



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

SOAR MINISTRIES



A MESSAGE FROM KERI

Another year of serving others and rejoicing has come to a close. I mean that sincerely. It truly is a joy to serve others in the name of Christ. I am constantly amazed at how God allows me to work for Him via SOAR. I have met so many people and have innumerable relationships that have spanned decades all because of SOAR.

2023 seemed to be a year getting back to normal. We had a couple of “regular” teams go out and serve and just feeling the excitement of people on mission for the Lord pushes me to look for more ways to get others involved in missions. For me, there is no greater joy than serving others around the world and telling them about Jesus, sometimes for the first time, and sometimes just helping them walk closer to Him. Either way, it is what we are all called to do, and I am so thankful for all of the supporters of SOAR that make it possible for us to do what we do!

This year we had teams go to India, New York, Brazil, ICOM, and Angel Bags. In India we conducted Vacation Bible School and we did that same VBS in New York with the CrossPoint Christian Church in Yonkers. In Brazil we had the opportunity to teach English again. How refreshing it was to be back with the churches and people in all three of those places since 2019. Angel Bags is always a joy, and fortunately we were able to go in person last year as well. We are looking forward to partnering with more churches to serve alongside them on the field and new ministry partners around the globe. The Lord has blessed us with nearly 25 years of ministry and we are looking forward to another 25 years ahead. I pray you will continue to partner with us and see all that the Lord has in store!

Keri Duncan, Ed.D.



ANGEL BAGS

By Keri Duncan

This year there were two international Angel Bags trips. This was the third year that Josue Garcia and the Insurgents Church of Christ in Guadalajara Mexico received Angel Bags. Josue has known Cris Garcia for many years and she began sharing the angel bags with them



a few years ago. They have done an amazing work with the Angel Bags and before Cris died she had encouraged me to go and be a part of their program. Now that I am retired that was finally a possibility. So, December 17—23 Dianne Lee and I went to Guadalajara to experience their program. I then returned to Mexico on December 26 with the other team that distributed bags in the Bethshean area of Zacatecas.

You will read from Abdiel Garcia about the impact of Angel Bags in Guadalajara, and you will also get to hear from a volunteer that worked countless hours at the warehouse in Tucker preparing the bags. Below I'll give a little information about Bethshean's distribution.

I am so thankful I had the opportunity to go to both locations. The dedication of the church members in Guadalajara was such an encouragement to see. They gave out a total of 854 bags at three different programs. They also had members talk to all those present at the gatherings and see if anyone needed prayer or was interested in a bible study or knowing more about the church. They had a total of 123 adults ask for prayer or more information. Wow! I can't wait to hear how the Lord works in those lives!

In the area of Bethshean we had a great group from the Villa Gonzalez church that helped with the program and all of the physical labor at each location including the preparations for each day. It was fun working alongside these young people that obviously have a heart for serving the Lord. We physically went to 13 locations in addition to the elderly home, and handed out just under 1200 bags. We gave out just under 1000 bags for other locations we were not able to visit where the churches had submitted lists of their needs and they would conduct the programs. We learned we definitely need more bags for 4yrs — teen! WE did have to make adjustments on the field to have enough bags in certain age groups, but the Lord provided as He always does!



US Warehouse

I'm reaching out to convey my profound gratitude for the impactful efforts of the SOAR Angel Bag Ministry. This marks my inaugural year actively participating in the warehouse operations to assemble angel bags. In prior years, I contributed by making donations, but it wasn't until I immersed myself in hands-on work alongside other volunteers that I truly comprehended the far-reaching significance of this ministry. Through shared stories and captivating images, I have become acutely aware of the life-altering effects it has on the children in Mexico, their parents, and the dedicated volunteers involved.

The dedication to delivering not only gift bags but also the knowledge of Jesus is truly commendable. The ministry's blend of generosity and spiritual guidance creates a unique and uplifting experience that extends beyond the moment of gift-giving.

Being part of the SOAR Angel Bag Ministry not only connected me with the children in Mexico but inspired me to leverage my gift basket experience to create beautiful baskets as a fundraiser, for local families, aiming to share the same joy with the children in their lives. Moreover, the impact has transcended generations, as my grandson has been enchanted by the Angel Bags. His love for the bags has inspired him to express a heartfelt desire to visit the children in Mexico and personally distribute the bags. This ripple effect of compassion and generosity is a testament to the lasting impact of the SOAR Angel Bag Ministry.

