



**Send Relief**  
Valdosta





## Contact Information

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## Meeting Needs, Changing Lives

Send Relief works with churches and volunteers to meet needs and change lives in communities within the U.S. and around the world.

By offering help and hope to the most vulnerable in collaboration with missionaries, local ministries and churches, your gifts and efforts through Send Relief have a long-term impact.

With Send Relief's help, churches and partners like you receive resources and training to be the hands and feet of Jesus to communities in crisis, refugees, human trafficking survivors, those affected by natural disasters and vulnerable children and families.



## Ministry Centers

Send Relief ministry centers deliver compassion ministry within local communities while providing mission trips and training opportunities for churches all over the country. The goal of ministry centers is twofold: serve communities well and encourage others to do the same.

All over North America, Send Relief ministry centers actively assess community needs, develop ministry strategies, deliver ministry and provide opportunities for others to go on mission.

# Community Snapshot

**At the heart of Southern Georgia, visitors to Valdosta can expect exceptional southern hospitality, a relaxing atmosphere, plenty of entertainment and beautiful scenic drives. Known as the Azalea City, Valdosta was named one of six of “America’s Friendliest Cities” by Rand McNally and USA Today’s “Best of the Road.” in 2011.**

- Even with its beauty and charm, Valdosta has an overwhelming number of children in foster care. According to the Division of Family and Children Services, more than 1,000 children are in foster care.
- **25%** of foster youth experience homelessness within four years of leaving the system.
- More than **12,000** of Georgia’s children are in the state’s child welfare system.
- Valdosta metro area population is **149,590**, with an average household income of **\$52,470**
- The city is ranked the poorest in Georgia with a poverty rate of **32.22%**.

## **Diverse Communities (2019):**

- 56.3%** Black or African American
- 34.9%** White (not Hispanic or Latino):
- 5.0%** Hispanic or Latino
- 1.7%** Asian
- 0.2%** American Indian and Alaska Native
- 0.1%** Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- 3.1%** Two or More Races



# Valdosta Ministry Center Snapshot

## Ministries

**Strengthen Communities**

**Care for Refugees**

**Protect Children and Families**

**Fight Human Trafficking**

**Mobilization Opportunities**



*“There are many different ways for all churches and Christians to be involved in serving foster children and families in need to live out what James calls ‘pure religion.’ In James 1:27,” says Jay.*

# Valdosta Ministry Center — Camp Rock Community Partnership

**While the Valdosta Ministry Center cares for children in crisis, they also provide resources for foster and adoptive parents and help train churches to support these children and their families. “We also serve the migrant community in our area (close to 10,000 farmworkers year-round). We have developed an ESL school and graduated people from six different counties in the last year,” Jay adds. “We go into the camps, the camp housing and the community to meet food, medical and dental needs. We also partner with Emory University and Mercer University to meet these needs.”**

- With Send Relief, Camp Rock also ministers in Venezuela to help feed hundreds of people a week with food shipments. They have shipped medical equipment and supplies and almost 40,000 plus pounds of staple foods to Venezuela.
- With Valdosta State University right up the street, the ministry center’s neighborhood includes a highly diverse community. It allows them to serve its large international community and surrounding apartment complexes within a block or two of its new building.

“We seem to have a growing number of addicts and homelessness in our community too, which affects the care of children in our community,” Jay shares. “The lack of spiritual life in the church and the non-believing community creates a span that seems to grow between the wealthy and the middle to lower class.”

- For that reason, they need help. Everyone can offer something, whether it’s a meal or foster care. The ministry center desires to establish healthy foster care ministries in their local communities. They want to come alongside churches in raising awareness of the need for Christian foster homes and support systems and provide education and training to meet those needs.

Through its partnership with Send Relief, Camp Rock prioritizes children in crisis by training churches and parents in best practices for the foster care journey.

- Whether through monthly mentorship camps, church training or trauma therapy, the Valdosta Ministry Center’s goal is to decrease the number of children in foster care while increasing the number of churches supporting foster families.

*“We became a licensed foster care agency in 2018. We train and recruit families to serve in foster care,” Jay Watkins, the center’s director, explains. “We also have social workers who oversee the care of all children in care. We also have a foster home, where six children in foster care live with one of our families. We also have an equestrian facility where our foster families go for therapy and riding lessons.”*

*—Jay Watkins*



# History of the Valdosta Ministry Center - Camp Rock

Camp Rock started serving families in crisis over a decade ago. At first, they were a resource ministry and offered special events (Christmas, spring and fall). They recognized the need the foster community and the family in crisis had, so they started doing summer camps and later a yearlong mentoring camp.

The Valdosta Ministry Center began with a shared passion for helping children through adoption and meeting the needs of underprivileged children in South Georgia. Through their efforts, they recognized the need for solid Christian families to get involved in foster care.

In 2011, an opportunity presented itself through the combined efforts of local churches for Camp Rock to provide many children the experience of a traditional sleep-away camp. This sleep-away camp allows children to “just be children” and have a safe, fun, and spiritual week experiencing the outdoors. Since 2011, Camp Rock has provided a fun camp experience for more than 600 children from high-risk environments.

Eager to find ways to better serve the children in the community, Camp Rock met with the Department of Family and Children Services in

Lowndes County to talk about a partnership and how they could help. Since December 2011, children in foster care from all over the Southeast have celebrated Christmastime at Camp Rock. This event is an evening of fun and activities for children in foster care and their families.

The first Christmastime at Camp Rock event included foster families from eight local counties and served more than 500 people. Since then, Camp Rock has expanded to every Georgia and North Florida county.







## Vision

The Valdosta Ministry Center's vision for the future is to be a premier training center for churches. They would like to develop a refugee relocation program and open child protection agencies across Georgia serving foster families and children in crisis.

## Valdosta Ministry Center Camp Rock

### Future Ministry Plans

- Expand Protecting Children and Families programs
- Expand ministry to migrants and refugees



## Next Steps

One of the most powerful ways to show the most vulnerable the love of Christ is by taking steps toward them. By helping churches be the hands and feet of Jesus, Send Relief supports and provides opportunities for those who desire to respond directly to these needs in lasting, meaningful ways while sharing the hope of the gospel.

### Give

Your gift provides critical, immediate help to families and communities that need it most. Give today to provide practical care and share the love of Jesus.

[Click here or scan the QR code to give](#)



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### Serve

Participate in various compassion opportunities by taking a mission trip and vision tour to a ministry center around North America. Mission trips can include apartment outreach, food pantry ministry, after-school programs, sports ministry, canvassing, prayer walking, homeless ministry, physical labor, serving at-risk families and university campus ministry. The trip also includes aspects of training and equipping so you can learn how to connect and serve the international and refugee communities in your cities.

[Click here to sign up](#)





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