

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

at Riverbend

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

AT RIVERBEND



The Vision

Each week Riverbend serves 2,500 - 5,000+ people on our campus, on Sunday mornings, but also throughout the week.

Our vision is that we would be serving at least as many people off our campus each week as on our campus, coming alongside others, loving them unconditionally, blessing them as we've been blessed, so that they too might experience the grace of God.

We approach outreach and missions with a practical application that Christ gave us in Acts 1:8 - *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

This is a guide for us to care for our neighborhoods, our city, and the world.

We do this by creating a myriad of opportunities for Riverbenders to get involved and serve others all across the city, as well as across borders. Opportunities to come alongside the homeless population, the immigrant population, those coming out of prison or off the streets, those battling addictions and other dysfunctional issues, those who've been trafficked, disadvantaged children, as well as others just struggling to get by. We do this to provide hope to the hopeless, be the hands and feet of Christ, and help them to experience unconditional love and grace, just as God does for us.

Riverbenders have the opportunity to experience how God can work through them, igniting their passions, enabling them to use their gifts, talents, experience, and resources to help expand His kingdom.



riverbend.com/missions

Pastor Aaron Foor » afoor@riverbend.com | 512 327-3540x275

2018

EL SALVADOR: DARK BECOMING LIGHT

10 years ago, we began a ministry in El Salvador, coming alongside Siloe Church and its K-9th grade school, located on the east side of the capital city San Salvador, in a small colonia called La Linea. Here we found people living on \$2-\$5 per day, in shanties built alongside an abandoned railroad track. If lucky, they had a meal of rice and beans one time per day. In addition, they faced extreme violence daily due to the heavy MS-13 gang presence in the community. Rarely did you see children playing in the community. The average drop-out age was 6th grade. After school, you essentially got recruited into the gangs, as there was nothing else to do. Violence and poverty begot violence and poverty in what seemed to be a helpless cycle.

Over the past decade, as Riverbenders have poured their time, talent, and treasure into this community, we've begun to see light seep through the darkness. Today, you can find hundreds of children playing in the community after school. You see children going on for HS and even college education. Missionaries serve the community daily, providing food, using soccer as a tool to develop relationships and share the gospel, caring for the elderly, and yes, even gang members have been turning their lives over to Christ.

Elementary Children - Siloe School takes in 250+ kids from K-9th grade, provides them a safe environment away from the gangs, provides a meal, provides uniforms, provides an education, and teaches them about Jesus.

HS & College Sponsorships - Over the years, Riverbenders have enabled over 50 students to go on to get a HS education at a private Christian HS, and a couple dozen have actually gone on to college, with the first ones graduating this past year. These students are coming back to serve the Church, School, and Community.

Medical - We've continued to host larger and larger medical clinics, all across the country of El Salvador each year, providing health & dental care to thousands of residents who might not otherwise receive any care.

Missionaries - Riverbend sponsors five Salvadorian men and women as missionaries who devote their time to working in the colonia, building relationships and trust, and sharing the gospel. They use soccer and softball as tools in the afternoons for after school programs for children and youth, and weekend tournaments to engage the adults in the community. These open up spiritual conversations, and over the past year, six different gang members and their families have left the gangs as they turned their lives over to Christ.

Men's & Women's Ministries - Each year we host men's and/or women's retreats, inviting not only local church members, but also men and/or women from the community to come together for a one or two-day retreat. These have been catalytic events that have helped to grow the church and have prompted regular Bible studies with men and/or women during each month. Many new leaders for the Church and School have come from these men and women who are being discipled.

Church Plant - Siloe Church in La Linea has planted a church in a rural area of the country called Jicalapa. In this community, the men work the fields seven days a week, just trying to provide for their families, and women are giving birth at twelve years old and becoming mothers. Today there is water that is piped in, and electricity is run to different areas of the community. A small property was acquired, and some small church buildings have been erected and a medical clinic is being established.



SERVING THOSE IN NEED ACROSS AUSTIN

The Homeless & Impoverished

Mobile Loaves & Fishes

Ten years ago, Riverbenders began going out on a Mobile Loaves & Fishes truck one time per month out of St John Neuman's church. As the demand by Riverbenders increased, Riverbend entered into an agreement with MLF to get our own truck, and years later Riverbenders make sandwiches, collect used clothing, toiletries, and books, and load up the truck almost every night of each week to go out and feed and care for the homeless across the city.



