

TEXAS ★ BAPTISTS®

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS

IN A WATER TANK

LIFE IN A WATER TANK

Alongside a long dirt road outside Laredo, the Ramirez family lives behind a thin wire fence. They have little, but they have enough to live. They have few material possessions, but an abundance of joy. Every Sunday afternoon, the grandparents, their seven grandchildren and two other families who live nearby gather beneath a carport. The young people sing songs and listen to a Bible story before doing crafts and eating a small snack of sugary fruit juice and crackers. A few adults encircle a pastor who shares a weekly Bible lesson.

It's a far cry from where Mario Garcia first discovered the family. As Texas Baptists' River Ministry coordinator in the Laredo area, he came upon the family during a prayer walk in a colonia. He first met the grandfather, Victorio Ramirez, who soon introduced his wife, Lupe, and seven grandchildren — all under the age of 16.

The children lived in one large metal water tank and the grandparents in another. When it rained, the tanks leaked. In summertime, temperatures inside the tanks rose to 120 degrees. The family had limited electricity and no running water.

"That just broke my heart," Garcia said, fighting back the emotion he still feels when he thinks of that moment.

What others might see as a difficult situation, Garcia saw as an opportunity to show the character and power of God. He regularly visited the family and built a relationship with them. Finally, he decided to see if he could gather the people and resources needed to build the Ramirez family a new home.



Volunteers, churches and mission groups raised the money and provided free labor. They worked quickly and passionately out of a call to help the Ramirez family, said Garcia, whose ministry is supported by the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions <http://www.maryhilldavis.org/>.

As they worked, they were able to get better acquainted with Ramirez and shared the gospel with him. He made a profession of faith in Christ, and his entire family followed. Garcia mentioned wanting to start a church in the area, and Ramirez volunteered his carport. Now 20-30 people gather there every Sunday afternoon.

"I was overfilled with joy," Ramirez said of hearing about the effort to build a house. "It was an opportunity for a big change."

People across the state need someone to share the gospel with them in word and deed. Will you be that person today? Visit www.texasbaptists.org/beonmission to view service opportunities.

