

# Generosity

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

## DELIBERATE GENEROSITY

A great many people 'go with what they know,' continuing to follow a pattern of traditions and habits caught in childhood. But what if God asks for something more? One Houston's First family is forging a more deliberate path of generosity, and found it has changed their view of Christ, the church family and their response to material things.

For Houston's First members David and Ally Saxe, MISSION 1:8 raised the bar for a higher and more determined level of financial giving to the church. The two-year generosity initiative not only helped each Houston's First campus be more effective locally, it also allowed smaller churches, start-ups and parachurch ministries across the globe to make a difference in their own parts of the world.

David and Ally never imagined they would join a church the size of Houston's First, but they trusted Pastor Gregg, who founded Breakaway at Texas A&M, a ministry for college students where David had been involved, and even interned after graduating. Based on that foundation, the couple tested the waters at Houston's First and found a comfortable fit.

The Saxes got involved, managing the first contemporary service held in the Chapel at Houston's First, and later directing a Life Bible Study for five years, where they continue to serve today. It wasn't until MISSION 1:8 that their idea of generosity began evolving. The couple decided that the right answer to the call of generosity, and whatever else God had in mind for them, was "YES!"

"I hadn't been leading our family from a posture of generosity," said David. "While both our families were generous givers, generosity wasn't necessarily a subject that was emphasized when either of us were growing up." The couple has now become intentional about teaching their own children to give, save, and spend, in that order.



Ally & David Saxe with Laurel, Micah and Norah

Starting a new creative services agency more than six years ago, David's inclination was to give according to the success of the company. "Our business is tied to the Houston economy like so many others," he said. "Historically, we gave what was easy to give; we had to be asked (through MISSION 1:8) to give more intentionally, and after that we gave regardless of the success of the company."

Ally said something began changing in their hearts, recognizing they needed to hold material things more loosely, and that they were merely stewards of those things. As the couple gave and trusted God, they learned deeper lessons about Jesus' sacrifice, and their own faith. "Like Him, we should love in a way that costs us something," said Ally.

"Being a part of the church means giving of ourselves," said David. "We've jumped in the trenches and it has changed the way we love our church — those in our 'family.' We can't hold back any part of our lives. Giving shows our loving response and a genuine heart for the Gospel."

### GIVING AT HOUSTONSFIRST.ORG

Visit the Giving page at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org) to read more generosity stories, make one-time or recurring contributions, give to mission trips, and more.

## MINISTRY IMPACT YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS FROM JAN 1 TO JUNE 30, 2016

### DECISIONS

599 New Church Members  
107 Joined By Baptism

18% OF NEW MEMBERS  
WERE BAPTIZED

### ATTENDANCE

125,363 in Life Bible Studies  
(5,015 weekly average)

147,229 in Worship Services  
(5,663 weekly average)  
28,200 on Webcast  
(1,085 weekly average)

### MISSIONS

21 Mission Trips with  
245 Team Members



## NEWS + UPDATES

### ALL CAMPUSES

#### HighPoint Bible Study

**Wednesdays @ 11:30a — 1010 Lamar (Tunnel Level)**  
This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everybody! Dr. Josh Harper will be teaching this Wednesday at 12:10p. Bring your lunch, or purchase one there for \$8. Visit [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org) to learn more.

**CONTACT** [Diane.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Diane.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org)

### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

#### Family Mission Trip

**Fri, July 29 @ 8a-4p — Galveston Urban Ministries**  
Great things happen when families serve together, giving attention to the needs of others and using their gifts along the way. On this one-day mission trip, kids in 1st-5th grades and their families will work together to help Galveston Urban Ministries. The cost is \$30/family member, with a maximum of \$120/family. Register at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Hannah.Bush@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Hannah.Bush@HoustonFirst.org)

