



# Newsletter



May 2026



## From the Director's Desk



### Have You Come to Stay?

When we founded Misión Peniel nearly 20 years ago, one of the first tasks assigned to us was to conduct a community assessment. To that end, we held a series of individual and group conversations to hear directly from the workers themselves.

A pivotal moment in our early history occurred during our dialogues with various community representatives, when we heard the same question asked time and again. Not necessarily in the exact same words, but with the same underlying meaning and the same honest concern: "Have you come to stay with us, or are you merely passing through?"

In the reality of a community like Immokalee, groups abound that show up to perform some charitable work, only to vanish again until the next cycle. This was what lay behind the question we heard repeated so often. And it presented us with the greatest challenge we had yet faced: to consistently and consciously integrate ourselves into the community-to such an extent that we would be regarded as part of it, rather than mere visitors.

Over the years, we have experienced the community's confirmation, validation, and appreciation for what we have shared with them. We have been granted the privilege of standing alongside them to laugh and celebrate valuable achievements-both individual and collective. And we also been able to be here to weep and offer comfort whenever pain and suffering have made their presence felt.

All of this-and more-has been made possible through the support and commitment of those who, throughout the years, have stepped forward to contribute with generosity. Those who arrived not as transient visitors, but with the intention of staying and integrate into the community of agricultural workers.

Today, once again, we appeal to your compassion and solidarity. Like many other organizations, Misión Peniel relies on your care and magnanimity. Thank you for considering a one-time gift, a recurring pledge, or a legacy. Whatever your means allow, your contribution enables us to continue standing alongside and serving the agricultural workers of Immokalee.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Message from the Director

How support our Backpack Drive

Volunteer Corner

Volunteer Appreciation

Thank you Faith Presbyterian Church

News

Pastor Miguel Estrada



# Help us to collect Backpacks and School Supplies to Distribute on July 15!

Donations of new backpacks and school supplies listed in the flyer below are appreciated. A great way to provide support our Backpack Drive is:

1. Donating new, durable backpacks and essential school supplies.
2. Set up your own backpack drive at your church or in your community and help provide backpacks and school supplies to children in our community.
3. Monetary donations: online at [www.misionpeniel.org](http://www.misionpeniel.org) (choose children supplies from the "Please direct my support:" menu), or via check mailed to the mission and designated as "Children/Supplies."
4. Alternatively, items may be ordered online and delivered; please contact us prior to ordering the delivery address.

Thank you for considering this request. Your support helps students achieve their academic aspirations and provides meaningful assistance to the families we serve in our community.



## ITEMS NEEDED

### Grade K-2

- Backpack (11" x 16" x 6")
- Crayon Pack
- Washable Markers
- Erasers
- Glue Sticks
- Folders (2 Pockets)
- Notebook (1 subject, Wide ruled)
- Pencils 2 HB
- Pencil Case
- Blunt-topped Scissors
- Ruler 12 inch



### Grade 3-5


- Backpack (13" x 17" x 7")
- Crayon Pack
- Colored Pencil Pack
- Washable Markers
- Erasers
- Glue Sticks
- Folders (2 Pockets)
- Notebook
- Pencils 2 HB
- Pencil Case
- Pencil Sharpener
- Blunt-topped Scissors
- Ruler 12 inch



### Grade 6-12

- Backpack (18" x 13" x 12")
- Colored Pencil Pack
- Permanent Markers
- Highlighter
- Erasers
- White School Glue
- Folders (2 Pockets)
- Notebook
- Composition Notebook
- Loose leaf paper
- Pencils 2 HB
- Pencil Sharpener
- Ball Point Pen
- Ruler 12 inch
- Index Cards

For More Info and Drop-Off Coordination

 239-839-3738

 [m.castillo@misionpeniel.org](mailto:m.castillo@misionpeniel.org)

## JOIN US BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACK DRIVE



Let's come together to help kids in Immokalee start school with a new backpack and the supplies they need.

**Collection Dates**  
**JULY 01 - 10 Monday-Thursday**  
09:00am - 03:00pm

Drop-Off Location: MISION PENIEL  
208 Boston Av. Immokalee, FL

Spread  
The Love!