The collaborative effort of dedicated volunteers stateside, coupled with the personal inspiration derived from this experience, makes the ministry's work even more profound.

I look forward to continued collaboration and the opportunity to contribute to this transformative effort.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this meaningful journey.

Setina W. Pouengue
Angel Bag Ministry Volunteer

Thank you to all the filled, checked, drove to border, unloaded trailers, traveled to Bethshean to help with the program and distribution, and to those that hosted us while in Mexico.



Guadalajara

My name is Abdiel Garcia, and I am the current youth pastor at Insurgentes Church of Christ.

I want to share my experience with the ministry of Angel Bags. I thank God for His love through the ministry of SOAR. Since I received the news that we would have the blessing of having gift bags to give to the children, my heart was filled with joy because I knew that God would use those gift bags as a bridge of blessing.

This past year, we had the opportunity to have three locations where we were able to give more than just a gift bag, but the gift of God's Word. I am filled with joy, because on two occasions, I was able to tell people about the greatest gift of all, Jesus the Son of God. I was able to see in the eyes of many people the love of God through the message of His word. One of the things that brings the most joy to my heart is seeing the smiles of children and the joy that these gifts bring to families.

I thank God for Keri Duncan and her team for making this blessing possible.

I pray that SOAR Ministries will continue to move forward and that our Lord will always give them the resources and strength to continue with this beautiful work.

With love, Pastor Abdiel Garcia



Mission to India

By David Kimbrell

Honestly, I wasn't sure what I was signing up for when I put my name on the list for the mission trip to Kerala, India, in April 2023. Something inspired me to take a chance and see what adventure would unfold.

One of the first things I noticed was the lack of traffic signals. I'm unsure if Americans could deal with that effectively, but the Indians have found a way to make it work. There was an abundance of roadside vegetable stands and markets along the roadways. In the downtown area many shops were selling their wares. It is a bustling downtown area full of traffic and pedestrians.

I have known Rajan since the mid-1970s when he first arrived at Mount Carmel Christian Church. I knew that he was a powerful speaker and a man of God, but had not gotten to know him on such a personal level as I was able to on this mission trip. As it turns out, we got along very well, and I now count him as a good friend of mine. Reni, Rajan's wife, is a very good cook, and we had a delicious lunch every day. It was rumored that she toned down the spices a bit. The cuisine in southwest India was a little on the hot side for me. I am grateful to have had such gracious hosts. I learned a lot about Indian culture, politics, and social order from Rajan as well as the many different religions that are a part of Indian Society.

I had never taught a class of any kind but had trained new employees on technical and mechanical issues during my many years of employment with AT&T. Even so, I definitely did not feel confident in my abilities to teach middle-school-aged children. Fortunately, I was paired with a seasoned missionary, Frank Sturgill, who had a good feel for instructing the children and keeping their attention. I soon found myself stepping up and embellishing on points that had been made during the day's lesson and even adding thoughts of my own. I was surprised and delighted how quickly I adapted to teaching and relating to these youth. I have to mention that the young people made it easy to speak to them as they were attentive to the lesson and genuinely interested in learning more about our Lord.

I was also struck by their maturity, intelligence, politeness, and very loving and welcoming demeanor. One young man in particular would ask me questions and discuss topics that were brought up during the lesson after class was dismissed (he told me that his ambition was to become a Pastor one day). There was a second young man



that caught my attention on the first day of class. He seemed disinterested and bored. I told myself, “I must make an effort to reach out to him tomorrow and see if I can make a connection.” Unfortunately, he did not return after the first day. I often think of this young man and regret that I didn’t try to engage him on that very first day. I include this story because many of us encounter people along the way that need a helping hand or a kind word. People who need to know the love and peace that God offers. Those who need to know Jesus. Let me urge you not to delay. Don’t put it off until tomorrow. Do it now because you may never get the opportunity again. Even though I don’t know this young man’s name, I still offer up a prayer for him every now and then because God knows who he is, God knows what he needs, and we all need God.

Many students displayed creative imaginations during the “craft portion” of the day. I was particularly impressed with some of the children’s artistic abilities. They are also very good dancers. I was pretty worn out after the post-class celebrations every day (I’m not used to the “Bollywood” lifestyle). All in all, it was a great experience to teach these young people about Jesus and get to know them. Our local support staff was extremely helpful. They made Frank and my classroom time run very smoothly.

We took several side trips to many congregations established by Rajan’s ministry, as well as one particular church in the Vagamon Mountain Region, where the scenery was magnificent. We took a boat ride on the Vembanad Lake, visited a Hospital, and toured a former orphanage converted into a Senior Living Facility. We even got to take a ride on an elephant!

