



## **Urban Immersion Team Handbook**

**June – July 2019**

# Welcome to Mission Centers of Houston!

We are honored that your group has chosen us for your mission trip destination through our Urban Immersion Program. It is our hope that this Handbook will contain information to get you excited and be prepared for effective ministry when you arrive. Please share this material with all the leaders and parents of any minors who will be joining you. After reading this material, feel free to email [cheryl@missioncenters.org](mailto:cheryl@missioncenters.org) or call us at 713-227-0304 with any questions you may have. We want to be available to ensure you are prepared for the best missions experience possible while you are staying with us.



## Our Mission Statement

Mission Centers of Houston provides for the physical and spiritual needs of people living in Houston's inner city. We change lives with the love, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ.



## **VISION & VALUES**

**We will follow God's Word without compromise**

His Word is truth, and the truth sets everyone free

**Prayer precedes everything we do**

It's the link that connects us to the power of God

**We act on faith as God leads - no matter what**

We'll never insult God with doubt, fear or safe living

**We extend grace to others, just like God extends to us**

It is not something that can be earned. It is just given freely

**We give up things we love for the One we love more**

Jesus is first. Others are second. We are third.

**We do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ**

The Great Commission is not the great suggestion

**We do what's needed, not what's easy**

God is always at work so we're always ready to respond

**We treat every person with honor, dignity and respect**

We show no partiality to anyone because God doesn't

**We practice radical hospitality with joy and love**

We roll out the red carpet for anyone and everyone

**We will always remember to say 'Thank you!'**

We make it a priority to show gratitude to God and the ones He uses to bless us

## Helpful Hints

We hope that your experience at Mission Centers of Houston will be life-changing and that God will bless your efforts as you serve Him! Here are some helpful hints as you begin to prepare for your trip.

1. Our desire is that we function as a team. During your week here, our team will consist of MCH staff, MCH summer missionaries and your group. The work you do is fun but is also a big part of our ongoing ministry. Familiarize yourself and your group with our Vision and Values prior to arrival. Remember that you will represent yourself, your church, MCH and our Lord.
2. Maintain a servant attitude. Please communicate this to each team member.
3. Respect the rules of Mission Centers of Houston. Remember, there may be rules that are in place that have cultural implications that you may not understand. Please, do not dismiss any of the rules.
4. Love our community through your words and actions. You may not be able to speak their verbal language, but your unconditional love will be used by God.
5. Join us for pizza dinner and worship at our Gano Center gym on Thursday night at 6:00 pm. Volunteer teams serving at Gano and Joy Centers will join with our missionaries and staff for corporate worship. After worship, we will have a time of fellowship and fun!
6. For your safety at night, do not allow your students to walk in the neighborhood or be outside talking on cell phones!

Our staff is praying for you as you prepare for this incredible opportunity to serve our Lord. Please let us know if we can help you in any way. Thank you for serving with us!



## What to Bring/Accommodations

### Individual List

- ☐ Bible & pen
- ☐ Air mattress or bed roll
- ☐ Pillow & pillowcase
- ☐ Bed sheets & blanket or sleeping bag
- ☐ Bath, hand & wash towels
- ☐ Toothpaste
- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Gloves for yard work
- ☐ Work Goggles
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Clothes
- ☐ Extra pair of shoes
- ☐ Tennis shoes

### Group List

**\*Centers will NOT provide paper items for group lunch or dinner.**

- ☐ Paper Towels
- ☐ Plates
- ☐ Cups
- ☐ Napkins
- ☐ Dinnerware
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Drinks
- ☐ Food for your meals

**☐ Supplies for Kids' Club (crafts, snacks, music; see Kids' Club Info. Sheet) If your group is at more than one center please bring enough items for the other center where you will be serving.**

### MCH Accommodations

- ❖ Gym floor available to sleep on
- ❖ Dividers to separate girls and boys
- ❖ Air-Conditioned Gym
- ❖ Shower facilities are available in the gym
- ❖ Secured room to store your belongings during the day
- ❖ Commercial kitchen with stove and oven
- ❖ Refrigerator, freezer, and Ice machine
- ❖ Microwave oven
- ❖ Pots, Pans, and Serving Utensils
- ❖ Coffee Maker

## Group Volunteer Guidelines

Our MCH Staff have been praying for you and your involvement in our ministry. We take our responsibility to represent Jesus Christ in our community seriously and want to make sure that everything we do glorifies Him. In order to work together, we have developed the following guidelines. Please trust that these guidelines were developed with your safety in mind as well as the overall interest of our community. Thank you for partnering with us!

- All team members are expected to demonstrate a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.
- Please guard your personal items in a secure location. We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Do not leave items of value (cameras, phones, etc.) unattended during ministry.
- If you have a disagreement with another volunteer, do not “air” that frustration in front of others. Please seek to resolve the conflict in a healthy, respectful way.
- All MCH staff members, including Summer Missionary Interns, will provide supervision of volunteer groups. You are expected to respect their authority. Please notify the Center Director or Executive Director if you feel that a situation needs to be addressed. We will make every effort to resolve the issue.
- You must lock ALL rooms, buildings and offices when you are the last one out. NEVER leave a room, building or office unlocked.
- Please wear a nametag while on-site (we will provide tags and lanyards).
- Please take caution and be a good steward of our tools, yard equipment and painting supplies. Personal safety measures (goggles, gloves, tennis shoes/no sandals) are required.
- If you walk away from the Center(s) property, you MUST go with *at least* one other person.
- No shaving cream fights, food fights or painting each other.
- All music, reading materials, and language should be Christ-honoring.
- **No** tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs on the property.
- **No** weapons, knives, blades, pocket knives, etc. are permitted on Mission Centers of Houston property.
- There will be **no tech** during ministry time (cell phones can be used to take pictures, but if it is non-stop, you will be asked to put the cell phone away)
- **No** sleeping/napping during business hours.
- **No** overnight sleeping in rooms above the gym at Gano. All those who are lodging on-site must sleep on the gym floor (classrooms and other areas are not allowed).
- Please respect the following dress code (note that staff members reserve the right to enforce these expectations):
  - No pants/shorts/shirts that show stomach
  - All shorts **need to have at least a 4 inch inseam** or something worn underneath them
  - Modest shirts must always be worn (not too low and no spaghetti straps, please!)
  - No bandanas may be hung off clothing (may be associated with gangs in the inner city)

***Please be aware of these guidelines and communicate them to your team members.***

*We pray that your experience at MCH will be life-changing for you and our community!*

## Ministry Overview

Mission Centers of Houston is committed to serving neighbors of all ages in our communities: Houston's Near Northside (where Gano is located) and Magnolia Park (where Joy is located). The ministries at each center reflect the culture and needs of their neighborhoods. Below is a summary of the variety of ministries your group will be involved with as they serve with us this summer. Not every ministry is at every center, so this list (and the schedules in the pages that follow) will let you know what ministry is held at what center. And, if your group will be split between two centers, this section might help you determine which team members are best suited for which center.

