

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS

JULY 2025

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LEARN



CONNECT



Jessica, Tammy and Jose's families all found healing through the Mission. Scan QR code to watch their testimonies in our "Family is Complicated Video."



Family is **Complicated**

For over 20 years, we've held City Kids Festivals as a way to minister to families. We've always loved families and want to do whatever we can to turn the hearts of the children to their parents, and the hearts of the parents to their children.

But even giving out hundreds of backpacks each year wasn't enough. And we didn't have the space to really minister to families in the way we wanted to. Until now.

Now, with the new Family Campus open, we're able to minister to entire families every day of the year! City Kids was our launching point, and it still is. But now, we get to use it to connect families to our other life-transformation services – because we have them!

Kenzie, whose story is inside, shows how all that we're doing at the new Family Campus is an extension of the ministry we've always had to families. For us, giving

out backpacks has always been about ministering to parents just as much as it has to children. No child comes on their own. They have to come with a parent, which means we get to share God's love with more people as we promote healthy families.

Even the healthiest families are complicated, and when you are struggling like the families who will come to City Kids and the Family Campus, any help you can get is a breath of relief and the chance to take a step towards healing.

What an amazing opportunity to bless families and share the grace of God!

Please pray for the families we are ministering to right now, and the hundreds that will come to City Kids. Pray for God's love to be impossible to ignore and that the hearts of hurting families will be turned back towards each other.

Continues inside.

Ministering to the **WHOLE** Family

Anyone who has a family understands that even the healthiest families hit bumps in the road of life.

But the families who come to the Mission haven't just experienced a few bumps. Their lives have often been completely derailed.

Kenzie, who is our Director of Shelter and Recovery Ministries, knows all about that. Now, she is turning her experience into a blessing by helping to lead our new Family Campus.

"There was a time my children's father, who is an alcoholic, was very abusive. I really just tried to bear up under the weight of it," Kenzie says. "But it just got heavier and heavier."

An Unbearable Weight

"I thought, well, if he's drunk and it doesn't seem to bother him, maybe if I'm drunk, it's not going to be as hard for me," Kenzie says.

"It didn't take long before I went back to drugs. And then it wasn't long after that I left my kids behind," she says.

Kenzie ended up homeless, and by God's grace, decided to transform her life in a recovery program. She wanted her kids to be a part of it, but as good as it was, the program she attended (which wasn't at the Mission) was mainly focused on her healing.

Trauma Affects Everyone

"When there's a breakdown within the family, it doesn't just happen within the one person," Kenzie says. "It happens to the whole family."



Kenzie, who is our Director of Shelter and Recovery Ministries, spent 10 years trapped in addiction and 8 years homeless before experiencing healing.

▶ **Every \$27.35 backpack you give is a way to share God's love and help a hurting family begin healing!**

City Kids is about Way More than Backpacks

City Kids started over 20 years ago to bless struggling families and set kids up for a bright future.

The Festival Includes:

- Food
- Games and crafts
- Backpacks with age-specific school supplies
- Haircuts
- Bible giveaway
- Gospel presentation
- Family photos
- Book giveaway
- And more

This year, we're expecting at least 900 kids and their families!

City Kids is at Juilliard Park, Santa Rosa on August 2nd from 10:30am to 3pm.



At City Kids, we're able to share God's love, provide school supplies, start to build relationships and connect hurting families with other life-changing resources.



Sign Your Backpack Tags!

Please sign and return both of your Backpack Tags when you send your gift to provide backpacks and supplies. We want to make sure that every backpack handed out has a tag on it so children know they are uniquely and personally loved! Please send yours by July 28.



And so, if the family is broken down together, the family needs to heal together."

With the new Family Campus, there's a place for that to happen. Your support is helping to minister to the needs of the entire family. And one of the ways friends like you do that is by providing backpacks and school supplies at the City Kids Festival.

"When you're a parent and you love your children and it's your job to provide for your children, but you can't provide for your children, that's heartbreaking," Kenzie says.

She remembers when she was in recovery, not being able to afford Christmas gifts. But the program she was in provided gifts she could choose for her kids. It allowed her to celebrate Christmas with them.