#### Parenting Workshop with Dr. Tim Elmore

**Sat, Aug 27 @ 9a-1p — The Loop (Worship Ctr)**  
Ever wonder what you're getting right and what you're getting wrong? In this workshop, best-selling author and speaker Dr. Tim Elmore will discuss *12 Huge Mistakes Parents Can Avoid* when leading their kids. Dr. Elmore will also provide practical and effective insights designed to help you lead kids to succeed before/after graduation, prepare them to become adults, and much more! Register for \$15/person or \$20/couple at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Katie.Walker@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Katie.Walker@HoustonFirst.org)

### COLLEGE/SINGLES/MARRIED

#### The Porch Live

##### Tuesdays @ 7:13-9p — The Loop (Chapel)

Houston's First is partnering with The Porch Dallas to bring The Porch Live worship experience to Houston. People in their 20s and 30s gather on Tuesday nights for live worship, great teaching and fellowship. Come see what The Porch Live is all about at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Joshua.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Joshua.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org)

### SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

#### Oasis Conference for Single Moms

##### Sat, Aug 13 @ 8a-3p — The Loop

Are you ready for a break? This summer, our Single Parent Family Ministry is hosting a day for single moms to get away from the everyday and be refreshed spiritually and physically. Jennifer Maggio, author and speaker from *The Life of a Single Mom Ministries*, will be guest speaker and Lisa Pierre will lead worship. Your school-aged children will have a one-day Daycation, and preschoolers will have a special day of fun, too! Learn more about breakout sessions, conference schedule and more at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Holly.Crain@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Holly.Crain@HoustonFirst.org)

### MEN

#### Generation-to-Generation Orientation

##### Sat, Aug 20 @ 8:30a-12p — The Loop (Rm 143)

Generation-to-Generation mentoring encourages men to walk alongside other men and assist in their spiritual growth. Learn the fundamentals of mentoring, including listening skills, scriptural guidance and biblical friendship. This training time is required for all men seeking to be a mentor at Houston's First. Register at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org)

#### Warrior's Heart

##### Thursdays @ 6:30-7:30a — The Loop (Garden Rm)

This summer we will be in a new series, *Fathered by God*. Steve Diserens and Minister to Men Eric Reed will co-facilitate this time of encouragement. Breakfast is available for \$5. Registration at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org) is encouraged, but not required.

**CONTACT** [Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org)

### THE LOOP

#### Celebrate Recovery

##### Thursdays @ 6-9p — The Loop (Oasis Rm)

A safe, confidential environment is provided for those needing to break free from the hurts, habits and hang ups that hinder us from experiencing the true joy found in Christ. Those who currently find themselves in a battle, or have been there and want to support others can both benefit from the experience. Learn more about Celebrate Recovery at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Huston.McComb@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Huston.McComb@HoustonFirst.org)

#### Biblical Principles of Estate Planning

##### Sun, July 31 @ 12:15-2p — The Loop (Oasis Rm)

Think estate planning is only for older adults? You might be surprised to know that people of all ages can benefit from planning ahead. Over lunch, learn about the biblical and practical aspects related to having a will, life insurance, and legal documents. Registration for free lunch and childcare (Birth-5th grade) is required by Tue, July 26, at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Sara.Johnson@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Sara.Johnson@HoustonFirst.org)

### CYPRESS

#### Summer Grow @ Home

##### Wednesdays, July 20 & Aug 17 @ 6-8p

#### Cypress Ministry Center

Opportunities to engage as a family, exploring relevant issues to equip you to grow together. Bring the entire family and enjoy a meal, faith conversations and fun! On Wed, July 20, Cypress Campus Children's Ministry Assistant Patrick Simpson, will help parents navigate technology in the family. Technology is a part of the lives of each family member, but this doesn't mean technology has to run your family. Patrick will give families practical ways for parents to help protect children while allowing them to enjoy technology. No RSVP required.