**Food Pantry:** Mission Centers of Houston offers two food distribution centers at our Gano and Joy locations.

**Clothing Closet:** Offering a selection of men's, women's and children's clothing, our Joy Mission Center provides a clothing closet for community members to walk through and make selections for their families. The Closet operates in conjunction with the Food Pantry at Joy.

**Gano Homeless Ministry:** A meal is served to our homeless friends on Mondays at 1:00 at the Gano Center. Afterwards, they receive a bag of groceries. This is a great time to encourage them.

**Ladies Bible Studies:** Some of your group will provide nursery care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary children during this time.

**Youth Club:** Takes place on Thursdays and Fridays at 3pm at both centers, Youth Club offers a combination of free play, games, and an interactive Bible study with a snack.

**Joyful Kids :** Is a children's program offered at the Joy Center on Food & Clothing distribution days. This allows moms to shop and fellowship while their children are having a great time.

**Kids' Club:** On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday both centers host our Kids Club at 3pm. Kids Club typically involves free play, crafts, low-competition sports and games, songs, an interactive Bible study or missions study and a snack. The constant sound of laughter and running feet is a certainty. Your group will be responsible for the recreation, music, and snacks at Kids Club.

**Senior Adults:** This takes place at both centers at 9am on Thursday morning. This is a time of fellowship for the seniors as well as Bible study and praise time. Your group will jump right in - playing dominoes, painting nails, listening to stories, being a part of worship, and serving food and a bag of groceries are given as the Seniors at each center as they leave. Your group is welcome (and encouraged) to prepare a song or two for this worship time.

**Community Ministry Projects:** Throughout the week at each center, there are a number of possibilities for ministry to our neighbors in the community. This ministry can include prayer walking, yard work and home visits with senior adults, delivering food to homebound people or the homeless, or as an outreach, trash pick-up and playing at the park with local kids and youth.

**Center Projects:** Throughout the summer, both centers will have on-going maintenance projects such as painting, organizing, building, deep cleaning, or anything else that may arise! Your flexibility and hard work allows us to keep our buildings operative and attractive as we strive to honor the Lord in all that we do.

## Gano Mission Summer Schedule 2019

### Volunteer Groups

(This is a general program schedule -ongoing projects will be added to this. **Your Center Director will give you the exact schedule on Monday morning** of your mission trip. We appreciate your flexibility since needs and ministries change weekly).

#### **Monday:**

8:30am-9:30am	Devotional and Prayer with Staff and Summer Missionaries /Orientation
9:30am-11:50am	Prayer walk, Stock Pantry, Clean Pantry, Community Ministry, Homebound Visits
Noon – 12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:30 pm	Homeless Lunch
1:00pm-2:30pm	Bag Produce in Food Pantry, Clean Pantry, Community Ministry, Unload Food truck
2:30pm-3:00pm	Prepare for Kid's Club/ Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids' Club (approximately 50 kids)
5:00pm-5:15pm	Clean Gym

#### **Tuesday:**

8:30am-8:55am	Daily orientation / Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:55 am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:50am	Interview for Food Pantry/Give out food in Pantry, Clean, and Community Ministry
Noon-12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:30pm	Interview for Food Pantry/Give out food in Pantry, Clean, and Community Ministry
2:30pm-3:00pm	Prepare for Kids' Club/Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids Club (approximately 50 kids)
5:00pm-5:15pm	Clean Gym

#### **Wednesday:**

8:30am-8:55am	Daily orientation / Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:55 am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:50am	Interview for Food Pantry / Give out food, Clean, Homebound Delivery and Community Ministry
Noon - 12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:30pm	Clean, and Community Ministry
2:30pm-3:00pm	Prepare for Kids' Club/ Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids' Club (approximately 50 kids)
5:00pm-5:15 pm	Clean Gym

#### **Thursday:**

7:45am	Sleeping area must be cleaned / showers completed
8:00am-8:40am	Daily orientation / Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:45am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:00am	Sign in Seniors/Interview/Distribute food from pantry, Clean
11:00am-11:50am	English & Spanish Bible Study
11:50am-until	Serve Lunch to Seniors- <b>(Your group is welcome to eat with the Seniors)</b>
12:30pm-1:30pm	Hand out senior bags, help seniors
1:30pm-2:30pm	Debriefing time
2:30pm-3:00pm	Prepare for Preteen Club/Pray for Youth Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Youth club (approximately 15-20 youth)
5:00pm-5:15 pm	Clean Gym
6:00pm-6:45 pm	Pizza dinner at the Gano gym for all Mission Teams, Interns, & Staff
6:45pm-8:00 pm	<b>Mid-week worship in Gano gym for both Mission Teams, Interns, &amp; Staff</b>
8:00pm-8:30pm	Fellowship with other volunteer groups and missionaries in Gano gym

#### **Friday:**

Check-out with Gano Director



## 4. Joy Fellowship Summer Schedule 2019

### Volunteer Groups

(This is a general ministry schedule. **Your Center Director will give you the exact schedule on Monday morning** of your mission trip. We appreciate your flexibility since needs and ministries change weekly).

