

Houston students minister to needy in Bay area

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The University of Houston mission team in front of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

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SAN FRANCISCO—Students from the University of Houston Baptist Student Ministries used their Spring Break to assist Bay-area ministries that serve people in need.

The students helped Page Street Mission Center in San Francisco and the Bay Area Rescue Mission in Richmond, which provide care for homeless people and others through clothes closets, food pantries, “breakfast in the park” and after-school tutoring.



Lauren Mock from the University of Houston assembles food bags for the pantry at the Page Street Mission Center.

BSM students also spent a day maintaining the facilities of Rock Harbor Christian Fellowship in Richmond, Calif.

Eric Burquist, director Page Street Mission Center described the

philosophy behind the Page Street Mission Center: "We try to share life with each other. Sure it's messy, most of the time people are dirty and smelly, but isn't that what Jesus calls us to do?"

The Bay Area Rescue Mission serves children and teens in an area where the crime rate is among the highest in the nation, according to Marshell Wilburn, director of the Kids' Club.

"These kids see death on a regular basis," Wilburn said. "A few weeks ago, I was talking with a student who casually mentioned to me that his mother had been shot the day before and in the next breath moved on to a totally different topic. They have to become callous to death, because they see it every day. They hear gun shots every day, and they know someone who is killed on a regular basis."

Houston students said the trip changed their outlook on people in need.

"This trip has allowed me to put a face and a story with the 'homeless' rather than thinking of them generically," Brian Kruse said.



Tara Roach from the University of Houston tutors a child at the Bay Area Rescue Mission.

Jacob Watkins said the experience in the San Francisco area inspired him

to return to Houston and volunteer to work with a church that meets each Sunday afternoon under a bridge.

Nathan Sutton said the trip pushed him to think about the purpose of his life.

"My week in San Francisco has challenged me to redefine my life goals and reevaluate my calling to Christian service," he said. "I enjoyed visiting Golden Gate Seminary while we were there. It seems like a great place to study theology while having such a diverse place to put into practice what you learn in the classroom."

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