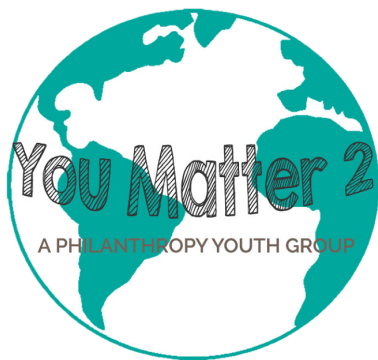


# You Matter 2

## Rio Grande Valley, TX

### Mission Trip

### June 23-28, 2019



experience **MISSION**



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## **Community Overview**

Step into life on the border, where two cultures become one. The Rio Grande Valley is the perfect place for your South Texas mission trip because it gives your team a chance to experience both American and Mexican culture in a unique way. The area has become an attractive corridor for immigrant families from Mexico and Latin America who are working hard to build a new life in the United States.

Serve alongside the local church just five miles from the border—a place often overlooked by short-term volunteers en route to Mexico, yet a community with real needs in our own backyard. Your team will give in practical ways through work projects and outreach with the church, while also receiving from the local people as they extend hospitality and share their stories with you.

## **Community Profile**

On your mission trip to the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas your team will be serving alongside the local church in Las Milpas, a colonia, 5 miles south of the city center of Pharr, Texas and 5 miles from the United States-Mexico border. Being right on the US-MEXICO border, the RGV is home to a high population of Mexican-American families. For many decades short term mission teams crossed this border to travel into Mexico and in the last few years have left this area seemingly forgotten.

### **Natural Environment**

The Rio Grande Valley (RGV) or the Lower Rio Grande Valley, refers to the eight county region, informally called "The Valley," an area located in the southernmost tip of South Texas. It lies along the northern bank of the Rio Grande, which separates Mexico from the United States.

### **Lifestyle**

Las Milpas is located within Hidalgo County. According to the U.S. Census data, Hidalgo county is the poorest county in Texas, with the lowest median household income in the state. In Hidalgo County, there are areas of wealth, but in most areas, like in Las Milpas, there are other riches, but not in terms of economics.

For more detailed information, check out a recent Census Survey: [Hidalgo County Poorest in Texas](#)

### **Religion**

Since this area is mainly composed of Mexican-American families who immigrated to the United States, a high percentage are considered Roman Catholic. In Mexico, Roman Catholicism is the main religion with 83% of the population identifying with Catholicism. Since Texas is a part of the strongly socially conservative Evangelical Protestant "Bible Belt," 64.4% of families in the state as a whole are considered Evangelical Protestant. This results in a highly concentrated population of Roman Catholics in South Texas, with the rest of the state being generally more evangelical in background.

## History

Las Milpas was established in the 1960s as many colonias were. In 1962 it had multiple dwellings, platted streets, and a church. By 1976 the community had 77 dwellings and about 424 residents.

In a period before 1987, the larger community had almost 5,000 residents. The community received media coverage that used it as an example of the lifestyles of residents in American colonias during the mid-to-late 1980s. In 1987 the City of Pharr annexed the community, with some residents of Las Milpas opposing the annexation.

In 1990 Las Milpas and Hidalgo Park, another colonia, had a combined population of 4,178. By 1995 the community had 12,000 residents. Chris Kelley of The Dallas Morning News wrote that year that Las Milpas "helps make the case that Pharr is the most distressed city in America."

Lynn Brezovsky of the Associated Press wrote that Las Milpas and Pueblo de Palmas, around 1997, "were Calcutta on the Rio Grande, poverty-stricken places that became filthy, stinking, disease-ridden expanses awash in mud and sewage whenever it rained heavily." By 2007 the community grew to over 17,000 residents and many illegal immigrants in the community became U.S. citizens and began applying political pressure to the federal and state governments to get aid for the community. Brezovsky wrote that Las Palmas "transformation into a proud, largely well-tended community" was "an immigrant success story."

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## Trip Information

- When: Sunday, June 23 - Friday, June 28, 2019 (6 days)
- Where: Rio Grande Valley, Texas (South Texas)

We will depart from Chicago Midway International Airport and arrive at McAllen International Airport in McAllen, Texas. We will travel by minibus to all of our locations. (Flight information: TBA).

## Trip Activities

- **Projects & Outreach Ministry:** Work projects are organized to support the needs and vision of the community and designed to connect team members with real needs in the Rio Grande Valley. Your team will work alongside local community leaders who are striving to make a difference in the lives of immigrants. Practically you may be involved in home repair projects and helping to build a local church. Teams may also participate in various outreaches such as working at Food Banks, Boys & Girls Clubs & more.