#### **Monday:**

8:30am-8:55am	Orientation/Devotional and Prayer with Staff
8:55am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:50am	Community Ministry, Cleaning, Stock Food, Sort Clothes, Prayerwalk
12:00pm-12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:00pm	Community Ministry
2:00pm-3:00pm	Community Ministry, Prepare for Kids' Club/ Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids' Club (approximately 40 kids)
5:00pm-5:15 pm	Clean Gym
5:30pm-7:00pm	

#### **Tuesday:**

8:30am-8:55 am	Daily orientation /Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:55am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:50am	Clothing & Food Distribution/Joyful Kids/Community Ministry
12:00pm-12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:00pm	Community Ministry Projects
2:00pm-3:00pm	Community Ministry, Prepare for Kids' Club/ Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids' Club (approximately 40 kids)
5:00pm-5:15pm	Clean Gym

#### **Wednesday:**

8:30am-8:55am	Daily orientation /Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:55am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am -11:30am	Clothing & Food Distribution/Joyful Kids/Community Ministry
11:30am-11:50am	Ministry Projects
12:00pm-12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:00pm	Clothing Distribution / Food Distribution / Ministry Projects
2:00pm-3:00pm	Ministry Projects, Prepare for Kids' Club/ Pray before Kids' Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Kids' Club (approximately 40 kids)
5:00pm-5:15pm	Clean Gym

#### **Thursday:**

8:30am-8:55am	Daily orientation /Devotional and Prayer with staff
8:55am	Go to assigned Ministries
9:00am-11:50am	Senior Adult Ministry/Clothing and Food Distribution /Community Ministry
12:00pm-12:50pm	Lunch (Clean after Lunch)
1:00pm-2:00pm	Community Ministry
2:00pm-3:00pm	Community Ministry, Prepare for Youth Club/ Pray before Youth Club
3:00pm-5:00pm	Youth Club (approximately 15-20 youth)
5:00pm-5:15pm	Clean Gym
6:00pm-6:45 pm	Pizza dinner in Gano gym for all Mission Teams, Interns, & Staff
6:45pm-8:00 pm	<b>Worship in Gano gym for Mission Teams, Interns, &amp; Staff</b>
8:00pm-8:30 pm	Fellowship with other volunteer groups and missionaries in Gano gym

#### **Friday:**

Check out with Joy Director

## Kids' Club General Information

We believe you will LOVE working with our kids!

Kids' Club meets daily (Monday-Wednesday) from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm. The order of events varies by center, so your Center Director will give you specifics regarding their center. Both centers incorporate games, music, crafts, Bible study and mission's studies. Although our attendance varies, it is best if you prepare for 40 children each day. If you are working at both centers, you can use the same material (games, crafts, music, etc.) because both Kids clubs' lessons are identical.

You will be working with a team of student missionary interns that are serving with us this summer. They will provide leadership in the Kids' Clubs and will teach the Bible and mission stories and the Bible Verses. Please have your group divide themselves amongst the children and sit with them during the Large and Small Group time. This will help the children stay focused as well as provide discipline.

We ask that your group will be responsible for the following:

- \* Crafts for 3 days, approximately 25-30 minutes each day. It would be nice if the craft would reinforce the Daily Bible Lessons, but if that is not possible, any craft with a Biblical theme will be great! Even though craft ideas are not listed in our curriculum, Pinterest and Oriental Trading provide great ideas for Biblical crafts.

Since the range of our children's ages spans from 4- 10 years old, it is such a blessing to have all of your students' help to assist the younger ones. It is also important to try to consider the interest level of our 8 & 9-year-old boys when choosing crafts! You can either have the children work on one craft that would span over the course of all 3 days, or you can do a quicker craft every day. If you decide to bring paint projects, please use washable paints and bring something to cover the tables and the floor.

- \* Group Organized Games for each day (approx. 15-25 minutes). It is helpful to have at least 2 options per day in case the kids do not understand the game. The children enjoy typical playground games such as Dodge Ball. If the games is physical, please plan a separate game for our preschoolers, such as "Duck, Duck, Goose", "What Time is It Mr. Wolf?", etc.

- \* Songs (approx. 10-15 minutes). The kids enjoy songs that require active participation and motions. Our missionaries will be available to assist you as needed but your group will be expected to lead 2 or 3 songs per day. If you decide to use a music DVD, we have a sound system, projector, and a DVD player for your use.

- \* A Snack and a drink for each child each day. Some ideas for snacks are crackers, cookies, fresh fruit, fruit cups, carrot sticks, granola bars, individual servings of cereal and a cup of juice, juice box or small bottled waters.

Thanks for sharing the love of Jesus with our children!



## **Suggested Kids Club Schedule (Check with the Center Director for variations)**

3:00 pm – Kids arrive

3:00-3:15- Free Play (intentional relationship building)/Bathroom/Water

3:15-3:30 – **Organized Group Game\*(s)**/Bathroom/Water

3:30 – 3:40 – **Songs\***

3:40 – 3:55 – Large Group Bible Lesson (Mon & Wed)

Missions Lesson (Tues)

3:55-4:15 – Small Group (Review and Apply Bible/Mission Lesson & Bible Verse)

4:15 – 4:45 – **Craft\***

4:50 – 5:00 **Snack**

**\*YOUR GROUP IS ASKED TO LEAD THESE ACTIVITIES**

### **Kids' Club Checklist**

Your group is asked to provide the following(if you cannot provide any of these below, please notify [cheryl@missioncenters.org](mailto:cheryl@missioncenters.org) prior to your arrival.

- ☐ **25-30 minutes of crafts for everyday of kids' club. Please make sure to check the average number of kids for the center at which your group is volunteering**
- ☐ **10 to 15 minutes of music and singing**
- ☐ **15 minutes of organized team games and activities for kids**
- ☐ **Snacks for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (approximately 40 kids per day per center)**

## Safe and Secure Measures for MCH Kids

1. Always make sure there are two MCH adult staff members in a room with a child – if there is only one adult, take the child to a room where there are other adults, take the child outside until another worker is present, ask the parent to stay until another worker arrives, or keep your door open.
2. Never extend any physical touch (tapping their shoulder, giving a “high five”, etc.) to a child unless you are in the presence of at least one MCH staff member.
3. When giving a hug to child, always give a “side hug”. If a child hugs you in any other position, do not reject the child, but gently redirect their hands to a side hug.
4. Never allow a child to sit in your lap – if a child attempts to do this, gently redirect them by asking them to sit next to you.
5. Kids’ hands should never be in leader’s pockets.
6. Never pick up a child and swing them with their arms or throw them up in the air. Do not roughhouse with them.
7. Do not allow children to discipline or humiliate other children.
8. Do not use any form of sarcasm with children. Absolutely no name calling or cutting remarks.
9. Do not yell at children or say unkind words to them.
10. Please get an MCH staff member if a child needs help in the restroom, if a child has been physically hurt at MCH, if you suspect child abuse, or in any other situation you may feel uncomfortable with.
11. Thank you for following these safe and secure rules! They will protect both you and the children we serve!

## Youth Club General Information

Youth Club will meet on Thursday from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm. As with Kids' Club, the order of events varies by center. Both centers incorporate games and Bible study. The Centers average 15-20 students a day.