Feeling Worthy Again

"When you're able to provide for your children, it fixes something in you," Kenzie says. "It creates a connection and a bond. . . It makes you feel worthy again. It makes you feel like you have some value or some purpose because you can provide for the needs of your child."

And backpacks are just the start.

"Now, my kids do reach out to me and ask me for prayer, which is a huge blessing that that can be the thing that I'm known for." – Kenzie

"Our hope for City Kids is that folks would take a next step, that we're not just giving them a backpack because it's the right thing to do, we're giving them a backpack because we know it's going to further their life in one way or another." – Kenzie



Find Your Place



Dozens of Volunteer Opportunities!

City Kids isn't just a blessing to needy families, it's a blessing to everyone who volunteers, too! Over 25 churches host booths that bless the families who come, and we have dozens of opportunities for individuals, too!

Current Volunteer Opportunities:

- Greeting
- Guest check-in
- Set-up and tear-down
- First aid
- Backpack distribution and more

City Kids is at Juilliard Park, Santa Rosa on August 2nd from 10:30am to 3pm.

Sign up now or get help finding your place by contacting Tina Karns at volunteer@rgm.org, calling 707.578.1830 x 314 or visiting rgm.org/citykids2025.



Blessings All Around!



After she retired from teaching, Victoria wasn't sure how she'd use her free time. A friend invited her to come to the Mission.

Right away, Victoria knew she wanted to get involved and she's been volunteering with our Women's Ministry and City Kids ever since – for more than 10 years!

"It's such a beautiful, refreshing thing to be a part of. It's society supporting families. Churches supporting families," Victoria says of City Kids. "I know it's what God would have us do."

Now Victoria can't wait to see how God uses the new Family Campus.

"When I walked into the new building, I was amazed and I just said, 'Lord, you got good plans and big plans.'"

Victoria plans to be there to watch those plans unfold – and she also plans to volunteer at City Kids again this year.

"It's a joy. I mean, it's such a positive thing, seeing our whole community come together. . . Why wouldn't I want to be there?"

If you want to experience the blessing of volunteering, just let us know. We have the perfect space for you!

"Wait until you see what God does, not only what He can do for you for others, but what He'll do for you personally. It's amazing," Victoria says.



Victoria has been volunteering at the Mission for over 10 years. City Kids is an event she says you don't want to miss!

Bless a Needy Family! Give a Backpack!

City Kids, the Missions' back-to-school event, is not the only backpack giveaway in our area.

But the thing that sets ours apart is that it's not only about the backpacks. It's about sharing God's love, coming alongside hurting families and giving them hope.

As Kenzie's testimony shows, when a mother or father can't provide for their child, not only does the child suffer, but the parents do, too.

But by giving parents a way to provide for their children – through attending City Kids – it helps restore their value and purpose, while also setting up students for a bright future.

In that way, even one backpack can help a family begin healing. And now, with our Family Campus open, we have a place to welcome them when they want to take that healing to the next level.

It's amazing what just one backpack can do!

Each \$27.35 you give provides one backpack full of supplies! Please also be praying for all the families we will have the chance to minister to.

Bless a Needy Family! Give a Backpack!

Yes, Jeff! I want to change lives and help families heal by sharing God's love!
I'm sending a leadership gift of:

☐ \$_____ to help as much as possible.

☐ My signed Backpack Tags are also enclosed.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State ZIP _____

Each \$27.35 given provides a backpack and supplies for a child in need.

Giving by credit card? Fill out the back of this form, or scan postage and processing by donating securely online at rgm.org/backpack

Remember to return your signed Backpack Tags when you send your gift!



Each \$27.35 you give provides a backpack and essential school supplies for a child whose family can't otherwise afford them.

Change Even More Lives!

Your gift today can change the future for a child in need, and when you name Redwood Gospel Missions in your will or Estate Plan, you'll change even more lives in the future! Over the years, a number of faithful friends have left gifts to the Mission, and they are continuing to have an impact today.



For more information on legacy giving, contact Jeff Gilman at 707.578.1830.



REAL CHANGE
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