchildren, Sophia and Jack, who both have cystic fibrosis, when they were babies. “We rolled them around in strollers in the lobby while their parents went to church,” said Joe. As they got older and strong enough to be around other children, the DeLorenzos followed them into the Preschool ministry as Life Bible Study teachers. “It’s a critical time in the lives of children to plant seeds,” said Joe. “They’re becoming little people instead of babies.”

Two more grandchildren, Grant and Paige, came along and the DeLorenzos are still teaching after eight years. “Nancy was the driving force behind our involvement,” said Joe. “She’s been the teacher all these years.”

This summer, Nancy suffered a severe stroke, but while she was rehabilitating from surgery, Joe attended his post each Sunday morning. Nancy was able to come back to church for the first time in early December. “We will see where God leads us from here,” said Joe.

**Brandon James’** call to teach was dramatic and came as a result of a low period in his life. Depressed and not knowing what direction to turn, Brandon had come to the end of his faith — and his desire to live.

“My faith had failed,” he said. “What I had learned in childhood about God was not necessarily true.” On the brink of suicide, Brandon heard an announcement about Counseling Center sessions at the Cypress Campus of Houston’s First and decided to check it out.

“Depression was like being in a dark cave,” he explained. “The counselor led me through Scriptures and had me repeat them out loud over several months. I was speaking truth, and prayer gave me hope.”

After a number of months of prayer and counseling, God led Brandon to share his story with Life Bible Study leadership. Next, he shared his story with the rest of the class. Unity, a new class, was formed in 2013 with Brandon as teacher. “One of the co-teachers has been in prison and another has a really tough past,” said Brandon. “I’m stunned at the things I’ve overlooked by just flying over Scripture. Teaching has caused me to go to greater depths. People are responding to God as I’ve been vulnerable to share my story.”



**Chris and Tara Read** have four children and a dental practice, and yet they have had the energy and enthusiasm to direct a Life Bible Study for half a decade. “We have a desire to serve,” said Tara. “We were taken out of our comfort zones and have grown a lot as a result of committing ourselves to leadership.”

Directing the class has helped them keep their priorities straight and kept them accountable as the challenge of raising children can sometime be a distraction to serving outside the family unit.

Before directing Saved 2 Serve, the couple spent the prior year leading a small group. “We were never responsible for the wellness of the class as we are now,” she said. “Directing has given us a chance to know our classmates better and to let them know, ‘Hey, I’ve been praying for you,’” she said.

**Rhett Dotson** began filling in time to time as his regular Life Bible Study teacher needed time to prepare for upcoming lesson series. “I usually taught on something I was passionate about,” he said. “I got great feedback and began teaching more often.” He attended Midnight Madness, a training opportunity for Life Bible Study leadership, and received some valuable resources he didn’t know were available for part-time teachers.

“Midnight Madness offered me good principles for leading a class,” said Rhett. “I learned how to ask the right questions and got an understanding of the resources available for teachers.”

Retaining more of the lessons of the Bible when teaching rather than being a passive listener is a most often quoted benefit. “Bible principles become ingrained in your heart when preparing a lesson,” he says. “You get a much deeper insight into the Word when you have to deliver it to others.”

Rhett encourages others to attend Midnight Madness for their own personal development. “You never know when you might be in a situation of leading in a small group,” he says. “A small group is the place I developed a new appreciation for the Word of God.”



**Dena Lee** always wanted to teach the Bible, but thought she didn’t know enough. “My teaching is a case of God equipping the called, not calling the equipped,” said Dena. She was involved in a singles class and became co-director, and got her first teaching assignment in a single ladies’ class after Women’s Ministry Director Carolyn O’Neal began encouraging her. In 2002, she filled in for Dayspring, a women’s class, for a year after the teacher stepped down. She’s been there ever since.

Knowing your spiritual gifting is the first step in understanding God’s place and purpose, according to Dena. A free spiritual gift assessment is available for members to help point to their innate giftedness and a place of service at [HoustonFirst.org/SpiritualGifts](http://HoustonFirst.org/SpiritualGifts).

“I tell the women in my classes: you were created for a purpose,” said Dena. “It’s never too late to understand your purpose and to follow it. As long as you’re breathing, God’s not through with you.”