**The only responsibility your group has for Thursday Youth Club is to provide the snack at the end of Club** (the same snacks from Kids' Club are fine). We encourage your group to play along during free play, which is usually basketball, soccer, etc. There may also be a time of organized play and we would like your group to be a part of that too, but our staff will be responsible for those games. As with Kids' Club, our summer interns will teach the Bible Study. Please have your group divide themselves among the youth and sit with them during the Bible study so they can assist with discipline and interaction as needed. Youth Club also lends itself to some conversational time with our youth. It provides a good opportunity to learn more about the life of our teenagers, to encourage them in their faith and in getting their education, and for individuals to share their faith.

## Mission Centers Location Information

### **Gano Mission Center**

1815 Gano Street  
Houston, Texas 77009  
**Lucia Ayala - Director**  
**Juan Ayala-Area**  
**Missionary, Greater**  
**Northside**  
713-227-0304 ext. 118  
[dora@missioncenters.org](mailto:dora@missioncenters.org)

### **Fletcher Mission Center**

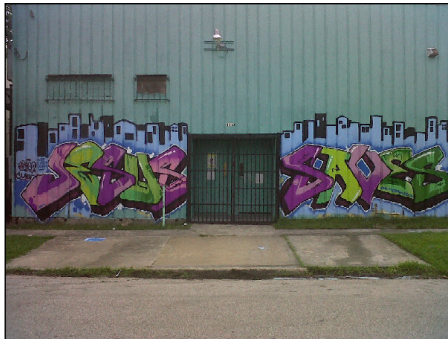
1913 Fletcher Stree  
Houston, TX 7709  
**(Ladies Bible Study**  
**Meets here)**  
*Kerusso Grace Church and*  
*Friends of Northside* currently  
Meet and office here

### **Joy Mission Center**

7629 Avenue F  
Houston, Texas 77012  
**Vanessa Ortiz-Director**  
**Noe Ortiz-Area Missionary,**  
**Greater East End**  
713-921-0197  
[vanessa@missioncenters.org](mailto:vanessa@missioncenters.org)



**Gano Mission Center**



**Fletcher Mission Center**



**Joy Mission Center**



**Mildred McWhorter Missionary Building**  
**(MCH offices and summer missionaries' residence)**

- For information about staff and other ministries, please visit our website:  
[www.missioncenters.org](http://www.missioncenters.org)

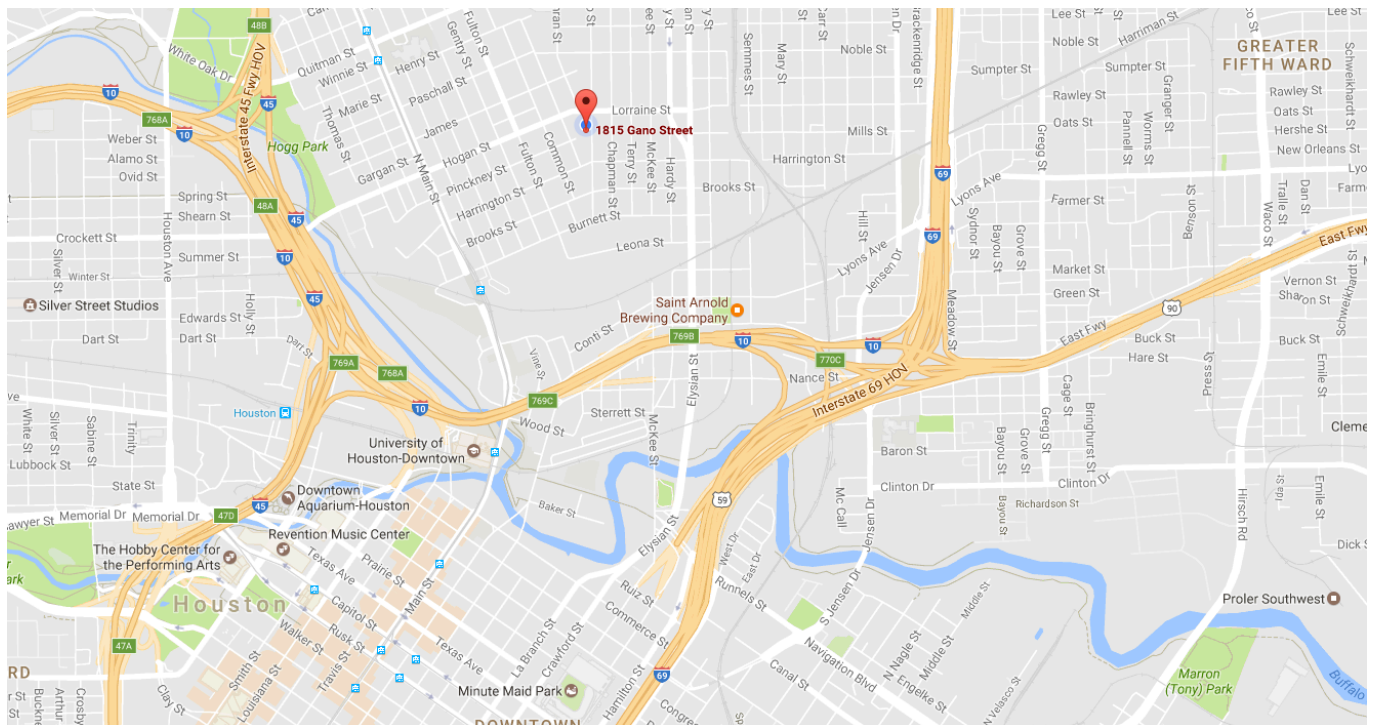
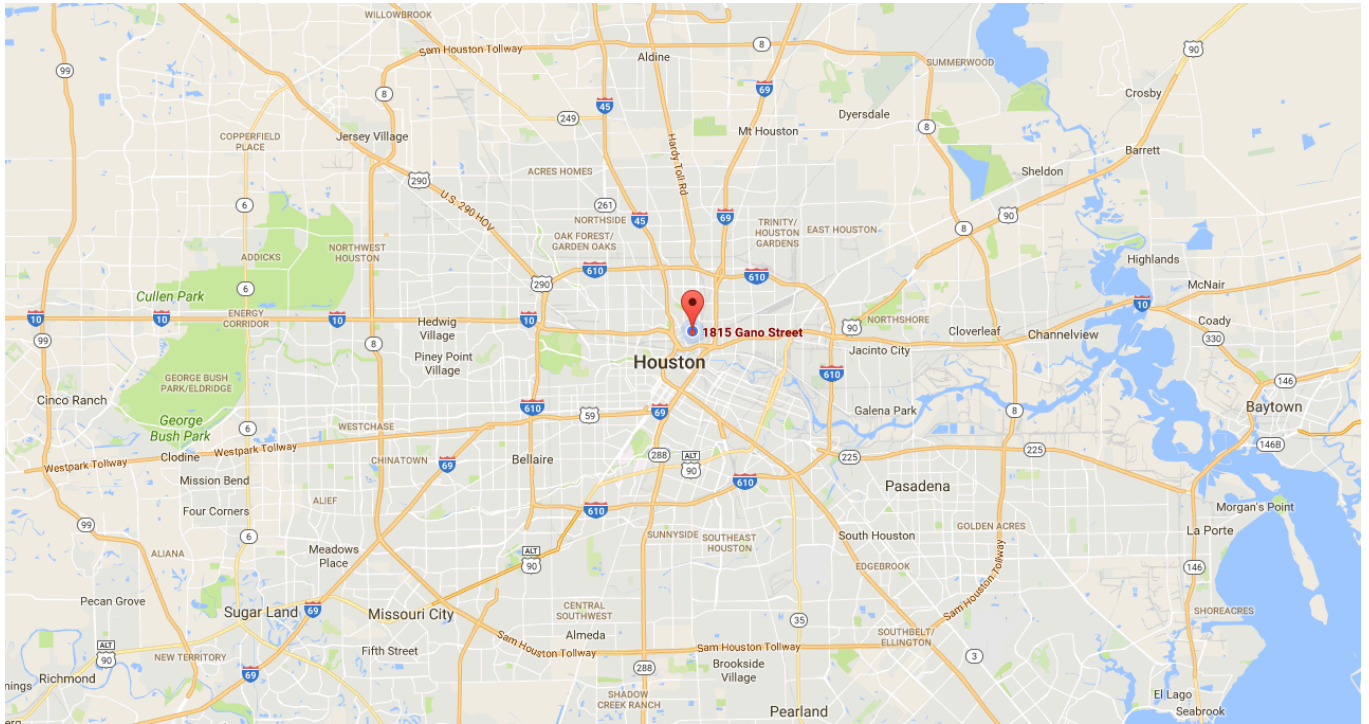