**CONTACT** [Cindy.Wineman@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Cindy.Wineman@HoustonFirst.org)

### DOWNTOWN

#### MEN

#### Band of Brothers: Men's Ministry Grill-Out

##### Sat, July 30 @ 12-3p — Barry Knoll's Home

Rally together with men of all ages from the Downtown Campus at our afternoon grill-out! Bring a friend, son or dad and enjoy some food and a time to build camaraderie and fellowship. Learn more and register by Thu, July 28, at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Peter.Lee@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Peter.Lee@HoustonFirst.org)

### SIENNA

#### WOMEN

#### Sienna Summer Nights

##### Tue, July 19 @ 6:30-8:30p — Sienna Campus (Worship Ctr)

Gather with ladies from the Sienna Campus for worship, teaching and dinner. We will be blessed by Kay Altic as she teaches us more about who God is and who we, His children, are to Him. Register for \$10 at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Cherry.Sears@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Cherry.Sears@HoustonFirst.org)

### SPANISH

#### Family Day

##### Sat, July 30 @ 10a-4p — Hunt Retreat

Gather with the Spanish Campus for an afternoon of food, fun and games in what's becoming our traditional time to fellowship as a FAMILIA! This is a great time to introduce family and friends to our new Spanish Campus. Registration is \$10/adults, \$5/kids (1st-12th grade) at [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org).

**CONTACT** [Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonFirst.org)



#### Back to School Supply Drive

##### Sun, July 31 — The Loop Campus

Set up kids for success by donating school supplies for distribution among the Faith Center-Spring Branch Apartment Ministry, our Single Parent Family Ministry and Galveston Urban Ministries! Visit [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org) for specifications about the exact type of supplies needed. You may instead want to donate Academy or Walmart gift cards (\$30 value) for the purchase of uniforms and shoes. Supplies will be collected at The Loop on Sun, July 31!

**CONTACT** [Jessica.Nolte@HoustonFirst.org](mailto:Jessica.Nolte@HoustonFirst.org)

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

### LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others and growing together at Houston's First. Visit [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org) to find one that's right for you, or ask the Welcome Team at your campus for assistance.

HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
PASTOR GREGG MATTE

# WAR ON INDEPENDENCE



JULY 10, 2016

FREE INDEED • BREAKING THE CYCLE • BEAUTIFUL FEET • DELIBERATE GENEROSITY

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. For information, call 713.681.8000, or visit [HoustonFirst.org](http://HoustonFirst.org)

### 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



# WAR ON INDEPENDENCE

How many of us have encountered people whose method of relating to others is “my way — or the highway”? Before we commend ourselves and move on, consider how we have personally responded to God’s call to renounce self-centered living and follow Him. A few Houston’s First members discuss how they raised the white flag on wrong thinking (and actions), and with divine help, began waging a war on their own independence from God.

## FREE INDEED

“Porn, drinking, lust, money, power — these are the things I used to strive after,” said Scott Phillips, a Houston’s First member whose marriage to Lauren, his wife of two years, nearly ended just one year after tying the knot. Not until Lauren left him did Scott come to terms with his dishonesty, not just of things he had withheld from Lauren, but also the lies he believed about himself.

“When I was dating Lauren I wasn’t open with her about some things I had done — was still doing — until after our wedding reception,” said Scott. “I thought I had given my life to Christ, though I continued to seek my own self-satisfaction and the cheap comfort of my own chains.”

God began wooing Scott early in his relationship with Lauren, but not having been a churchgoer while growing up, his understanding of a relationship with Christ meant working at changing his behavior. “Morally, I tried to be a better person, but each time I failed,” he said. “I worked hard to change, though my sin only showed itself in new and different ways.”

Although the couple had been on the verge of separation for a while, Scott’s world came crashing down when Lauren actually packed a bag and left their home a year into their marriage. He asked her to return and assured her that he should be the one to move out. “I remember vividly the day I checked into the Airbnb, feeling completely hopeless and despondent,” said Scott. “My life as I had known it was completely ripped from my arms; the woman I loved so dearly cut off from my life. I cried to Jesus to save my life and my marriage — and that’s where He met me and entered my heart.”

