

WMU hammers home concern for South Texas family

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PENITAS—Seven-year-old Osvaldo Salazar hopped off the bus after school and ran home like a whirlwind of energy. Crossing into his dusty front yard, he stopped short, and his mouth dropped open.

Helen Scott, a member of West Shore Baptist Church in Orange Grove, smiles as she works on the side of the house. (PHOTO/John Hall/BGCT)

"What happened here?" he exclaimed.

His life changed. That's what happened.

In the time he spent at school that day, a team of more than 20 volunteers with Woman's Missionary of Texas erected a new home for Osvaldo's family—one hammer stroke, one beam, one piece of siding at a time.

When he left for class that morning, a pier-and-beam foundation stood on the building site. When he returned, he saw a framed-out house, and women were piecing the roof together and running electrical lines.

By the end of the week, the [Texas WMU](#) volunteers nearly finished the home, including all the siding, as well as installing much of the electrical wiring, cabinetry, appliances and drywall.

The home, which cost \$15,000 in supplies paid for by the [Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions](#) funds, will allow the Salazar family to move out of the pull-behind recreational trailer that currently houses five members.



Maria Salazar prays with WMU volunteer Norma Powell to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Her husband, Osvaldo (right), had made a profession of faith in Christ one day earlier. (PHOTO/Courtesy of Texas WMU)

For the rest of that first day of work, Osvaldo and his 5-year-old brother, Daniel, remained on the construction site. They looked at the new structure from all sides and enjoyed snacks with the volunteers. The boys were promised they could help paint if they came back the next day.

When the volunteers packed up and left near dusk, the brothers and their mother spent more than an hour and a half in what will be their new home. Osvaldo and Daniel tried to figure out which room would be theirs and where they would put their beds. Their mother, Maria, pondered where the stove would go and what her kitchen would be like.

"All the people who helped build our house are a blessing from God," said the boys' father, Osvaldo Salazar Sr. "There are no words for how it feels."

When team members saw the family's reaction to the first day's progress, several volunteers fought tears. They found it hard to express the joy they felt when they saw the young boys bounce through their future home.

"That was just priceless to see that, to make a difference," said Ruth Heiner, a member of Berean Bible Fellowship in San Antonio.

The volunteers became even more emotional later that week when they learned the family's patriarch came to faith in Christ.

"It was just so cool to hear he accepted Christ. All the glory to God for making that happen," said Deirdre LaNoue, a member of [Valley Ranch Baptist Church in Coppell](#).



Shelly McQuarie (left from First Baptist Church in Cleburne and Deirdre La Noue from First Baptist Church of Valley Ranch in Coppell install shingles on the roof.
(PHOTO/John Hall/BGCT)

The next day, his wife embraced a relationship with Christ. Salazar said each person who was part of the home-building effort influenced his and his wife's decision to become Christians. The way they cared for his family enabled him to see how God cares for each of them.

"All the people here are Christians," he said, looking over the construction site. "All these people helped us. They are beautiful people. They are full of the Holy Spirit. They came for free and asked nothing."

His decision exemplifies why WMU of Texas partnered with Buckner International and Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association to build a home for

a family in a colonia, Texas WMU Executive Director-Treasurer Sandra Wisdom-Martin said. Throughout the week, the team emphasized the house simply is a tool through which team members can build relationships and share the gospel.

"In WMU of Texas ... we believe you ought to leave your heels at home and grab your hammer or whatever God is calling you to do," Wisdom-Martin said.



Shelly McQuarie from First Baptist Church in Cleburne uses a nail gun in installing trusses for the roof. (PHOTO/John Hall/BGCT)

"We just want you out doing it, sharing the love of God, telling people about Jesus and helping people along the way."

The construction project serves as an opportunity for volunteers to give time and resources as well as learn a new skill, Wisdom-Martin said. They can take their experience in Penitas and consider how they might be able to minister in their own communities.

"We believe that being a Christian is more than just going to church an hour on Sunday," she said.

"We want people to be radically involved in the mission of God. You can't do that by just sitting in the pew. You have to be outside the walls of the church, being the hands and the feet of Jesus. That's what these women ... are doing."



Gloria Mills, president of Texas WMU, measures a board during the WMU home build in Pernitas. (PHOTO/John Hall/BGCT)

Despite 10-hour days in temperatures reaching triple digits, volunteers agreed they were blessed to be part of the building effort.

They enjoyed meeting the Salazar family, their neighbors and the other volunteers on the team. By the end of the week, volunteers felt they were more than a team; they were a family of faith.

"There's no greater joy than giving and serving," LaNoue said. "We sometimes get caught up in our world and just trying to make our lives work and that kind of thing. Any time we are willing to step out of our comfort zone in order to serve, it's just hard to de-scribe the reward of that."