*\*Experience Mission works closely with local leaders to identify work projects and ministry opportunities that address authentic needs within the community. We ask that you come with a servant's heart and willingness to adapt to the unique qualities represented in each location. Opportunities can vary significantly from one week to*

*the next. Your team may work at one location or serve at multiple locations each day. Due to the changing needs of our community partners, we cannot confirm your specific daily activities until your team arrives.*

- Children's Ministry: In this community, connecting with the local children through children's ministry is an important part of what we do each day. Teams coming to this community must expect to participate in Kids Club. Experience Mission will provide the curriculum for your teams use. This Kids Club curriculum will be sent out to Team Leaders in the spring via email. Your team may be asked to participate in multiple Kids Clubs and avenues of ministering to children.
  - *Teams will be responsible to bring the craft supplies needed for their specific crafts and should budget appropriately.* While we do our best to make sure craft materials are cost effective, teams may feel free to augment any materials to make them more suitable to their budget. Experience Mission will supply scissors, staplers, paper hole punches and rulers. There are plenty of opportunities to connect with the local children through games like soccer or Frisbee. Tuck in a hacky sack, football or jump rope as they are sure to come in handy!

### **AVERAGE DAILY SCHEDULE**

#### **Day 1**

3:00-6:00 pm Groups Arrive  
 5:00 - Leader's Meeting  
 6:00 - Dinner  
 7:00 - Orientation Meeting  
 8:30 - Team Time (a time for your group alone)  
 10:00 - Lights Out

#### **Day 2-5**

7:15 - Breakfast  
 7:45 - Devotions and Quiet Time  
 8:15 - Group Prayer  
 8:30 - Teams leave for Sites  
 12:00 - Lunch  
 3:30 - Finish Work for the day  
 4:00 - Break and Clean-up  
 5:00 - Leaders meeting  
 6:00 - Dinner  
 7:00 - Evening Gathering (as a whole group)  
 8:30 - Team time

#### **Day 6**

7:00 - Breakfast  
 7:30 - Cleanup/ Packing  
 9:00 - Pictures and Goodbyes

### **Lodging**

Teams in South Texas will stay in at a local church. Team members will be sleeping on the floor and should plan on bringing mats or air mattresses as well as a sleeping bag or light bedding and a pillow. Please bring single-wide air mattress only.

### **Showers**

There will be limited shower facilities at the church where teams will be staying.

### **Bathrooms**

There will be bathrooms at the church where your team will be staying. Most work and outreach sites will have bathrooms as well. For those that do not, teams will need to take mid-day breaks to use a public restroom.

### **Water**

Teams will have access to water at the church and at their work and outreach sites. Teams should plan to bring refillable water bottles to stay hydrated at work sites

### **Electricity**

There is electricity available to teams at the church where they will be staying, as well as at most work and outreach locations.

### **Food**

A wonderful team of local cooks, alongside your Experience Mission Summer Staff, will be preparing and serving your meals. Breakfast and dinner will be served buffet style, and your team will pack your lunches. **Team members should plan to bring their own plate, bowl, cup and silverware for meals.**

### **Transportation**

**Your teams transportation to, from and while in South Texas is NOT covered.** You will need your vehicles throughout the entire week to transport your team to various locations for work and ministry.

**Using a school bus as your main mode of transportation while in this community is not an ideal option. 15 passenger vans or smaller are your best choice for transportation while in South Texas.**

## Cost

- Experience Mission Trip - \$425
  - Requires a \$50 deposit per person & \$100 team deposit (this will be split amongst the whole group)
  - **ALL FUNDS ARE DUE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE START OF YOUR TRIP AND ALL PAYMENTS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**
  - Payment Options
    - *Payment by CREDIT CARD* - You can make a payment anytime by using your Username and Password to sign into your MyMission Account, going to the page for your Trip and selecting the "Make a Payment" link. A 3.5% credit card surcharge will be applied to all online payments.
    - *Payment by CHECK* - You can mail your check to "Experience Mission, PO Box 719, Port Hadlock, WA 98339." *Payment is expected within 10 days of receiving your electronic invoice. Please include your 4-Digit Team ID number on your check.*

Due Date Timeframe	Total Team Balance Due/Non-Refundable Amount
Initial Registration (Due on Sunday, July 29)	\$50/person + \$100 Team Registration Fee (split between everyone)
120 Days before trip (Feb. 23, 2019) - \$148.75	35% of total balance
75 Days before trip (April 9, 2019) - \$297.50	70% of total balance
30 Days before trip (May 24, 2019)	100% of total balance

- **Group Withdrawals & Transfers**
  - Should your team cancel and withdraw from a mission trip by your own choice, Experience Mission must be notified in writing by mail, email or fax. All funds paid are non-refundable, however, all funds (with the exception of the initial \$50 or \$100 per person deposit respective to the community) can be transferred to a trip within the same calendar year or the following calendar year.