# MCH Office, Summer Missionaries Residence & Gano Mission Center

1815 Gano Street ♦ Houston, TX 77009

Tel. 713-227-0304 ♦ [www.missioncenters.org](http://www.missioncenters.org)

Director: Lucia Ayala ♦ [lucia@missioncenters.org](mailto:lucia@missioncenters.org)

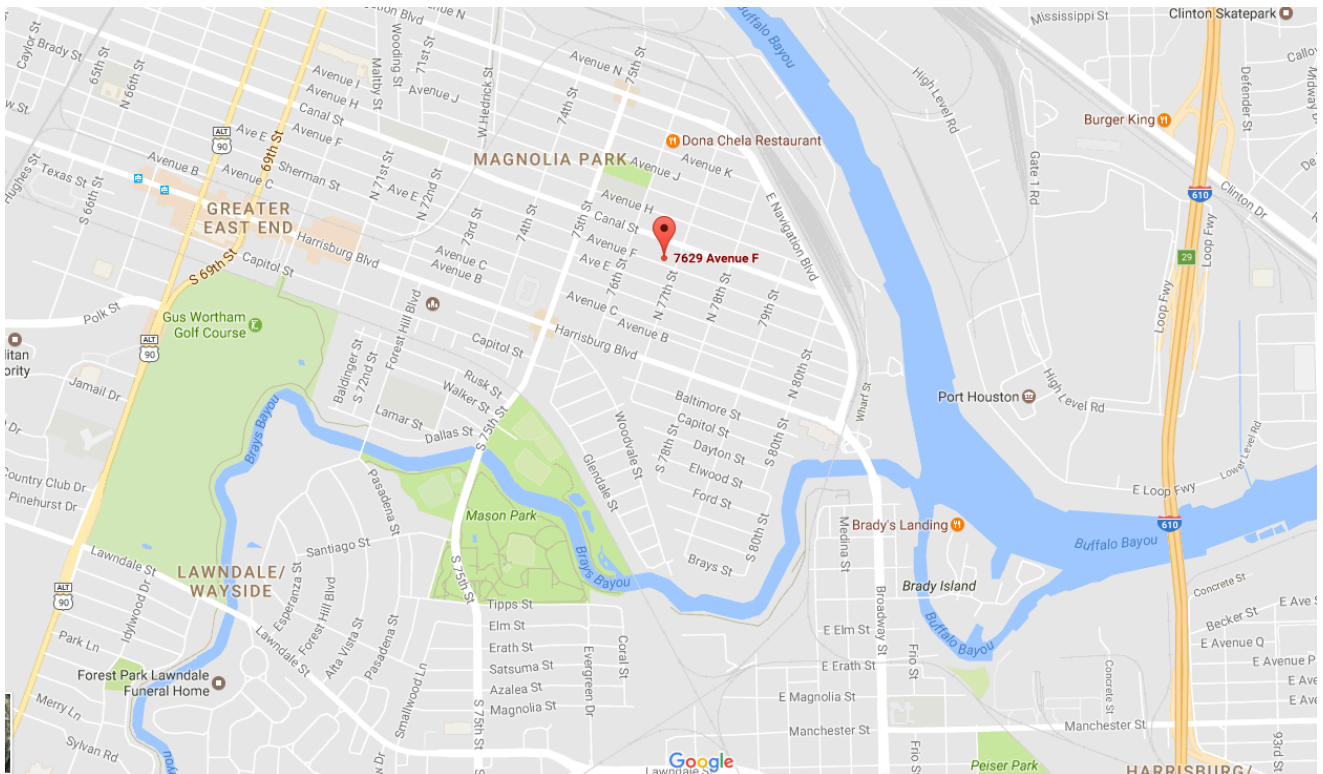
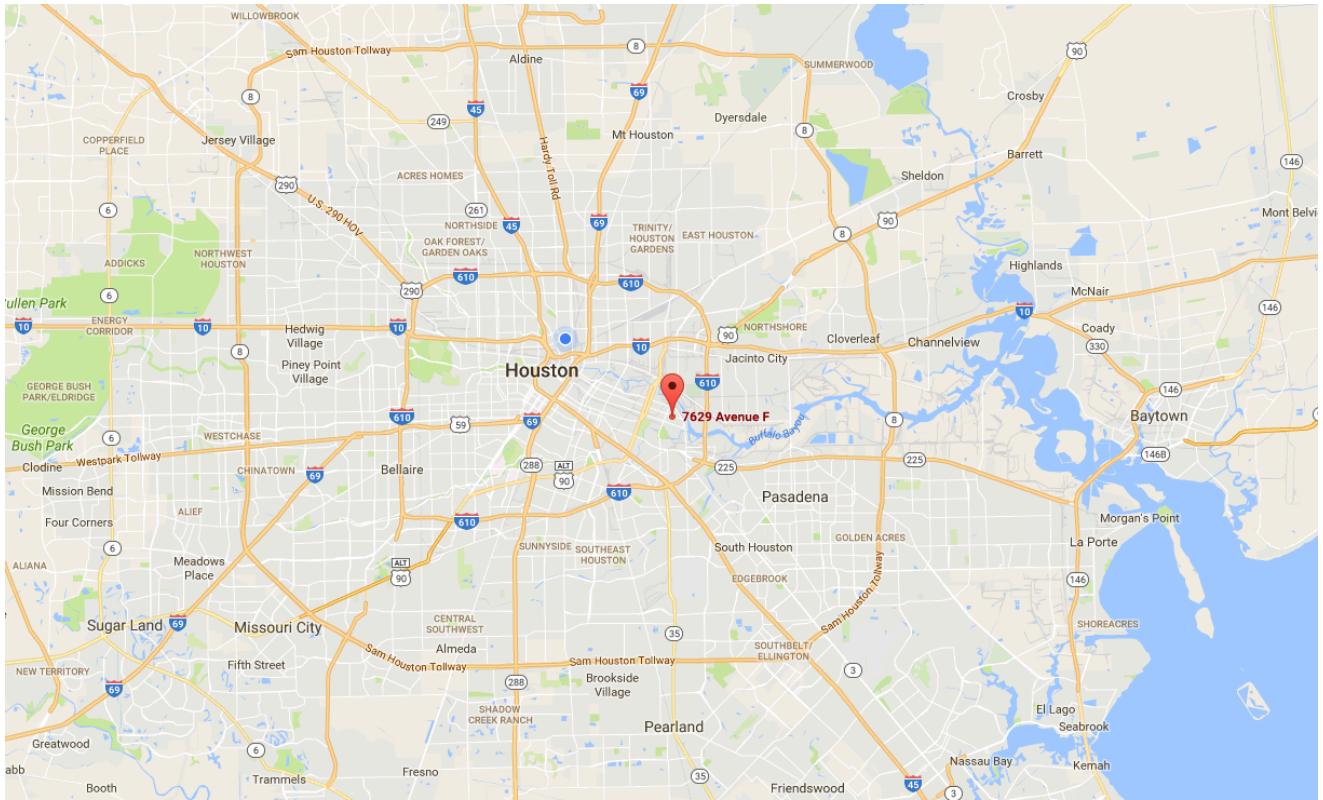