**“Christ has liberated us to be free. Stand firm then and don’t submit again to a yoke of slavery.”**

Galatians 5:1

Lauren’s initial hurt at the things Scott told her right after their wedding began simmering in her heart and mind. The couple went to counseling, but as Lauren learned more details about Scott’s behavior, she struggled with disillusionment, bitterness and unforgiveness. After Lauren drew a line in the sand by leaving home, God began working on Scott, transforming him into the godly man she believed she had married and working in her own heart to stop the cycle of hurt, sin and shame she had felt in her response to Scott’s betrayals.

“I was not being the sacred influence that Christ had called me to be,” said Lauren, “but rather a prosecutor who kept a record of all Scott’s wrongs, and ready to bring them up to support any current ‘case’ I had against him.”

Lauren could see how continually lashing out was causing her to become a bitter and cold 27-year-old. She wondered if true change and restoration were even possible in their marriage.

“We had been going to church and belonged to a Life Bible Study, but the true knowledge of Christ, the joy of pursuing Him wholeheartedly just wasn’t there in my heart,” said Scott. “It wasn’t until our separation that Christ gave me a true vision of His intentions for my life, and my need for salvation. To save my marriage, Christ first needed to save me.”



Scott & Lauren Phillips



Completely helpless to “fix” their problems, Scott sought God for healing and answers to the despair that had characterized his relationship with Lauren. By seeking truth in God’s Word, prayer, and spending time with mentors, Scott discovered that a good marriage was a by-product of his own relationship with Christ.

Scott began a serious pursuit of the Lord, and He began revealing how his behavior was destroying him as well as Lauren, the person he loved most on earth. Scott’s mind was being renewed, which expanded his understanding and appreciation of salvation and its ensuing blessings: the security of eternal life, peace in his heart and Christ’s acceptance of him. For Scott, salvation translated into freedom from seeking acceptance and self-worth from others, the ability to recognize the lies of the enemy, and restored relationships — beginning with his marriage.

“Now our marriage is no longer based on having my needs met, but rather, being in covenant with God,” said Scott. “I’m committed to meeting Lauren’s needs — to protecting and nurturing her as together we seek to obey and live for Christ.”

Ashley Mancillas was a high-performing student who excelled academically, in sports, and as a “good Christian.” By doing everything expected of her, being cheerful, making no demands and suppressing her needs, life at home was peaceful. But inside, Ashley was wounded and exhausted from trying to earn acceptance from an unpredictable and emotionally abusive father. Breaking free from the belief that she also had to earn God’s love and acceptance has been a long and painful journey, one she has vowed not to inflict on her own future children.

“My dad was emotionally and verbally abusive, and he used Christianity as a weapon to make me comply,” said Ashley. “Verbal assaults when I didn’t perform to his standards taught me early that my heart was not cherished.”

Ashley met Jesus at a young age in Vacation Bible School, but that Jesus looked nothing like the one allegedly living in her home. Her dad was often absent, and when home, usually volatile, causing Ashley and her mom to walk on eggshells.

“Over time, I learned that my dad had deep insecurities,” said Ashley. “I had to excel and please him to satisfy his pride, so I thought I had to gain God’s approval the same way.”

And so Ashley unconsciously began her quest to please God by giving her time in Bible study and prayer, serving others, seeking His will for her life, good behavior and making sure to have all the right answers. Good things — to be sure.

But there was one thing she wouldn’t — couldn’t — give Him: her heart. After all, why would God want that? No one else close to her seemed to think it had any value.

“I worked myself to exhaustion living a legalistic life of constantly trying to ‘do the right thing,’ while keeping a happy, grateful, all-together front for God,” she said. “But God didn’t give up on me — He pursued me relentlessly to show His love to me. He wanted my heart.”

A one-month dating relationship with a boy in high school proved to be God’s way of working on Ashley’s wounded heart. “It doesn’t sound like much, but that month was the first time in my entire life I allowed myself to be vulnerable,” she said. “Once the relationship was over, I scrambled to put the pieces back together to be who I was before, but it was too late; God had opened a door. Once you taste freedom, you don’t want to go back.”