Contact:

To learn more or volunteer to help, contact:
Carol Rawson | mobileloaves@riverbend.com

Housing the Homeless

Community First! Village

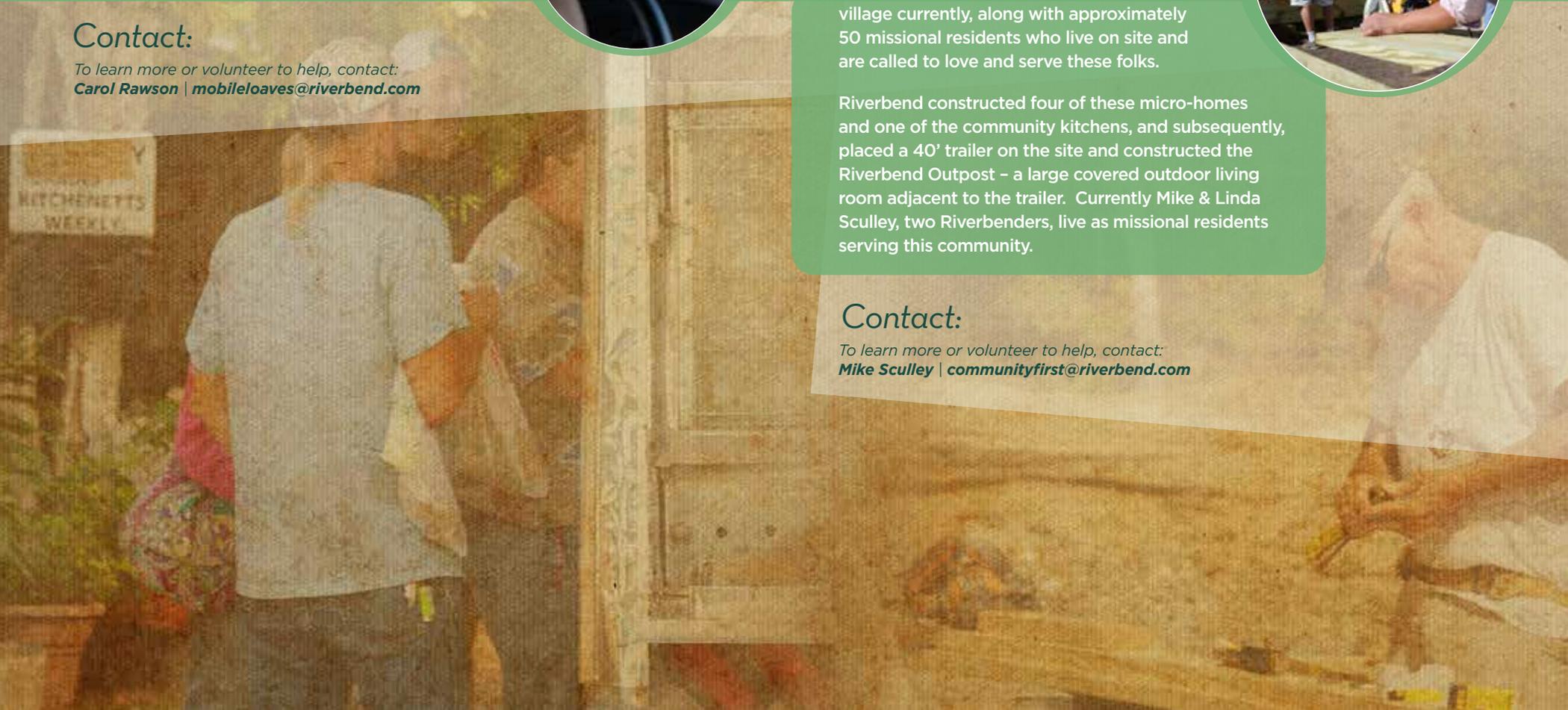
Five years ago a 27-acre site in East Austin was purchased and cleared by MLF. Over the past four years, it has been developed with a series of micro-homes, platform tents, and 5th wheel trailers, along with community kitchens, restrooms, a medical clinic, an art studio, and more, as 250 residents have moved into the village. Nearly 200 chronically homeless are living in the village currently, along with approximately 50 missional residents who live on site and are called to love and serve these folks.