# Volunteer's Corner

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

**Tom Mortenson**  
**April 20, 2026**



I graduated from high school in Minnesota in 1961. I heard President Kennedy's call <sup>1</sup> to national service in my senior year of high school. I remember his call vividly, even though that was 65 years ago. His call to service has guided my life since then, both professionally and vocationally.

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President Kennedy's first act after being sworn in as President was to create the Peace Corps. so I joined Peace Corps in 1966 after college and served in Colombia for almost three years. There I learned Spanish, lived with campesinos in the mountains of southern Colombia, and later lived in a roof-top maid's quarters in Bogota. The Colombians were good to me and I didn't cause too much trouble during my time of service there. My experiences broadened my familiarity and appreciation for the diversity of humanity.

My wife and I moved to Florida and bought a house in 2013 to care for her elderly parents. I sought an opportunity to practice my Spanish from my Peace Corps days back in the 1960s. Through my church—Buckingham Presbyterian Church—I heard about something called Misión Peniel in Immokalee, Florida. I thought I could practice my Spanish there, and maybe even help in the work of Misión. So I showed up and began helping to prepare hot meals handed out to farm workers returning from the fields on Friday afternoons. Pastor Miguel was an outstanding cook preparing enormous tanks of tasty gumbo for the workers. I confess that I would sometimes set aside a packaged meal to take home for myself because his food tasted so very good.

I have now volunteered at Misión Peniel on Fridays since about 2013. I supported Misión Peniel's vision and commitment to serve the farm workers community of Immokalee with service and money. I see the people we serve on Fridays just as fully human as the millionaires and billionaires that live at the other end of Collier County, but who are oblivious and indifferent to the poverty of their neighbors.

I realize now in retrospect that I am still today responding to President Kennedy's call to serve. I feel honored and privileged to be able to do so at Misión Peniel. I look forward to excitement and chaos that every Friday afternoon brings. And I appreciate the smiles and nods of recognition from folks who come every Friday in search of sustenance. I am blest to be here.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/inaugural-address-19610120>

**\*Editor's note: Tom is our statistician. Every week he is around and besides others tasks he keeps record of services and clients. The information he collect is instrumental to support Misión Peniel's ministry.**

# We couldn't do it without you!



We appreciate and recognize the impact that volunteers make by serving others with their unique gifts and talents.



We would like to extend words of gratitude to the members of Faith Presbyterian Church of Cape Coral.

Faith's 2026 Diaper Drive, collected an approximate of 19K diapers and 7K baby wipes. This allows us to continue providing essential care to our community

Thank You!



## ¡GRACIAS!

## MÈSI!



# YOUR GENEROSITY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

## Support to Families

Thanks to your donations we can continue support to families/individuals affected by the immigration crackdown; with the payment of basic services bills, rent, medical attention and travel arrangements.

## Food Pantry

Our weekly service average is approximately 550 individuals/families. Your time as a volunteer helps us keep operations running, especially as we aim to provide hope and stability during challenging times.

## Pan de Vida

Pan de Vida is a program that serving homebound elderly and disabled farmworkers in Immokalee. Each week, about 22 clients receive three nutritious hot meals, often accompanied by fresh vegetables, hygiene items, blankets, clothes, birthday gifts, or seasonal extras. For many, the person who knocks on their door is their only human contact that week.

## New Truck

It's officially here! Our New Truck has officially joined our organization, allowing us to reach out and keep serving the community. Thanks to an insurance settlement and your generous donations.

## Donations may be sent to:

**Misión Peniel, Inc**  
**PO Box 1204**  
**Immokalee, Florida 34143**

**Make checks payable to**  
**Misión Peniel**

**Or Online at: <https://www.misionpeniel.org>**

**All donations are tax deductible**

Misión Peniel Federal Tax ID number: **473118063**

# May-June Donation Need List

**MAY AND JUNE 2026**  
Donation Need List

- Caps or Hats
- Umbrellas
- Light Rain Jackets
- Rain Ponchos
- Towels, used or new
- Socks
- Rice
- Dry Pinto beans
- Canned meat (please not tuna fish)
- Cereal
- Cooking Oil
- Canned Vegetables
- Diaper # 6

**Misión Peniel**

Visit our website <https://www.misionpeniel.org> to learn more about how you can help!



Please notice the changes on our email addresses, we are migrating to a new domain service.

Don't forget to update your mail list.

## Contact Us

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