
Orphan Grain Train †

Relief for Human Need Worldwide

OGT Spotlight Indiana Branch

Year Established:

1998

Branch Manager and background:

Gene Ernst has served as Branch Manager since October 2014. Gene is a retired Lutheran pastor from western Iowa, and his wife, Vivian, moved to Columbus, IN, in 2011 to be closer to their four sons and families never thinking it was going to lead to being a branch manager. Having volunteered at the Iowa West OGT in Ida Grove while serving as pastor in that area immediately piqued his interest when he saw an OGT pickup in the parking lot of St. Peter's, Columbus where he and Vivian were attending. Connections were made, directions were given to the Wint farm and volunteering began soon thereafter.

Pictured: Indiana Branch Manager Gene Ernst with his wife Vivian.



Location & Hours of Operation:

209 Jackson Street Jonesville, Indiana

Every Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Office is generally open at 8:30 a.m. with business and referrals being handled during the 10-3 time period. Special appointments and groups wishing to volunteer just need to call for making arrangements.

Branch History:

OGT Indiana Branch organized in 1998 in Seymour, moving to the Wint farm in 2002, and moving again in 2015 to our present site in Jonesville. The OGT building has 12,000 square feet for sorting, packing, storage for packed pallets of boxes, an

area for housing donated furniture, appliances and kitchenware, and a two semi-trailer loading dock. Jonesville OGT was blessed with this location situated between two strong LCMS communities of Seymour and Columbus.

What mission touched your heart the most?

No one mission or shipment stands apart as “the” mission or shipment because there are always individual stories connected with each mission or shipment. It truly is God’s hand of blessing that moves the various pieces and actors of each story to make that moment special and memorable. There have been the funny moments, the inspiring moments, and the hard-work moments that make each load a unique moment of ministry and outreach of serving God’s people in so many locations, locally and internationally.

Indiana Volunteers

Jonesville OGT has a solid core of dedicated, faithful, weekly volunteers as well as those who come as groups on a monthly basis. Over the course of this past year, OGT saw 115 individuals who volunteered for their first time. It is always a joy to share with the groups that come to see the picture of our “boss” Jesus and then see the reaction on their faces. As we go into the conference room, I am able to explain what OGT is, why it exists, and what the impact that their time and work will have on people whom they will probably never meet. That usually opens up some more discussion on the ministry and outreach of being Jesus’ hands in this place.

Is there something unique about your branch?

One part of Indiana’s OGT missions is to be a “hand-up” with folks who are having a hard time meeting everyday challenges. The back part of the warehouse has the donated furniture, appliances, household and kitchenware items that help make a house a home. It is here that opportunities arise to talk with people on a one-to-one basis and offer a word of encouragement and prayer. Sometimes it just allows people to share their struggles with someone who simply cares. That is the heart and soul of OGT, whether it is right there in the building or down the road at a mission post or across the ocean, sharing the love of Jesus is what drives OGT to keep going.



1st photo: Front view of Indiana warehouse with 7th grade boys & dad’s day

2nd photo: Toyota Materials and Handling volunteers “giving back to the community” time at OGT

3rd photo: Pete’s Trenching Crew who helped with a load to Guatemala

Indiana Branch

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Contact Us

