

**“There’s no such thing as other people’s kids.”**

When your congregation is committed to supporting young people, sometimes having fewer children and youth in Sunday school and youth group is just a reason to cross a busy street. First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, California, crossed that street — D Street, specifically — and established a two-way connection perhaps neither fully expected.

Seven years ago, the Rev. Dr. Sandy Tice and members of the congregation worked with the school and a consultant to discover ways they might better support young people beyond their doors.

“There’s no such thing as other people’s kids,” Sandy shared, and so the Life Skills program began offering academic coaching, opportunities to volunteer, field trips and, of course, food. In the years since, the congregation has sought to provide space to talk about anything in a safe setting. Over 100 students have taken part.

“[The Church] values us as individuals,” said Edgar Nunez, a past participant in the program who is now in his second year at the University of California, Riverside. “This program motivated me … to give back to my community, whether in the form of time or deeds — how these people did for me.” Since the Pentecost Offering began in 1998, it has been part of First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino’s commitment to support the development and education of children, youth and young adults. They use the retained 40% of their collection to support the Life Skills program, while 60% of this Offering supports national youth events like the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, the Young Adult Volunteer program and the Educate a Child initiative.

Through their contributions, they’ve seen just how much generosity compounds and extends. Bobbi Cummings, ruling elder and volunteer from the start, says, “To give your *self* to something makes such a huge difference. I’ve gotten more from Edgar than Edgar will ever get from me.” The students have offered themselves in other ways, too, volunteering in the other ministries of service engaged by the Church. “They love being on the giving end of mission. And I love their amazing habit of thinking without limits,” Sandy said. Not even limits suggested by the presence of a busy street.

We support the Pentecost Offering so we, too, can think with fewer limits, and can think, together, with friends like Sandy, Bobbi and Edgar, and the children, youth and young adults we support here and through our shared work as a larger Church. That’s what we believe in: When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. Please give generously to the Pentecost Offering.

*Let us pray:*

*Pentecost Spirit, inspire our faith, again, through the young people in our Church. Let the bright faith they share light your fire in all.* ***Amen****.*