

# Evangelists Offer Jesus Burgers to Win Souls to Christ

Thirteen years ago, a group of college-aged believers near the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) decided to reach out to those in need by serving free hamburgers at a park in Isla Vista, Calif. That sparked the idea behind a ministry now known as Jesus Burgers that serves free meals to the community every week.

“When it first began, the people out there were really skeptical ... almost kind of hostile that we’d be out there serving hamburgers,” explains Isla Vista Church pastor Jason Lomelino. “But now people absolutely love it.”

Isla Vista packs 20,000 people into one square mile, making it one of the most densely populated cities in the country. The church owns a home on Del Playa Drive, a street so popular for partygoers that it’s closed to cars on Friday and Saturday nights. So amid the revelry every Friday night, members of the charismatic congregation hand out 200 free burgers on the Del Playa home’s lawn.

“The house has become a place where people can come, get water, get a hamburger, sit around the campfire,” Lomelino says.

Fourteen college students live in the home, and they’re all part of the ministry that prays over the free barbecue event two hours beforehand every week.

Recent UCSB graduate Tarra Rarick lives at the Jesus Burgers house and has been involved with the ministry since her freshman year. She says she’s seen people change through the outreach effort.

“The conversations that I have,” she says, “I see how people start to say, ‘These are Christians I have never seen before. They actually care about what I have to say. They’re actually loving me in a really sincere way.’”

Rarick has witnessed several healings during her time of working with Jesus Burgers. She shared a story of a man who had a metal bar inside his body where he had broken a rib years earlier.

“I said, ‘God wants to turn that back into bone and heal you,’” she recalls. “I prayed, and he said the pain was gone and he didn’t feel the rod. I didn’t get an X-ray, but I’m confident it happened.”

Lomelino says the heartbeat for the church and the ministry is that people would encounter the love of God.

“This whole deal is just to show people that God loves you,” he says. *—Gina Meeks*