- **Team Member Withdrawals & Transfers**
  - Should any member of your team withdraw from your mission trip for any reason, all mission trip fees are fully transferable to a replacement team member. If you are not able to find a replacement, we will adjust your team size and invoice to reflect the appropriate non-refundable amount applied to the dropping team member(s). This will adjust your total balance due and eliminates the need for most refunds.
  - *\*Refunds are limited to extreme situations (e.g. serious injury or illness, death in the family) and are considered on a case-by-case basis. All refunds will be processed after your trip is complete and final balance has been paid in full.*
- **Cancellation by Experience Mission**
  - *In the event a mission trip is cancelled (at EM's discretion) due to the minimum team size requirement not being met, to terrorism, civil unrest, natural disaster or man-made disasters, widespread illness, pandemic or other extraordinary events and your team is not willing or able to transfer to another available location, a credit will be issued for a future mission trip, to be used within 24 months of its issuance.*
- Flight - TBD (estimated ~\$400 round trip)
  - United Airlines
  - American Airlines (can't look until July 23)
  - Depart on Sunday, June 23, 2019 (arrive in Texas between 4-6pm)
  - Depart for Chicago on Friday, June 28, 2019 by 11:00 AM
- Bus - Enterprise 15 passenger Van ~ \$835.71 (cost will be split amongst group)
- Estimated total cost: ~ \$950



**Packing List**

- Health Insurance Card
- Sleeping Bag
- Single Air Mattress (optional)
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Towels
- Pajamas for 5 nights
- Clothes for 6 days
- Comfortable shoes (don't mind getting dirty)
- Phone charger
- Wallet
- Bug Spray
- Sunscreen
- Body Wash
- Refillable Water Bottle

**Fundraising** - If youth cannot attend fundraiser someone needs to fill in for them or they will not receive their portion.

- Car Wash - August 11th
  
- Mega Dough Cookie Dough Fundraiser
  - August 5th-September 23rd
  
- Chipotle or Portillo's Fundraiser
  - December (date TBD)
  
- Marcus Cinema Fundraiser
  - February - March

### **Support Letter for Family & Friends**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope this letter finds you having a great day. Thank you for taking the time to read this short letter. I wanted to write and share what is going on in my life in regard to missions. I am a member of You Matter 2, a nonprofit youth philanthropy group. I have an opportunity to participate in a short term mission project with other youth in this organization.. I will be traveling to Rio Grande Valley, Texas in June of 2019 to participate in a week long mission trip. This is a great opportunity for me to share the love of God with those in deep need.

I will participate with a group of volunteers to repair homes, help build a local church, volunteer at Food Banks, Boys and Girls Club, and more. I am sharing this information with my friends and family to allow them the opportunity to be one of my financial sponsors. First, I need your prayers. I know that God can supply my needs through His people so prayer is the greatest need I have. Second, you can serve as one of my financial sponsors. I am raising the money needed for the trip. The amount I need to raise is \$1,000. If you would like to be a financial sponsor for my trip you can make a check payable to \_\_\_\_\_.

If I can answer any questions about the trip, please feel free to contact me. Thank you so much for your prayers as I take this life changing step in my life.

Sincerely,

**Sponsorship Letter to Businesses**

To whom this may concern,

You Matter 2, Inc (Tax ID#: 47-4098369), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit youth organization that consists of 7th-12th grade students, will be going on their first short term mission trip to Rio Grande Valley, Texas from June 23-28, 2019 with *Experience Mission*. We are a youth philanthropy group whose mission is to inspire and empower youth to be world changers. You Matter 2 strives to dynamically empower emerging youth leaders to create a generation of change. Our organization focuses on youth empowerment, hunger, education, and many other local and global causes.

Over the past 3 years we have served our community by giving out free school supplies at our annual "Back to School Bash," donating food to our local food bank, and educating, empowering, and helping youth discover their passion(s) and take action through our youth empowerment conference, *You Matter 2 Day*. All of our events are organized and hosted by the youth of our organization, and we are hoping to take our work a next step forward with this mission trip. We strive to promote community involvement, meaningful and positive outlets for youth, and forward movement which brings about a positive change. We hope to continue to be able to meet the needs of communities, both near and afar. It is our goal to expand our reach and help even more people in more ways. We are hoping that you can help us with this goal.

The youth of our organization traveling to Rio Grande Valley, which lies right along the U.S.-Mexico border will be able to hear the stories of people who have come to the U.S. as immigrants, help repair homes, build a local church, volunteer at Food Banks, Boys & Girls Club, and more. By becoming one of our sponsors for this trip, you'll be able to help us cover the cost airfare, bus transportation while in Texas, materials needed for service projects, and reduce the cost of the trip overall. The cost of this trip is about \$1,000 per person. Through your sponsorship we will be able to provide the community we are serving with exactly what they need help with. If you are interested in making a donation, you can make out a check payable to You Matter 2, and mail it to the address below. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Destiny Watson

Founder

destiny.watson16@gmail.com

You Matter 2, Inc.

PO Box 1056

Homewood, IL 60430