

Families React to Receiving Grant Funding from their Congregation

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COVID-19 NBA Response Grantee
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At the start of the pandemic, the virus did not seem to be a problem for Garland, Texas, a city far from the major coronavirus hot spots. As days passed, the virus began to appear more relevant to everyday life; and soon enough everyone in the world was affected by Covid-19. My name is Yolanda Estrada and my husband is Rev. Julio Danilo Estrada. We are pastors of [Iglesia Cristiana Bethel Garland](#), a Disciples of Christ Church in Garland, Texas.

During the month of March, we made the decision to stop having services in our building and began services via Facebook Live and Zoom. During the prayer time in one of our Zoom meetings, a member of our church began to ask for prayer because they had lost their job. I remember one of our youth members saying, "Could we pray for my dad? Yesterday was his last day at his job. My mom works in a clinic as a receptionist and they have to close the clinic. I am an elementary school teacher, she said, and schools are closed. No one in my family has a job and we don't know what is going to happen." Then Jennifer, another girl said: "The clinic where I work is closed and we don't know when it will be open again." Jennifer is single and rents a bedroom in a house. Then, more and more members began to ask for prayer. As their pastor, I told them that we would be praying for them and gave them a word of encouragement, but in my heart, I felt that it wasn't enough.

We continued to hear similar stories in other prayer groups. Members began to tell us, "I lost my job" or "my job is closed, and we don't know when we will be going back." Another said, "I will begin to work for one or two days only." Parents began to stay at home because schools were closed, and they had to be at home with their kids. After hearing all of those stories, I began to pray to God for help because our church had just the right amount of money to pay the bills and we were unable to help the families of the church. We were not receiving the same amount in tithes or offerings that we used to.

"Dear God, please provide us with money to bless our families," we began to pray without ceasing. When I saw information about the [COVID-19 NBA Response Grant](#), I

immediately did everything necessary to apply. After applying, my family and I began to pray every night to God for a positive answer. One day when I opened my emails I found out that our church received the grant! All the stress went away, and my heart was full of joy and thankfulness to God and to [NBA](#). We had a meeting with the board letting them know the good news, and they rejoiced with us. We prepared a letter to let the congregation know that God sent us an answer through NBA's grant program. In the letter, we expressed our love toward them and we wanted them to realize that they were not alone. My husband and I decided to go to their houses and bless them each with a check.

Here are some of the reactions from the families:

The Rodriguez Family

This is a family from Perú. One of their family members back in Perú has COVID-19 and the family members in the U.S. were out of work due to the pandemic. They didn't know what to do, all the doors were closed. When we visited them in their house with a check, they were so thankful. They were able to buy groceries, shoes, and send some money to Perú to help their sick family member go to the hospital for treatment. They were deeply thankful.

Mauricio Avalos

My name is Mauricio Avalos and I would like to take the opportunity to THANK YOU so much for your generosity! Not just with my family but with our entire congregation! During this difficult time, many families are struggling financially because they lost their jobs and they do not have another source of income. In addition, they are not able to give their tithes and offerings. In my case, I am still working a couple of days a week, but my wife got laid off. My family and I appreciated the financial support. This money represents food on my table for a couple of weeks. I thank our GOD for your lives and for your ministry. We will be praying for you!

Robert and Guillermina

First of all, I want to give thanks to God for blessing his children. NBA, what you are doing in this difficult time is wonderful. Since February 28, 2020, I haven't been able to work because I had a surgery. The check that the pastors brought to our house came in a time of big need. We are greatly thankful for our God, our church and NBA. God bless you abundantly.

Martha

Martha works as housekeeper. One by one, the owners of the houses that she

cleaned began to call her and tell her not to go to clean their houses. She is going through a divorce and she had to pay rent and take care of her child. The day that we brought her the check, she began to cry and told me, "before you came to my house, I was praying to God for provision because I didn't have enough money to pay the rent. With this check I will pay my rent." She was so thankful that she did not stop giving thanks.

Kelly

Before the pandemic, Kelly's husband was working in Florida with a person that promised to pay him more if he continued to work for him in that state, far away from his wife and two children. Those promises were lies because this person never paid Kelly's husband. He came back frustrated and sad without money. When we went to his house, they were in shock because that check meant that they had money towards paying bills and buying food. "Thank you so much," they said.

Rocio

Rocio is a single mother with two children, a five and eight-year-old. She was working in two hotels as a housekeeper. She told us that they didn't have guests in the hotels and sadly they weren't able to keep her working. She had to take care of her two sons at home because schools closed. When she received the check, she said, "This is a miracle." She was able to pay her bills and buy some food. She was so thankful.

Francisco and Mirna

Francisco and Mirna had a month without work when we visited them with a check. They said "We don't know what you had to do to bring us this check today, but God definitely knew about our need. God multiply NBA for what they are doing for us, this money will help us to pay bills and buy groceries. Thank you, thank you so much."

Mayra

Mayra was working as a cleaner in a big hair salon. The hair salon closed and she found herself without money for her expenses. I can remember the smile on her face the day that we visited her with a check. She was so, so, thankful.

Omar

Omar had a temporary job in the construction field. He was one of the first people in our congregation to lose his job. He was trying to find a job, but no one contracted him. The check we brought him helped him a lot.

More families beyond the few listed here were blessed with by the COVID-19 NBA Response Grant. In this gigantic crisis, we were able to bless the families of our church because you gave us that grant. Wow! That was awesome.

The grant meant a lot to us as pastors, to hear all those prayer requests and having something to give to them gave us peace in our minds. Please receive our gratitude from the bottom of our hearts. We are speechless.

In all these stories, they gave thanks to God for you. **Thank you, NBA**, for your love and compassion. Our church will never forget the impact that this grant had for us all.

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacares.org.