I have to say that I am truly blessed to be able to travel to a faraway land and share the story and the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to fellowship with the other missionaries including my brothers and sisters in India, to see and learn new things, and to experience the power of God at work.

By Gerardo Mancilla

What can I say about our trip to India. It was full of joy and eye opening experiences. It was a time when the Lord seemed to

share the vastness of his love and mercy. The experience Morgan and I had as a family really brought us closer. We loved seeing kids, students, and adults worshipping the Lord in their language and expressing themselves through their culture. It was a beautiful experience to see how God made us unique with different cultures and expressions, but also see where we were all made in His image as one human race.



VBS- YONKERS, NY

By Melinda Wilson

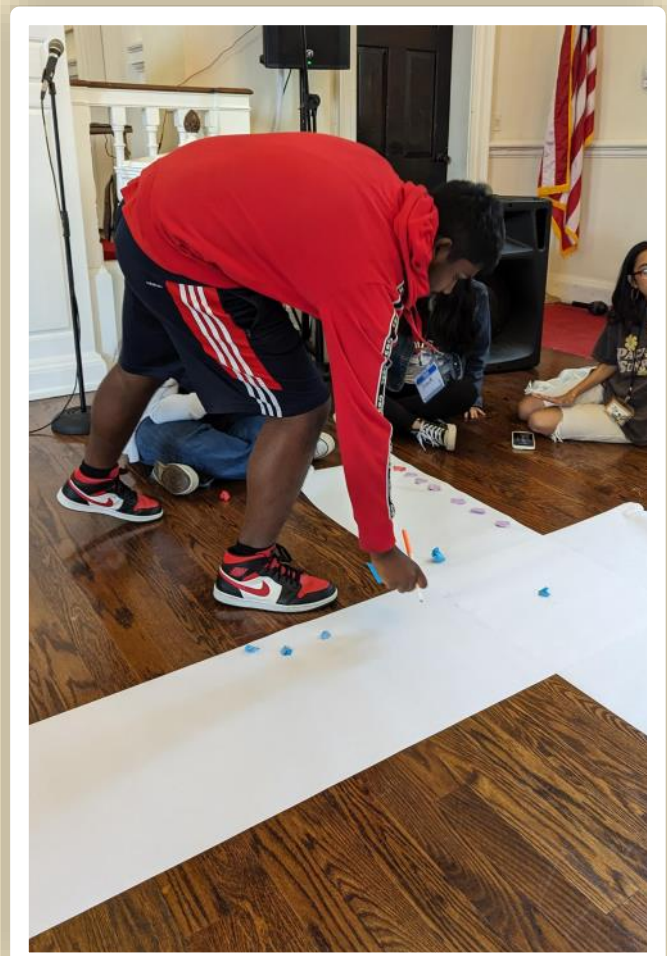
The first day is always the day to get to know the teens, and getting the teens to open up to answering questions as well as confiding in their other teens can be a challenge. I knew some of the teens, but the peer pressure was strong. I knew that in a few days they would be understanding where not only me, but God wanted them to go.

Of course, they are like all other teens: quiet, not really into answering questions, or volunteering to do whatever. But the 2nd day got much better. The group leaders were beginning to rise to the challenge of becoming leaders. Each day, the teams had to design a banner of what they learned from that day's lesson.

This is meant to be an all-class, hands-on activity. The first day was not that. It was the typical teen thing, that's for small kids to make a banner! So, 2 girls took on the job of telling what they learned that day. They did an excellent job. Then, they presented the teen banner for their class. The next day, more of the teens wanted to help with the banner. They all began to want to help design the banner that told everyone what they learned that day.

The next day, they had the lesson, but the activity was a little hard for them. I asked them to take as many Post-It Notes as they needed. This time they were to write down on a Post-It-Note something they wanted to quit doing. Something that was getting between them and God. They would tape the post-it-note on the banner. After they were all finished with the Post-It-Notes and had placed them on the banner, I asked them to do something with the banner. I asked each to help take the banner outside, and keep it from tearing. They looked at me like you want what? I told them they would understand once we made it outside.

We used a metal trash can that had been provided. They wadded up the banner that had all the Post-It-Notes. These notes were to represent things that they wanted to change in their lives. Things that were not what a Christian teen should be doing. Things that they wanted to stop doing. I then took a lighter and lit the banner in the trash can. I explained to them that these are the things



that God does not want them to do any more. To leave these things and don't look back. No one except you and God would ever know what was written on the note that was burning.