As a young adult who was growing spiritually, Ashley made a couple of attempts to talk with her dad about the hurts she had experienced. Her dad responded by calling her an ungrateful child and a bad Christian.

“I wrestled with questions like, ‘When do you call out a person who doesn’t treat you in a healthy way?’ said Ashley, “or ‘When do you just stop and turn the other cheek?’”

## BREAKING THE CYCLE

With counseling and hard, soul-searching work, little by little Ashley began grasping that her worth comes from who she is in Christ — not from her ‘works.’ God blessed Ashley by bringing Steven Mancillas into her life, whose unconditional love and emotional maturity offered God’s healing clothed in flesh.

“Steven constantly reminds me that he and God are not like my dad when I start to question their integrity, their love or the truth of the things they say,” said Ashley. “Steven pursues me when the pain of life becomes too overwhelming and I try to check out.”

Ashley and Steven wed in late summer almost three years ago, and only after the couple’s marriage did he understand the depth of her pain. “The main struggle has been helping her overcome the thought that everything is her fault,” said Steven. “I had to help her see that I’m responsible for my own emotions, and how I react to things. It was a major breakthrough when she began believing it.”

Though a difficult decision, it wasn’t until Ashley cut off communication with her father that Steven began to see emotional healing taking place in Ashley’s life. “I have seen a lot of growth in Ashley this past year,” he said.

Learning from the past and working toward having healthy feelings about herself has been a gradual process. “It’s been overwhelmingly painful, almost too much to bear at times,” said Ashley. “Steven has been a reflection of Christ to me, and God continually reminds me that He is my perfect Father, and that I can trust Him with my heart because I am precious to Him.”



Ashley Mancillas



JULIANNA POOR MEMORIAL  
**COUNSELING  
CENTER**  
HOUSTON’S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

**The Julianna Poor Memorial Counseling Center at Houston’s First provides biblically-based, clinically-competent, and Spirit-sensitive counseling for individuals, marriages, and families. Appointments are offered at The Loop, Cypress and Sienna Campuses and at the Faith Center-Spring Branch. Services are available for church members and non-members alike. Visit [HoustonFirst.org](https://HoustonFirst.org) to learn more, or call 713.335.6462.**

## BEAUTIFUL FEET

Members of Houston’s First recently traveled more than 5,000 miles to deliver a message of hope to people who have experienced unimaginable pain and loss.

In two tag-team mission trips to Germany last month, Houston’s First staff members, married adults, college students — even two high school students — traveled to the European nation to share Good News with refugees who migrated to safety from war-torn countries in the Middle East. During the stay, these messengers found that refugees weren’t the only ones hearing from God.

The Germany trip was not only Tyler Esposito’s first mission trip, but also his first experience traveling overseas. He expressed safety concerns to his wife Megan, who encouraged him to give his anxiety to God as she continued to pray that Christ would develop in Tyler a heart for missions.

A documentary filmmaker, Tyler began working at Houston’s First on the Production team last year, so he fully expected to spend most of his time behind a camera. “I told myself, ‘I’m the video guy; I’ll go and do my job,’” said Tyler. “But God had a different plan in mind.” Initially thinking he would shadow a team of four, his whole mindset had to change when he became part of the team.

Tyler connected with Omar (not his real name), a 26-year-old Iranian and son of a political dissenter. Omar had been beaten and had his arm broken before deciding to board a boat to Greece with 140 other people who were also trying to flee the country. Only 40 made it there alive.

“Omar told me that, in desperation, when he thought they were sinking, he called out the name of Jesus,” said Tyler. “He’s Muslim.”

During their afternoon visit, Tyler presented the Gospel to Omar, but he just couldn’t commit. Tyler heard the following day that Omar had placed his faith in Christ.

“I learned that you don’t necessarily need a heart for missions,” said Tyler. “Take one little step, and then let God take you the rest of the way.”