## Joy Mission Center

7629 Avenue F ♦ Houston, TX 77012

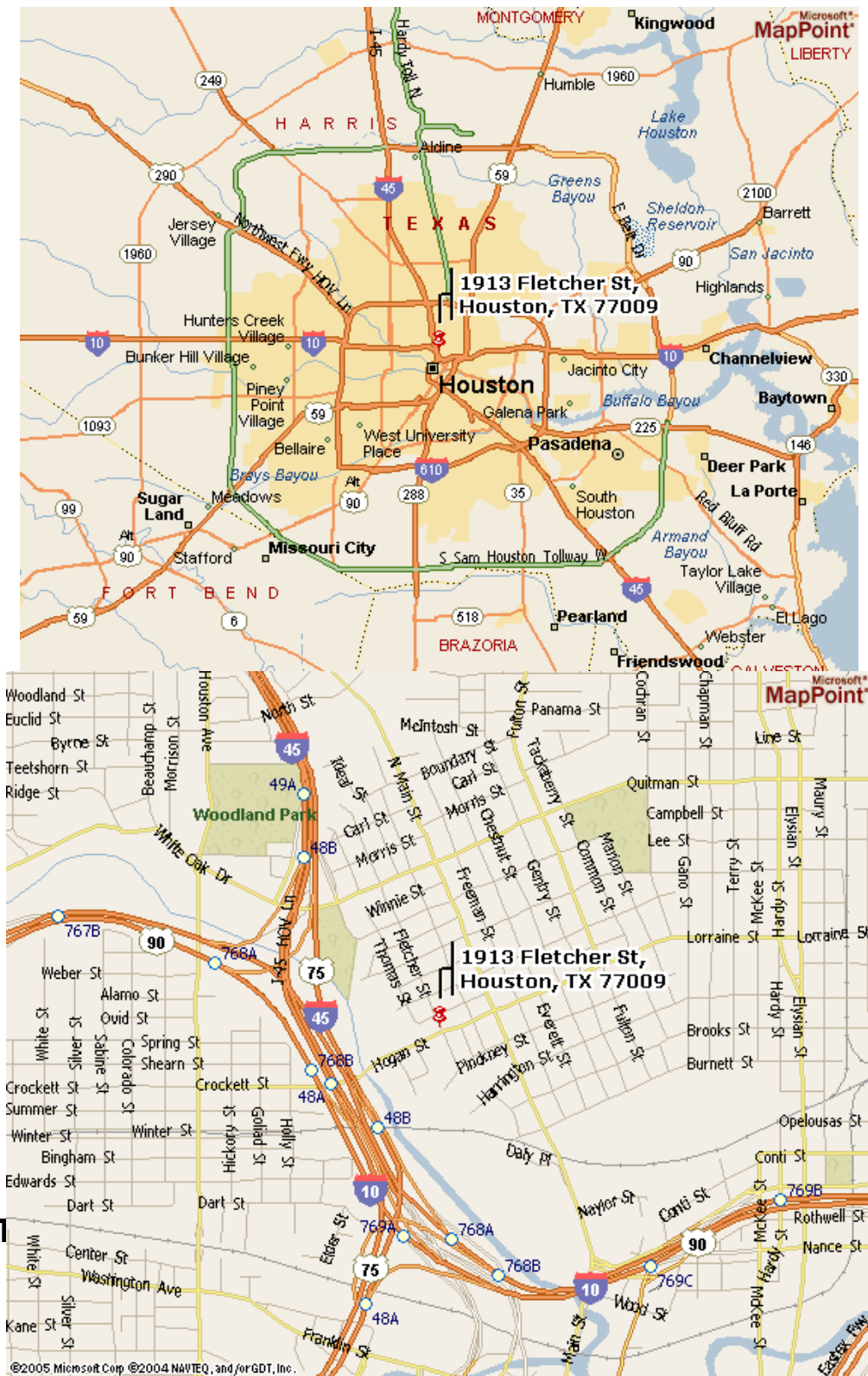
Tel. 713-921-0197 ♦ Fax: 713-921-5090 ♦ [www.missioncenters.org](http://www.missioncenters.org)

