

Baptist Immigration Services offers help to people “left hanging”

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BROWNWOOD—Baptist Immigration Services of Brownwood has opened its doors to meet the need for Christian immigration services in Central Texas.

According to its mission statement, the ministry exists to “show the love of Christ by offering affordable legal immigration services to Brown County.”

Members of the community join with Jesus and Elsa Ramos in cutting the ribbon for Baptist Immigration Services of Brownwood, the first ministry of its kind in the area. (Photos by Analiz Gonzalez/Buckner)

Jesus Romero, pastor of Iglesia Nuevo Amancer and co-director of the program with his wife, Elsa, knew someone who was charged \$5,000 to obtain U.S. residency, but she was “left hanging.”

“They took advantage of her,” Romero said. “So, we prayed about it. And then we met Alex Camacho, who has done this ministry in McKinney since the ‘80s, and we knew the Lord wanted us to be part of it.”

No other immigration service agencies serve the Brownwood area, Romero noted. Baptist Immigration Services of Brownwood does not harbor undocumented immigrants or encourage illegal activity, he stressed.

“There are undocumented immigrants who would be eligible for help, and we want them to find legal relief,” he said.



Jesus Ramos, co-director of Baptist Immigration Services of Brownwood, receives a plaque honoring the agency's membership in the Chamber of Commerce.

People in the community have been very supportive of the program, providing a new tile floor, office supplies and the first four months of rent, he added. Someone even anonymously donated a new computer.

Buckner International and the Baptist General Convention of Texas helped the program get started through the Immigration Service and Aid Center (ISAAC), a collaborative venture that helps churches serve immigrants, said Richard Muñoz, director of the ISAAC program.

Texas Baptists help support ISAAC through their gifts to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions.

Each site served by ISAAC is an independent, autonomous agency, Muñoz said.

"We don't control what they do," Muñoz said. "We just help them become recognized by the government and we give them help along the way. ... We provide some of the tools and let them take care of construction."

ISAAC helped the Brownwood ministry get its accreditation package ready, Romero noted.

“They provided us with software that guaranteed that we would have the nation’s best electronic law library at our disposal,” he said. “We feel that ISAAC is really walking with us.”

The Brownwood agency is the second ISAAC-affiliated program operating in Texas. The other program is the Ruth Project in Waco.

For more information on ISAAC, contact Richard Muñoz at richard.munoz@bgct.org or visit www.isaacproject.org .