

Volunteer spotlight: Tara Hickman

Tara Hickman first heard about the MEMNT through the church bulletin at Our Redeemer in Dallas. She soon met some of the children as their Sunday school teacher. Then, during VBS in the summer of 2018, she heard Pastor Yadessa speak about the kids being served by the ministry and how hard it must be to come to a new country under difficult circumstances. She recalls, "He mentioned that something as simple as saying hello and reaching out your hand to introduce yourself might have a big impact and make them feel welcome. So simple! And I couldn't agree with him more. So I went over, stuck out my hand, and introduced myself to him."

Since that day she has been involved in many parts of the ministry, particularly as an advisory board member and chair of the weekend program committee. She coordinates the volunteers, mentors and spends time with approximately 40 children who regularly attend the program, and often provides the program meal. "I have been blessed with new ways to serve and new friendships," she says. "I've stayed involved because these kids and other adults involved in the ministry are my neighbors, and I love them. We all know the greatest love and God has put us all right here together to keep showing that love to each other."

Though she has a family and a very busy schedule, she devotes a lot of time and energy to the MEMNT. Her innovative ideas, leadership, and experience as a teacher have helped the program grow and flourish. She has contributed to enhancements such as a signup system for volunteers, the development of volunteer materials, and improvements to program safety and organization.

She notes that feeding and spending time each week with a big group of energetic, hungry kids while trying to love them and share the Gospel may require stepping outside of a comfort zone. "But that loud, exciting, chaotic, and sometimes messy place is where these kids need us to meet them," she says, "and even if we feel completely inadequate, we know that the Holy Spirit is doing the work."

Thank you, Tara, for your dedicated service to the MEMNT.