

# REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

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JULY 2023

Enrique heard about City Kids through a friend of a friend. If his son Saul hadn't gotten a backpack there eight years ago, their life could be very different today.



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## A Backpack Was Just the Beginning.

Saul doesn't have the backpack he got at City Kids when he was in second grade anymore.

But what he does have is so much better.

He has a relationship with Jesus, a heart for serving others, a healthy family, a church community and a family photo.

### The Gift of a Photo

That family photo was the first physical, printed photo his family has ever had. They got it the third year they went to City Kids. You can tell by their smiling faces that life was better then.

But before that, life was hard. Really hard.

Enrique, Saul's father, was out of work and struggling with life-controlling substances. There was no way he could afford a backpack for his son. Without friends like you, Saul would have had to go to school with nothing and risk being bullied, falling behind in class and having his future jeopardized.

*(Continued inside ...)*



*"It was a blessing that Saul was able to get a backpack."  
— Enrique (Pictured left. His son, Saul, pictured right.)*

Get involved at [srmission.org/backpack](https://srmission.org/backpack)

## A Backpack was Just the Start.

(Continued from cover)



The first printed family photo Enrique's family ever got was taken at City Kids. They framed it and keep it on display in their home.

"It was pretty cool because it came with supplies inside," Saul says. "It also came with a Bible."

Now, nearly eight years later, the entire family has personal relationships with Jesus. They attend church regularly; Enrique is sober and has a good job.

### They Don't Need Backpacks Anymore. They Come to Help the People Who Do.

Enrique and his wife can afford backpacks and supplies for both Saul and his 10-year-old brother. But they still come to City Kids to volunteer.

Last year, along with their church, they ran a photo booth so other needy families could have the joy of taking a printed family photo home, too.

But the thing that both Enrique and Saul love most about volunteering is the chance to share the Gospel.

"It was a nice experience because you get connected with the people that come," Enrique says. "Then you get to share the Gospel with them."

### Should City Kids Continue?

"I think they should keep doing this event because not only do the children get the Gospel shared with them, so do the parents," Saul says. "Through the way we treat them in this event... we can show Jesus through all of our actions."

It's safe to say that with the support of friends like you, and churches like Enrique and Saul's, City Kids will continue. And this year, Saul and Enrique plan to be at the photo booth again, sharing God's love by blessing others in the ways they have been blessed.



Saul, along with his church, volunteered at the photo booth last year. They plan to be there again this year!

### What's Inside?

We don't just give out backpacks, we give out backpacks filled with grade-specific school supplies. To know what each student might need, we partner with local teachers for a list of the most used items in each grade and the backpacks are packed and labeled accordingly. That way, a junior high student will get the college ruled paper they need, and a kindergartener will get the crayons they need!

**Each \$27.35 you give provides one backpack full of age-specific school supplies for one poor and needy student.**



# It's All About Relationships

Jeff Gilman  
Executive Director

**I truly believe that ministry is best done in a relational way over the long-term. We see that with Jesus and His disciples, don't we?**

He walked with them, taught them, showed them how to live, ate with them. He had relationships with them.

That's what we are all about here at the Mission, too – Jesus and relationships. And City Kids is an opportunity to not only begin relationships but foster them. Just look at Enrique and Saul. They came to that first festival because they needed help. As a community, we came together to serve them.

Now, years later, they both know Jesus, they attend church, they serve at the Mission and have become partners with us, giving back like they were given to.

That's the heart and passion behind everything we do, and City Kids is one of the best examples of how that ministry model truly changes lives.

Thanks for being part of it. My prayer for you is that as you change lives, your own life will be transformed by the relationships you build. After all, as Jesus shows us, it truly is all about relationships.

**By partnering with faithful friends like you and local churches, through City Kids we're able to share God's love, provide school supplies and build relationships in unique, lasting ways.**

## The Festivals Include:

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



**Every year, needy kids and families are blessed in incredible ways – and so are all those who participate!**



**City Kids North County is July 29th  
City Kids Santa Rosa is August 5th**



## Why Jim Loves City Kids

*"We all have different gifts. There might be somebody who can juggle and is a magician. There are people who face paint. But whatever your gift is, if you're just helping out that little bit, you're contributing to this big, beautiful event." – Jim*

**Jim has been coming to City Kids since before Enrique and Saul have. He thinks it's been about 10 years.**

And every year, you can find him in the same spot – behind the BBQ, grilling up hot dogs for all the hundreds of families who come to get backpacks.

*"For some of these kids, it's like Christmas morning, because otherwise they're going to school with absolutely nothing," he says.*

*"The atmosphere is a beautiful atmosphere. There are games for the kids, there's all sorts of food. And what's really cool is that a bunch of different churches get together. It's not just one church, it's a community of churches that all participate."*

It's not only the feeling of doing good that keeps Jim coming back. It's the opportunity to share the Gospel in a real, tangible way.

*"It's a community event where a lot of brothers and sisters from different fellowships come together to help the community and be the light in the community," he explains. "It's an opportunity for them to hear a message about God and salvation . . . We're planting seeds."*



**Want to be a part of it? Check out the next page and find your place!  
And if you don't see something that fits you, let us know!**

# Find Your Place!

Let us help you find a place to volunteer with City Kids. Here's a list of ways we know we'll need help, but as Jim says, "Whatever you got, share it." We'll find a place for you!

**We're currently looking for people to help with:**

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

You can even get your church involved by hosting a booth or organizing a group to come and serve. City Kids North County is July 29th. City Kids Santa Rosa is August 5th.

Sign up now or get help finding your place by contacting Tina Karns [tkarns@srmission.org](mailto:tkarns@srmission.org) 707.578.1830 x 314 OR [srmission.org/CityKids2023](http://srmission.org/CityKids2023)



City Kids volunteers are ready to distribute backpacks to students.



## 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!**



# Why More Backpacks this Year?

The reason we're expecting to provide more backpacks this year (our goal is 1,100) is because we keep hearing that inflation and the cost of living are making it harder and harder for poor and needy families to make ends meet.

**We don't want them to be forced to choose between food and school supplies.**

We want to love them and stand with them by helping them. And in doing so, we'll get to build relationships and share the Gospel so that lives can be changed not just for the school year, but for eternity. Giving needy kids backpacks at City Kids is a way to do that.

But because our God isn't one who picks and chooses who to pour out His love on, we want to make sure we have enough for every child in need. And you can be a part of making that happen!

**Any amount you give will help provide backpacks and grade-specific school supplies for families that can't afford them.**

With your help, the future for these families could change, just like Enrique's and Saul's did.



**Each \$27.35 you give provides one backpack full of supplies!**



*To help in time, please respond by July 28th. Remember to return your signed Backpack Tags when you send your gift.*

## Change Lives in the Future, too!

Your gift today can change the future for a child in need, and when you name Redwood Gospel Mission 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

is the newsletter of  
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