There was a change in the teens. That day, the class became a team. They worked together the rest of the week. They worked as a team during discussion times as well as when it was time to make the banner. The spirit of God showed them that they turned away from the bad things and have turned to dig deeper into God's word.

KINGDOM KIDS

By Sini Alex

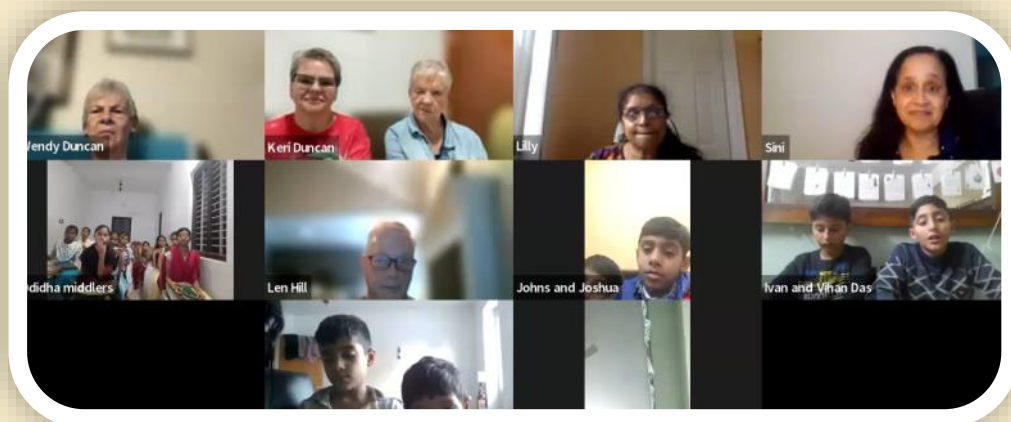
In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." In 2021, during coronavirus pandemic, God enabled

Cross Point Church to partner with SOAR Ministries to launch 'Kingdom Kids' program via Zoom across the globe. With God's grace, this program is continuing with the dedication and commitment of SOAR Ministries and volunteers from Cross Point church.

The intent of this program is to raise our young generation with a systematic exploration of the scriptures and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform every child that we come across. This program involves sharing songs, Bible story clips, and teaching Bible lessons with four classes (Pre-K, Elementary, Middlers, and Seniors). Currently about 50 kids are participating in this program. With the technology and expertise offered by SOAR Ministries, this program conducts classes for different age groups through virtual breakout rooms. We are

already seeing the fruit of this labor as the children and their parents share their experiences on how this program is equipping the children to grow in faith and rooted in the Word of God. God has led this program to mold one of the senior students to launch this program in the Hindi language in Uttar Pradesh, the northern part of India, by the end of January, 2024.

Cross Point Church is very fortunate to work with SOAR Ministries to continue this endeavor and very grateful to all the team members who actively lend their support every week. All glory to God, who gave us the opportunity and resources to nurture a Godly generation.



BRAZIL

By Sarah Quiñones

Greetings and Blessings Reader!

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Sarah Quiñones, and I am a teacher at Lilburn Elementary school. I was simply scrolling on Instagram in Spring of 2023 and saw an ad for individuals to attend a mission trip to Brazil through SOAR Ministries. This particular mission trip spoke to me as it provided not only the opportunity to serve others and be a part of a team, but to teach English to our brothers and sisters in Christ in Brazil. I was initially very interested

and nervous about the experience at the same time. This would be my very first mission trip, and I did not know what to expect. Within a few days, the calling God laid on my heart to be a part of this trip was undeniable. I was not going to let my fear of the unknown or my own personal fears of having what it takes to be a missionary stop me. I reached out to Keri Duncan through SOAR and she made me feel extremely welcomed and appreciated- as well as guided me through each step of the process from preparation to execution of the mission.

The church we worked with in Brazil was Brazil River of Life Ministries with Pastor Jeff Fife. During our trip, our group continuously received a warm reception from our family in Brazil. Everything from the spirit of our Lord, the people, and the experience is one that will remain a part of my heart for many years to come. Not only was I able to increase my capacity to have a servant's heart and further develop my relationship with God, I made connections with people that changed the way I view our world for the better. I am excited to attend this mission trip again this summer, and hopefully every summer thereafter!