# WE SAID YES

Houston’s First has been a friend to “the least of these” since the church was established nearly 175 years ago.  
As Houston has grown, so have the needs of people who now call it home. God is raising new leaders from Houston’s First and opening up new facilities across the city to meet those needs.

Since opening its doors in 2008, the Faith Center on Long Point Road in Spring Branch has provided for many tangible needs needs near The Loop Campus. As refugees have been resettled in Houston, God is using programs like Houston 1:8, the “stay-at-home mission trip,” and people like Houston’s First members Megan and JP Johnson to meet needs across the city. The young couple has been on the forefront of establishing the new Faith Center-Harwin in Southwest Houston, serving refugees primarily from Bhutan, Burma and Nepal — many of whom lived in tent camps before coming to the United States.

“We are reaching the nations,” said Megan. “We are blessed with many resources, so God is bringing the nations to us!”

Three years ago during the Houston Project, since renamed Houston 1:8, Megan and JP were asked to join another couple from their Life Bible Study as assistant site leaders. When the leaders had to relocate to another city, the Johnsons were put in charge of an inner-city site. That baptism by fire developed in them a love for international missions.

After the site leader assignment, the Johnsons registered for a three-hour class, “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement.”

“The ‘Perspectives’ class was life-changing,” said Megan. “It helped us to see God’s heart for unreached people.” Many of the people they began ministering to had come from the 10-40 window (regions of the eastern hemisphere, plus the European and African part of the western hemisphere, located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator), a part of the globe whose residents have been widely unreached by the Gospel.

Megan and JP began ministering at Los Arcos apartment community, an international refugee site. When apartment management shut down the program, they searched and discovered a similar community at SunBlossom Mountain on Ranchester Street near Harwin in Southwest Houston. It would become one of the next Houston 1:8 ministry sites in 2013.

The team at SunBlossom ministered to 250 children and fed 400 people each night. After the week was over, the Johnsons were faced with a decision. “How could we leave and not come back until next year?” said Megan.

Using Faith Center Director Scotty Sanders’ Spring Branch model, Megan and JP set up Kids’ Club at SunBlossom. Every other Saturday, the Johnsons along with 10 volunteers from Awaken (Single Adults) and Catalyst (Married Young Adults) Life Bible Studies ministered to between 30 and 60 refugee children.

The following year, the Houston’s First Leadership Team — Pastor Gregg, David Self, William Taylor, and Stephen Smith — began praying and the Johnsons began looking for a site to open a new Faith Center near SunBlossom. For a solid year, the door was shut.

Last summer, Houston 1:8 prayer teams went out to SunBlossom and began praying over it and the surrounding area, hoping God would move in the neighborhood and open the door for the new Faith Center site nearby. The team went out in July, and by September they had signed a lease.



During that season of prayer a “spa,” casino and other businesses near the apartment community closed their doors. “God put His stamp on this area,” said Megan. “Light moved in and all the darkness moved out.”

In addition to holding Saturday Kids’ Club at SunBlossom Apartments, the new Faith Center-Harwin, located across the street, will partner with other ministries such as One Community, a faith-based organization that provides volunteers to teach ESL classes and helps refugees along the path to citizenship. Refugee Project offers a variety of classes including art and business, and teaching women marketable skills such as craft making to provide them a sustainable income. Fair Trade Fridays allow refugee artisans space where subscription holders can pick up a box of their wares.



Like the Faith Center in Spring Branch, a food pantry and clothing distribution center will open soon at Faith Center-Harwin. The Houston Food Bank will partner with them.

“We need so many volunteers throughout the week and on Saturdays,” said Megan. “Kids’ Club and the food pantry and clothes closet will need people who are dedicated to fill those positions each week.”

JP says some people avoid getting involved in missions because they feel they must be apologists for Christianity. “Being a local ‘missionary’ is not hard,” he said. “If you just love on people, God will use you where you are. We let Christ change them.”

The Johnsons are amazed at the progression of their involvement in ministry to refugee communities. “We weren’t seeking to do this five years ago,” said Megan. “It’s been a series of ongoing yesses to God that brought us to where we are today. We said yes to simple opportunities of serving, and the lesson we learned is how to share God with the nations.”