Riverbend constructed four of these micro-homes and one of the community kitchens, and subsequently, placed a 40' trailer on the site and constructed the Riverbend Outpost - a large covered outdoor living room adjacent to the trailer. Currently Mike & Linda Sculley, two Riverbenders, live as missional residents serving this community.



Contact:

To learn more or volunteer to help, contact:
Mike Sculley | communityfirst@riverbend.com



GLOBAL MISSIONS

Serving Special Needs Orphans in Piedras Negras, Mexico

Located about a four-hour drive from Riverbend, right across the border is the city of Piedras Negras. Here, Riverbenders have begun to come alongside an orphanage filled with forty children and adults with special needs. It is the only one of its kind in northern Mexico.

In addition, we come alongside the local Hands and Feet ministry in Piedras Negras, working with K-9th grade children, and also helping their school to improve the facilities and grounds.

This is a great missions opportunity for the whole family.



Russia : Starting new movements

Riverbenders Cameron and Jenna Stingley will be heading to Moscow, Russia to begin a ministry among college students. The dream and the goal is to start movements of college students who will take the love of Christ back to their home communities and towns. Cameron and Jenna have committed the next 5 years of their life to live in Moscow and share their life with this wonderful culture that desperately needs the hope of Christ, and the grace he offers.



Exploring our Next Global Opportunity in South America

In 2018, we are planning an exploratory trip to Chile, Peru, and Equador, for the purpose of identifying a community that we might come alongside of and begin to establish a long-term relationship with. Our desire is to find a community where Riverbend can make an impact with our human as well as financial resources, while at the same time enabling our people to experience God's power and blessing in the process, similar to the relationships and community we've established in San Salvador.

South America can be strategic for us as a way to also minister indirectly to the Middle East. As we train up church leaders in South America, they, in turn, can more easily travel to Middle Eastern countries than we as Americans can.



THE NEST: THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING & MORE

beLydia



beLydia's mission is to help women respond to the Gospel by using strategic hospitality to prevent child sex trafficking. Their three primary initiatives are:

1. **Create Awareness:** educate adults about human trafficking and how to help keep children safe.
2. **Youth Education:** help to provide youth the tools they need to understand the threat of trafficking and how to take the steps necessary to stay safe.
3. **Community:** help to create opportunities for volunteers to assist those who are vulnerable by finding resources to help improve the situation.

To learn more, visit: belydia.org

Sparrow House



The Sparrow House in the Rundberg area of Austin was created as a women's discipleship house to take in women coming out of jail and/or off the streets, and provide a safe place where they can live, experience Christian community, and learn to turn

their lives over to Christ as the source of hope for the future.

Riverbend helped to make this home possible and works in conjunction with North Austin Community Church, who champions this ministry, to come alongside these women, building relationships and helping in their spiritual formation.

Contact:

To get involved, contact:

Tracy Barr | tbarr54@gmail.com

Remember Nhu



Remember Nhu's mission is to end child sex slavery through prevention. They focus on four things:

1. Prevention
2. Sponsorship
3. Prevention Homes
4. Vocational Training

Riverbend hopes to get involved with a community in one of the third world countries where trafficking is prevalent, and eventually have a presence to help with all four of these initiatives.

To learn more, visit: remembernhu.org

Hopefully Sow



Hopefully Sow exists to sow seeds of love, joy, and aspiration for children in foster care in the Austin area. Many times foster children are the most susceptible to fall prey to human trafficking. Hopefully Sow's mission is to sow these seeds through experiences, meeting

tangible needs, and providing opportunities beyond the system. There are a variety of ways for Riverbenders to get involved.

To learn more, visit: hopefullysow.org

HELPING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN OF AUSTIN

Angels Afoot

Angels Afoot is a 20+ year program at Riverbend where each November our congregation purchases and donates children's toys to be distributed through a variety of different channels to help families in need.

We set up "toy stores" in the Rundberg, South Austin, and East Austin neighborhoods on Saturdays in December. Last year, 1200 toys were priced at \$1.00, \$3.00, and \$5.00, enabling low-income and/or out of work parents to purchase toys for their children, many for the first time in a long time. Not only do the children get gifts for Christmas, but their parents actually make that happen.

We also distribute about 2,100 toys through various Austin area agencies to give out to children and families in need all across our city.