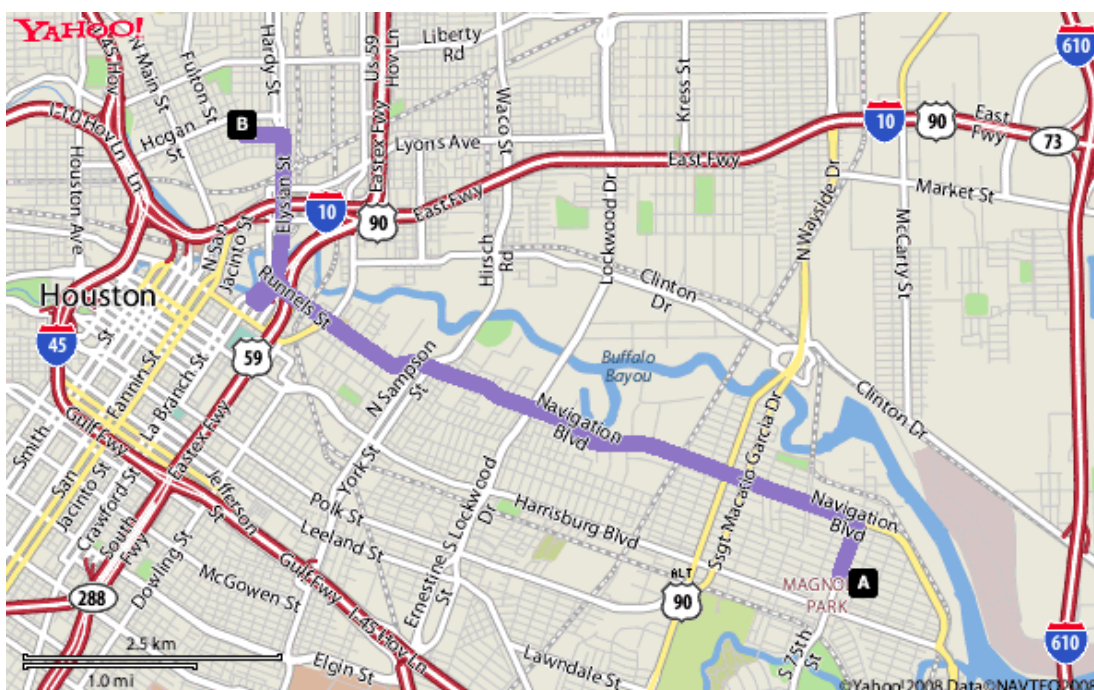
**Director: Vanesa Ortiz ♦ [vanessa@missioncenters.org](mailto:vanessa@missioncenters.org)**



♦ [www.missioncenters.org](http://www.missioncenters.org)







START **A** Joy Fellowship Center (713) 921-0197  
7629 Avenue F, Houston, TX 77012-1239

FINISH **B** Gano Mission Center (713) 227-0304  
1815 Gano St, Houston, TX 77009-8725

**Total Distance: 6.5 miles, Total Time: 19 mins (approx.)**

- A 7629 AVENUE F, HOUSTON, TX 77012-1239**
1. Start at **7629 AVENUE F, HOUSTON** going toward **76TH ST** go **0.2 mi** 0.2 mi
  2. Turn **R** RIGHT on **75TH ST** go **0.4 mi** 0.5 mi
  3. Turn **L** LEFT on **NAVIGATION BLVD** go **3.7 mi** 4.3 mi
  4. Continue on **RUNNELS ST** go **0.5 mi** 4.8 mi
  5. Make a Sharp **L** LEFT Turn on **MCKEE ST** go **< 0.1 mi** 4.8 mi
  6. Continue on **N JACKSON ST** go **0.2 mi** 5 mi
  7. Turn **R** RIGHT on **RUIZ ST** go **0.1 mi** 5 mi
  8. Turn **R** RIGHT on **N CRAWFORD ST** go **0.1 mi** 5.1 mi
  9. Continue on **ELYSIAN ST** go **1.1 mi** 6.1 mi
  10. Turn **L** LEFT on **HARRINGTON ST** go **0.2 mi** 6.4 mi
  11. Turn **R** RIGHT on **GANO ST** go **0.1 mi** 6.5 mi
  12. Arrive at **1815 GANO ST, HOUSTON**, on the **L** LEFT go **< 0.1 mi** 6.5 mi

## Grocery Stores near the Mission Centers

### **Grocery Stores near Gano Mission Center:**

#### **Fiesta Mart Grocery Store**

11020 Quitman St  
Houston, TX

#### **Target**

2580 Shearn Street  
Houston, TX 77007

#### **Kroger**

1440 Studemont Street  
Houston, TX 77007

#### **Wal-Mart**

111 Yale Street  
Houston, TX 77007

### **Grocery Stores and Restaurants near Joy Mission Center:**

#### **Fiesta Mart Grocery Store**

800 S. Wayside Dr.  
Houston, TX 77023

#### **HEB**

Gulfgate Center  
3111 Woodridge Drive #500  
Houston, TX 77087

#### **Wal-Mart**

2391 S Wayside Dr  
Houston, TX 77023

#### **Kroger**

1440 Studemont Street  
Houston, TX 77007

## **Mission Centers of Houston History**

For almost 60 years, the Mission Centers of Houston have worked to transform the lives of

people living in Houston's inner city and the people who come here to serve them. As Mission Centers enters a new century, that commitment to transformation continues to grow and mature.

In the early 1940's, an existing ministry to children and families was moved from the Primera Iglesia Bautista Houston to the Mexican Goodwill Center. This center operated primarily as a ministry to impoverished Latinos in Houston's Near Northside. In 1960, the center became the property of the Union Baptist Association. Miss Mary Terry served as a mission worker at this center until 1963, when the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention joined the UBA in supporting this work. At that time, the center was renamed the Fletcher Mission Center, and Miss Mildred McWhorter was appointed Director of the center. For the next 30 years, "Miss Mac's" name would be synonymous with inner-city Baptist mission work in Houston.