Dianne Lee, Sharon Joseph, Sara Quinones, Wendy Duncan, & Keri Duncan



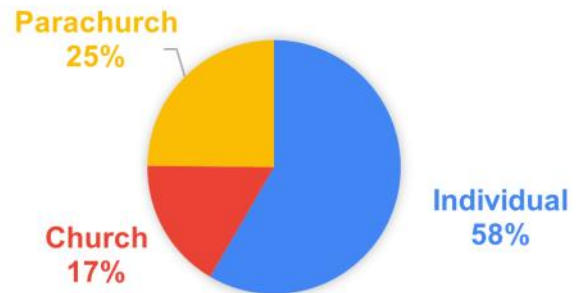
FINANCIALS

We always want to be upfront about our income and expenses while giving information that is relevant to the reader. First, we want to convey the importance of each person that contributes to SOAR. You will see that 58% of the income for SOAR comes from individuals. YOU MATTER when it comes to keeping SOAR working for the Lord.

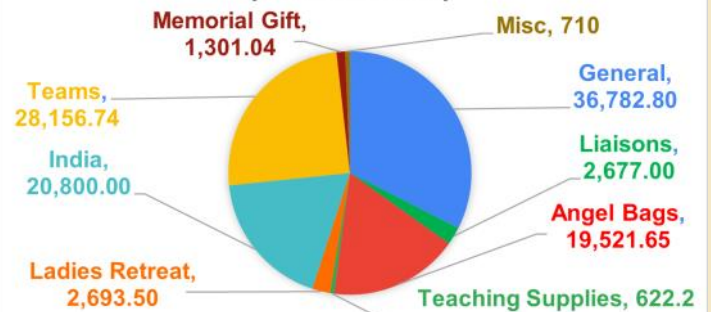
The contributions by fund lets you know how the contributions are designated and used. Teams is the fund for the actual groups/ teams that traveled this year. India, is the fund we use to help an organization in India. Miscellaneous is a fund because we received funds that were sent to the “wrong SOAR Ministries”. Liaisons are for those that contribute to their accounts throughout the year and help lead teams for SOAR. The expenses are according to the same funds. Some expenses like the ladies retreat are paid in a different year than the contributions received.

Each year a 990 is filed with the IRS for SOAR reporting how we use our funds. If you would like to see a copy of that report, or have any other questions about how your contributions are being used, please don't hesitate to ask! You can email Keri @ kerid@soarministries.org.

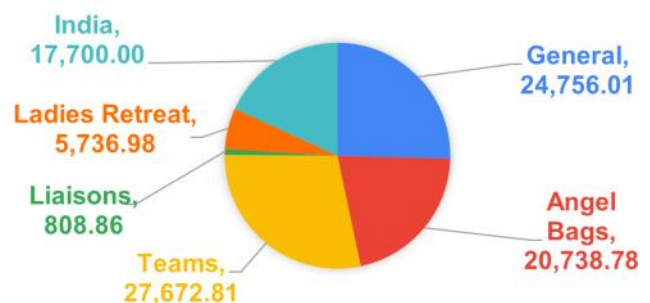
DONATIONS BY TYPE



CONTRIBUTIONS BY FUND (\$113,24.93)



TOTAL EXPENSES BY FUND - \$97,413.44



25th Anniversary

It is hard to believe that SOAR will have been in existence for 25 years as of this March. We are planning a very special celebration to commemorate this momentous occasions and it won't be complete unless YOU are there.

Our plan is to have the celebration March, 23, 2004 at MC3 Church in Lilburn, GA. Doors will open around 3:00 pm for mingling and a silent auction. There will be lots of pictures and videos from over the years to view. The meal, catered by Always Fresh, will begin around 4:30 pm and the menu includes baked chicken, BBQ pork, salad, macaroni and cheese, and other sides. Since we work in multiple countries around the world we thought it would be nice to have a bit of an international flair for our desserts. Dan Garrett, from Christian City, will emcee the program and we will hear from some of the people who have both participated in mission trips and some of the missions that we have partnered with over the years. Our plan is to conclude the evening by 6:30 pm so those that wish to be home before dark can be on their way. We hope you will plan to be a part of this special afternoon. Tickets are \$25 per plate. If you would like to sponsor a table, please let us know. Reservations and tickets can be made online. (<https://bit.ly/SOAR25dinner>) Contact sharon@soarministries.org or kerid@soarministries.org with any questions.

Do you have a story, picture, or video you would like to share for the day? Submit them via this form. (<https://bit.ly/SOARmemories>)



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How can YOU help?

GO! Go on a short-term mission.

Get involved either by going or helping others go.

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