Lastly, this past year we provided approximately 300 gift cards to people in the East Beaumont area who had lost their homes due to Hurricane Harvey, and also provided new school uniforms for about 250 children at Siloe K-9th grade school in San Salvador.



School Supply Drive

Each July, we encourage Riverbenders to purchase school supplies from local area stores and donate them to Riverbend. On top of that, we contract with Siloe School volunteers in San Salvador to make hundreds of backpacks and our missions teams bring them back with them throughout the Spring when they return from their trips. Riverbenders donate \$25 toward the cost of each of these backpacks, the proceeds of which go to support Siloe School children in El Salvador. The backpacks are filled with school supplies and then distributed to families in need for their children in select Rundberg, East Austin, and South Austin areas through our ministry partners in those areas.



Contact:

To learn more or volunteer to help, contact:
Aaron Foor | missions@riverbend.com

Contact:

To learn more or volunteer to help, contact:
Aaron Foor | missions@riverbend.com

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS (NDC'S)

East Austin NDC

In a cooperative agreement with Austin Reconciliation Church, an Hispanic Church on the east side of Austin, we are in the process of building out approximately 9,000 sq. ft. of unused warehouse space on their property, for the purpose of creating an NDC. The mission of the NDC is to connect with the people in this area of the city, primarily low-income immigrants, and provide goods and services they need. Many of these people wouldn't consider coming to a church, but will come for ESL Language courses (started in March 2018), or to a medical clinic, or an AA meeting, or a variety of other services we will begin to offer this year.

We are currently in the design and planning stage to develop a free-standing building into a panaderia (Spanish bakery and coffee house), as a place for the community to connect with us. Plans are also in place to develop a "co-working space" with 25-50 desks for young people to rent and use as their place of business.

Plans are also being developed to connect with and provide needed services to high school kids (Regan HS is across the street).



South Austin NDC

In September 2017, in conjunction with Travis Heights Christian Outreach (a small church in South Austin), we leased a 3,400 sq. ft. space along the service road of Hwy 71 in South Austin. The local church uses the facility on Sunday mornings, but Riverbenders help run a five-day per week food pantry that provides food on average to over 8,000 individuals in need per month. Men from the Bridge (a men's discipleship house run by Travis Heights Christian Outreach) joins in with Riverbend men weekly for fellowship, Bible study, and accountability. Together they run the food pantry, clothing closet, and provide a number of other services to the residents in this South Austin community. Homeless come in to use the showers, get clothes and food, and more often than not end up staying to help serve others. Transformation is occurring in the lives of so many as they learn to surrender their lives to Christ and live for Him. A new mentoring program is starting up between Riverbend men and the men in the Bridge program.

Contact:

To get connected to this ministry, contact:
Pradeep Thorat | pthorat@riverbend.com

Contact:

To get connected to this ministry, contact:
Brian Rawson | rawson62@gmail.com

DISASTER RELIEF

Strength in Neighbors

When Hurricane Harvey hit the shores of Port Aransas and other areas inland and made it's way along the coast to Houston and Beaumont, with it came unbelievable devastation. It was amazing to see Riverbenders get involved. We had people early on helping to rescue people in the Houston area with their bass boats, following Facebook postings to locate families on rooftops as their first floors were under water. We had others headed to the coast in Port A and surrounding areas, helping to muck out houses, haul trash, cut up fallen trees and provide much needed drinking water and other supplies. Still others made their way to the East Beaumont/Vidor area, to provide local churches with clean drinking water, supplies, and much needed encouragement.

A program called Strength in Neighbors was established for the purpose of providing small amounts of financial need to help sustain families over the short haul, so they could purchase food, diapers, water, rent a hotel room, or other much needed help while their homes are being addressed. Tens of thousands of dollars of small grants have been made and continue to be made each month through Riverbend to help these families in need.

Austin Disaster Relief Network (ADRN)

ADRN is a non-profit networking with the churches of greater Austin bringing hope into crisis. It ultimately enables and empowers church members to organize, prepare, mobilize, and respond quickly in the event of disaster, great or small.

Riverbend is one of the disaster relief sites in the city used to help train and mobilize volunteers to help in the event of natural disasters (fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.). Over the years we've been part of the response to the fires of Bastrop, the flooding in La Grange, and hurricane disaster relief throughout the state.

To learn more, visit: adrn.org