In 1965, another center was opened on Avenue F in Magnolia Park neighborhood near the Houston Ship Channel. Seeing the expressions of joy on the faces of neighborhood children whenever they arrived, "Miss Mac" named it the Joy Fellowship Center. During the 1960's and 1970's, Miss McWhorter and other volunteers visited the two neighborhoods, learning the needs of the residents and developing a variety of programs to address those needs, including after-school ministries for children and teenagers, food and clothing distribution, ESL and GED classes, job placement, and of course, Bible study and worship. Success was not immediate. It took time to gain the trust of the communities, but the Lord eventually rewarded prayers and hard work with very fruitful ministries.

In 1980, the Gano Mission Center, located a few blocks from the Fletcher Center, became part of the Baptist Mission Centers. This sizable property included the historic "Industrial Home," a three-story building that provided housing for visiting missionaries. This building was demolished in 1999 to make room for a new building that would provide improved facilities for missionary housing and ministry programs.

In 1989, Mason Drive Baptist Church, a predominantly Anglo congregation in the Magnolia Park neighborhood, closed its doors. The property was donated to the Union Baptist Association, and the Mason Drive Mission Center came under the Baptist Mission Centers' umbrella. After serving as a mission center for seven years, it was sold to a new congregation in 1996.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, "Miss Mac" became a well-known missionary speaker and promoter of home missions. Miss McWhorter retired as Director of the Baptist Mission Centers in December of 1992. In 1993, Miss Myrtle Tolley was appointed as Interim Director while a search was conducted for new leadership of the BMC.

In April of 1994, the Baptist Mission Centers' Executive Board selected Miss Dorcas Camacho as Administrator of the BMC. Miss Camacho was married shortly afterward. In 1997, she and her husband, Emerson Byrd, were appointed as Co-Administrators of the Baptist Mission Centers. The Byrd's faithfully served the inner-city communities of Near Northside and Magnolia Park until the summer of 2002, when Emerson joined the United States Army as a Chaplain and was stationed at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, CO. Chris Bryan, BMC Board Member, assumed the role of Interim Administrator.

In October of 2002, Miss Ginger Smith was appointed as Executive Director of Baptist Mission Centers. Ginger provided passionate and inspired leadership and led the Mission Centers from merely providing "relief" ministries, adding to the picture development ministry designed to lift individuals, families and communities out of the cycles of poverty that have plagued our neighbors and communities for many years. In 2008, the BMC Board of Directors voted to change the name to "Mission Centers of Houston." This opened the door for other denominations and organizations to partner with us. Ginger served until February of 2015.

In April of 2016, Rev. Jeff Chadwick was appointed as MCH's new Executive Director. He is responsible for providing the overall leadership, guidance and vision for the organization and is the main point of contact and liaison between MCH and various ministry and business partners. Prior to Jeff entering full time ministry in 2003 he worked for over 20 years as a petroleum engineer in various staff, management and executive leadership positions. Since then he has served in various pastoral positions relating to missions and outreach, and most recently church planting with his wife, Cheryl, in an urban context. He has an M.S. degree in Petroleum Engineering from West Virginia University and a M.A. in Religion from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Cheryl serves with Jeff at MCH as the Director of Interns, Kids and Volunteer Ministries. She has a M.Ed. in Special Education, has directed Children's Ministries in various sized churches for over 20 years, and served as the Children's Ministry Strategist for the State of Virginia's Baptist Convention.

In April of 2019, MCH was excited to have Rev. Juan and Lucia Ayala join our staff as the area missionary to the Greater Northside and the Gano Center Director. Juan has a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and the Ayalas have served in pastoral ministry since 2001. They are presently serving in these roles at The House of Grace Church. They have two grown daughters and will be moving into the community to the Fletcher home upon the completion of its renovation, which is being done through the donations and volunteers from churches and businesses. The essence of their ministry will be feeding the needs of others both physically and spiritually, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and helping believers grow in their knowledge and walk with God.

Going into the future we see the landscape in the Near Northside of Houston near the Gano Mission Center changing as old homes are being torn down and replaced with modern townhouses and condos. This is forcing the under-resourced residents in the area to move out as property taxes and rent skyrocket with increasing property values. MCH has begun working with church plants and networks in the area as partners in ministry to continue reaching people for Christ as the ministry model in the area changes over the next 5 to 10 years. While this happens, we will continue to provide our traditional ministries and services to help those who have come to rely on us and who need it most.

The picture is quite different in the Magnolia Park Area of Houston's Greater East End where our Joy Mission Center is located. The area is very stable in terms of unchanging demographics but

the physical and spiritual needs continue to escalate. That's why MCH will be focusing a great deal of our effort in this area going forward. In June of 2017 MCH was excited to add our first Area Missionary to our staff to serve in the Joy Mission Center Community. Noe and his wife, Vanessa, have a history of ministering at MCH, starting with their meeting in 2003 when they met while serving as summer missionaries. They returned to the Fletcher Center from 2009—2014 to serve, live, and raise their growing family there. The Ortiz family has the primary focus of reaching out from the Joy Center to the many neighborhoods in the area to expand our mission work. We want to 'take the center to the people' by identifying and raising up lay leaders who will make disciples through neighborhood 'Impact Groups'. These leaders will identify those who need help and spiritual guidance which will in turn allow us to work with our mission partners to provide what is needed. The Ortiz family moved into the Joy Mission Home in June of 2018, which enables them to live in the community they are serving. The Joy Mission Center and the Joy Mission Home are hubs for gathering the impact groups together, training and encouraging leaders, providing educational and Biblical training, and coordinating mission work in the area. The facilities will be utilized to provide a centralized location from which these ministries will occur.

Another growth in our ministry occurred when Hurricane Harvey, the worst disaster in the History of Houston, landed in August 2017. This storm has left hundreds of thousands still in need of disaster relief, recovery, and rebuilding. Mission Centers of Houston has responded with the formation of "NE Houston Disaster Recovery Network" which mobilizes churches and church-supported organizations to work together as a Christ-centered coalition to help people recover and rebuild. Through the relationships we build through this recovery process, we hope to establish new community-based ministries to bring about personal and community transformation throughout Northeast Houston.

As Mission Centers of Houston continues to change to meet the changing needs of the inner city we will be well positioned to expand our mission work into new areas of the city where the Lord leads us. We believe the model of ministry we will be doing through the Joy Center will be the model the Lord will allow us to take to new areas of Houston in the future.



**MCH is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization supported by individuals, churches and ministry-related grants. All gifts guidelines. For information on how you can participate in financially supporting this ministry, please contact Jeff Chadwick at [jeff@missioncenters.org](mailto:jeff@missioncenters.org) or call 713-227-0304.**

