



Mission Grant Report Form

Iowa District West

Grant recipients are asked to complete and submit the report form within one month of the completion of the effort or, if a continuing ministry, by January 31 of the following year in which the grant is received. Please submit any pictures, as well, that would help to share the story with other congregations to encourage them in their ministry.

1. Please provide a brief overview of the effort.

Calvary has offered Bag-a-Lunch for four summers. It is a neighborhood feeding program providing youth with a safe place to go. Lunches are provided to go or participants are invited to eat their lunch at the church. The program is provided on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Without the structured free and reduced lunch programs at school some students might not get a healthy meal during the summer or the healthy spiritual food they need for eternal life. However, in order to feed those deprived, we do not wish to single out any child or make some feel embarrassed that their family has less money. We consider that many youth may have enough money for lunch, but because their parents work, they are running free without any supervision.

Each summer the "Bag-a-lunch" program has expanded to the point that last summer we fed several thousand meals to youth. Between 20 and 70 youth come each day! We involve easily between 5 -100 congregation members from those who serve the lunches (5-10), to those who donate food, to those who pray for the success of the program. We have always offered and taught meal prayers, provide activities, book check-outs, programs about interesting topics, crafts, monthly birthday parties, singing, and Bible stories together with the lunches. A few neighborhood families have joined the church through these efforts, but not huge numbers.

Last summer we had our first year with a youth intern with the purpose of intentionally trying to incorporate these unchurched youth into existing church ministries and to try to make more disciples for Christ's kingdom.

2. What goals were established for this effort; that is, what did you hope to accomplish?

Our goal was to bring 10 people into existing Calvary activities. The result: We had 20 - 30 youth from bag-a-lunch go to VBS but we did not have any go through new membership classes this past summer. Other connections continue to be made in the Hispanic community with Pastor Henry Witte and Ruthie Witte.

3. Did you achieve your goals? If not, what do you think were some of the contributing factors?

Why did we not gain new members? Some of the youth that come already have churches in other parts of the community. Also, we found we did not get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of parents so that we could do meaningful follow up and offer these

programs direct. We did send notes home, but this was not enough and many notes were lost by the youth. This will be a goal in future internship programs. Despite this, many seeds were planted because the Word of God was shared. We have noticed that people of our neighborhood speak higher of the church as a result of bag-a-lunch. They say, "Calvary cares."

4. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to undertake this effort again?

5. What lessons were learned through this effort?

6. What suggestions would you give to a congregation considering a similar effort?
 1. Put the work in the Lord's hands: Pray, involve many members, have multiple leaders so that one leader does not become overwhelmed.
 2. Contact local businesses (i.e. grocery stores, Wal-Mart, bakeries, cooks, restaurants) to see if they are willing to donate.
 3. Take advantage of the expertise of members who are able to present to the youth their skills and abilities.
 4. Don't try to do a bag-a-lunch "Calvary's Way." Start a bag-a-lunch that matches the gifts and abilities of the congregation and neighborhood.
 5. Don't try to compete with existing food ministries, work with them. We started the program, then the public school tried to copy our ministry, but because Calvary started first the public program ended up closing. Being well established does matter!
 6. Love the children, even when they are imperfect. Show the Gospel, but also literally tell them the Gospel. If it is shown they will never hear and as a result never believe. Intentionally tell them about Jesus' death and resurrection!
 7. Lastly, do not be roped into a government program that makes it so you cannot share the Gospel freely. Doing so will defeat the purpose of the feeding program. If possible try to keep the strings away. We have struggled a little with the "rules" of our local food bank. So far it has worked, but it can be tough.
 8. Look for ways to get addresses and names but in a way that is safe and preserves privacy.

7. Contact person
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(church) or 712-239-0880 (Lanette)
Congregation: Calvary, Sioux City