

Brain surgery leads to ministry opportunity

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BROWNWOOD—Nerve and blood vessel damage in 2003 paralyzed the left side of Ernest Espinoza’s face. It required two extensive brain surgeries and cost him his job as a factory supervisor.

“It’s great watching TV for a while,” Espinoza said, but time off gets old for a man who always has worked. “I was home, real depressed. ... I got to where I didn’t want to talk to anybody.”



Ernest Espinoza, a member of First Baptist Church in Early, enjoys meeting needs and helping people at Good Samaritan Ministries in Brownwood, where he works with Angelia Bostick, the ministry’s executive director. (PHOTOS/Courtesy of Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission)

Finally, he recalled, “I told my wife I had to get out of the house and do something.”

A federal jobs program that matches disabled workers with part-time work

enabled Espinoza, a member of [First Baptist Church in Early](#), to work for [Good Samaritan Ministries](#) in Brownwood 25 hours a week.

“I’ve been so happy,” said Espinoza, who is now a full-time employee and food manager of the ministry supported by the Texas Baptist Offering for World Hunger. “People come and they have problems and we sit and talk. ... We give them something to show that the Lord’s there. ... We help out any way we can.”

While sitting and talking may be one of the things Espinoza enjoys, he’s doing much more than that. The food ministry of Good Samaritan fed 907 families in May, and those numbers have been increasing, said Angelia Bostick, executive director of the ministry and a Southern Baptist Convention [North American Mission Board](#) missionary.

“With Ernie, it’s always about the Lord,” Bostick said. “It’s a mission.”

Espinoza’s commitment to Christ and to people matches Good Samaritan’s approach. The ministry seeks to show respect to all people, no matter their current circumstances, said Bostick, who helped start the ministry 20 years ago.

Everything associated with the ministry looks nice—not fancy, but clean and inviting. The walls are painted in a “calming” light green because many of the people who come to Good Samaritan are in the midst of traumatic life situations, Bostick said.

But it’s not just the décor. The director has a basic rule about the clothes that are available.

“If you’re not going to wear it or if you’re not going to let your kids wear it, don’t put it out there” for those in need, she said. “All people are children of God and deserve respect.”

