

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN HOUSTON BRANCH

Houston has enjoyed the first year organizing and working out of our new Servant Center and Warehouse. Boxes, volunteers, forklifts, donations overflow, under-flow, distributions, tears, joys...working for the Lord as we care for others.

3 x 3 - for three hours, three days a week we are blessed with volunteers (avg. over 400 hours per mo.) who come from local churches of every denomination, youth from local high schools and church youth groups, along with community groups looking for a place to serve.

Since we can, we did...hosted an over-night youth servant event. We told the youth they were our guinea pigs as they were the first to sleep in the two multipurpose rooms and use the showers. We just wanted to know if the shower water came out hot and the auto-sensor lights in the rooms stayed off. Water was hot, lights went on and off all night...problem fixed.

Our fundraiser held right in the OGT warehouse was the perfect no-frills, come-and-see what we do event. The evening was complete with a catered fajita dinner, margaritas, trivia competition (which included some OGT trivia) and a silent auction.

53 distributions within Texas have ranged from a few miles to 300 miles from the Servant Center.

Texas is a big, spread-out State so we put on the miles to share blessings in every direction.

Joyfully we celebrated our first international shipment on December 13, 2025. Volunteers felt and saw the fruits of their labors as we gathered around the loaded semi to bless the aid headed to a prison ministry in Malawi, South Africa. Since then we loaded a second shipment to Liberia on May 12, 2026 which was received by Hope and Care Ministries.

Sadly, one major relief effort included the Hill Country flood of the Guadalupe River July 4, 2025 which took the lives of some very young children and adults staying at Camp Mystic, an all-girls Christian camp. The lost are known as "Heavens 27." One child, Cecilia, has never been recovered yet we know she is in the arms of Jesus.

For 3 weeks we were open long hours every day to receive donations so volunteers could organize the aid of food, clothes, and hygiene supplies for shipment to Kerrville, Texas. We were blessed with a financial gift from HQ to share with families who received severe loss of property from the flood. They were emotionally moved and grateful for this gift along with a basket of comfort items delivered to them by two of our Board members, Bernice and Erika.

We continue to share presentations about the OGT ministry with churches and community groups. We were honored to be asked to speak at the LWML Texas District Convention June 2026. Steve & Holly Harris who serve on our Board represented our Branch. Steve, as a keynote speaker, shared how the mites we receive help grow the ministry as we share the good news of Jesus with those in need.

Opportunities to carry out the command of Jesus to care for the orphans, widows, the oppressed, has become a very real mission as we see and hear of daily needs in our community and abroad.

Use us Lord.

He continues to provide for all our needs. We give Him the glory!

Mike Rathje, Branch Manager - Houston