

Churches work together to reach families on Cinco de Mayo

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WACO—Two Waco churches and the local Baptist association collaborated to reach Hispanic families through a Cinco de Mayo celebration.



A child enjoys a pony ride at the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta Familiar in Waco. (Photo / Isa Torres)

Viento Fuerte Church and First Woodway Baptist Church worked with Waco Regional Baptist Association to offer food, face painting, pony rides, games, piñatas and music at the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta Familiar.

Their goal was to build relationships with families in Waco's Austin Avenue Neighborhood, said Tom Gutierrez, pastor of Viento Fuerte.

[René Maciel](#), who arrived at First Woodway in 2016 after serving as the president of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio, initially proposed the idea for the family outreach event.

"I moved here with a real heart to connect with Hispanic families," Maciel said. "There are a lot of unchurched Hispanic families in Waco."

Most churches in the association represent one culture or ethnicity, Director of Missions Tim Randolph noted. To enhance relationships between those churches and improve their ability to reach communities of other cultures, the association plans to sponsor more events like Fiesta

Familiar, Randolph said.

“Our churches would like to become multicultural, but they do not know how,” he added.



A boy takes aim at a piñata during the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta Familiar in Waco. (Photo / Isa Torres)

When Maciel talked to Gutierrez and his wife, Elizabeth, about his desire to reach Hispanic families, the couple knew they could bring that idea to fruition.

She serves on the association’s evangelism team, and she immediately recognized the event first would need to appeal to children.

“When you take care of the kids, the families will come back,” she said.

Rather than seeing the fiesta as a one-time event, she viewed it as a long-term investment in the lives the children. When the children grow up, they will remember who cared for them and taught them about God, she noted.

In addition to making the event fun for children, the organizers also sought to make it attractive to families by providing food.

Maciel pointed out the event raised the churches’ profile in the Hispanic

community and let families know they care by bringing the party where the families live rather than expecting them to come to church.



Tom Gutierrez, pastor of Viento Fuerte Church in Waco, presents the gospel at the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta Familiar. (Photo / Isa Torres)

“We want people to see we are here,” he said.

Volunteers from First Woodway and Viento Fuerte teamed up to provide the food, games and entertainment. Near the end of the event, Gutierrez presented the gospel message to everyone in attendance.

Randolph hopes more events like this one occur, as churches of varied backgrounds learn to work together.

“Our strength lies in our diversity, ethnic and cultural diversity,” he said. “A team is not complete if everyone else looks like you.”