While ministering to refugees, first-time missionaries and team members Andre and Christen Barron saw God move in extraordinary ways: through salvations, spiritual warfare — and in visions, a method of communication with God they had never expected.

Andre and Christen live in Houston’s Texas Medical Center in an apartment community housing a large number of Middle Eastern families who are here seeking medical attention. Last year, a mosque was built next door and a gate added for access between the two buildings. “We considered buying a home, but postponed it to go on the mission trip,” said Christen. “We decided we had an incredible opportunity to evangelize our community and wanted to learn how to engage our own neighbors.”

Working alongside the Barrons was Nguyen Nguyen, web manager at Houston’s First and a husband and father to three young sons. Nguyen says, initially, he didn’t feel drawn to Germany. “Friends from our Life Bible Study, who I had also worked with at the Faith Center-Harwin, were leading” said Nguyen. “My parents and family members had also been refugees in the ‘70s, so as I prayed, in a short while God began changing my heart.”

Part of the strategy for spreading the Gospel was “Treasure Hunting,” or praying for God to inspire team members to search for specific people to share the Gospel. “Christen told us

as they prayed, she saw a picture in her mind of men’s bright blue tennis shoes,” Nguyen recalled. “Later in the day, she caught sight of a man with those exact shoes. But before she could get to him, he disappeared. Christen’s ministry partner returned just as the man came around a second time, and the two went to talk to him. He only spoke Farsi, but Christen’s partner was able to piece together enough of the language to find out he was once a Christian who now claimed to be an atheist.”

Christen and her ministry partner learned that seven years earlier the man had denounced his faith in Christ because of his struggles and the turmoil in his country. “What would it take for you to believe again?” Christen asked the man. A message from God, he replied. She told him about the picture of his blue shoes that God had planted in her mind that morning. “God heard your prayer, and we are His messengers,” she told the man.

Between street evangelism, Treasure Hunting and meeting people at a local coffee shop, the group from Houston led 13 people to the Lord during their stay. Eight of them put their faith in Christ while at the coffee shop.



Nguyen Nguyen, Tyler Esposito, and Don Echols

“We had no tangible way to help on this mission trip,” said Don Echols, who oversees the Creative Services team at Houston’s First. “We weren’t digging water wells or offering medical supplies — we just had Jesus. Basically, we were coming alongside the teams of long-term missionaries living in Germany — figuratively holding up Moses’ arms.”

Don sees a perilous belief among Christians in America. “We think spending time, gaining trust, or building relational collateral will make people see what you have and want it, too, without actually being bold enough to

tell people about Jesus,” he said. “I have something they need that I should talk about, like a cure for a disease.”

Being in a place where people believe something so radically different from Christianity, or are even hostile to Christ, somehow made it a little easier for Don to share his faith. “But why am I not fervent about telling the people I know best about Christ?” he mused. “I’m still processing it, but going there helped me find motivation to share my faith that I didn’t have before.”

In the airport on their way to board the flight to Houston, the first team crossed paths with the student mission team led by Houston’s First College Minister Derek Nease and Student Minister Justin Holcomb. The group was arriving to begin their work with the missionaries that the first crew had left just hours earlier.

Within a short time after arriving, any reservations the students had began to fade, much like the previous group of missionaries had experienced. The students began connecting with people whose world had been forever changed as they risked their lives to reach a safe haven, one that God had prepared especially so they could hear the Gospel.

“Students saw the power of prayer while they were there,” said Derek, “and they returned excited about bringing back home what they experienced. Learning to love and pray for refugees stretched them, and they became bolder when asked to share their own story of faith.”

### NEXT STEP

**Have you considered going on a mission trip? The Family Mission Trip to Galveston on Fri, July 29, is a great opportunity for families with kids in 1st-5th grades. Also, there are openings for adults on two upcoming trips to East Asia on Oct 7-16 and Oct 14-24. Visit [HoustonFirst.org](https://HoustonFirst.org) to learn more about these trips, and to discover how you can give life away through local ongoing missions endeavors.**